

# THE CLIFTON BATHS, LATER THE CLIFTONVILLE LIDO, MARGATE

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# THE CLIFTON BATHS, LATER THE CLIFTONVILLE LIDO, MARGATE

**2019-2020**

## **REPORT**

**Peter Seary**

Canterbury Archaeological Trust

Edited by Rosemary Scott

The present study of the Clifton Baths, later the Cliftonville Lido, at Margate, was commissioned from Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) by Nick Dermott of Thanet District Council, in 2018.

It is based on CAT's two existing studies of the premises,<sup>1</sup> supplemented by further documentary research. CAT is grateful for the opportunity, once again, to study this site.

The present report sets down as much as possible of the information we have gathered concerning the Clifton Baths and Cliftonville Lido.

It is based largely on documentary research, chiefly at Margate Public Library (MPL), Cliftonville Public Library; Margate Local History Museum (MLHM); the Kent History and Library Centre (KHLC); the Templeman Library of the University of Kent, including its Special Collections (SCTL); the National Archives (TNA), the National Monuments Record (NMR); the Bill Evans Collection (courtesy of Nick Evans); and CAT's own library and archive. We also cite some posts from the *Kent History Forum* website (KHF).

The recent photographs reproduced in the Photographic Survey of the site, accompanying this report, comprise a mixture of photographs taken by CAT in 2007, 2013 and 2018, and others taken by Lynton Owen, Louise Oldfield and Frank Leppard, at various dates, as indicated in the captions.

We are grateful to Nick Dermott and Thanet District Council for the opportunity to study this remarkable site. We are grateful to Lynton Owen and his comrades in the Save Margate Lido campaign and the Kent Underground Exploration Team (KUET), and to Louise Oldfield, for their most generous assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> CAT 2007 and 2013.

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# **1 LASER SURVEYS OF THE CLIFTONVILLE LIDO AND THE CLIFTON BATHS (NOVEMBER 2019)**

## **1.1 Plans, Sections and Elevations**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Yx\\_1aAFDq1RdoyM3cKlIbJS2vYp3CCjTB?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Yx_1aAFDq1RdoyM3cKlIbJS2vYp3CCjTB?usp=sharing)

## **1.2 ‘Fly-Throughs’**

### **1.2.1 Sub-basement – Sea Level entry**

[https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboK-CPw/e?hide\\_logo=true&hide\\_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true](https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboK-CPw/e?hide_logo=true&hide_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true)

### **1.2.2 Promenade Level**

[https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboK\\_FBs/e?hide\\_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true](https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboK_FBs/e?hide_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true)

### **1.2.3 First Floor**

[https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboK8XQI/e?hide\\_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true](https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboK8XQI/e?hide_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true)

### **1.2.4 Ground Floor**

[https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboLAR\\_I/e?hide\\_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true](https://stuart-cadsurveys-co-uk.vr-360-tour.com/e/FD0BboLAR_I/e?hide_nadir=true&hidehotspotlabels=true&hidelive=true&hidetitle=true)

## 2 INTRODUCTION

This report concerns a cliff-top site in Cliftonville, immediately to the east of the seaside resort of Margate in Kent, United Kingdom. The surrounding suburb of Cliftonville was to take its name from the name of the bathing establishment which was built on this site.

From the mid-1820s, the site was known as the ***Clifton Baths***. In 1938, it was renamed the ***Cliftonville Lido***.

The remains of the Clifton Baths were listed, Grade II, on 1/9/2008. The Lido site was designated as part of the *Cliftonville Cliff-Top Conservation Area* in October 2016.

The adjacent Fulsam Rock, on the shoreline in front of the site, is designated as a SSSI, a SPA and a SAC.

There have been few planning applications for the Cliftonville Lido, and none of these has ever been determined. The leisure complex was last fully operational in 1978, and, since then, there have been a series of demolitions and also extensive decay – especially in those parts which were built in the 1920s.

These structures (the Lido) are constructed of ferro-concrete which has spalled severely in the damp conditions of the boarded-up building. Additionally, the lowest level of the complex, the former changing area, has, in recent times, been repeatedly subject to tidal flooding.

The Clifton Baths, which the Lido abuts and surmounts, survive remarkably intact, following those demolitions which took place in the early C20th. They include features, such as the Bathing Machine Store and the ‘plunge pool’, which functioned as the Lower Reservoir, which are unique to the Margate site and which bear testimony to the inventiveness of their creator, the Margate solicitor, John Boys.

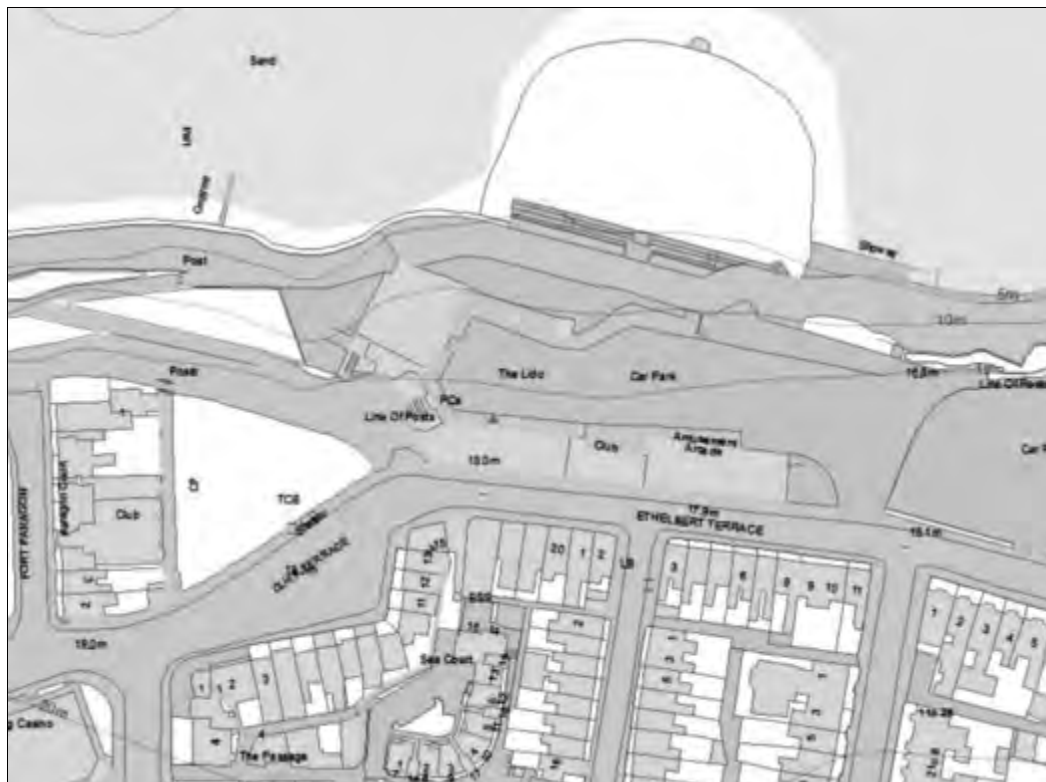
### 3 SITE LOCATION

The Cliftonville Lido occupies a coastal site opposite, and to the north of, Ethelbert Terrace, Cliftonville (NGR: 6359 1714).

From the street frontage, it descends, by a series of stepped terraces, through the chalk cliffs, and extends some way across the foreshore below.

The site is bounded, to the south, by the east end of Fort Promenade, part of Cliff Terrace and Ethelbert Terrace.

The Lower Newgate Promenade crosses the site, east–west, at the foot of the cliffs.



Site Location of Cliftonville Lido

## 4 COMMENTARY by Nick Dermott

### ***Some Themes Raised by the Clifton Baths and Cliftonville Lido Site***

A unique and strikingly original character, John Boys (1782-1861), the designer and builder of the Clifton Baths in Margate, played a pivotal role in transforming Margate into the popular seaside resort that it later became.

His involvement in the Hawley Square Gardens (1810s), Marine Terrace (1820s), The Stone Pier (1815) and Jarvis's Landing Place, latterly The Jetty (1824), mark him out as a major figure in the history of the town.

His eccentric, cantankerous and litigious personality, his wide antiquarian interests and his sustained and vigorous persecution of the Margate smuggling community also cause him stand out amongst his contemporaries.

Margate had been at the forefront of therapeutic sea bathing since the 1730s, through the town's use of both indoor sea water baths and outdoor immersion via bathing machines.

Nevertheless, the Clifton Baths were a never-to-be-repeated advancement of the sea bathing, therapeutic concept. They were an ambitious, ingenious and daring feat of marine engineering, which continued to retain their structural integrity in a highly-exposed, maritime position. They were as an audacious piece of construction, in their own way, as Smeaton's Eddystone Lighthouse (1759).

Boys excavated the seabed and foreshore (the Fulsam Rock), and remodeled it, and its adjacent cliff, in order to create a private, pay-to-enter, beach resort that utilised a secluded, artificial, sandy beach.

The sixty-foot high, chalk cliff-face was cut back to form terraces and jetties, and was also excavated to form tunnels and chambers.

This facility, the Clifton Baths, was a precursor of the C20th lidos and also of continental 'gated' beach resorts. The Clifton Baths were one of the first entertainment sites to be a 'drive-in' beach facility, in this case designed to admit carriages.

Overall, the modernity of the concept behind the Clifton Baths, as an *exclusive and fee-paying place of health and recreation*, is striking.

In the 1820s, the site of the Clifton Baths was outside of the Margate town boundary and in open, cliff-top countryside.

The coastline to the east of Margate Jetty was one of rugged cliffs, characterised by chalk stacks and sea caves which were repeatedly exposed to the rough sea. The area also had the reputation as being the haunt of smugglers, and it could be said to have been 'beyond the pale'.

Through their design and their liminal siting, the Clifton Baths amplified this sense of 'otherness'. They also demonstrated that nature could be tamed, and put to the service of human well-being.

The Clifton Baths and their outworks are an example of the landscape and architecture of the *Age of Romanticism*. Through the Clifton Baths, Boys transformed the natural, wild landscape of Margate's coast into a piece of Romanticist art.

As such, the Clifton Baths subterranea were deliberately designed to strike feelings of awe into paying visitors, drawing on concepts of *the Sublime* (early C18th) and *the Picturesque* (late C18th).

Early descriptions of the baths also dwell on its siting amongst the '*vertiginous cliffs and mysterious sea caves*'. The sea '*frequently dashes its spray to the top of the cliffs*' (Cooke 1830). These descriptions were clearly designed to create frissons of excitement and terror in visitors.

Beyond the therapeutic baths themselves, the tunnels and chambers that John Boys created were designed to be a thrilling, tourist attraction in their own right, and a complement to the natural, marine landscape in which they were sited.

There were '*beautiful Gothic arches forming the resemblance of the undercroft of a church*' (The Times 14 October 1827). (Gothic might be defined, in this case, as a landscape which employs dark and picturesque scenery, startling and melodramatic juxtapositions and an overall atmosphere of exoticism, mystery, fear and dread).

One of the striking features of the baths would have been the sound of the sea echoing through the Clifton Baths' tunnels, alongside the sound of the Clifton Baths' pipe organ. These auditory delights were juxtaposed with the thrilling knowledge that the site was subject to frequent and dangerous storms.

'*Unexplored excavations*' at the Baths were advertised on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1827 (poster reproduced by Scurrall 1982), suggesting mystery, secrecy and intrigue.

On the other hand, despite the shrewd exploitation of feelings of excitement and danger, the Clifton Baths' tunnels were also designed for the safe, dry and private circulation of pedestrians and of Sedan Chairs, as well as for horses, carriages and bathing machines. The baths were a '*drive-in leisure facility*' – a strikingly modern concept.

John Boys' Clifton Baths are an example of The Sublime; of 'nature improved'. They have a cultural affinity with Alexander Pope's *Grotto* (1725), Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818) and also with the engraved and architectural work of Giovanni Piranesi (1720-1778). They also bring to mind the 'Hellfire Caves' of West Wycombe (1748-52) and the Gothick fantasies of Horace Walpole's 'Strawberry Hill' (1750-70) in their deliberately dramatic effect. The baths' boiler chimney, disguised as an obelisk, also suggests exoticism and other-worldliness.

Strikingly, Margate's Grade I-Listed 'Shell Grotto', 'discovered' in the 1840s, has many similarities with the Clifton Baths. There are also functional and stylistic affinities with the Margate (Royal) Sea Bathing Hospital (1791) and the obelisk dedicated to George IV at Ramsgate Harbour (1821).

The Clifton Baths are also part of a tradition of 'fabulous and eclectic' seaside follies, the most prominent of which, locally, were Lord Holland's follies at Kingsgate (mid-to-late C18th).

The outstanding features of Boys' facility were hot and cold sea water baths, vapour baths, showers and dressing rooms for both men and women. There was a 'Reading Room' and a domed, bathing-machine, storage area with a turning space. There were open-air terraces where sea air and sea views could be enjoyed. There was an outdoor bathing-machine beach and bathing-machine hard-standing.

There was also an ingeniously-designed, indoor, plunge bath (which also acted as an indoor reservoir). It was 80ft long and 18ft wide, replenished by the sea at each tide, but also fed by a fresh water spring (it is said). A chalk vault covered this pool, but it was open to the sky and to the setting sun at its extreme, western end. The pool was said, at the time of its opening, to be a private bathing place for women and children (quoted in *Margate Delineated* 1829), and was termed the '*Baths of Amphitrite*'. Was it, in fact, a swimming pool in the modern sense, as its geometry might suggest?

During the 1920's, there was a huge, topographical and cultural change at the site when a C20th lido was constructed on top of Boys' subterranea. This new facility had all the characteristics of the fully-fledged, inter-war, seaside lido, with cafes and bars, a large, outdoor, saltwater pool, high diving boards, extensive seating for spectators, sunbathing terraces and changing rooms with freshwater showers. In a nod to the old Clifton Baths' period, the new attraction incorporated fifty, indoor, private baths.

The Cliftonville Lido was also a place where watching the human body became a spectator sport (leading eventually to the bizarre, outdoor, beauty competitions of the 1940s and 50s).

The building, in 1926/27, of what was later to be called the Cliftonville Lido, involved the destruction of the 'above ground', Bathing Rooms, Waiting Room and Porter's Lodge from John Boys' Clifton Baths of the 1820s. In addition, Boys' sea defence jetties, and the 'Artificial Bay', became buried under the new, lower promenade and the saltwater pool. However, Boys' subterranean works from the 1820s, one of the things that make the Cliftonville site unique as a structure, were left fully intact, and remain remarkably well-preserved.

The 'New Clifton Baths', which opened 24<sup>th</sup> June 1927 (in torrential rain), were an early example of a seaside lido (although, in Cliftonville's case, the facility was not called a lido until 1938).

Other seaside lidos of this era included South Bay Scarborough (1915, demolished), Prestatyn (1922, now altered almost beyond recognition), Blackpool (1923, demolished), Plymouth (1928), Exmouth (1929), Skegness (1932), Hastings and St Leonards (1933), New Brighton and Wallasey (1934), Brighton (1935), Penzance (1935), Morecambe (1936) and

Weston-Super-Mare (1938), to name a selection. Bournemouth had an indoor pool with one wall opening to give the advantages of an outdoor pool in hot weather (an arrangement which recalls the layout of the Clifton Baths plunge pool of the 1820s).

The Cliftonville Lido, as it stands today, still displays the full range of its original, 1920s-designed spaces, including the pool, changing rooms, terraces (where sea views and sunbathing could be enjoyed), restaurants and bars. These spaces sit up against, and on top of, the Clifton Baths of the 1820's.

The Cliftonville site encompasses the first prototype British seaside 'lido' (in the form of the Georgian Clifton Baths) juxtaposed with the earliest *surviving* British example of a fully evolved, C20th, seaside Lido.

Sitting alongside each other, these two facilities highlight changes in public attitudes towards health, recreation and the human body between the years 1820 and 1920. They demonstrate the evolution from the search for personal space and privacy to exhibitionist, public display.

This is a unique site with a key position in the history of the development of the seaside, and of health and wellbeing.

Nick Dermott RIBA April 2020

## 5 Frontispiece: The Baths of Amphitrite, Looking East



The Baths of Amphitrite 1825 (see 8.6) Photograph ©Frank Leppard 2019



## 6 Before the Clifton Baths' Construction (pre-1824)

There is an historical context for the Clifton Baths on the eve of their construction that is significant for our understanding of the baths' history and development.

Some of the themes and details we discuss here may seem miscellaneous and tangential, but we refer back to them in later sections.



Fig. 1 Detail of Ordnance Surveyor's field drawing, c1800

The gun battery of The Fort can be seen on the northernmost point of the coast. The Clifton Baths would later be built on the open ground beyond the enclosed fields to the east.



Fig. 2 Detail of Edmund's Map of Margate, 1821

The site of the Clifton Baths is just off the edge of the map beyond the town boundary (dashed line).

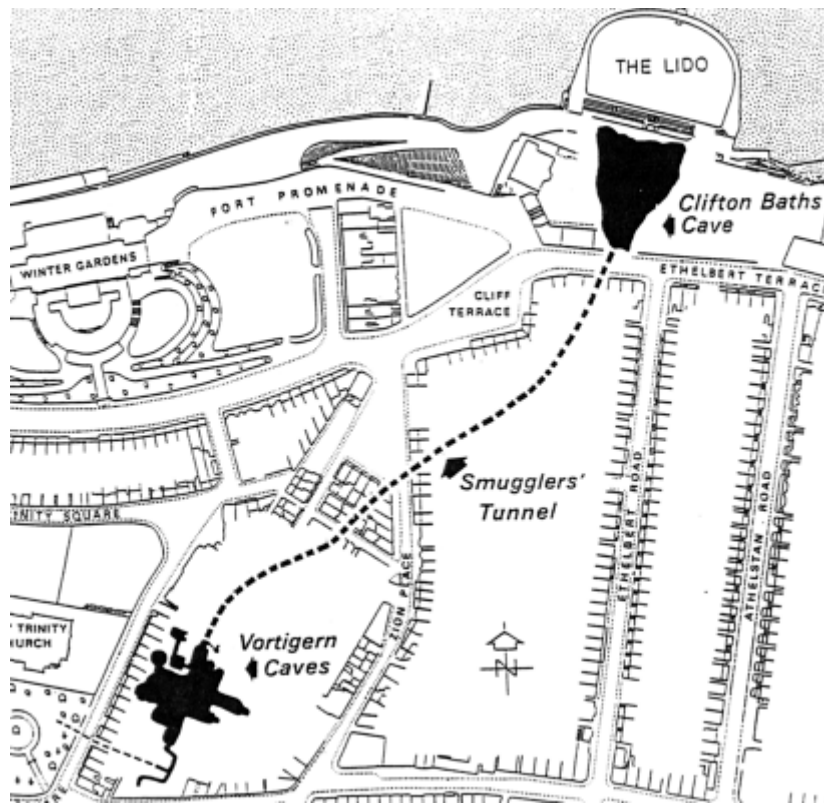


Fig. 3 Hypothetical former cave on the site of the Clifton Baths (John Graham; MLHM)  
The wide cave-mouth seems unlikely to have existed. The tunnel may exist, but it is not clear whether it is earlier, or later, than the Clifton Baths.

## 6.1 Margate Sea Bathing (also, see Seary 2018)

Margate emerged as a sea bathing resort around a quarter of the way through the C18th, and participated fully in the craze for sea bathing during the second half of that century.

Around this time, in Margate, Benjamin Beale seems to have revolutionized the design of the bathing machine by adding a canvas awning to conceal the bather, thus spurring even greater interest in sea bathing in Margate where these newly-designed and more private machines could be found.

Consequently, and from an early date, demand for accommodation at Margate outstripped supply, provoking a building boom that lasted for decades, including a deliberate programme of improvement from the 1760s.

In 1736, an indoor, warm sea water bath also opened at Margate, and, by the early 1760s, bathing rooms appeared on the High Street, where patrons were entertained while awaiting immersion.

Visitor, and, especially, sea bathing, accommodation at Margate seems to have been approaching saturation by 1824, when it was noted that the '*town, though of late years grown to double its former size, [was] now rapidly filling in every direction.*' (Kentish Gazette 24 July 1824).

One Margate correspondent, striking an unusually negative tone, commented:

*'The bathing rooms here, which are resorted to as the temple of health in a morning, are so suffocatingly crowded of an evening, that they are more calculated to increase the number of invalids, than to renovate the imbecile.'*  
(*Kentish Gazette* 6 August 1824)

In addition, sewage from the town and the heavy, and localised, activity of the horse-drawn bathing machines, may well have taken its toll on the cleanliness of Margate Bay, and discouraged bathing there.

*'The place most frequented [for sea bathing], in the neighbourhood of the bathing-houses, owing to the number of bathers and the circumstances that horses are employed for drawing the machines into the water, which do not, as may readily be supposed, add to its purity [...] I should as soon think of going to bathe in the Mechanics' Bath at Lambeth, as of going into the water at this spot.'* (Curtis 1842)

Margate's popularity, and even that of sea water, was clearly waning:

*'There are many bathing machines, tepid and vapour baths, properly constructed and attended to. Sea bathing is good under particular circumstances, taken by the advice of medical experience; but ducking is no panacea. The proprietors of the bathing places have discovered to their cost that persons do not come to Margate to play Tritons and Mermaids, as they did a few years' since.'* (op. cit.)

## 6.2 Earlier Margate Bathing Rooms

The first bathing rooms at Margate date from the mid-C18th, and three were in existence by 1763. These were, for the most part, low buildings fronting the Lower High Street, and overlooking the bay.

They were prevented from building upwards by a covenant protecting the sea views of the premises opposite.

Their rear elevations were perched atop a high, timber revetment that supported the west side of the street.

They were ephemeral structures, also probably largely of timber, since it had presumably been decided at an early date to build cheaply and rebuild often, rather than to try to withstand the force of the sea in a storm.

They were squat, with flat or shallow roofs and prominent chimneys, which seem to have been exempt from the height restriction, and vertiginous timber staircases descended from open-fronted galleries at the rear, to mounting blocks on the shore, from whence visitors boarded the machines.

Around 1790, one of the bathing rooms' proprietors, near the bottom of the High Street, established a warm, salt water bath like those at the New Inn nearby, and such provision gradually spread to some of the other bathing rooms.

On the night of 14 January 1808, a terrific gale caused enormous damage along the Margate coast, destroying most of the bathing rooms, together with the timber revetment upon which they perched, and damaging the others. Part of the High Street itself was washed away, and the storm also wrecked Margate's Pier and Harbour.

Being extremely popular and profitable, the bathing rooms were soon rebuilt, this time atop the new masonry sea-wall. The secure structure of the new stone wall may well have encouraged some proprietors to invest in marble, warm-water baths – either immediately, in rebuilding their bathing rooms, or over subsequent years.

By 1809, there were two showers and six, marble, warm, salt water baths, and, by 1822, it seems pretty much every bathing room offered warm and cold baths, while one of the bathing rooms had one of the first vapour baths. Such innovations were necessary to keep the bathing rooms attractive.

This context is important, as we suggest that the Clifton Baths, as they would originally be built, can be thought of as a larger and more opulent version of the bathing rooms then already existing on Margate High Street. They were also a response to the increasingly negative aspects of bathing associated with Margate's sea water.



Fig. 4 'The Front of the Bathing Houses' on the High Street, Margate (engraving by Shury, published in Oulton (1820))

The single-storey frontages provide the main entrance from the street, whence one would descend through two storeys to the balconies at the rear.



Fig. 5 Detail of 'The Back of the Bathing Houses' in Margate (engraving by Shury, in Oulton (1820))  
Note the balconies and the stairs for boarding the bathing machines.

### 6.2.1 The Royal Sea Bathing Hospital

The Margate Sea Bathing Hospital was founded in 1791 on the west side of Margate. It occupied a cliff-top site to the north of the Canterbury Road in Westbrook, on the opposite side of the town to where the Clifton Baths were to be built.

Originally called *The Margate Infirmary for the Relief of the Poor whose Diseases require Sea Bathing*, it was a charitable institution, accepting patients suffering from scrofula (today known as lymphadenitis, caused by tuberculous or nontuberculous mycobacteria). Patients were mostly from London, and were predominately children.

The main treatment offered at the hospital was that of sea bathing carried out, for the most part, using the hospital's own bathing machines. There were also indoor sea water baths. Fresh air, rest and an improved diet supplemented this treatment. The institution, and its treatment regime, proved to be a great success and did much to enhance Margate's reputation as a health-giving place.

In the later C19th, the hospital came to concentrate on treating pulmonary tuberculosis, through fresh air and sunshine. After WW2, it became a general, surgical hospital. It closed in 1995, and has been converted into 'Luxury Apartments'. (See Seary 2006.)

## 6.3 Bathing Rooms Elsewhere

### Ireland

Around the start of 1808, '*very compleat marine baths*' had been completed at Westport, County Mayo, providing '*hot or cold sea bathing at all hours, an extensive hotel elegantly furnished, and a public table during the summer months.*'<sup>2</sup>

### The Isabella Baths, Ramsgate, 1816; later the Royal Kent Baths

Large bathing rooms – already '*indicative of a nineteenth-century trend towards greater lavishness*'<sup>3</sup> – opened at Ramsgate on 10 June 1816 under the name of the Isabella Baths.

<sup>2</sup> *Dublin Evening Post* 23 February 1808.

<sup>3</sup> Whyman 1980: 288.

*'They are situated on the West Cliff, and terminate the elegant range of buildings called the Paragon. The front is placed towards the sea, the space between it and the cliff being laid out as a promenade; an elegant saloon forms the centre compartment, having the Clifton Baths and dressing rooms in each wing.*

*All the Clifton Baths are formed of white marble, and of the dimensions of the celebrated warm baths of Naples; to allow of invalids using the friction brush so conveniently as not to expose any part of their bodies above the surface of the water, they are placed in a room lighted and ventilated from the ceiling; the dressing rooms, which communicate with them, are of an ample size and fitted up with everything that can administer to the comfort and pleasure of the bathers; the saloon is furnished with the daily papers, reviews, and other periodicals; and commands delightful views of the country ...*

*The shower baths are also placed in rooms lighted from the ceiling, and the dressing rooms attached to each are of the same dimensions, and fitted up in the same manner as the others.*

*Vapour baths are also included in this establishment, and constructed to produce medicated vapour if required.*

*A horizontal funnel, in which the tide ebbs and flows, has been excavated in the chalk rock, and runs under the building until it joins up with the vertical funnel containing the pumps and pipes, which raise the water to the reservoir on the top, from which it is conveyed by pipes to the boilers and other parts of the buildings. The pumps are worked by horses, and are so placed as always to get their supply at high water.*

*Considerable inconvenience having often been experienced by invalids using the warm bath, in consequence of the unequal temperature of the apartment, and the currents of cold air acting on some part of the body, great attention has been paid to obviate this objection to the mode of heating these buildings in general; this has been accomplished by adopting steam as the heating power, and the heat is so equably diffused over the whole building, that in the coldest days it has all the delightful warmth of a day in summer.'*<sup>4</sup>

The main range was a dignified, single-storey structure. Two wings flanked a central block with a projecting, semi-circular bay under a conical, glazed roof.

The building's footprint was somewhat similar to that of the Bathing Rooms at the Clifton Baths – each wing having, presumably, as there, been appropriated to one of the sexes, providing baths and dressing rooms.

Unlike that at the Clifton Baths, however, the central block of the Isabella Baths housed a 'saloon.' At the Clifton Baths, this would occupy a free-standing range of its own.

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<sup>4</sup> Anon. 1816: 94-6.

The dimensions of the Isabella hot baths reproduced those of '*celebrated warm baths of Naples*',<sup>5</sup> and this illustrates a typical strategy among Regency proprietors – that of associating one's own premises with some more exotic or prominent resort elsewhere. (John Boys, by contrast, seems to have relied on establishing something unique with his Clifton Baths).

Like the Clifton Baths, the Isabella Baths were situated on the edge of the developing seafront, and its facilities relied on some substantial excavations in the chalk. There is no sign, however, that the Isabella Baths subterranea were intended to form part of the attraction, as they would at Margate.

By 1822,<sup>6</sup> the Isabella Baths had been renamed the Royal Kent Baths, having, presumably, by then, enjoyed patronage.



Fig. 6 The Isabella Baths, of 1816, at Ramsgate soon after completion

<sup>5</sup> Later reports (e.g. Anon. 1823) claim the Clifton Baths were laid out on the same plan as their Neapolitan prototype, but this seems distinctly unlikely.

<sup>6</sup> Collard and Hurst's map of Ramsgate, 1822.



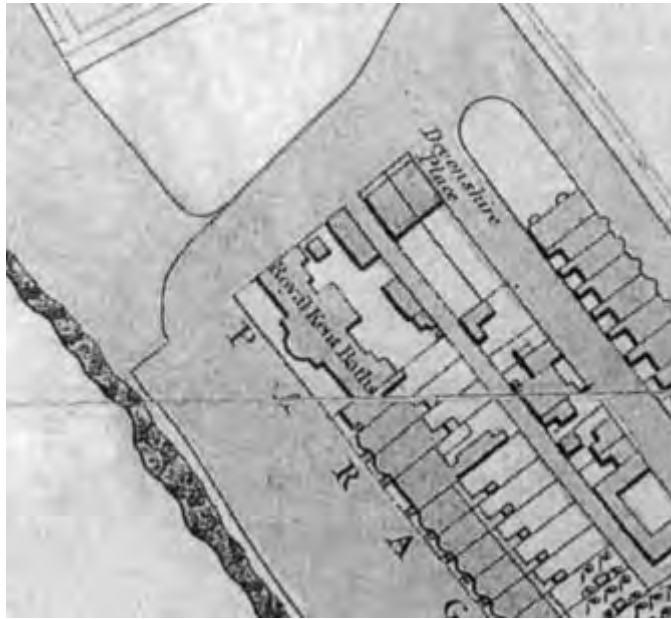


Fig. 7 Detail of a mid-C19th map of Ramsgate  
The Isabella Baths now feature as the Royal Kent Baths. Note the similarity of plan of the main building with the 'Bathing Rooms' at the Clifton Baths.

### **Mahomed's Baths in Brighton, 1821**

In 1821, Dean Mahomet 'shampooing surgeon' and 'inventor of the Indian medicated vapour and sea water baths,' opened his New Baths on the East Cliff at Brighton.<sup>7</sup>

These are certainly those the Clifton Baths referenced when, in August 1824, the Morning Post predicted that John Boys' proposed bathing rooms at Margate would 'vie with those recently opened at Brighton.'<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 8 Mahomed's Baths, at Brighton, in the early C19th.

<sup>7</sup> Morning Post 13 February 1821.

<sup>8</sup> Morning Post 20 August 1824.



### Ilfracombe

In 1823, the 'Tunnel Beaches' were built on the rocky shoreline of Ilfracombe, then an isolated resort on the north coast of Devon.

They were constructed *'by building up walls to connect various rocks'* (Gray 2006), thereby retaining sea water at each high tide and creating permanent bathing areas.

They featured bathing pools - one for women, the other for men – which were constructed in 1824 by The Metropolitan Marine Bath Company.

Although it never came to fruition, the Metropolitan Marine Baths Company's plan for baths in London forms an interesting comparison with the Clifton Baths, especially from a technical perspective. It proposed:

*'bringing a powerful stream of water from the coast, and supplying all parts of the metropolis with real salt water baths, upon terms of very moderate expense.'*<sup>9</sup>

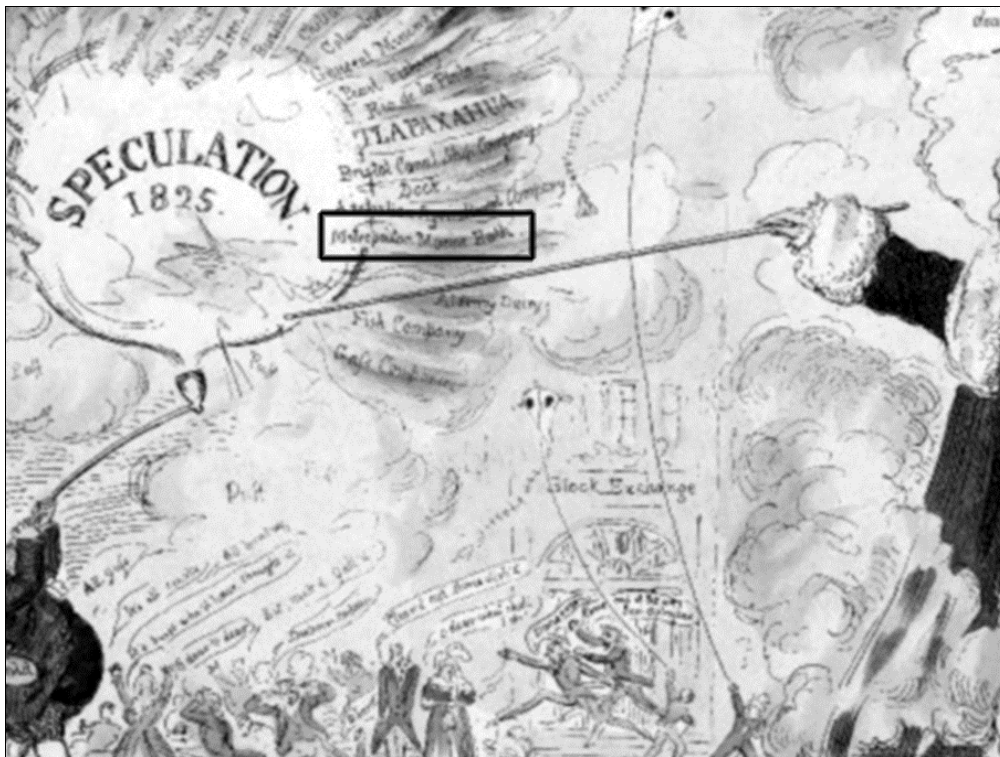


Fig. 9 The 'Metropolitan Marine Bath' (highlighted) among the ill-fated speculations in Cruickshank's, 1825, engraving *'The bubble burst - or the ghost of an old act of parliament!'*

## 6.4 The Influence of Architectural Fantasies

Boys' bathing establishment belonged to an established tradition of fantastic architecture in seaside locations, and his designs for the Clifton Baths must have been influenced by Lord

<sup>9</sup> *Courier* 12 August 1824.

Holland's extraordinary collection of follies at Kingsgate, on the North Foreland, including various castellated, faux-historical structures, some of them emblazoned with Latin inscriptions, just as had been done on numerous lesser structures throughout Thanet.<sup>10</sup>

The Kingsgate follies have been described in detail elsewhere (e.g. Jessup 1958; Jones 1974), and this need not be repeated in the present report, except to note a few of their features that are most suggestive of their influence on Boys.

The most obvious parallel, at Kingsgate, is the building known as 'Kingsgate Castle' – a huge, castellated stable-block, of flint and stone construction, perched near the cliff-edge, which may well have suggested the range containing the Bathing Rooms at the Clifton Baths.

Other Kingsgate follies, such as the so-called 'Hackemdown' Tower, prefigured the Clifton Baths, in that they explained themselves, to educated visitors, by means of contrived Latin inscriptions.

The same was true of the 'King's Gate' itself which also, perhaps, presaged the mouth of the Lower Reservoir at Clifton Baths. The quaint juxtaposition, at Kingsgate, of 'Roman' temples with 'medieval' chapels, and mock-up 'renaissance' fortresses – would sanction a similar mingling of historical periods at the Clifton Baths – where an 'Egyptian' obelisk overlooked the flint crenellations.

## 6.5 John Boys

The men and woman who were owners and tenants of the Clifton Baths were very much part of Margate civic, and also, on occasion, criminal, life. This was most true of John Boys, the man who designed and built the original Clifton Baths. He was a buccaneering, original genius, with a taste for scandal and legal - and quasi-legal – brawling.

The character of the baths was also Boys' character. He defined the Clifton Baths. This was not only in what he brought to the baths in terms of design and construction, but also through the chutzpah and originality with which he managed and promoted the baths themselves.

He was skilled at historiography, engineering and science, and had a penchant for early, particularly Saxon, British history. All of these interests informed his design and construction of the Clifton Baths, but, as important, was the fact that he was also dogged and inventive and made things happen at the Clifton Baths that were to be unprecedented.

His was also a vision of a quality, up-market location visited by up-market, quality people – an attitude that ultimately defined not just the baths but also the surrounding area, including the quality of housing and the grandeur of the cliff-top promenade and the seafront terraces.

The decline of Boys' vision mirrored the decline of Cliftonville itself (see Appendix 3). Boys' concept of the Clifton Baths, and his life in Margate, were so eccentrically and wonderfully

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the castellated appendages of Belmont, on the London Road, Ramsgate, c1795.

original, that an understanding of his life and personality is essential to an understanding of the Clifton Baths in its first incarnation, and its place in the social history of Margate. This is set out in detail in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

## 7 The Clifton Baths' Site at 1824

### 7.1 The Site of the Clifton Baths on the Eve of Their Construction

Few groups of buildings can ever have been more 'site-specific' than John Boys' Clifton Baths, although nothing about the site suggested the name, 'Clifton', and there is nothing to suggest that any such place as 'Clifton' existed in or near Margate before Boys' time. John Boys presumably introduced the place-name himself (see Appendix 1).

### 7.2 The Natural Site

The Clifton Baths would be built upon, and within, the chalk cliffs, overlooking the Fulsam Rock and the supervening sandy beach, on a vacant site just outside of the town boundary. The site lay just beyond the built-up seafront, which was doubtless dictated, in large part, by the available coastal building land.

The site will also, however, have been attractive for a range of other reasons, such as its picturesque scenery and the proximity of a rising estate, which was filling up with smart new lodging houses.

The site also brought with it a range of challenges, or at least issues to be addressed, which would shape the character of the Clifton Baths, both in its initial construction and in its subsequent development.

Otherwise, the cliff-top here, to the east of the town boundary, including the present site, was of little of interest<sup>11</sup>, and seems to have been largely empty of buildings, or any named topographical features, until one reached New Gate – a steep-sided cutting down to the shore, anciently called 'Rockin's Stairs'.

It was later testified that '*no buildings were existing in [the] neighbourhood*' before the construction of the Clifton Baths (KHLC: R/U438/L12), and early East Kent and Thanet Maps show nothing here. Town plans, such as Edmund's map of 1821 (Fig. 2), typically end at the town boundary, on this side of Margate whereas, on the west side of the town, they extend well beyond this boundary to take in the small settlements at Westbrook and Buenos Ayres. The future site of the Clifton Baths would probably have been open, cliff-top, meadows.

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<sup>11</sup> On the west side of the town, by contrast, such maps extend well beyond the town boundary to take in the Sea Bathing Hospital and the small settlements at Westbrook and Buenos Ayres.

### 7.3 Ownership of the Land

On the eve of construction, the cliff-top site, just outside Margate's eastern boundary, was in John Boys' possession in fee simple. It was possibly purchased from John Cowell of the Dane (KHLC: R/U438/L12).

It seems likely that the foreshore in front of the site was owned by the Marquis of Conyngham, Lord of the Manor of Minster, as part of the waste of that manor (KHLC: R/U438/L12).

### 7.4 The Fort and Fort Crescent

If one had wanted a name for this stretch of cliff, one would probably have called it 'the Fort' – after an old, earthwork gun-battery, perched on the cliff-top quite some way to the west. In the absence of other distinguishing features, this 'Fort' had long lent its name to much of the adjoining cliff-top, and this arrangement had recently been solidified by the laying-out of 'Fort Crescent', at a sensible distance from the cliff-edge, in the adjoining fields to the east. Accordingly, the Clifton Baths would, at first, and for many years thereafter, be referred to as standing '*on, or rather in, The Fort*' (e.g. Bonner 1831).

The plots fronting Fort Crescent, at this date, were still filling-up with large dwelling and lodging houses, whilst a further short terrace – named 'Cliff Terrace' – extended, at its eastern end, almost to the town boundary.

The site - well secluded from the bustle of the town and harbour, and well away from any urban effluent - will have offered its wealthy residents bathing with greater privacy, cleanliness and social exclusivity.

Forming, as they did, one of Margate's most prestigious districts, these environs will have guaranteed Boys' proposed bathing station a suitably genteel clientele.

### 7.5 The Chalk Cliffs

Geologically, the cliff was of the Upper Chalk – fine-grained, white limestone, dating from the Upper Cretaceous Period. Compared with those on the south coast of Thanet, the chalk cliffs at Margate, belonging to a more recent part of the Upper Cretaceous Period, contain relatively few flints (Dutton et al. 1977).

The oblique alignment of the Clifton Baths fabric also, helpfully, served to present their best aspect toward Jarvis' Landing Place, which had been completed and first used in July 1824 (*Kentish Gazette*).

Since it fell outside the coverage of early town plans, and since the Clifton Baths and Cliftonville Lido developments have transformed the site so completely, it is hard to reconstruct the more detailed topography of site at this time.

The cliff stood about sixty-feet above the shore, but it is not clear whether there were jagged inlets and chalk stacks (as at The Fort, further west) or a relatively plain cliff-face. The Ordnance Survey field drawing of c1800 (Fig. 1) suggests the latter – but this is little more than a sketch. Written sources, on the other hand, suggest a rugged cliff-face, which Boys would have had to cut back considerably to prevent rock-falls. Early photographs show numerous, freestanding, chalk stacks and sea caves between the Jetty and the Clifton Baths.

The Margate chalk was well suited to cutting and tunnelling – a fact that would be exploited to great effect in the construction of the Clifton Baths – and the results, unless exposed directly to the sea, were fairly stable.

The best of the chalk, thus excavated, provided a ready building material (common in Margate's cellars and foundations well into the C19th), which would also be used extensively in the construction of the Clifton Baths.

The waste chalk could also be burnt for lime, and, from some point in the early C19th, there was a lime kiln on John Boys' property, at the foot of the cliff adjoining the Clifton Baths on their eastern side.

The curving inlet shown just to the east of the Clifton Baths' buildings on early maps may be associated with this structure (although it would be filled in during the late C19th). It has not, as yet, been possible to determine whether the kiln preceded or post-dated the construction of the Clifton Baths. Perhaps it was established to make use of the massive quantities of waste chalk extracted during the Clifton Baths' construction.

Besides its use as a raw material, new kinds of value – 'aesthetic', 'scientific' and 'imaginative' – had been identified in the chalk landscape since about the early C19th.

*'The sands extend themselves on each side of the town, and may be passed with safety for nearly a third part of the day. Here the ocean is viewed, in its sublimity, on one side; whilst the high, chalky cliffs, on the other hand, present fantastical resemblances of grottoes to amuse the pictorial or cursory observer, and an endless train of natural curiosities for those who are fortunate in having leisure and inclination to make more attentive examinations.'* (Brewer 1819: 209)

## 7.6 Natural Forces

The Clifton Baths would make the most of the rugged and picturesque cliff scenery – especially when it came to the preparation of engravings.

The main elevation of the Clifton Baths would also face west-by-north-west, and could be appreciated from the sands at low tide.

The forces that had shaped these cliffs remained formidable, however, and would have to be confronted in designing the complex.

## 7.7 The Fulsam Rock and Sands

The chalk of the cliffs, and of the Thanet plateau, rested, in turn, on older, harder chalk, which, having better withstood the elements, now exposed a broad, craggy and uneven shelf, sloping very gradually out into the sea and visible at low tide.

Before the construction of the Clifton Baths, this shelf, known as the Fulsam Rock, would have posed a considerable, perhaps insurmountable, obstacle to bathing machines (and would even have discouraged bathing on foot). John Boys would have to overcome this difficulty in constructing the Clifton Baths:

*‘There was a considerable amount of rock in front that rendered bathing impossible or nearly so in that part of the coast ... bathing was impossible on the rocks ... in front of the Clifton Baths’.* (KHLC: R/U438/L12)

Atop the Fulsam Rock was a beach of fine, yellow sand, thrown-up from the seabed by storms (Dutton et al. 1977).

The shallowly sloping foreshore, exposed for a great distance at low tide, was inundated completely, and rapidly, when the tide came in – sometimes to the peril of tourists.

## 7.8 Smuggling

The site was well-secluded from the bustle of the town and harbour, and was well away from any urban effluent. The Clifton Baths would, of course, make a virtue of this seclusion, offering privacy, cleanliness and social exclusivity.

Other Margate residents, however, valued the seclusion of this stretch of coast for other reasons.

Concealed by protruding cliffs from the town side, and lying at a (usually) sufficient distance from the Prevention Post at Newgate Gap, this area seems to have been a favourite spot for landing contraband.

During the first half of the C19th, several arrests were reported in the vicinity of the Clifton Baths, and the area was doubtless even more popular for this illegal activity in the years before their construction.

Many of the incidents which are reported as having taken place at ‘the Fort’ may have been in this stretch of coast.

This is worth mentioning, not just in view of John Boys’ well-known efforts in the suppression of contraband (see Appendix 1), but also because the theme of ‘smuggling’ would return more than once, both in reality and fantasy, in the history of the Clifton Baths and Cliftonville Lido.

## 8 The Construction and Opening of the Clifton Baths: 1824 to 1828

The Clifton Baths were built between 1824 and 1828, and some of the more authoritative sources suggest the works cost £15,000.<sup>12</sup>

Everything suggests John Boys alone designed the Clifton Baths, and all their details, himself, and they were '*constructed by and under [his] superintendence.*'<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, however much Boys had designed in advance, the scheme clearly evolved as the works progressed.

In fact, we find fascinating clues as to how his conception and design of the establishment changed, and became increasingly ambitious and expensive.

The design will also have been shaped by external forces, such as the ravages of the sea and by the activities of other persons quarrying the foreshore.

Reflecting the organic nature of the Clifton Baths' design and construction, it seems that its facilities were opened to the public progressively, and as they were completed.

Boys even toyed with several possible names for the establishment before finally settling on The Clifton Baths – a name that had no link with its surroundings, and seemed to be purely to have sprung from his imagination.

(Also, see Appendix 1.)

### 8.1 The Clifton Baths Manuscript

Tantalisingly, John Boys is known to have set down a detailed account of the construction of the Clifton Baths, and of their subsequent enlargement, during his lifetime.

A Mr North, deponent at the Court of Appeal in the early 1880s (KHLC: R/U438/L12), referred to '*a manuscript by Mr Boys giving an account of his works*' on the Clifton Baths over the space of almost twenty years.

This document is known to have survived John Boys' mid-C19th 'bonfire' (see Appendix 1), but it is not yet clear whether it still exists, or where it might now be.

Obviously, if this manuscript could be found, it would provide an extremely valuable source for the early history of the Clifton Baths.

It seems likely, however, that some of the later descriptions of the Clifton Baths were based quite closely on Boys' manuscript - in particular, that offered in Mr North's testimony in the

<sup>12</sup> E.g. KHLC: R/U438/L12; John Harvey Boys, letter, c1828.

<sup>13</sup> Anon *sd.*

late 1870s and also that given in a certain mid-to-late C19th advertisement for the Clifton Baths (represented by a photocopy at MLHM).

## 8.2 The Start of Works: Around August 1824

In mid-August 1824 it was reported that *'spacious bathing rooms [were] to be erected on the Fort, which [were] expected to vie with those recently erected in Brighton.'*<sup>14</sup>

A little over two years later, on 24 August 1826, a visitor was told that the excavations had been going on for *'more than two years'*, suggesting that they had begun by around this time. They were certainly underway by 9 September 1824, when a letter addressed to the *Public Ledger* noted:

*'The influx of inhabitants to [the Fort], which, inasmuch as it is the most salubrious, is the most sought after by invalid visitants, calls for increased accommodation for those to whom bathing is recommended.*

*To afford this accommodation the erection of new baths, adjacent to the spot, is in contemplation, and a number of workmen at present employed in clearing away a part of the cliff, opposite Cliff Terrace, and preparing a base upon which the foundation of the bathing rooms is to be laid; and to afford facility of approach to it, a road is to be excavated through the cliff, affording a gentle descent to and ascent from, the beach to Cliff-place. Considerable progress has been made in this part of the work, as well as in levelling the cliff. When the work is finished it will certainly constitute a great improvement to this part of Margate.'*<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the first works seem to have included terracing the western end of the premises and beginning the tunnel, or tunnels, down from this to the shore.

Boys will presumably have chosen to make these tunnels sinuous in plan – as they indeed are – in order to provide the *'gentle descent ... and ascent.'* (*op. cit.*)

## 8.3 The Main Excavations

Generally, as one would expect, the excavations preceded the construction of the various supervening ranges and structures.

The construction of the Clifton Baths seems to have begun with extensive excavations out of the natural chalk, which seem greatly to have modified the existing topography:

*'At the commencement of the work, the cliff was cut down to within about six feet of the level of the sea-shore; and the part so left (being a hard rock-chalk) was cased with brick-work, laid in Roman cement, so as to form a*

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<sup>14</sup> *Morning Post* 20 August 1824.

<sup>15</sup> *Public Ledger* 11 September 1824.



*sort of pier about eighty feet long; for the double purpose of forming an accumulation of sand, and an inclined plane behind it on the land side, and also for a breakwater for the sea to pass over and spend itself, instead of dashing against the cliff and recoiling.'*<sup>16</sup>

*There was a considerable amount of money spent in these various excavations – the cliff itself was 60 feet high – in some places it was cut down to the level of the shore – in other parts it was cut down to the level where these buildings are put upon it.'*<sup>17</sup>

Estimates varied as to the quantity of chalk which had been removed during the works. The Times (14 October 1827) quoted 60,000 cubic yards, but Cooke (1830), only 40,000. At the outset, Boys:

*'undermined and threw down certain irregular and projecting portions of the cliff which overhung the then foreshore and were then in a dangerous condition.'*  
(KHLC: R/U438/L12)

He then conducted further excavations, forming platforms to house the various ranges of the Clifton Baths, subterranean chambers and tunnels and a sloping passage out through the rocks onto the foreshore.

*'All the Rocks in front of these Works were (c1824) ragged and covered with weed close up to the Cliff; they have been pared down and smoothed to accumulate the beautified Sands which are now formed under the Cliff.'* (Mid-to-late C19th advert)

Boys broke up the rocks and levelled the shore between low-water mark and the cliffs so as to allow a smooth surface of sand to be deposited, and make the shore available for the purpose of bathing (KHLC: R/U438/L12).

*'[What] he did was to clear away a good deal of the rock, prepare the ground for the reception of sand inasmuch as bathing was impossible on the rocks [...] in front of the Clifton Baths.'* (ibid)

In particular, Boys cut a channel down through the Fulsam Rock to the sea. This duly filled with sand, providing *'a roadway along the said shore by which bathing machines could be drawn backwards and forwards'* (KHLC: R/U438/L12):

*'[There was] a passage cut through ... I think he made it 60 feet wide. I think it has been somewhat widened since that time but that was a hollow where the rocks were cleared away and a sandy foundation left for the convenience of persons who were bathing there, and a considerable number of bathing machines [would] at that point supply accommodation for bathers. When the tide goes out it goes out beyond those rocks.'* (KHLC: R/U438/L12)

<sup>16</sup> Cooke GA 1830 A Topographical and Statistical Description of the County of Kent (New Edition)

<sup>17</sup> KHLC EKA: R/U438/L12.

The course of this excavation is evident in Ordnance Survey maps - a wide, rectilinear interruption in the shelf where the sand and the sea meet without any intervening chalk.

## 8.4 Mineral Extraction on the Foreshore

John Boys' efforts may have been hampered, from the outset, by the extraction of large quantities of chalk and sand from the nearby foreshore on behalf of the Pier and Harbour Company (from whom Boys had resigned as a director in 1813).

Boys repeatedly claimed this had undermined his sea defences.

*'[In 1824] the Directors of the Pier and harbour were carrying out new works and immense quantities of the rock, chalk and sand in front of the [site] were dug and carried away by the town carters for the pier works to the injury of the lands lying along the cliff, by the deepening of the sea shore and thereby causing the waves of the sea to fall heavier [...] the injury was more particularly to [John Boys] who was then building a new bathing station called the Clifton Baths.'*<sup>18</sup>

These minerals were probably intended for use in sea defences, perhaps including the repair of the 'sea wall and embankment of the Margate Brooks,' which had begun in 1822.<sup>19</sup>

On 15 July 1825, the 'commissioners of the town' advertised for tenders to provide '200 cube yards of rock chalk' to be delivered to the 'stone wall.' Extraction would continue throughout the construction of the Clifton Baths.

## 8.5 Proposed Floating Baths for Margate, 1825

May 1825 saw another remarkable scheme for Margate:

*'A company is already formed for establishing a magnificent set of Floating Baths, surpassing anything of the kind ever seen in this country; they will combine cold swimming, vapour, hot and shower baths, together with elegant reading and dressing rooms. It will be surrounded by a spacious gallery for a promenade, and combine all the comforts of the private baths, unattended by any of the inconveniences of the present system.'*<sup>20</sup>

Nothing seems to have come of this. (Interestingly, however, a less ambitious scheme was realised, some years later, in connection with some bathing rooms on the Medway at Rochester).

<sup>18</sup> KHLC: R/U438/L/2; John Harvey Boys, letter, c1828.

<sup>19</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 21 December 1821.

<sup>20</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 6 May 1825.

## 8.6 The 'Baths of Amphitrite' and the First Obelisk, 1825

In mid-September 1825, the *Kentish Chronicle* reported that a set of '*new baths [were] about to be erected at [...] the other end of town*' from John Boys' excavations, where '*a shaft [had] already been sunk of sufficient depth to procure water at all times of the tide.*'<sup>21</sup>

These were probably Robert Foat's baths at what was then Number 37 Lower Marine Terrace.<sup>22</sup>

The *Chronicle* also reported progress on John Boys' baths, which it considered '*a similar undertaking, but of a more novel kind*':

*'Several spacious excavations [had] been made in the cliff, which [were] to contain warm baths, while the arched passage leading to them [had] an opening to the beach for the purpose of sea bathing. The chimney to the Clifton Baths [was] in the shape of a handsome obelisk upon the cliff, serving also as a seamount.'*<sup>23</sup>

Around the same time, several papers announced that '*new baths, solely for ladies*' were erecting at Margate, at an estimated expense of 5000l, which were to be called the '*Baths of Amphitrite.*'<sup>24</sup>

It seems very likely that these were John Boys' baths, rather than Foat's, and that this was one of the various stages through which his conception of the Clifton Baths passed.

We know that John Boys had not yet settled upon the 'Clifton Baths' as their name (indeed it may not even have occurred to him quite yet), and that he considered naming them along classical lines.

Amphitrite, in classical mythology, was a sea goddess (or Nereid nymph), the daughter of Nereus and Doris (Lemprière says she was the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys), who became the wife (or consort) of Poseidon/Neptune.

Amphitrite might well have appreciated women-only baths, having vowed celibacy but been wooed unrelentingly by Poseidon, who later proved less than faithful.

Interestingly, Brewer offers the etymology: '*amphi-trio for tribo, rubbing or wearing away [the shore] on all sides,*' which also seems appropriate for Margate.<sup>25</sup>

The idea of the Clifton Baths being '*solely for ladies*' (if this is accurately reported) may have survived in the eventual use of the large, underground reservoir at the Clifton Baths as a 'plunge bath' for women and children.

<sup>21</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 16 September 1825.

<sup>22</sup> *Pigot's Kent* 1832; see CAT 2108.

<sup>23</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 16 September 1825.

<sup>24</sup> *Jackson's Oxford Journal* 17 September 1825.

<sup>25</sup> Square brackets in original.

## 8.7 A Possible View of the Clifton Baths during Construction c1825

It is possible that an undated watercolour view of the Clifton Baths at MPL (below) shows the Clifton Baths roughly half way through their construction. Alternatively, it may just be a highly inaccurate view taken shortly after their completion.

It is very hard to say which the case is as watercolour sketches can be imaginative and horribly misleading.

The view can be dated confidently earlier than 1832 because the depiction of the Artificial Bay and sea defences agrees with the earliest engravings – prior to the construction of the ‘Bathers’ Terrace’.



Fig. 10 An early watercolour view of the Clifton Baths (MPL).

Most notably, the watercolour, if taken at face value, seems to show the castellated, middle portion of the eventual Bathing Rooms’ flint frontage spanning the mouth of the underground plunge bath or reservoir – without its adjoining flint-faced wings. Instead, it is shown flanked by large masses of chalk on each side, which would later be reduced to accommodate those wings.

This interpretation seems fairly plausible. The reservoir was described as ‘arched’ c1827 long before the supervening baths were constructed. Also, the wings, as completed, differed in numerous details from the castellated middle section.

## 8.8 The Bathing Machine Store, Waiting Room and Terrace: c1825 or early in 1826

George Alexander Cooke provides a detailed account of the Clifton Baths which, although published in 1830, evidently describes the situation several years previously, when Boys was building a waiting room and terrace atop the Clifton Baths:

*'These works and subterraneous excavations were in progress upwards of three years; they are the plan and undertaking of an individual; and are equally novel and extraordinary, and on that account a further description of them may not be uninteresting.*

*It had long been a matter of complaint that, amidst the many improvements of this public-spirited town, no attempt had been made to render the sea bathing more pure and more private; and these considerations, it appears, gave rise to the present undertaking; the projector being possessed of the land opposite to a good sand, and where the sea water is remarkably pure.*

*At the commencement of the work, the cliff was cut down to within about six feet of the level of the sea-shore; and the part so left (being a hard rock-chalk) was cased with brick-work, laid in Roman cement, so as to form a sort of pier about eighty feet long; for the double purpose of forming an accumulation of sand, and an inclined plane behind it on the land side, and also for a breakwater for the sea to pass over and spend itself, instead of dashing against the cliff and recoiling.*

*At the end of this pier a tunnel has been cut into the solid chalk, and arched over, so as to form a roadway of the length of about 130 feet, for bathing machines to pass up and down, as the tides should render necessary.*

*At the south end of this tunnel ways, an immense excavation of chalk has been made in a circular form at the bottom, and terminating with a dome of the height of 33 feet; the diameter at the bottom is 42 feet in the clear; the whole interior is cased and supported by brick-work, and by eight arches, which diverge from the centre in exact distances and proportion; and through each arch, further excavations are made, so as to be capable of holding from twenty to thirty machines.*

*Besides this, another archway is cut from the top of the cliff, so as to enable the machine horses and small carriages to pass up and down from the sea-shore; and another entrance, with a handsome flight of thirty-four steps for foot passengers, has also been made.*

*Communicating with the upper entrance, a very good porter's lodge has been built, with three arched and three cemented rooms, for the residence (as it is said) of a toll gatherer, or of those who take care of the property; and last of all, a waiting or lounging room is building 40 feet long by 20 wide, communicating with a terrace walk, cut down fifteen feet below the*

*natural surface of the cliff, and of the length of about two hundred feet, upon which it is intended to place seats and benches for the subscribers.*

*The room and terrace have a northern aspect towards the ocean, and are expected to be attractive in the hot summer months, from their shade, and from the particular purity of the sea air there.'* (Cooke 1830)

## 8.9 Repairs to the Sea-Defences, Early in 1826

John Boys seems first to have advertised for a tenant for the Clifton Baths early in 1826, well before the completion of their various buildings and facilities. He was, however, forced to withdraw the offer pending the repair of his sea defences:

*'New Bathing Ground, Margate*

*In consequence of the great depravation of sands, arising from the extensive excavations of chalk close to this property, for the uses of the Margate Pier and Harbour Company, (whereby the sea defences of this undertaking have been undermined) the proprietor is obliged to underset and strengthen the outward wall; and he gives notice that the meeting to let the premises by tender on the 19th June, as advertised, will not take place, and that the opening of it to the public will be postponed until further notice.'* <sup>26</sup>

Around this time, Boys managed to secure *'the conviction of Richard Cook for taking chalk from [his] new bathing places at Margate,'* but this was quashed in June that year.<sup>27</sup>

## 8.10 The 'Baths of Titus', 1826

On 24 August, William Fry, who was in Margate seeking relief from his lumbago at Philpot's Bathing Rooms, took an evening stroll up to the Fort, where, he noted:

*'They are now building some new salt water baths – called Clifton Baths which they are cutting out of a solid chalk cliff, about 60 feet high from the sea – at present, it is in a very imperfect state, notwithstanding the workmen have been already employed on these subterraneous excavations for more than 2 years, they are still going on with their laborious undertaking.'* <sup>28</sup>

Storm damage, and the likely suspension or reduction of works during the 1826 season, may have added to an impression of slow progress. However, on 21 October 1826 the *Morning Post* reported:

*'The new marine baths [...] appear to be a greater undertaking than the projectors originally designed them to be. The sea has shaken their frail*

<sup>26</sup> Poster at MPL dated 20 May 1826.

<sup>27</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 23 June 1826.

<sup>28</sup> Manuscript travel diary in Leicester University Library.

walls, and given them many a fearful rent. However, a fresh portion of vigour has been thrown into the Clifton Baths of Titus, as they are called, by the accession of new hands, and abundance of money. Gothic entrance gates, a round tower, a range of rooms, faced with curiously wrought flints, and numerous subterraneous passages, arched with brick and stone, form only a part of the undertaking, which is of considerable extent.’<sup>29</sup>

Tantalisingly, the correspondent seems to have provided the paper with a ‘water view’ of the premises, and another, ‘from the land.’ The ‘accession of new hands,’ bringing with it an ‘abundance of money,’ is as yet mysterious, and seems to contradict later assertions that Boys had completed the premises entirely ‘at his individual cost.’<sup>30</sup>

At this time, the spectacular remains of Trajan’s Baths, at Rome, were widely and erroneously attributed to the earlier emperor, Titus. Their fame had been burnished through a series of excavations the previous decade.<sup>31</sup>

It seems unlikely any feature of Boys’ premises was based on its proposed classical namesake – unless the two great ‘*hemicycli*,’ or *exedrae*, shown in the upper corners of Piranesi’s engraving (reproduced below) may have suggested the – much smaller – segmental wall protecting the water tank at the Clifton Baths.



Fig. 11 Detail of Piranesi’s *Veduta degli Avanzi delle Terme de Tito* (1756).

Might the said segmental wall explain the mysterious ‘round tower’ mentioned in the article?

If this yet existed, then it might well have been depicted in the aforementioned view ‘from the land’ side of the establishment, and, taken from that direction, it might well have resembled a round tower.<sup>32</sup> Alternatively, this may have been a garbled account of the subterranean ‘Dome’ of the Clifton Baths.

<sup>29</sup> *Morning Post* 21 October 1826.

<sup>30</sup> Bonner 1831 Might Boys have invented them for the purposes of the story?

<sup>31</sup> E.g. *Kentish Gazette* 7 September 1810; *Caledonian Mercury* 20 February 1815.

<sup>32</sup> The wall in question is shown on the earliest available views of the Clifton Baths, c1829 (see below).

The *'range of rooms, faced with curiously wrought flints'* presumably comprised the Waiting Room, together with the range for the tenant or caretaker of the Clifton Baths which had presumably by now been built obliquely up to its south-east corner. We can be fairly sure the range containing the Bathing Rooms at the baths had not yet been built.

The reference to *'Gothic entrance gates'* suggests that the brick, boundary wall had by now been thrown up on the south side of the site. The use of the plural suggests there may have been two entrances, as shown in mid-C19th maps.

### 8.11 The First Season: Glitches 1826

For a time, Boys leased the tunnels out to be shown to the public as curiosities:

*'In consequence of not being complete, it has been let for the present season to Mr Howe, of the Royal Hotel, and some other inhabitants, who open it every evening for three hours to public inspection, for a trifling admittance.'* <sup>33</sup>

Boys was not long deterred, however.

On 20 July 1826, the *Morning Post* could announce that *'the new baths, which [had] been built (or rather excavated) by Mr Boys in the Cliff, [were] soon to be opened for the use of the public'*.

The article described the premises as follows:

*'Upon the eastern side of the cliff (a place almost proverbial for its beauty of sea view and variety of marine objects) is a singular work, which is likely to benefit greatly this part of town. It is intended for a new bathing place, and is well situated both for the purity of water and privacy, points which have long been the subject of complaint at this watering place. In front of the works the rocks have been cleared away in the form of a bay, and the sands appear to be collecting there very fast.*

*The plan consists of subterraneous excavations upon a very large scale, for the purpose of admitting bathing machines to stand at high water, and a portion is to be set apart for hot and shower-baths. In short, the whole arrangement appears an equally judicious and well contrived one for the several modes of hot and cold sea bathing. [...]*

*Much more remains to be done to complete it, but there seems to prevail only one opinion as to its success.*

*The situation of it defies competition; the judgement with which the strong outworks are planned and constructed seem to insure safety against the*

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<sup>33</sup> *Morning Post* 15 August 1826.



*sea, and the good arrangement of the interior, render the whole capable of being used in various ways so as to be profitable to a tenant.*

*It is a work well worth the inspection of scientific men, and no well-informed person should quit the neighbourhood without taking a peep at so unique and bold an undertaking.’*<sup>34</sup>

The Clifton Baths seem, indeed, to have been opened to the public, employing bathing machines, for seven weeks that season. During this period, there were:

*‘upwards of 8,000 admissions, many persons having paid more than once, and some invalids as many as ten times during the hot weather.’*<sup>35</sup>

Boys seems to have operated the two bathing machines himself, as one of his associates later remembered:

*‘bathing machines began to be used in the year 1826 [...]. I think Mr Boys himself at first had them for two or three years [...] He had first two machines, the first year he was there, and then they very soon increased.’*<sup>36</sup>

The suggestion that Boys operated machines ‘for two or three years’ is odd, as he seems to have found a tenant for the Clifton Baths the following season.

The Clifton Baths could be included in the sixth edition of *Margate Delineated* (1826), providing our earliest, clear description of them and a useful summary of progress down to this time:

*‘For the accommodation of the numerous houses built on the Fort, a very novel and peculiar bath, or rather baths, excavated from the solid chalk rock, rising in a circular form from the bottom, and surmounted by a dome of large dimensions, of the height of 33 feet, has been constructed by and under the superintendence of Mr Boys; a high chimney, built in the shape of a pyramid, crowns the structure; a waiting, or subscription room has been erected, which fronts the sea, forty feet long, and of proportionate width, communicating with a terrace-walk 100 feet long, formed with alcoves and seats.*

*In the dome is standing room for 20 bathing machines, at the height of ten feet above high-water mark, with convenient access to the sea; and a horse road from the top of the cliff, of sufficient width to admit pony chaises to go to the sands, and steps cut out of the chalk, to enable persons on foot to descend with safety.*

*It is hoped the ingenious projector may meet the encouragement he deserves, as from the magnitude of the undertaking, the expense of its erection must have been considerable.*

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<sup>34</sup> *Morning Post* 15 August 1826.

<sup>35</sup> *Kentish Gazette*, 25 May to 5 June 1827.

<sup>36</sup> KHL: R/U438/L/2.

*Independent of its use as a bath, it is an interesting object, and worthy the inspection of the curious.'*

From this description, it seems that the domed chamber for bathing machines at the hub of the tunnels had been completed. We cannot say quite when this was done – perhaps quite early in the work - but this is the first mention we have found of it.

'Obelisk' and 'pyramid' were often used synonymously during the early C19th, so the pyramid may well refer to the obelisk of the Clifton Baths.

The 'waiting, or subscription room' and 'terrace-walk' were probably among the most recent additions.

Notably, none of the warm, indoor, salt water baths or vapour baths seem, as yet, to have been completed, although the associated chimney had been built.

## **8.12 Description of the Finished Baths: Marketing 1827**

As the 1827 season approached, John Boys placed the following advertisement in several consecutive issues of the *Kentish Gazette*, seeking a tenant to operate the bathing station for four months:

*'NEW BATHING PLACE, Margate to be let by auction (without reserve) at the Royal Hotel, on Monday, the 11th of June next, at six o'clock in the evening, for four months, the new bathing place, near Fort Crescent, with liberty to the tenant to take Toll and use the property in any manner that may be most advantageous to him.*

*The buildings consist of one bed room, a sitting room, and a kitchen for the residence of the renter; a waiting room for the company, 40 feet long by 20 feet wide, fitted up with ten benches, two dozen chairs, and a good organ.*

*There is a basin excavated for a plunge bath, 80 feet long by 18 wide, which with self-acting valves will change the water every tide, and is intended for females and children, and there is a standing room in the dome for at least ten machines, with excellent approach to and from the sands by an arched roadway, which the proprietor will engage, at his own expense, to protect and keep clear of beach or any obstruction.*

*The whole will be positively let without reserve to the highest bidder; and as it is the proprietor's object to make it answer to the renter, the most liberal encouragement will be given to a good tenant.*

*For further details and for tickets of admission to view the premises, after the 28th of May, inst. Apply to Mr R. Jenkins, auctioneer.*

*During the seven weeks of the last season that this place was open to the*

*public, there were upwards of 8,000 admissions, many persons having paid more than once, and some invalids as many as ten times during the hot weather.'*<sup>37</sup>

By this time, the large underground reservoir had been completed and fitted out for use as a plunge bath.

Possibly, at this time, the tenancy would seem to have been taken by one J Dixon, although only briefly and perhaps only for a single season.

Dixon advertised the Clifton Baths as follows:

*'Clifton Bathing Place, Reading Room, Terrace, and Subterraneous Passages, near Fort Crescent, Margate J. Dixon Respectfully announces to the nobility, gentry, visitors, and inhabitants of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and the Isle of Thanet, that the above novel and interesting bathing place with its reading rooms, subterraneous passages, dome, terrace walk, alcoves, and excavations is now open to the public.*

*From the magnitude of the undertaking and the great expense incurred, he confidently trusts to public patronage. Independent of its great utility as a bathing place, it is an object of curiosity not to be met with in any other watering place in the kingdom.*

*Terms of subscription to the reading room and free passage at all times through the subterraneous works.*

For families not exceeding 4 in number		For single persons	
For the season	1 1 0	For the season	0 10 6
Two months	0 15 0	Two months	0 7 6
One month	0 10 0	One month	0 5 0
Two weeks	0 7 6	Two weeks	0 3 6
One week	0 5 0	One week	0 2 6

*Admission to non subscribers sixpence each day*

*The daily London and county papers, magazines and reviews - also an excellent toned organ for the use of subscribers.*

*Admission to bathe in the Arched Basin or Plunge Bath, one shilling each person This basin is 80 feet long, contains several hundred tons of the purest sea water, which by self-acting valves, is changed every tide, wherein all the luxuries and advantages of Cold Sea bathing may be enjoyed in privacy and perfection.*

*Terms for bathing in machines, same as at the old bathing rooms.*

<sup>37</sup> Kentish Gazette, 25 May to 5 June 1827.

*Pony chaises admitted through the archway to the sands on paying 6d each in consequence of the frequent applications by the company visiting these baths.*

*Mr Dixon has made arrangements to supply tea, coffee &c on the usual terms.*

*If the undertaking is sufficiently encouraged, it is in contemplation to erect, as early as possible, hot and vapour baths, similar to those at Ramsgate when the visitants of the Fort and east side of town may obtain those benefits without travelling the distance so generally complained of in that fashionable part of the town.'*

There were already vapour baths at Hubbard's bathing rooms by this time. However, the reference to vapour baths at Ramsgate - which presumably refers to the Isabella Baths there (see 6.3) - hints that the better class of visitors might no longer be satisfied with the old Margate bathing rooms.

**CLIFTON**  
**Bathing Place,**  
**READING ROOM,**  
**TERRACE, AND**  
**subterraneous Passages,**  
**NEAR FORT CRESCENT,**  
**MARGATE.**

**J. DIXON**

Respectfully announces to the Nobility, Gentry, Visitors, and Inhabitants of Margate, Ramsgate, Faversham, and the Isle of Thanet, that the above BATHING and INTERESTING BATHING PLACE with its

**Reading Rooms Subterraneous Passages, Dome, Terrace Walk, Alcoves, & Excavations**

is NOW  
**OPEN to the PUBLIC.**

From the magnitude of the undertaking and the great expense incurred, he confidently trusts to Public Patronage. Independent of its great utility as a Bathing Place, it is an object of Curiosity and to be met with at any other Bathing Place in the United Kingdom.

**TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION**  
To the Reading Room and Free Passage at all Times through the Subterraneous Works.

For Families not exceeding 4 in Number.	For Single Persons.
For the Season..... £ 4 0 0	For the Season..... £ 2 0 0
For 6 Months..... £ 3 0 0	For 6 Months..... £ 1 5 0
For 3 Months..... £ 1 10 0	For 3 Months..... £ 7 6
For 1 Month..... £ 7 6	For 1 Month..... £ 4 6
For 1 Week..... £ 5 0	For 1 Week..... £ 2 6

**ADMISSION TO NON-SUBSCRIBERS SIXPENCE EACH DAY.**

The daily London and Country Papers, Almanacs, and Reports, and the best local Newspapers, for the use of the subscribers.

**Admission to Baths in the Archway Basin or Phoenix Dock, One Shilling each person.**  
This Room is 50 Feet long, contains several hundred tons of the purest Sea Water, which by alluring Valves, is changed every Tide, wherein all the luxuries and advantages of Cold Sea Bathing may be enjoyed in PRIVACY and PERFECTION.

**Terms for Bathing in Machines, same as at the Old Bathing Rooms.**  
Pony Chaises admitted through the Archway to the Sands on paying of each Horsecock, 6d. each.

**Tea, Coffee &c. on the Usual Terms.**

If the undertaking is sufficiently encouraged, it is in contemplation to erect, as early as possible, HOT and VAPOR BATHS, similar to those at Ramsgate, when the Visitants of the Fort and East Side of the Town may obtain those benefits without travelling the distance so generally complained of in that fashionable part of the Town.

Fig. 12 Advertisement for the Clifton Baths c1828

### 8.13 The Indoor Baths Completed Late in 1827

Boys may well have been looking for a tenant to replace Dixon when, in mid-October, the Times described *'the Bathing Rooms'* at Margate as follows:

*'Great and absurd jealousy has been excited by the innovations and excavations under the eastern cliff. They are entitled "The Clifton Baths", and are really objects to excite curiosity. They reflect the highest credit on the skill, enterprise and perseverance of the spirited projector.*

*We think, indeed we have no doubt, that public patronage will reward this ingenious and even magnificent undertaking.*

*They run thus: - 1st Three rooms for the renter or occupier. 2d A reading room, 40 by 20, with a good organ. 3d The terrace, leading out of the subterraneous passage, in which are alcoves and a spacious walk, capable of holding many hundred persons. 4th Excavated arches several hundred feet in extent, forming the resemblance of the undercroft of a church. 5th Many hot baths: they will be supplied by a self-acting pump, from the sea. 6th A dome, 36 feet high, circumference 126 feet, supported by eight arches. 7th The west 24 entrance to the dome, by a circular flight of steps, for foot passengers. 8th the carriage road, to and from the sands, arched with chalk, in a very curious and substantial manner. 9th An arched passage to the plunge bath, intended to be 120 feet long. 10th on the right of the last passage is another entrance to the plunge bath: the bath itself will hold 10,000 tuns of sea water, to be changed every twelve hours by the action of the tide. 11th The out-works and piers are constructed exactly in the direction which nature and the effect of the sea may be supposed to produce. 12th All of the rocks in front of these works are pared down and smoothed, so as to accommodate the sand. The total quantity of chalk removed and excavated from these works during a period of three years, may be computed at 60,000 cubic yards. 13th From the top of the cliff to the sands, the height is 62 feet: there is a carriage-road for pony-chaises through the whole extent.'*<sup>38</sup>

By this time, various, warm, indoor baths had been completed, as confirmed by the tenth edition of *Margate Delineated*, in 1829, which added the following details to those given in the sixth edition (see above):

*'There is a Plunge Bath 80 feet long by 40 feet wide, for females and children. A Billiard Table, Library, excellent Organ, etc add to its attractions. To the improvements of last year, Marble Warm Salt Water Baths, Baths en Douche and Vapour Baths; immense reservoirs of water raised by machinery; a Bathing Boat with awning, and Machines with horses have been added. Independent of its use as a bath, it is an interesting object, and worthy the inspection of the curious. Upwards of 10,000 persons visited it during last season.'*

<sup>38</sup> Times 14 October 1827; very similar articles featured in the *Standard* and the *Morning Post* for 17 October.

The ‘*bathing boat with awning*,’ here, is especially interesting. This was evidently a kind of floating Bathing Machine, possibly unique.

### 8.14 Lease of the Foreshore, c1828

Owing to the constant action of the sea, the foreshore in front of the Clifton Baths – and in particular the passage for the use of the bathing machines – had to be regularly maintained:

*‘[Ever] since [the completion] ... large quantities of sand, shingle and chalk have been constantly removed for the purposes of keeping the said foreshore in order.’ (KHLC: R/U438/L12).*

This constant chore was not made easier by the incessant theft of sand and chalk from the foreshore in front of the Clifton Baths, and the ensuing traffic and mess that this had entailed had interfered badly with Boys’ building work.

Such vexatious excavations had begun more or less alongside the construction of the Clifton Baths.

To prevent them, Boys appealed, through Sir Robert Peel, to the Marquis of Conyngham, the presumed owner of the foreshore.

In 1824, according to a later letter of John Harvey Boys:

*‘the Directors of the Pier and harbour were carrying out new works and immense quantities of the rock, chalk and sand in front of the [site] were dug and carried away by the town carters for the pier works to the injury of the lands lying along the cliff by the deepening of the sea shore and thereby causing the waves of the sea to fall heavier ... the injury was more particularly to [John Boys] who was then building a new bathing station called the Clifton Baths and on which he expended about £15000. Sir Robert Peel very kindly viewed the property and still more kindly promised to speak to the Marquis in order to put a stop to it.’ (Seary 2007)*

The situation was only resolved around the time of the Clifton Baths’ completion, c1828, when Boys leased the surrounding foreshore from the Marquis of Conyngham for twenty-one years. (It is not clear whether Boys renewed this lease subsequently, once the threat of unauthorised extraction had diminished).

The following notice was then ‘*painted on a large board and affixed to the cliff where it remained for a year [before being] washed down by the sea*’:

*‘Notice – by authority of the Right Honourable the Marquis of Conyngham Lord of the Manor of Minster all persons are hereby forewarned from digging up or disturbing the sands or rocks upon the sea-shore and Waste of the Manor in front or within half a mile of the Clifton Bathing place at Margate and all persons found so trespassing after this notice will be*

*prosecuted as the Law directs – Dated this 9th day of September 1829, John Boys, Solicitor’.*<sup>39</sup> (KHLC: R/U438/L12).

### 8.15 Edward Read, Tenant of Clifton Baths c1828 to 1850

Perhaps as early as 1828, Edward Read became the tenant of the Clifton Baths, and certainly by 1832, when he operated a ‘*vapour shower and general bathing establishment*’<sup>40</sup> there. In a directory of 1849, Edward Read would thank his customers for their support during ‘*the last twenty-six seasons*’.

Clearly, the Clifton Baths had not existed that long, and Read does not seem previously to have operated any of the earlier bathing houses on the High Street. It may be that he had operated a machine or machines directly from the shore.

On 15 October 1844, Edward Read:

*‘assigned all his effects and estate to Daniel Gouger [...] miller, and Thomas Rest Flint, brazier, as trustees for the benefit of all [his] creditors [...] attested by John Harvey Boys.’*<sup>41</sup>

His goods were sold by public auction, but the trustees neglected to pay the poor rates that Read owed, and, in December, he was committed to prison until £6 10s arrears could be paid.<sup>42</sup>

### 8.16 Harriett Read, Tenant 1850 to c1853

Edward Read died 19 April 1850,<sup>43</sup> but his widow, Harriet, remained at the Clifton Baths, at least into 1852.<sup>44</sup>

Widow Read seemed to have had the native chutzpah of Boys himself.

What seems to have happened is that a Mr Pettman – probably Thomas Lewis Pettman, whose son, of the same name, would operate the Clifton Baths toward the end of the C19th – took the lease of the Clifton Baths, and sub-let them to Harriet.

In August 1851, one Mr Jarrett sued Harriet ‘*for £2, for coke sold and delivered [...] to [her] late husband, proprietor of the Clifton Baths:*’

*‘I have seen her since her husband’s death; the business is still in her name and carried out by her as in his lifetime. Pettman ordered some tar, and I*

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<sup>39</sup> KHLC: R/U438/L 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Pigot’s Kent* 1832

<sup>41</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 5 November 1844.

<sup>42</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 24 December 1844.

<sup>43</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 7 May 1850.

<sup>44</sup> *Kelly’s Thanet* 1852.

*sent in the account in his name, and she said it ought to be in her name, as she was the proprietor. She has promised me to pay.'*<sup>45</sup>

Harriet Read then deposed:

*'My husband carried on the baths 25 years. He died about April twelvemonth; he was in possession of the premises up to his death, and I have with assistance conducted them since; no one has had any profits but me. I have never promised to pay. I might have said "as soon as it lays in my power, I'll pay you and everyone else, and that I must take care of those who have taken care of me. Pettman take possession at the time of the deed and re-let them to us.'*

Her defence showed that she had mortgaged her husband's effects to Pettman for £40, and contended *'that as she had proved no will, or administered, she could not be made liable.'*

The judge found in her favour.

Harriet seems to have been ejected from the Clifton Baths in favour of Edward Charles Hayward in 1853, but she soon established a rival bathing place, styled, perhaps provocatively, as: 'Widow Read's New Clifton Baths' – at what is now called Newgate Gap. This may have been as early as 1854.<sup>46</sup>

Before long, she set about improving the beach, seeking to eclipse Hayward's premises. Her poster, advertising her 'New Clifton Baths,' explained:

*'The Widow Read, twenty-eight years tenant of Mr Boys' Clifton Baths, since her expulsion from the same, has removed her bathing establishment to the New Town, two minutes' walk from her old establishment, and trusts to the patronage of a generous public, and her own industry, to maintain herself and [her] children respectably.*

*To testify her gratitude for the liberal and extensive patronage bestowed during last season on her new establishment, and to secure its continuance, Mrs Read has been to great expense during the winter to render her bathing place superior to that of the Old Clifton Baths.*

*The rocks have been extensively and deeply re-cut and a backwater ['breakwater'?] of 100 tons skilfully constructed, whereby the cutting in the rocks at this bathing place is naturally cleansed from the impurities and refuse deposited in other cuttings.*

*Notwithstanding the improvement and expense, the machine bathing is only 6d each a pure water, upon beautiful and firm sand, without the*

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<sup>45</sup> *Maidstone Gazette* 12 August 1851.

<sup>46</sup> In August that year, a gentleman 'was bathing from a machine at the new Clifton Baths, to which he was returning, when he complained of a gargling in his throat; he was got into the machine and medical assistance sent for, but he had expired before it arrived' (*South-Eastern Gazette* 15 August 1854).



*inconvenience of sea-beach. Machines daily in attendance from 5 am to 7 pm. Warm baths 1s 6d each, no extras.'*

By the late 1859, Thomas Lewis Pettman had succeeded Harriett Read at Newgate Gap,<sup>47</sup> but things had evidently gone badly wrong for her. In March the following year, she hanged herself from the bannisters at her house in the High Street.

Her death was not a surprise, as she had been *'for a considerable time suffering from debility, caused by exaggerated nervousness,'* and had recently been given notice of eviction, having struggled to keep up with the rent.<sup>48</sup>

## 9 The Clifton Baths - as Completed and Altered up to 1919

Elegantly and imaginatively, the design of the Clifton Baths was woven into the landscape to create a massive, gothic fantasy, integrating the man-made and the natural.

### 9.1 The Stage Setting of the Cliffs

The first feature of the Clifton Baths one should consider are the high, ragged, chalk cliffs which flanked them, and out of which they were carved.

These cliffs were valued for their wild, picturesque appearance. They were weathered into caverns, stacks and arches, and were deeply corrugated, with an impressive series of sea-caves.

Waves, at high tide, were constantly eroding new hollows and fissures. Every few years, during the early C19th, some great gale was recorded which ravaged Margate's seaside buildings to a greater or lesser extent, whilst the chalk itself was blasted annually by winter frosts.

Cooke (1830) later described the frequent violence of the weather at the Clifton Baths:

*'[So] powerful is the sea from the Northern Ocean, in spring tides and Northerly winds, that it frequently dashes its spray to the top of the cliffs (a height of more than 60 feet').*

Since about the mid-C18th, new kinds of value – aesthetic, scientific and imaginative – had been identified in Margate's chalk cliffs, which presented:

*'fantastical resemblances of grottoes to amuse the pictorial or cursory observer, and an endless train of natural curiosities for those who are fortunate in having leisure and inclination to make more attentive examinations.'*<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 24 December 1859; cf *South-Eastern Gazette* 27 December.

<sup>48</sup> *South-Eastern Gazette* 27 March 1860.

<sup>49</sup> Brewer 1819: 209.

Much of the chalk remaining exposed below the terrace around the Artificial Bay also conveyed wildness and the natural environment.<sup>50</sup>

## 9.2 The Clifton Baths in Harmony with its Surroundings

The Clifton Baths, from the first, made full use of its imposing, cliff setting, and, in doing so, introduced elaborate, architectural fantasy into seaside buildings, such as had by now been seen at other resorts, but which were yet to make much of a mark on Margate.

There was a striking, visual, fantasy element to the Clifton Baths' construction, and Boys' design ensured that the baths made full use of their picturesque cliff setting – as attested by the numerous, early views and engravings.

The cliffs to either side of the Clifton Baths stood to their full, vertiginous height, abruptly overlooking the buildings and stepped terraces.

Also, at first, much of the underlying chalk may have remained exposed amongst the flint and brickwork of the various buildings and ranges, to suggest the harshness of the natural environment.

The Clifton Baths, in their earliest construction, were also decorated to resemble an ancient flint-walled castle, flanked by the rugged chalk cliffs, on a series of terraces overlooking the future Artificial Bay.

In one way, the design was also a practical consideration.

The main ranges of the Clifton Baths' buildings, together with the shore works and breakwaters, followed the oblique alignment of the cliff geomorphology – having been '*constructed exactly in the direction which nature and the effects of the Sea upon the Cliffs [had] pointed out*' (The Times 14 October 1827). Such construction was also calculated to better withstand those forces – still formidable – which had shaped the scenery.

The Bathing Rooms, on the north-west projection of the site, confronted the sea directly, conveying a symbolic appeal to God for protection from the waves: '*DOMINE QUI ÆQUORA PLACAS HOC OPUS TUERE,*' loosely translated as '*O Lord, who calms the seas, look after this work.*'

The main sea-defences, far below, had the appearance of castle bastions, whilst the gaping mouth of an underground reservoir resembled a fortified gateway, and the sinuous, battlemented wall, behind the upper terrace, near the top of the cliff, the curtain of an enceinte.

A tall flagstaff, and a chimney shaped like an Egyptian obelisk, completed the picture.

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<sup>50</sup> In the interests of safety and the security of the Clifton Baths against the sea, however, the cliffs would, be tamed, piecemeal, and, in places faced with flint or brick, during the course of the C19th.

As observed earlier, this design may have been influenced by Lord Holland's extraordinary collection of follies nearby at Kingsgate, near the North Foreland. These included various castellated, faux-historical structures – some of them emblazoned with Latin inscriptions – and an obelisk. These were often the resort of Margate visitors on their afternoon drives.

The interior of the Clifton Baths continued the image of a fantasy world but, by contrast to the wild exterior, evoked a cosy, if Bacchanalian, theme, particularly in the Bathing Rooms, toward the top of the cliff. These housed hot, sea water baths, showers and vapour baths for exclusive sea bathing for wealthy patrons.

What came across most of all was the grandeur and sheer size of the Clifton Baths.

A remarkable network of subterranean tunnels linked the various terraces and buildings and centred on a huge chamber that served as a store for the bathing machines.

While they shared features of existing bathing rooms, such as having a waiting room, gallery, various indoor baths, chimneys and bathing machines, the Clifton Baths were on a much grander scale and much more elaborate, dwarfing all of Margate's other bathing establishments put together.

They were also much more massively built, or, rather, excavated, into the chalk cliff to the east of the town, and were provided with their own extensive sea defences.

### **9.3 The Earliest Views of the Clifton Baths**

Before discussing the various elements of the Clifton Baths in detail, we will reproduce and briefly discuss some of the earliest views and maps of the Clifton Baths.

These (below) are the earliest available engravings, and the earliest, firmly-dated views, we have been able to obtain of the Clifton Baths.



Fig. 13 The earliest known engraving of: 'The New Baths, Margate, Kent', drawn by George Shepherd; engraved by McClatchie; Published by George Virtue, 1829: The scene is at high tide.



Fig. 14 Sears' engraving after a drawing by William Bartlett, c1830 (MLHM)

A more romantic view with rugged scenery and a stormy sea; the tide is a little way out. A bathing machine is shown in the Artificial Bay. This is not quite as accurate a description as the last, but gives a better impression of the sea defences. The Upper Terrace is mis-drawn. It, wrongly, shows the Upper Terrace at the level of the Bathing Rooms.

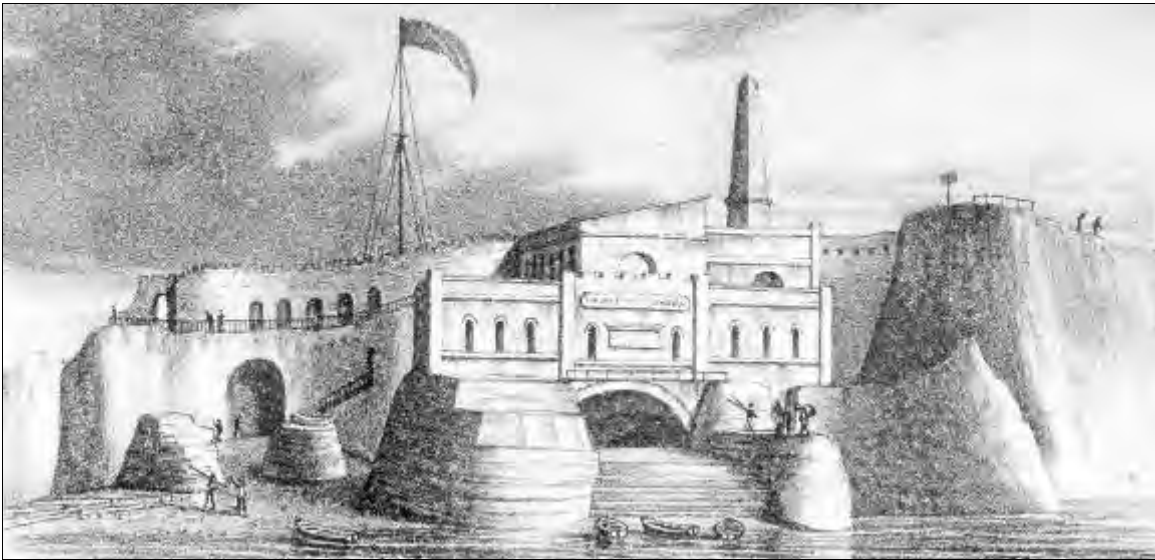


Fig. 15 Hullmandel and Walton's lithograph of the Clifton Baths c1845

(This was probably printed in the mid-C19th, but looks to have been based on an earlier view since it does not show the Bather's Terrace.)



Fig. 16 Engraving of 1832 by J. Shury

This is quite naïve and diagrammatic but shows off the various features of the site more distinctly. Note that the Bathers' Terrace has now been added, halfway up the cliff-face.

## 9.4 An Outstanding Engineering Achievement

Apart from the breath-taking and imposing visual effect of the Clifton Baths, they were remarkable for the extent to which John Boys altered the landscape – engineered it – to accommodate his extraordinary designs.

Earlier bathing rooms had taken the existing topography – whether urban or rural – largely as a given. The topography of the Clifton Baths' site, by contrast, would be transformed almost beyond recognition:

*'In some places the cliff [was] removed altogether and buildings put upon its site, so that what would afterwards look like the foreshore really was the site of that projecting rock.'*<sup>51</sup>

In addition, Boys tidied up the adjoining cliffs - although not so much as to spoil their picturesque charm.

The chalk that was left behind was used to define an Artificial Bay, down which the bathing machines could pass on their way out to sea, and a series of terraces on which to raise the main buildings of the Clifton Baths.

## 9.5 The Artificial Bay

Before the mouth of the tunnel where the bathing machines emerged from the Clifton Baths subterranea onto the shore, Boys seems to have reduced the cliffs greatly, forming the basis of what would later be called an Artificial Bay.

The Artificial Bay was an inclined ramp that led from the mouth of the Bathing Machine Tunnel to the sand-filled cutting into the Fulsam Rock.

This bay was, at first, rather less well defined than it would be by the time of the next available map. It also seems to have been interrupted by a narrow spur of chalk, where a flight of steps for bathers descended from a tunnel mouth high in the cliff.

The passage to the north-east of this spur, in front of the Bathing Machine Tunnel, was pared down to an inclined plane of bare chalk for the bathing machines to run on.

## 9.6 The 'Roadway' across the Fulsam Rock

Boys also set to work on the Fulsam Rock itself, which had presented such an obstacle to bathing machines in the past. He wanted to score a channel through the rocks in which, he hoped, sand would accumulate, thus providing *'a roadway along the said shore by which bathing machines could be drawn backwards and forwards'* (KHLC: R/U438/L12).

A contemporary account records this achievement:

*'All the Rocks in front of these Works were in [1824?] ragged and covered with weed close up to the Cliff; they have been pared down and smoothed to accumulate the beautified Sands which are now formed under the Cliff (mid-to-late C19th advert, see below.*

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<sup>51</sup> EKA: R/U438/L12.

*[Boys] broke up the rocks and levelled the shore between low-water mark and the cliffs so as to allow a smooth surface of sand to be deposited and make the shore available for the purpose of bathing (KHLC: R/U438/L12).*

*[What] he did was to clear away a good deal of the rock, prepare the ground for the reception of sand inasmuch as bathing was impossible on the rocks ... in front of the Clifton Baths (ibid.).*

*[There was] a passage cut through [the Fulsam Rock] ... I think he made it 60 feet wide. I think it has been somewhat widened since that time but that was a hollow where the rocks were cleared away and a sandy foundation left for the convenience of persons who were bathing there, and a considerable number of bathing machines [would] at that point supply accommodation for bathers. When the tide goes out it goes out beyond those rocks (ibid.).'*

The course of this excavation is evident in Ordnance Survey maps. It presents as a wide, rectilinear interruption in the shelf where the sand and the sea meet without any intervening chalk.

## 9.7 The Sea-Defences

To either side of the Artificial Bay, and in front of the projected north-west range, parts of the chalk were retained near the level of the shore, and were clad with brickwork, and some ashlar, to form sea-defences.

On the east side of the Artificial Bay, Boys left a long baulk of chalk, forming a kind of pier:

*'At the commencement of the work, the cliff was cut down to within about six feet of the level of the sea-shore; and the part so left (being a hard rock-chalk) was cased with brickwork laid in Roman cement, so as to form a sort of pier about eighty feet long, for the double purpose of forming an accumulation of sand, and also for a breakwater for the sea to pass over and spend itself, instead of dashing against the cliff and recoiling.'* (Cooke S. D. [c1840]).

Other projections were left on the other side of the bay, below the castellated frontage of the Bathing Rooms.

The image of castle bastions, mentioned above, was reinforced architecturally by a sizeable, keel-shaped bulwark under the north wing of the Bathing Rooms, providing it with a battered skirt of massive, rusticated masonry.

Another mass of chalk, somewhat lower, was left in front of the north wing, at the foot of the cliff adjoining the Clifton Baths.

Between the two, and in front of the latter, was left a broad, sloping apron spanning the mouth of the Lower Reservoir.



Much of this fabric probably survives below the floor of the former Jolly Tar Tavern on Promenade Level.

It is remarkable how closely the footprint of this room, and the supervening storeys of this part of the building, follow the lines of the former sea-defences. They were probably built straight on top of them, with little reduction of levels.

These '*out-works and Piers*' it was later claimed, were '*constructed exactly in the direction which nature and the effects of the Sea upon the Cliffs for many years past [had] pointed out*' (from a mid-to-late C19th advert).

Later, in the first half of the C19th, John Boys added a pair of narrower, brick breakwaters to the piers on either side of the Artificial Bay.

## 9.8 The Upper Ranges and Structures

Many original features are shown on the first accurate map of the site, the Margate Sanitation Survey of 1852 (see Figs. 19.1 and 19).

The author's drawing (below, in Fig. 17) shows the component parts of the original Clifton Baths' layout at ground level.

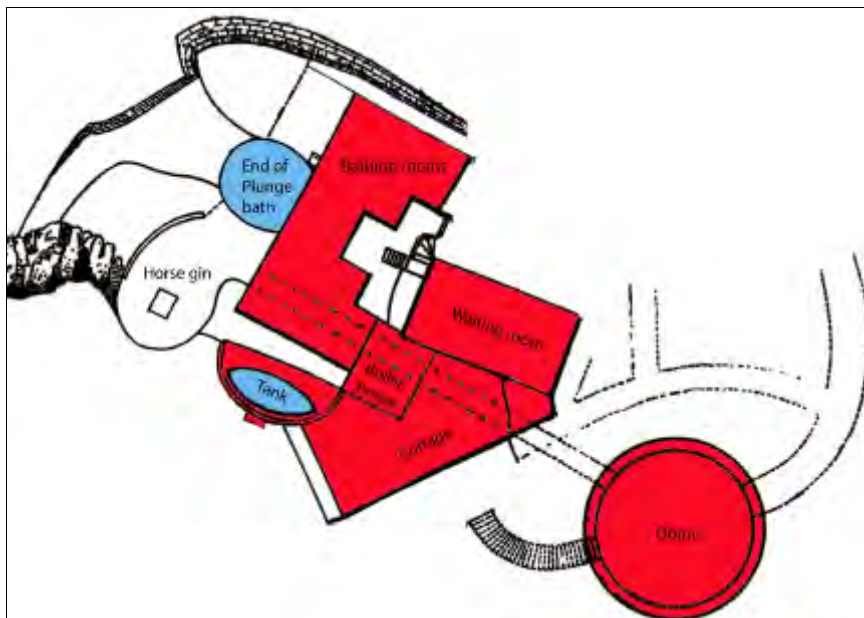


Fig. 17 Author's Site Diagram

The Artificial Bay, which would have been at the top right of the drawing, had been altered by this time, so we have omitted it to avoid confusion.

The upper terrace around the top of the Artificial Bay had been removed by 1852, and so is not shown. It can only be seen on early engravings.



We have omitted some other walls and structures because we are not sure to what extent they were original. We also have little clue as to the internal arrangements within most of these ranges.

## 9.9 Construction of the Boundary Wall and Entrance(s)

Within the Clifton Baths' roughly trapezoidal boundary, the ground had been reduced by about five metres below Ethelbert Terrace, and much of this reduction seems to have taken place during their initial construction.

Probably, there was originally a grassy slope down from the boundary walls - fairly steep on the south and south-west side and shallower (perhaps approximating the present entrance ramp) to the south-east.

The main, public entrance to the Clifton Baths, both for pedestrians and those arriving in sedans or carriages, seems to have been opposite the east end of Cliff Terrace, through a gate at the southern angle of the site boundary wall.

This led down into a gently recurved, descending passage, running northward. This passage was presumably fairly steep, since it seems, within about forty feet, to have entered into the Clifton Baths subterranea, and to have passed 'underground'.

The descending, entrance passage continued downwards through an opening in the opposite wall, into a maze of subterranea, leading to the terraces and beach.

Another adit, in the south-west side of the courtyard, led down a curving flight of steps to the subterranean Bathing Machine Store.

At this point, it met the southern corner of what we will term the Porter's Lodge (see 9.10, below).

Then, this entrance passage turned to the north-east, along the south-east side of that building, before opening, via a second gate, into a small, sunken courtyard, in plan like five sides (plus the chord) of a regular octagon, shaped like the canted bay of a toll-house.

It was presumably here that payment or subscription was collected for entry to the complex, and the long side of this yard was placed roughly half-way down the south-east frontage of the Porter's Lodge, wherein there probably opened an external door, and a window or windows (for lighting and to monitor arrivals).

## 9.10 The 'Porter's Lodge'

This, we are told, contained three rooms, probably all on a single floor. These comprised '*one bed room, a sitting room, and a kitchen*' (*Kentish Gazette* 29 May 1827), presumably for the use of the tenant or 'toll gatherer' (Cooke 1830).

The Porter's Lodge (marked in Fig. 17, above, as 'Cottage') was built on an irregular plan, around two sides of what seems to have been a boiler house, and at an angle to the adjoining buildings. It will have stood at about the level of the present car park.

A mid-C19th engraving seems to show a row of six windows – perhaps small, round-headed windows, as elsewhere, equally spaced in its long, south-east, elevation. This elevation may have been raised in flint and brick, like the other main elevations of the Clifton Baths' buildings.

No trace of this lodge, nor any intelligible view of it, is known to survive, and next to nothing can be said of its appearance, except that, standing at the entrance to the site, it was probably quite smart (perhaps symmetrical) on this south-east side.

At a guess the elevation may have been raised in flint and brick, like the other main elevations on the complex.

The other faces of the sunken, entrance courtyard were disposed like five sides of an octagon, with a door or archway in each.

Another doorway, in the south-west wall of the courtyard, led down a curving flight of steps (the Staircase Tunnel), to the subterranean Bathing Machine Store.

A door in the south wall of the courtyard opened into a small washhouse, presumably pertaining to the lodge. This washhouse was a rectangular building, aligned north-south onto the courtyard. Its west wall, (nearest the subterranean stretch of the entrance passage), seems to have been a revetment wall, retaining the higher ground on the roadside.

A door in the east wall of the courtyard led to another outbuilding, smaller still (a kiosk? – it does not seem to have been a privy).

These arrangements have also long been swept away – excepting the curving stair passage, which survives, in a mutilated condition, below ground.

## 9.11 The Waiting Room

The symmetrical, main frontage of the Waiting Room faced north onto the upper terrace and out to the sea.

It had four windows; two on each side of a central doorway. The windows and doorway seem, originally, to have been round-headed, in keeping with the castellated theme, but would be replaced with sash-windows at some point in the late C19th.

A sizeable arch – probably blind – featured in the west side-elevation, and there may have been something similar on the east. The roof originally sloped shallowly, on a single pitch, toward the east.

From the outset, this room went under a great many different names, reflecting its different functions, which were essentially those which had long been provided in the 'saloons' of the earlier bathing rooms on the High Street.

Besides being described as a 'Waiting and Lounging Room', it was a 'Reading and Subscription Room' (mid-to-late C19th advert) and was probably also the 'Great Saloon' of 1827. It was later described, or part of it was described, as a 'News Room' (Wilson 1870-72).

This room was probably, at least at first, used as a single, large, undivided room. It also probably communicated directly with the Porter's Lodge (see above, Fig. 17) to the south. It was '*fitted up with ten benches, two dozen chairs, and a good organ*' (*Kentish Gazette* 29 May 1827). The organ was probably always intended for the use of the patrons – at least as much as for professional entertainers – although we have only found firm evidence for this from the middle of the century.

By 1829, the Waiting Room had also been provided with a 'billiard table' (Anon 1829), and, as a reading room, it naturally contained a small library of books, and was supplied with newspapers.

## 9.12 The Upper Reservoir and the Horse Pump

The Upper Reservoir is among the most difficult components of the original Clifton Baths to reconstruct.

Its depiction, in both early engravings and maps, is inscrutable, and early, written descriptions are vague. Documentary evidence is scarce, and, so far, we have found little or no direct physical evidence of it. We can probably deduce that the Upper Reservoir was probably the structure marked as 'tank' on the Sanitation Survey of 1852 (see Figs. 19.1 and 19.2), unless this was a rainwater tank.

The Upper Reservoir appears to have been protected, on the land side, by a tall, curved flint wall, pierced by a row of oculi along the top, and was fed with water by the Horse Pump. Horse pumps had long been in use at the Margate bathing rooms. Even the General Sea Bathing Infirmary at Westbrook had been provided with such a pump in 1807 (Searly 2006).

The Horse Pump at the Clifton Baths was operated at each high tide when it forced fresh sea water up to a second, arched reservoir cut into the solid cliff further up (i.e. from the 'Lower Reservoir' or 'Great Reservoir' to the 'Upper Reservoir').

From here, the sea water would descend, gravitationally, by means of self-acting valves, to top up, as necessary, a boiler which supplied the hot baths in the Bathing Rooms.

The motive power of the Horse Pump was provided by a horse-gin. This turned, in the open air, in a loop-shaped concavity in the foot of the cliffs, west of the main baths' buildings. A high, flint wall retained the cliffs here, which surrounded the gin to the south, east and west sides, with decorative loopholes at the cliff-top. The flint was divided into flush panels by horizontal and vertical bands of brickwork.

By the means of the Horse Pump, the Upper Reservoir was replenished every tide, and so kept itself full and fresh, supporting the notions of health and well-being associated with the Clifton Baths at that time.

The popularity of the Clifton Baths was indicated by the fact that the Upper Reservoir was ‘*of such large dimensions as to be capable of holding more than all the other Sea-water tanks in Margate, together*’ (Cooke 1830). The associated boiler had a capacity of 1,200 gallons. Fabric relating to the foundations of the Upper Reservoir may, perhaps, survive immediately behind the south wall of the Cliff Café, nearest the present Dressing Rooms.

The line of this wall agrees suspiciously well with the north-east wall of the ‘tank’, as shown on the survey map of 1852 (Figs. 19.1 and 19.2)

On the other hand, the reservoir fabric may have begun rather higher up, and since been removed, so there may just be solid chalk behind the said wall, at this level.

The base of the reservoir must also have fallen at least a metre above the present café floor (probably higher) since solid chalk can be seen below this level.

All in all, however, there seems a reasonable chance that any redevelopment of the site would bring to light evidence for the arrangement of these features, which could usefully be compared against the various depictions and descriptions.

### 9.13 The Boiler House and Obelisk Chimney

The Boiler Room may well have been the square feature immediately to the east of the Upper Reservoir – shown as undercutting the Porter’s Lodge – which meets the ‘tank’ corner to corner, and which apparently abuts the south wing of the Bathing Rooms (see Figs. 19.1 and 19.2).

Such an arrangement would make sense in terms of the supply of water to the hot baths. Incongruous and striking, the chimney serving the boiler at the Clifton Baths was raised in the form of an obelisk resting on a tall, classical plinth.

A fashion had arisen for Egyptian motifs since Napoleon’s expedition at the end of the C18th. A more immediate precedent for John Boys’ chimney had, however, been provided by the plain, granite obelisk, erected beside the harbour at Ramsgate to commemorate George IV’s embarkation for, and return from, Hanover, late in 1821. The chimney is marked as such on the 1872 *Ordnance Survey* (see p. 103).

Contrary to some reports, neither this chimney, nor the second, similar structure that had joined it by around the middle of the C19th, survives today. The present Lido Obelisk is indeed a chimney, but dates from the latter half of the C19th. The two, earlier obelisk-chimneys were probably removed towards the end of the C19th. Almost certainly no trace of them survives *in situ*.

### 9.14 The Upper Terrace

On the eve of its construction, the terrace, which we will term the ‘Upper Terrace’, to distinguish it from the slightly later ‘Bathers’ Terrace’, was about two hundred feet long (Cooke 1830), and seems to have been sited about fifteen feet below the original cliff-top.

It curved gracefully around the south side of the Artificial Bay – on approximately the same line as the present car park (i.e. the Cliff Café frontage) – and railings protected it.

The chalk of the cliff below the terrace seems, at first, to have been exposed to the elements. Access to the Upper Terrace was by a side passage off a now-severed stretch of the Entrance Tunnel. (The Upper Terrace is best depicted in Fig. 16).

The back wall of the Upper Terrace was crenellated, and followed an attractive, recurved course from the north-east corner of the Waiting Room. It was pierced by round-headed alcoves, containing '*seats and benches for the subscribers*' (Cooke 1830).

These were provided '*for those who prefer reading the Newspapers in the open air, or enjoying the Sea Breezes*' (*op. cit.*) to actually bathing.

By this time, of course, an increasing number of people held that the effects of sea air were at least as beneficial as those of sea water.

As the 30th June, 1836 'Pinnock's Guide to Knowledge' observes:

*'The Clifton Baths is cut in the chalk cliff; and rooms, and a terrace are thus formed, which are delightfully shaded from the fierce rays of the sun, while at the same time, they are thoroughly visited by the salubrious breeze from the sea.'*

## 9.15 The Bathing Rooms

From the outside, the tripartite, west elevation of the Bathing Rooms formed the Clifton Baths' defining view.

Two, imposing, flint-walled wings, each with three round-headed windows, flanked a crenellated, central block straddling the mouth of the Lower Reservoir.

The Bathing Rooms' elevations were articulated by odd, thin, brick, pilaster buttresses (which continued up above the parapet, somewhat like pinnacles) and by thin platbands and dogtooth stringcourses. On the central block were placed two, stone panels bearing carved inscriptions.

The long, thin, upper tablet sat between two courses of dogtooth brickwork. It bore the inscription: 'DOMINE QUI ÆQUORA PLACAS HOC OPUS TUERE.'

The larger panel seems to have borne a three-line inscription in English, of which the first line would appear to have been 'Clifton Baths' and the second, 'Warm Baths.' We have not yet been able to decipher the third line – perhaps listing another of the Clifton Baths' attractions. We do not yet know what was carved on the larger panel (Shury's engraving, see Fig. 16), suggests it bore several lines of text), except that it made no direct mention of John Boys:

*'Mr Boys, a solicitor of Margate ... with very commendable humility, has not suffered his name to appear upon the tablets, which are placed upon these expensive and elaborate works.'* (Bonner 1831).

A pair of round-headed niches flanked this panel.

The six, small, round-headed, casement windows were each divided into two lancet-shaped lights, by thin, timber Y-tracery. These were fairly typical of Regency Gothick except, perhaps, for their round heads.

Similar, brick buttresses, in two compartments, divided the north elevation of the Bathing Rooms, each containing two, round-headed windows.

Entrance to the room was at the rear (east), down a flight of steps from the Upper Terrace (see 9.14). Its original, interior arrangements are, as yet, unclear, although they included the usual collection of different forms of private bath.

MLHM hold a photocopy of an advertisement, probably dating from fairly early in Hayward's tenancy of the Clifton Baths, which observes:

*'On the West-side of this Terrace you descend by a flight of steps to the Bathing Rooms, where there are 7 Hot Baths, Shower Baths and Hip Baths, they are supplied in such manner to render it impossible that any trick can be played in using impure water; which must happen in other places where the reservoirs and Tanks are too small. These Baths are all fitted up in the best manner, and ready at two minutes' notice. The North Wing of this Building is appropriated to Gentlemen, and the South Wing to the Ladies. The Frontage of this Pile of Building exceeds 100 feet'.*

We cannot, perhaps, be sure that there were seven baths provided, although one early source claimed there were *'many hot baths'* (Times 14 October 1827).

The baths themselves may have been installed fairly late in the sequence of construction (Anon 1829), but seem to have included hot water, showers and vapour baths from the outset. They were also of marble construction, which seems to have been *de rigueur* among the Margate bathing rooms by this time.

An unreferenced research note at MLHM also claims that at first *'the Clifton Baths were in flint cubicles, and 'showers' were given with a bucket of water'*.

This statement concerning the showers is probably an over-simplification – doubtless the showers would have been filled up by the bucketful, as was quite usual.

The baths would necessarily have been in something like cubicles, but the idea that these should have been lined with flint is harder to credit. It would have been remarkably single-minded of Boys to expect bathers to accept such Gothick arrangements inside the Bathing Rooms.

Bonner (1831) noted the existence of *'large and convenient dressing rooms.'* There seem, from an advert of 1869, to have been two of these (Times 14 and 16 August 1867).

## 9.16 The Subterranea

The Clifton Baths subterranea provided safe storage for the bathing machines and communication between all levels of the site.

They were also expected to excite a Gothic frisson among the visitors, however incongruous that might seem in combination with bathing machines and other seaside traffic. This is clear from the language used to describe them. Early commentators, perhaps reflecting John Boys' own sales-pitch, described the passages as '*beautiful Gothic arches*', '*forming the resemblance of the undercroft of a church*' (Times 14 October 1827).

(Calling these round-arched tunnels 'Gothic', in 1827, was not as much an error as it would be today, as the Romanesque style had yet to be commonly distinguished from the 'pointed' styles of medieval architecture).

If it seems odd that staff and patrons were not better segregated in their underground activities, which must surely have conflicted at times. This reflects the fact that these tunnels and chambers were themselves a major part of the Clifton Baths' attraction.

Indeed, one's subscription entitled one to '*free passage at all times through the subterraneous works*' (Isle of Thanet Directory 1849).

For the most part, the tunnels have neat, chalk-block walls and round or segmental, brick vaults. The broader tunnels tend to have rounder vaults, and the broadest have vaults of chalk-block.

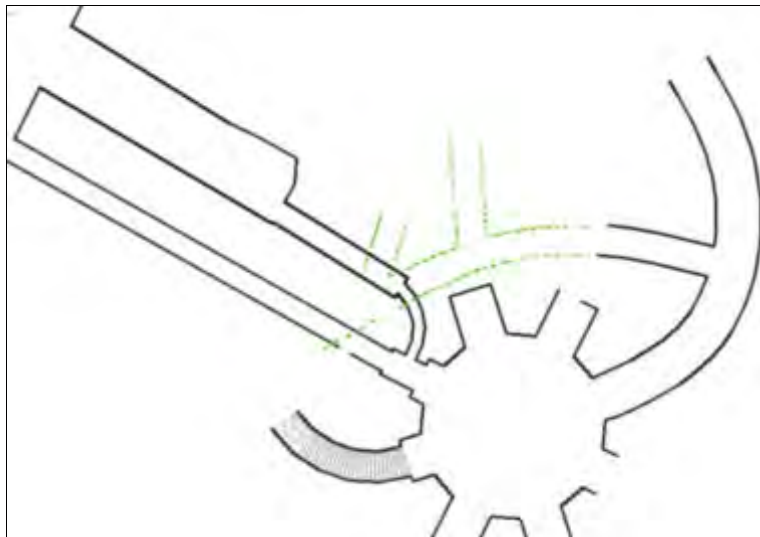


Fig. 18 Author's impression of location of the subterranea

## 9.17 The Entrance Tunnel

The entrance tunnel provided vehicular access into the Clifton Baths subterranea.

The accessible, eastern stretch, opening onto the Bathing Machine Tunnel, is typical of the smaller passages at the Clifton Baths, having walls of chalk-block and a segmental (almost round) vault of red brick.

Two side-tunnels seem to have opened off of its north-east side.

The first, at the north-east corner of the Porter's Lodge, skirted the east side of the Reading Room, and emerged, into the air, on the Upper Terrace. The second led, via what we will call the Bathers' Tunnel, to an aperture in the chalk just below the said terrace.

A little way beyond this, the Entrance Tunnel began to curve gently to the east, ending in a T-junction with the Bathing Machine Tunnel, which, in turn, led north, to the beach, and south-west, to the Bathing Machine Store.

The disposition of this Entrance Tunnel can be readily understood, since, by turning left at this junction one could pass directly to the sands, by-passing the crowded Bathing Machine Store.

In fact, by means of this Entrance Tunnel, and its subsidiaries, one could reach pretty much any part of the complex.

The Entrance Tunnel was intended for the use of both staff and patrons of the Clifton Baths, and was large enough for horses and small vehicles, such as 'pony-chaises' (Times 14 October 1827).

This is clear from Cooke (1830), who explained that this 'archway' had been '*cut from the top of the cliff, so as to enable the machine horses and small carriages to pass up and down from the sea-shore.*'

Similarly, an advert of 1850 (cited in MLHM research notes) announced that for '*the convenience of those customers who disliked fresh air there was a covered arched passage for sedan chairs so that people could move from their lodging houses to the Clifton Baths.*'

Only the curving, lower portion of the Entrance Tunnel is presently available, the rest having been cut off by C20th alterations. (Other portions of it may, however, survive below ground, and might well be brought to light during any redevelopment of the site.)

## 9.18 The Staircase Tunnel

The Staircase Tunnel led directly down from the yard by the Porter's Lodge into the Bathing Machine Store.

It contained '*a handsome flight of thirty-four steps for foot passengers*' (Cooke 1830) that wound anticlockwise through an arc of about forty-five degrees, and had neat, chalk-block walls and a segmental, brick vault.

The top of the staircase has since been truncated and blocked at Car Park Level, and the uppermost treads have been removed, revealing their underlying brickwork.



## 9.19 The Bathing Machine Store

The Bathing Machine Store:

*'was originally made as a refuge for the bathing machines, which were to be kept there when not wanted and to be conveyed down to the shore through that tunnel.'*<sup>52</sup> (KHLC: R/U438/L12).

It formed the hub and centrepiece of the Clifton Baths subterranea.

The store was a cylindrical chamber, cased with brickwork, twenty-one feet in radius and between thirty-three and thirty-six feet high (presumably to the crown of the vault). Its floor, we are told, was about ten feet above high-water mark.

This chamber provided standing room for bathing machines, and kept them safe from the high tide. Initially, Boys predicted it could hold *'at least ten machines'* (*Kentish Gazette* 29 May 1827), but it was later estimated it could accommodate twenty or even thirty machines, with their adjacent alcoves.

The domical roof of this chamber rose some way above present car park or Sun Terrace level.

The early C19th ground level, here, may have been nearer that of Ethelbert Terrace, to the south. Alternatively, the chamber may have protruded above ground level from the outset, fostering the illusion that the excavation was deeper than was actually the case.

The brickwork of the chamber seems to have been rather uneven. An advert of c1880 reassuringly explains that this is merely because the vault had been *'constructed simply by the use of a Trammel, and without the aid of centres, which will account for some of the unevenness in the circles of the brick-work'*. The term 'trammel', here, is slightly problematic. Our guess is that – since the process is described as 'simple' – the word is here used in its most generalised sense of a 'hindrance' or 'restriction', and is simply intended to mean that the bricks were positioned by means of a rope or chain. This, presumably, was fixed to a post standing under the crown of the vault, whose free end, pulled taut, would be restricted to the projected, hemispherical soffit of the vault.

In the absence of centres, the domical brickwork was presumably raised course-by-course – bearing its own weight at all times.

This precarious process brings us back to the question of what, originally, lay over the top of this vault. Was it originally free standing above ground level? Was the cylindrical excavation continued up to the surface, and then back-filled after the work had been completed?

It is possible, indeed likely, that the chamber had some kind of oculus in the top, to allow in some natural light. There is, perhaps, a suggestion of some such feature in late C19th and early C20th pictures, but these may, of course, record a later alteration.

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<sup>52</sup> KHLC: R/U438/L12.

Eight, large, round-headed arches opened off the drum, equally spaced around its circumference. They opened under rough, brick arches in which whole bricks alternated with pairs of half-bricks.

A thin, brick, stringcourse, around the chamber, marked the springing of the arches, returning under each brick intrados.

Each such archway led either to a deep alcove cut into the chalk, or into a tunnel of some kind. For the purposes of the present report we can refer to these eight archways by their approximate compass-directions.

The arches, then, to the east, west and north-west each led to tunnels, which we will describe below. The other five may all, originally, have led into rectangular alcoves, cut into the chalk, radiating out from the centre of the room.

Cooke (1830) suggests that these formed part of the storage for bathing machines: *'Through each arch, further excavations are made, so as to be capable of holding from twenty to thirty machines'* (Cooke 1830).

Each of these alcoves has been extensively altered, and their form has diversified considerably, but one can still obtain some impression of their likely, original appearance.

The Northern Alcove is perhaps the least altered, although its ceiling has been reinforced, with shuttered concrete, around an inserted, brick chimney in the vault. Behind the entrance arch, the walls are of bare chalk, roughly hewn, and the original vault was probably also cut out of the bedrock.

The North-Eastern Alcove is similar, but its northern corner has been knocked through into an inserted, C20th, lift-shaft beyond. Its entrance has been partially bricked-up in the construction of a concrete mezzanine to the chamber in the late C20th.

The South-Eastern Alcove has been heavily modified, in recent times, by the insertion of a long, straight, brick-lined, escape staircase to the surface.

The Southern Alcove looks to have been extended outwards, for quite some distance, to the north and east. A low, small, chalk tunnel, half-choked with refuse, opens in its south wall, framed by a brick arch. This leads, turning through forty-five degrees in the middle, onto the South-Western Alcove.

This South-Western Alcove now has its own archway from the chamber blocked by a massive Lancashire Boiler. (The apparent enlargement of the Southern Alcove may relate to its likely use as a coal-store for this boiler). The date and function of this boiler are unknown, but it is likely to be the boiler installed by Thomas Dalby Reeve c1870. Its date or provenance may well be recorded epigraphically. This South-Western Alcove is also much deeper than the others, having probably been extended when the boiler was inserted, and its walls, which converge to form a pointed vault, are impressively craggy and cave-like.

Despite sporadic mutilations over the years, the Bathing Machine Store remains an extremely impressive space, although its impact is somewhat reduced by a large, concrete

mezzanine, of amorphous plan, which has been inserted halfway up. If this could be removed, and the original room reconstructed, one would restore an important and spectacular piece of Margate's history.

(Also, see 16.3.)

## 9.20 The Bathing Machine Tunnel

The eastern archway of the Bathing Machine Store led to a long, curving tunnel (the Bathing Machine Tunnel) of very large dimensions, which led down towards the Artificial Bay.

Referred to as an '*arched machine-way*', it was reckoned at between '100' (mid-to-late C19th advert) and '130' (Cooke 1830) feet in length. It was about '*13 [feet] high, and 10 feet wide*' (*op. cit.*).

The tunnel has chalk, block walls, and (due to its considerable width) a round, chalk-block vault.

It was intended '*for bathing machines to pass up and down as the tides should render necessary*' (*op. cit.*), providing access from the Bathing Machine Store to the foreshore.

Alarming, it sounds as if the sea, at some tides, may have come all the way up the Artificial Bay and into the mouth of this tunnel. So, John Boys undertook, on behalf of his prospective tenant, '*at his own expense to protect [this tunnel] and keep [it] clear of beach or any obstruction*' (*Kentish Gazette* 29 May 1827).

The mouth of the tunnel survives, under render, in the south wall of the C20th French Bar, on promenade level.

(Also, see 16.1.)

## 9.21 The Horse-Pump Tunnel

A long, straight, narrow tunnel led from the Bathing Machine Store's north-western archway, running parallel with the underground Lower Reservoir and emerging at a brick-quoined doorway under the south wing of the Bathing Rooms.

A mid-to-late C19th advert described it as '*an arched Horse-way, 120 feet long to the Horse-pump*' (MLHM).

The tunnel has chalk, block walls and a segmental, brick vault.

This now opens into the former Jolly Tar Tavern, but is still closed by an early C20th timber gate, which has clearly been exposed to the elements.

The construction of the chalk walls has been exposed on the south side, where a hole has been made, leading to a rude, chalk-cut tunnel, now blocked by debris.

During the construction of the Cliftonville Lido, during the 1920s, this Horse-Pump Tunnel was interrupted, toward its south-east, by an inserted timber staircase, leading down from an antechamber adjoining the Cliff Café. This staircase collapsed in 2012.

Apart from this, the tunnel survives in excellent condition.

(Also, see 16.2.)

## 9.22 The Lower Reservoir Tunnel

A narrow, low-vaulted, brick-lined tunnel descends steeply from the north side of the Horse-Pump Tunnel, near its south-east end.

This tunnel pursues a tight quarter-turn, westwards, towards the Lower Reservoir, then broadens abruptly, increases in height and continues as a long, straight tunnel, on a slightly shallower descent, to the south-east corner of the reservoir chamber.

The final descent is, today, by a short flight of steps, at the north-west end of the tunnel, down to a concrete platform overlooking the reservoir. This flight of steps, however, seems to represent an early alteration. It seems likely, judging by the slope of the vault (and by exposed chalk at the base of the tunnel walls), that the tunnel originally maintained its original slope, and entered the reservoir chamber higher up.

Various features in the Reservoir Chamber may, on closer analysis, cast light on this arrangement. The present platform, at the near end of the reservoir, seems, for example, to have been created by 1848, suggesting a likely *terminus ante quem* for the staircase.

Apart from this alteration, the tunnel clearly survives in its original form, and is a very fine feature.

(Also, see 16.11.)

## 9.23 The Lower Reservoir or 'Plunge Bath'

The Lower Reservoir was another extraordinary subterranean feature.

It was built as a reservoir for sea water, to be refilled, or perhaps topped-up, at each high tide.

It was open to the air at its far end, through a huge archway under the Bathing Rooms. The rounded, western end of the reservoir projected slightly, and can be seen on the 1852 plan. It was reckoned to be about 80 feet long by 18 wide, but is slightly wider at its outward (north-western), than at its inward, end. It was '*computed to hold 10,000 tons of Sea-water*' (mid-C19th advert: MLHM).

The reservoir was cut directly into the chalk, and was provided with a very high, semi-circular vault, formed of large, chalk blocks.

The upper parts of the walls were originally left as bare chalk, above the thin, cement lining of the reservoir pool.

The south-west wall has since been revetted, extensively, with brick.

The vault was formed in a series of discrete, semi-circular arches, varying in girth, as the chamber widened towards its mouth. Was this vault formed before the reservoir below had been fully excavated? Judging by diagonal scoring in the chalk, the reservoir walls were originally lined, to a certain height, with cement.

John Boys boasted that the water in the reservoir was changed '*at every tide*' by '*self-acting valves*' (see advertisement quoted at 9.15), whilst a mid-C19th advertisement claimed the water was '*in a constant state of change every tide*' and that '*by this grand desideratum, [was] accomplished one of the most perfect, pure, and private Bathing places in England.*' (MLHM)

It is not yet clear how this would have worked. Was the sea water wholly replaced, or was it merely topped-up?

If the former were the case, then presumably the reservoir must have emptied completely between tides, and this would explain why the Horse-Pump at the Clifton Baths (as at the Isabella Baths in Ramsgate) was only employed at high tide (*Kentish Gazette* 29 May 1827).

Perhaps, on the other hand, some water was retained in the reservoir between tides (justifying its being called a 'reservoir'), and this water was refreshed, rather than being wholly replaced, at high tide. Today, there is always water in the reservoir, but the level rises and falls slightly with the tide.

The 'self-acting valves' and associated features may well survive within the remains of the brick-lined apron at the north-west end of the reservoir. Inspection of such features, during any watching brief, might cast light on this matter.

The reservoir was also intended for use as a 'plunge bath' for women and children, and '*There is a basin excavated for a plunge bath, 80 feet long by 18 wide [...] intended for females and children*' (*Kentish Gazette* 29 May 1827).

This would, perhaps, have eased the problem of segregating men and women in the use of the bathing machines. (Strict local byelaws specified that male and female bathers should be kept a given distance apart.)

It may well, nevertheless, have been something of an afterthought.

The dimensions of the bath would certainly have made for impressive statistics, but it is difficult to see the need for so long a bath when so few of the Clifton Baths' visitors, at this date, would have been able, or inclined, to swim.

The great size of this bath has also led some to assume that it was communal – in which case it would have been a remarkable innovation – but it is by no means clear that this is how it was actually used.

It seems likely that bathing would have taken place from the south-eastern end of the reservoir, but, again, it is not yet clear what the original arrangements were at this end.

Evidence in the Reservoir Tunnel, providing access to this end of the plunge bath, suggests that the present, two-tiered platform may represent an early C19th alteration. It looks as if the tunnel originally entered the Reservoir Chamber rather higher up, perhaps onto some kind of timber platform.

Bathing in this 'plunge bath' may sound a rather dank and unappealing prospect, but perhaps it would not have been so far removed from the ordinary, early C19th, Bathing Machine experience. The chalk vault of the reservoir vaguely resembled the cowl of a gigantic Bathing Machine (and would have kept out the breezes more effectively). Having undressed, one would have been encouraged down the steps for a 'dip'.

The north-wester end of the plunge bath would also have caught the light from the setting sun.

(Also, see 16.13.)

## 9.24 Harriett Read, Tenant 1850 to c1853

Edward Read died 19 April 1850,<sup>53</sup> but his widow, Harriett, remained at the Clifton Baths, at least into 1852.<sup>54</sup>

## 9.25 The 1852 Sanitation Survey

The 1852 Sanitation Survey of Margate provides our first detailed and accurate map of the Clifton Baths (see two views from the survey in Figs. 19.1 and 19.2, below).

As such, it shows features, such as the Bathing Machine Store, the Artificial Bay and the Horse Pump, which cannot be seen properly in the earlier views we have obtained, and which could only be seen, from sea-level, from the direction of Jarvis' landing place.

Some of the features on the Sanitation Survey may have been in existence from the initial construction of the Clifton Baths; others the result of more recent alterations.

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<sup>53</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 7 May 1850.

<sup>54</sup> *Kelly's Thanet* 1852.



Figs. 19.1 and 19.2 Two extracts showing detail of the *Margate Sanitation Survey* of 1852 (MLHM). These provide a fairly clear impression of the original layout of the Clifton Baths, except that the cliff terraces have been altered, with a new staircase down to the Artificial Bay, and narrow, masonry breakwaters have been added to the ends of the two piers.

## 9.26 The Bathers' Terrace, by 1832

Among the first of Boys' additions, c1830, seems to have been the Bathers' Terrace. This adjoined the Bathing Rooms, about halfway down the west side of his Artificial Bay, with a timber staircase leading down to the shore.

The Bathers' Terrace is first depicted, albeit not very accurately, in Shury's engraving of 1832 (see Fig. 16). It seems to have been built up in front of the existing cliff-face, overlooking the Artificial Bay, and a substantial portion survives.

A mid-C19th advertisement<sup>55</sup> for the Clifton Baths tells us:

*'Upon the level with [the Bathing Rooms] is the Bathers' Terrace, with Benches for the accommodation of those who are waiting their turn for Bathing, or for recreation, and there is an arched Passage to this Terrace, in order that individuals may pass from their houses in sedan chairs, to and from the Hot Baths without passing through the open air.'*

The Bathers' Terrace is not mentioned in the earliest descriptions of the Clifton Baths, and is not shown on the engravings of 1829 and c1830. Instead, only chalk cliff can be seen, up to the level of the Upper Terrace.

Protected by a railing, the terrace ran parallel to the cliff-face from behind the north wing of the Bathing Rooms – wherein, presumably, a new doorway was inserted – stopping just short of the mouth of the Bathing Machine Tunnel.

It was retained by a galletted, knapped-flint revetment, which curves tightly, at its eastern end, to meet the existing cliff-face, and it was accessible by a new, second side-passage, about 25 feet long, running north-by-north-west from the Entrance Tunnel.

A staircase leading down into the Artificial Bay was perhaps slightly later, but was in place by 1852.

The terrace may also, perhaps, have helped to protect the vulnerable cliff-face.

A turn-of-the-C20th postcard seems to show some kind of room, with a door and window, built into the Bathers' Terrace revetment, at shore level. The revetment can be found, in good condition, in the south wall of the French Bar and, immediately below this, in that of Café Basque. (Evidence for the original, ground level of the Artificial Bay, in front of the mouth of the Bathing Machine Tunnel, also survives at this lower level.)

## 9.27 The Margate Grotto, before 1835

In 1835, another important subterranean site came to light, not far from Clifton Baths, and, three years later, the 'Margate Grotto' was opened to the public as a tourist attraction. It is tempting to propose the main subterranean components of the Clifton Baths as a likely prototype for the plan of the Margate Grotto.

Might, for example, the circular drum of the Clifton Baths have suggested the Grotto's 'Rotunda', and, likewise, the serpentine passages opening off it, similar structures in the latter?

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<sup>55</sup> Was there a faction, then, who distrusted sea air altogether?



A more likely precedent, however, would perhaps be the mid-C18th 'Hellfire Caves' at West Wycombe, excavated for Francis Dashwood.

### 9.28 Edmund's Map of the Clifton Baths, 1839

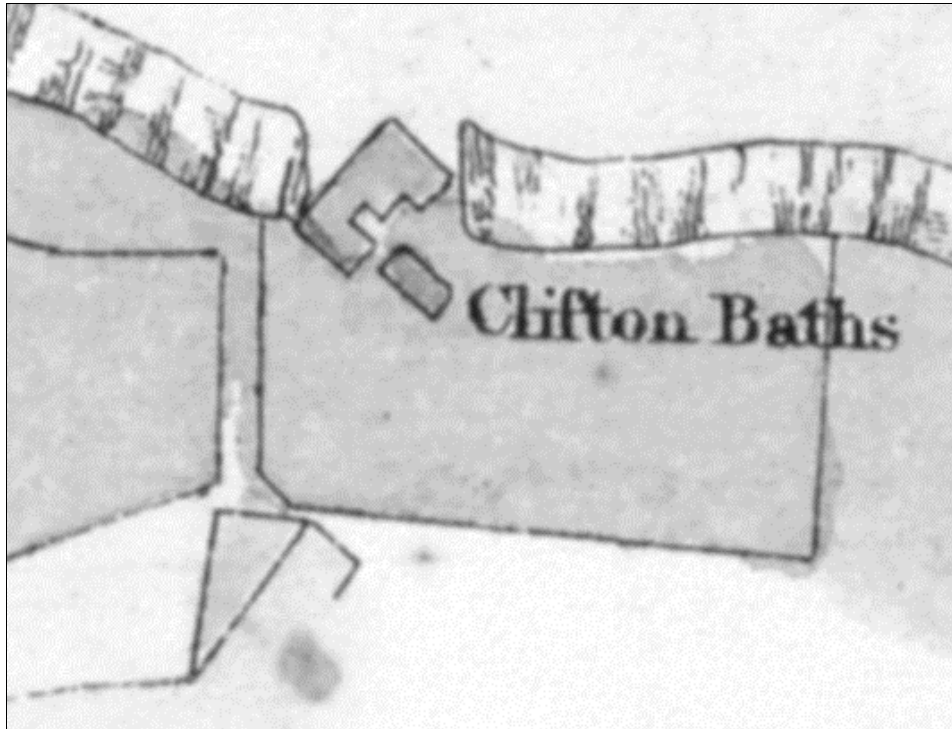


Fig. 20 William Edmunds' *Map of the Harbour Port and Bay of Margate*, 1839

This map makes no attempt to depict the excavations or sea defences, but does record the approximate footprint of the freestanding buildings then existing on the cliff-top. It also omits details of the dwellings

### 9.29 Machine Sheds, Stables and Pasture, South of Cliff Terrace, c1840

Horses were used in drawing the bathing machines and operating the Horse Pump, but there is no sign of any stables having existed on the present site.

Stabling would have been elsewhere – probably on a plot to the south of the site (most likely the plot numbered 572 on Fig.23).

John Boys owned this plot, and the adjoining plot 573, at the time of the Tithe Apportionment in the early 1840s, and we know that there were later: '*large machine sheds and ground [...] stabling, &c*' in the '*rear of Ethelbert Road*' (Times 14 and 16 August 1867).

The whole site of the stables and machine sheds was evaluated in 2007, but neither of the trenches intersected the footprints of these buildings.<sup>56</sup>

### 9.30 The Second Chimney, by 1841

The Clifton Baths' second chimney was built at some time between 1833 and 1845, since the 1845 edition of Bonner states that the Clifton Baths were, by then, '*crowned with two obelisks, which serve the purpose of chimneys.*'

The new chimney is the one on the right-hand side in mid-C19th views, but its function is, as yet, unclear. One possibility is that it may have served as a separate boiler for heating fresh water since it seems to have been placed very close to the 'tank' shown on the 1852 plan (Figs. 19.1 and 19.2).

There is, however, no mention of any new boiler in the mid-C19th descriptions (e.g. the 1867 advertisement for the sale of the Clifton Baths. See 9.41.)

Was the boiler the small, square projection shown on the south side of this structure (see the Sanitation Survey 1852 (see Figs. 19.1 and 19.2)? Perhaps, the 'tank', also marked on the survey was for rainwater. It is hard to be sure.

By 1842, '*two chimneys, to represent pyramids, [crowned] the structure.*'<sup>57</sup>

*'In the Fort there is an extraordinary erection, or perhaps, excavation would be a more apt term, called the Clifton Baths, being built in the solid chalk, rising in a circular form, surmounted with a dome 33 feet high.*

*Two chimneys, to represent pyramids, crown the structure. The buildings consist of a waiting or subscription room, 40 feet long, fronting the sea, opening on to a terrace 100 feet in length, in which alcoves and seats are introduced at convenient distances.*

*Twenty bathing machines stand under the former, 10 feet above high-water mark, whence there is an easy access to the sands by a gentle declivity. There is a plunging bath, 80 feet by 40 [sic], for females and children, and all kinds of medicinal baths, as elsewhere.*

*The plan is altogether well deserving of a visit, and is a singular and indisputable evidence of to have enterprising spirit of its projector and proprietor. Upwards of 12,000 persons have visited the Clifton Baths in a single season.'*<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> {Moody GA 2007 Land to the Rear of 2-20 Ethelbert Road, Margate, Kent (unpublished Trust for Thanet Archaeology client report)}

<sup>57</sup> {Anon 1842 The Visitor's Guide to the Watering Places}.

<sup>58</sup> [{The Visitor's Guide to the Watering Places, 1841: 169}]

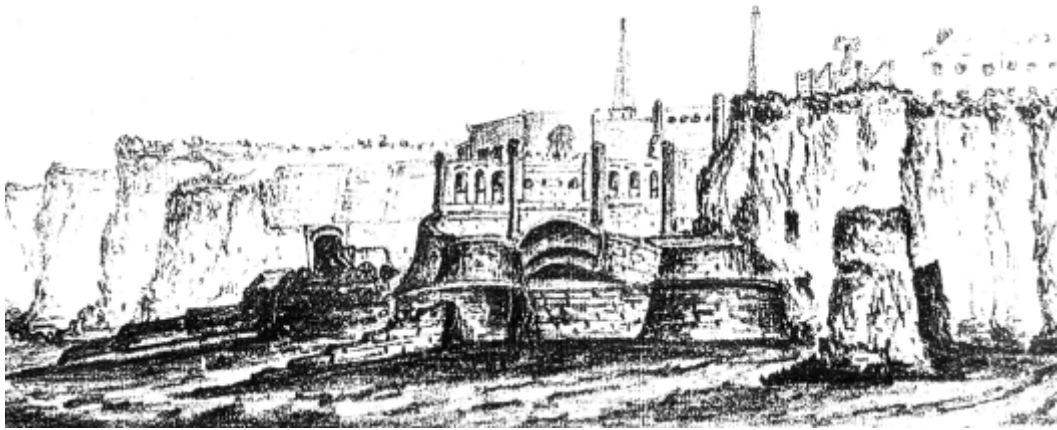


Fig. 21 Mid-C19th sketch of the Clifton Baths (MLHM)

Note that a second chimney has been added. This also shows the new masonry breakwaters. This admirably shows the staged diminution of the vault over the underground reservoir.



Fig. 22 Engraving published by Kershaw & Son., supposedly c1860 (MLHM)

Note the increasing development of Cliftonville in the background.

### 9.31 Tithe Map of 1841

The Tithe Map of 1841 (below, Fig. 23) gives a better indication of the site boundary and topography of the Clifton Baths, but omits the buildings.

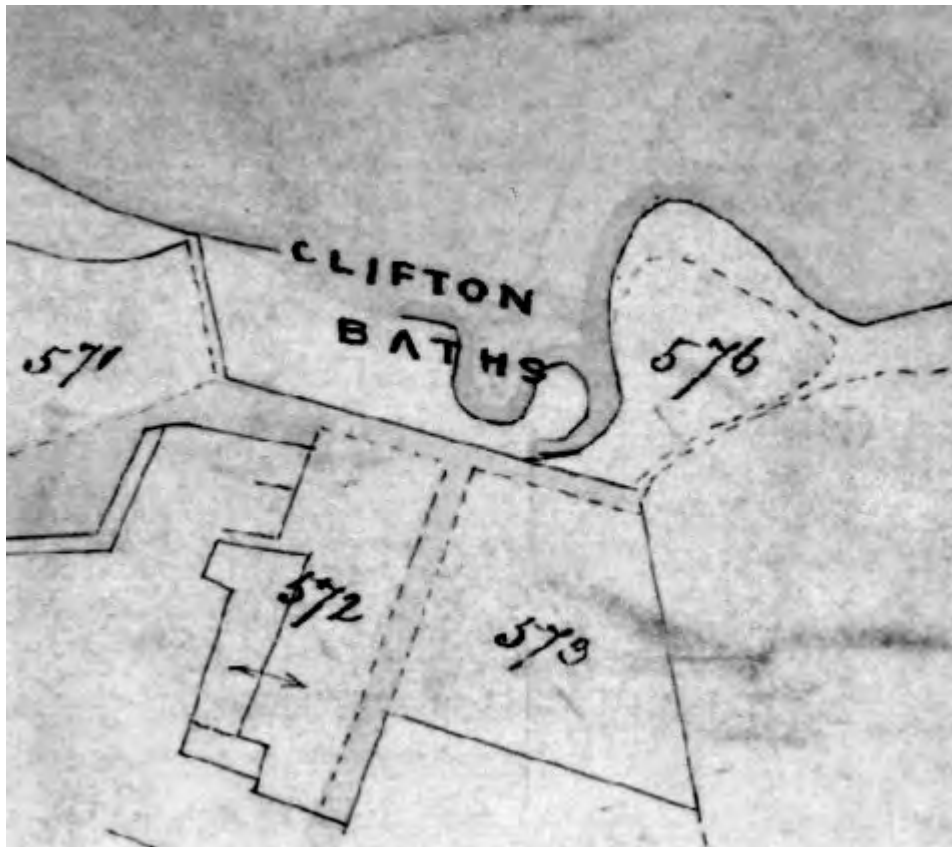


Fig. 23 Detail of the St John's Tithe Map, 1840

An inaccurate depiction of the coastline, but shows John Boys other plots (572 and 579) flanking what would become Ethelbert Road. Note the alteration to the east end of Cliff Terrace, the Artificial Bay and an impressionistic depiction of a second, long, narrow inlet further east, perhaps the lime-burner's excavation.

### 9.32 Bagshaw's Directory, 1849

The Upper Terrace, as we have noted, seems to have disappeared, or rather been assimilated into the general cliff-top, by the middle of the C19th.

This terrace, however, is thought to have been formed well below the cliff-top of 1824. This suggests that the cliff-top as a whole may have been reduced at this time.<sup>59</sup>

In 1849, *Bagshaw's Directory* claimed that *'the quantity of chalk excavated and removed from the works since 1840 [was] computed at about 200,000 cubic yards.'*

Were it not for the disappearance of the Upper Terrace wall, one might have discounted this as an error, since it more-or-less quadruples earlier estimates, and since no further subterranean works are known from this period.

Why might the cliff-top have been reduced so extensively at this time?

It may have been to allow the extension of the Clifton Baths' facilities without spoiling the sea view from Ethelbert Terrace. Certainly, by 1860, or thereabouts, there seems to have

<sup>59</sup> Might this also explain the projection of the Dome above ground level?

been an unobstructed view across what is now the Car Park Level, to the southern boundary of the site.

In 1849, *Bagshaw's Directory* described the Clifton Baths as follows:

*'The Clifton Baths in the Fort present a novel suit of bathing rooms, excavated from the solid chalk rock: they rise in a circular form, and are surmounted by a dome 33 feet in height.*

*A spacious reading room fronts the sea, and communicates with a terrace 100 feet in length, provided with benches for those who prefer sea breezes. The room is supplied with the London and provincial papers, and an excellent organ for the use of subscribers. All the advantages of sea bathing may be enjoyed at these baths in the greatest perfection and the utmost privacy, with marble baths, warm, shower and vapour baths; and machine bathing in the sea.*

*The north wing of the building is appropriated to gentlemen, and the south wing to the ladies. From the top of the cliff to the sands is about 66 feet, and the quantity of chalk excavated and removed from the works since 1840 [sic] is computed at about 200,000 cubic yards.*

*They are conducted by Mr Read, and form an object worthy of inspection by the curious.*


*The other bathing establishments are situated at the foot of High-street forming a range of handsome apartments on the ground floor, with back communications to the sea, and delightful views of the pier and harbour. These are provided with reading rooms, and have every accommodation for warm, cold, shower, and vapour bathing, with machines for sea bathing.'*

The 'subterranean sea works' (noted in the advertisement, below) were still a headline attraction, and a subscription to the Clifton Baths included 'free passage at all times' (see 8.12) through them.

This advertisement also mentions a 'floating bath,' which may have been the 'Bathing Boat with awning', referred to in the 1829 edition of *Margate Delineated*.

The plunge bath is not mentioned, and the Lower Reservoir may well no longer have been used as such.

**WARM AND COLD SEA BATHING,**  
AT THE



**CLIFTON BATHS,**  
READING ROOMS, TERRACE,  
Subterraneous Sea Works, and Floating Bath,  
FORT CRESCENT, MARGATE.

~~~~~  
**E. READ**

Begs respectfully to return his sincere thanks to the Nobility and Gentry of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and the Isle of Thanet, for the liberal support he has experienced for the last Twenty-six seasons, and hopes, by assiduity and attention, to merit a continuance.

**TERMS OF BATHING:**

|                   | <i>s.</i>                   | <i>d.</i> |                   | <i>s.</i> | <i>d.</i> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Warm Bath .....   | 2                           | 0         | Warm Shower ..... | 1         | 6         |
| Vapour Bath ..... | 4                           | 0         | Cold Shower ..... | 1         | 0         |
| Adults .....      | 2s. 6d. each, or 10 for £1. |           |                   |           |           |
| Children .....    | 1s. 6d. each.               |           |                   |           |           |

**COLD SEA BATHS.**

|                                                |           |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Children, when Two or more in one Machine..... | 6d. each. |
| Separately .....                               | 9d. „     |
| Adults, when Two or more in one Machine.....   | 9d. „     |
| Separately .....                               | 1s. „     |

**TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:**  
TO THE READING ROOM, AND FREE PASSAGE AT ALL TIMES THROUGH  
THE SUBTERRANEAN WORKS.

| <b>Families not exceeding 4.</b> | <i>s.</i> | <i>d.</i> | <b>For Single Persons.</b> | <i>s.</i> | <i>d.</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| For the Season .....             | 10        | 6         | For the Season .....       | 5         | 0         |
| „ Two Months .....               | 7         | 0         | „ Two Months .....         | 3         | 6         |
| „ One Month.....                 | 5         | 0         | „ One Month.....           | 2         | 6         |
| „ Two Weeks .....                | 3         | 0         | „ Two Weeks .....          | 2         | 0         |
| „ One Week .....                 | 2         | 0         | „ One Week .....           | 1         | 6         |

**Admission to Non-Subscribers, 3d. each day.**

An excellent toned ORGAN for the use of Subscribers: also  
**THE DAILY LONDON NEWSPAPERS.**

*All the advantages of Cold Sea Bathing, may be enjoyed at the Clifton Baths, with the utmost privacy and perfection.*

Fig. 24 Advertisement for the Clifton Baths c1850

### 9.33 Additional Breakwaters, by the Mid-C19th

John Boys also seems to have augmented the sea-defences with a pair of brick-built breakwaters, added to the two main piers. They were probably, as we have said, in place by 1842.

They are shown, in whole or part, in various later drawings and photographs, and they look to have been rather flimsy.

Mr North's late C19th deposition (KHLC: R/U438/L12) supports the 1852 plan in suggesting that these were '*entirely masonry up to the end*,' which is to say they contained no *in situ* chalk.

It is possible that something of the western breakwater may survive, under the present Promenade.

This is one of several alterations first firmly evidenced in the Margate Sanitation survey of 1852 (see Figs. 19.1 and 19.2) but which are likely to have taken place by the middle of the century.

### **9.34 The Castellated wall of the Upper Terrace Demolished or Altered by the Mid-C19th**

The castellated wall of the Upper Terrace, with its alcoves, seems to have been demolished by the middle of the C19th.

There is reason, albeit tenuous, to think it may still have been standing at Easter 1845, when an infant was abandoned in '*one of the recesses in the front of the Clifton Baths*'.<sup>60</sup>

Subsequent descriptions generally refer to benches on the Upper Terrace, but no longer mention alcoves.

### **9.35 An Enclosure behind the Clifton Baths' Buildings, by the Mid-C19th**

The Sanitation Survey (see Figs. 19.1 and 19.2) also shows a sub-enclosure, within the walled Clifton Baths site, encompassing the dome of the Bathing Machine store, the Clifton Baths' entrance and the rear of the Porter's Lodge.

It was formed by two, straight lengths meeting at a slight, obtuse angle: the northern one running up to the east elevation of the Waiting Room; the eastern one running up to the southern boundary wall.

It is hard to say how long this enclosure had been in existence – in engravings, it may previously have been hidden behind the Upper Terrace.

The northern wall of the enclosure is seemingly shown on Kershaw and Son's mid-C19th engraving of Clifton Baths (Fig. 25, below).

It appears to have had a series of windows or niches in its seaward face, but it seems unlikely to have been a remnant of the Upper Terrace revetment, as that appears to have been curvilinear along its entire length.

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<sup>60</sup> *Maidstone Gazette* 8 April 1845.



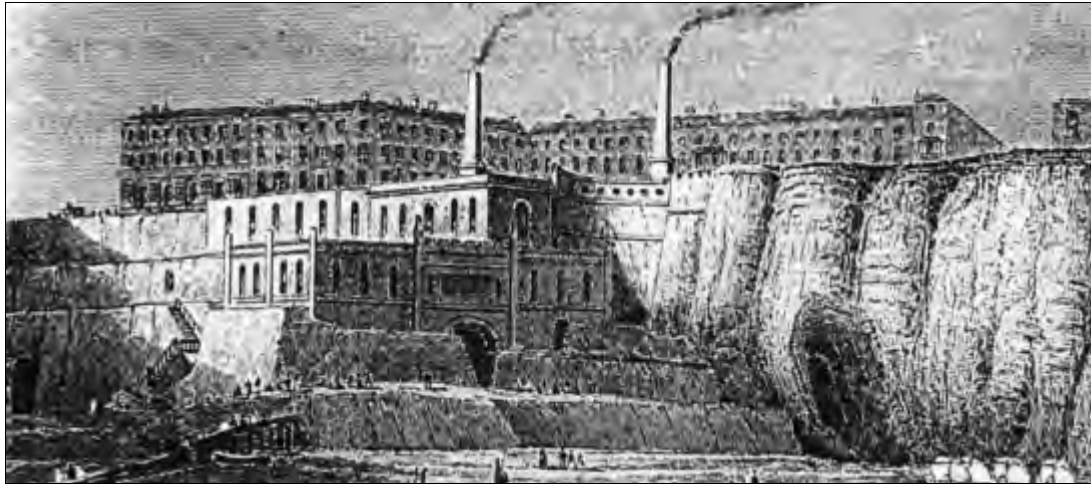


Fig. 25 Detail of Kershaw and Son's engraving.

### 9.36 Entrance Features, Including a Wash House and a Possible Kiosk, by the Mid-C19th

The 1852 Sanitation Survey map (see Figs. 19.1 and 19.2) shows the sloping entrance path leading to the half-octagonal, sunken, entrance courtyard in front of the keeper's cottage. It is possible, indeed likely, that these were original to the complex, but we cannot yet be certain.

Abutting the south side of this courtyard is shown a washhouse ('WH'), open-fronted toward the west. This was probably not original, since it is not mentioned in early advertisements to prospective tenants, or in guidebook descriptions, which, as we have seen, gave fairly complete enumerations of the various buildings and rooms.

By contrast, a similar advertisement of 1867 included '*washing and mangling rooms*' in addition.<sup>61</sup>

An entrance slope like this is likely to have existed by the end of July 1846, when:

*'a young gentleman was fined [...] 4s and costs, for riding a velocipede on the footpath, and allowing the machine to run down the entrance of the Clifton Baths.'*<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Times* 14 and 16 August 1867

<sup>62</sup> *Kentish Independent* 1 August 1846.



### 9.37 Map of Margate, 1845

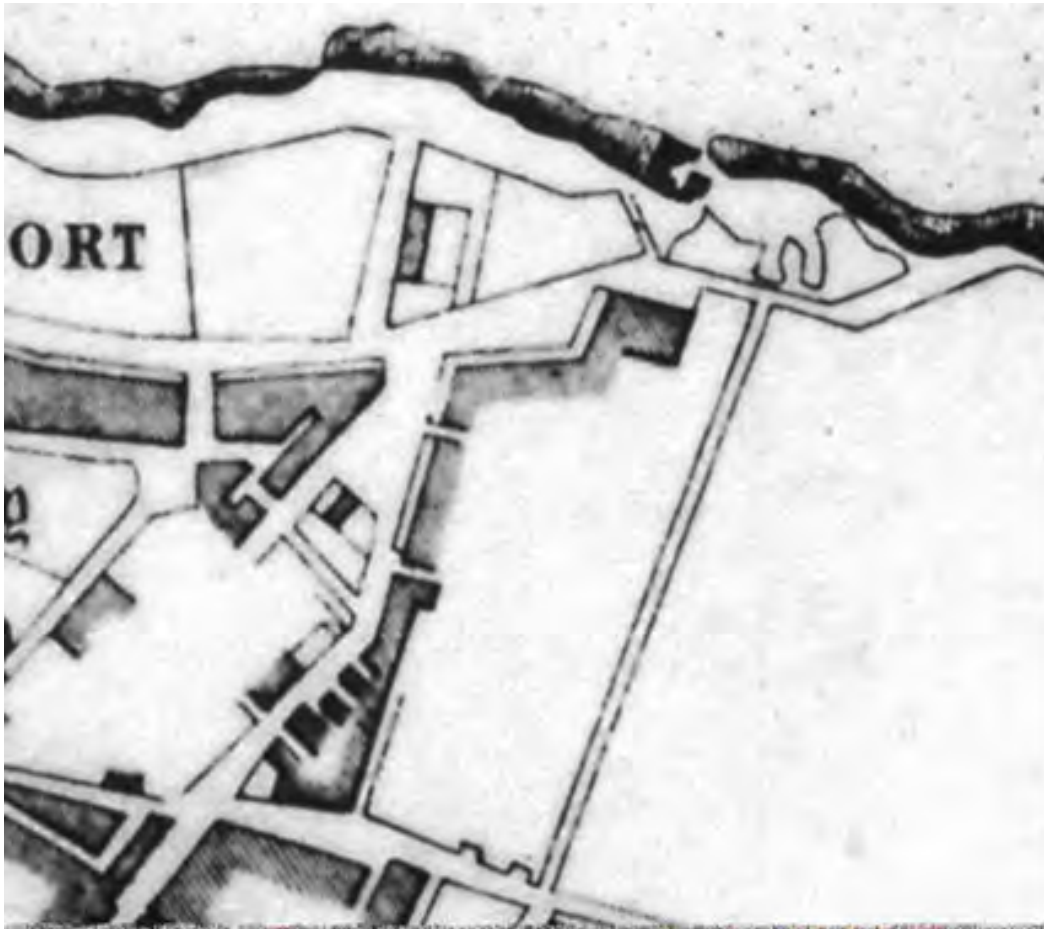


Fig. 26 A plan of the present harbour of Margate (detail), 1845

This agrees with the topography shown in the 1841 tithe map (see Fig. 23), albeit 'smoothed'.

### 9.38 The Clifton Baths in Photographs of c1860

As shown in the photographs, below, there seems to have been relatively little change in the outward appearance of the Clifton Baths across the middle of the C19th.



Figs. 27 and 28 Distant views of the Clifton Baths from the west. 1872



Fig. 29 A crisper view of the Clifton Baths showing the arch in the west wall of the waiting room and what is probably the sea water inlet at the foot of the western sea-defences.



Fig. 30 The Clifton Baths c1860.





Fig. 31 The Clifton Baths showing the door at the end of the Horse-Pump Tunnel, and, to the right of that, the two tall curved revetment walls overlooking the Upper Reservoir and the horse-gin.



Fig. 32 Frontal View of the Clifton Baths



Fig. 33 A Closer frontal view of the Clifton Baths



Fig. 34 The bathing machine in this photograph closely resembles one pictured in a 1790 painting of Margate harbour. Might it have been original to the Clifton Baths – or at least on a similar pattern to the original machines?



Fig. 35 A bathing machine on the sands outside the Clifton Baths



Fig. 36 A Side-View of the Clifton Baths with a bathing machine and horse (right)







Figs. 37, 38 and 39: Three views of the Clifton Baths c1860-1870



Fig. 40 The Clifton Baths with patrons c1880

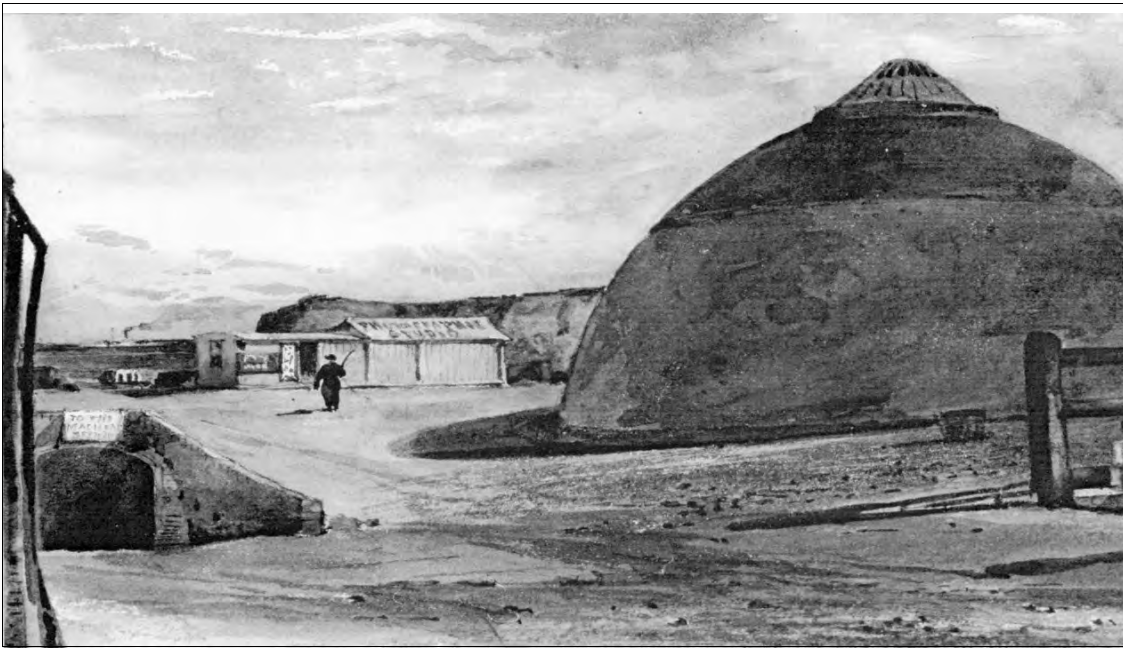


Fig. 41 A late C19th watercolour of the Clifton Baths 1899



Fig. 42 The Clifton Baths: Ordnance Survey Site Drawing 1858



### 9.39 The Death of John Boys. Ownership passes to John Harvey Boys, 1861

John Boys died in January 1861, and his wife, Martha, in August of the same year. It seems likely that the ownership of the Clifton Baths then passed to his son John Harvey Boys. John Harvey Boys also practised in Margate as a solicitor until his death on 29th May 1870, aged 55.

John Boys retired from business in 1842 *'and took his name off the Rolls in order to be qualified for the Commission of the Peace for the County of Kent and also of the Cinque Ports'*. At this point, sadly, *'he destroyed all old correspondence and burnt several sacks full of papers [...] which had become [...] as he thought [...] useless.'*<sup>63</sup>

In 1852, Boys had resigned from the Margate Board of Health (16 June 1852: TNA: MH 13/123/136), and, increasingly, in his letters, complained of ill health. Around 1855, he ceased acting as Justice of the Peace *'by reason of ill-health and deafness.'*<sup>64</sup> John Boys died 13 January 1861<sup>65</sup>. The *Thanet Advertiser* regretted:

*'To report the death of a gentleman, an old inhabitant of the town, who, from the active part that he hitherto took in matters pertaining to a public nature, had gained the respect and esteem of all around him. [...] He] was a man of singular energy; and though his life was twice attended by those who had the reason to feel the vigour of his conduct; yet he never shrank from the discharge of his public duties.'*<sup>66</sup>

Boys' wife, Martha, died 12 August the same year.<sup>67</sup>

### 9.40 Edward Charles Hayward, Tenant from 1853 to the Early 1870s

Edward Charles Hayward took a fourteen-year lease of the Clifton Baths in 1853.

In 1855, the *Post Office Directory of Kent* listed him at the *'Clifton Baths, Eastcliff'*, (a curious designation for the vicinity which we have not encountered elsewhere).

Hayward had Masonic links with John Boys' family, and, by 1862, Hayward was a 'PMPPGSW' in the local Unity Lodge, when he supported John Harvey Boys ('PMPPDGM') in initiating his son, Athelstan Harvey Boys, into freemasonry.<sup>68</sup>

In 1864, he was elected an auditor of the town council.<sup>69</sup>

See, below, Hayward's advertisement for the Clifton Baths (Fig. 43)

<sup>63</sup> KHLC: R/U438/L12.

<sup>64</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 19 January 1861.

<sup>65</sup> *South Eastern Gazette* 15 January 1861.

<sup>66</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 19 January 1861.

<sup>67</sup> *Morning Advertiser* 16 August 1861.

<sup>68</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 3 May 1862; God only knows what those long initialisms mean.

<sup>69</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 5 March 1864.

# CLIFTON BATHS,

READING ROOMS, TERRACE, AND  
SUBTERRANEOUS SEA-WORKS,  
NEAR FORT CRESCENT, MARGATE.

## E. C. HAYWARD,

Respectfully announces to the Visitors of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs and the Isle of Thanet, that the above  
NOVEL and INTERESTING BATHING PLACE IS

**NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

TERMS of SUBSCRIPTION to the Reading Room and Free Passage through the Subterraneous Works, to Subscribers and Bathers:

| For Families not exceeding 4 in number, s. d. | For Single Persons, s. d.  |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| For the Season .. .. . 10 6                   | For the Season .. .. . 5 0 |
| Two Months .. .. . 7 0                        | Two Months .. .. . 3 6     |
| One Month .. .. . 3 0                         | One Month .. .. . 2 6      |
| Two Weeks .. .. . 3 0                         | Two Weeks .. .. . 2 0      |
| One Week .. .. . 2 0                          | One Week .. .. . 1 6       |

ADMISSION TO NON-SUBSCRIBERS, 3d. EACH DAY.

*The Daily London Papers: also an excellent ORGAN for the use of Subscribers.*

## MACHINE BATHING IN THE SEA,

MARBLE WARM, SHOWER, HIP, & VAPOUR BATHS.

All the advantages of Cold Sea Bathing may be enjoyed at these Baths, in its greatest Purity, as there are no Drains or Sewers in the Locality.

### DESCRIPTION:—

1.—On the North-side is the entrance to the *Reading and Subscription Room*, 40 by 20, with a fine toned Organ. The Room opens upon the *Upper Terrace*, where there are Benches for those who prefer reading the Newspapers in the open air, or enjoying the Sea Breeze.

2.—On the West-side of this Terrace you descend by a flight of steps to the *Bathing Rooms*, where there are 7 *Hot Baths*, *Shower Baths* and *Hip Baths*, they are supplied in such manner as to render it impossible that any tricks can be played in using impure water; which must happen in other places where the Reservoirs and Tanks are too small. These Baths are all fitted up in the best manner, and ready at two minutes' notice. The North Wing of this Building is appropriated to Gentlemen, and the South Wing to the Ladies. The Frontage of this Part of Building exceeds 100 feet.

3.—On the South-side is a *Room*, where is fixed a Boiler, containing 1,200 gallons, and as fast as the water is drawn off into the Hot Baths, the Boiler is supplied by a self-acting valve from an arched Reservoir cut into the solid Cliff, of such large dimensions as to be capable of holding more than all the other Sea-water tanks in Margate, together. This Reservoir is replenished every Tide, by a Horse-pump, from the *Great Reservoir*, which keeps itself full and fresh every Tide.

4.—Upon the level with this Building is the *Bathers' Terrace*, with Benches for the accommodation of those who are waiting their turn for Bathing, or for recreation, and there is an arched Passage to this Terrace, in order that individuals may pass from their houses in sedan chairs, to and from the Hot Baths without passing through the open air.

5.—Lower down in the *Dome*, it is 36 feet high, 126 feet in circumference, and supported by 8 arches; it is built for a standing room for 20 Machines, and as a place of security against extraordinary high Tides. This Dome was constructed simply

by the use of a *Tram-mel*, and without the aid of centres which will account for some of the unevenness, in the circles of the Brick-work.

6.—The West entrance to the Dome is by a circular flight of steps for Foot Passengers.

7.—The East entrance to the Dome is an arched machine-way to and from the Sands, about 100 feet in length, 15 feet high, and 10 feet wide.

8.—On the North-west side of the Dome is an arched Horse-way, 120 feet long to the Horse-pump.

9.—On the right of this passage is the entrance to the great Reservoir, which is computed to hold 10,000 tons of Sea-water, and is in a constant state of change every Tide; by this grand desideratum, is accomplished one of the most perfect, pure, and private Bathing places in England.

10.—The Out-works and Piers are constructed exactly in the direction which nature and the effects of the Sea upon the Cliffs for many years past have pointed out; and if Engineers and Surveyors who may happen to be in Margate during a heavy gale of *Northerly Wind and a Spring Tide*, would then visit these unique works, they might form a more correct opinion than otherwise they could do, of the plan and strength of the whole, which nothing but actual observation and experience can give an adequate idea of.

11.—All the Rocks in front of these Works were in 1811 rugged and covered with weed close up to the Cliff; they have been pared down and smoothed to accumulate the beautiful Sands which are now formed under the Cliff. The total quantity of Chalk removed and excavated from these Works is computed at about 200,000 cubic yards.

12.—From the top of the Cliff to the Sands, the height is about 65 feet, with many Subterraneous improvements and additions, too numerous for the limits of this bill.

KALE, PRINTER, HIGH STREET, MARGATE.

Fig. 43 Hayward's Advertisement for the Clifton Baths c1864

### 9.41 Boys Sells the Clifton Baths 1867

In 1867, John Harvey Boys seems to have tried to sell the Clifton Baths, and, in July 1868, the Clifton Baths were put up for sale, together with three other plots, when they were described as follows in an advertisement in the *Times*:

*'the Clifton Baths, Margate -- This estate is for sale, by private contract. It is so well known that no detailed description is necessary. Every information may be obtained of Messrs Boys and Son, solicitors, Margate; of the tenant; or of Mr George Staner, jun, estate agent, Margate. Tenders to be sent to Messrs Boys and Son, or Mr Staner, on or before 10th July. The highest or any other offer will not necessarily be accepted.'*<sup>70</sup>

Evidently some description was necessary, since a second advertisement appeared the following month:

*'Amended notice – Margate – The well-known freehold, called the Clifton Baths Estate (in or near Clifton-place, Ethelbert-crescent, and the Cliftonville estate) – by Mr [George] Staner, jun. [...] on Monday, the 19th day of August, 1867, by order of the proprietor, at the White Hart Hotel, Margate [...]*

*All that well-known bathing establishment and freehold premises, called the Clifton Baths, most substantially built, the north-westernmost portion being of stone 15 ft thick against the solid cliff; consisting of sitting and bed rooms, washing and mangling rooms, seven hot baths, to two of which are attached separate dressing rooms, shower baths, &c. a reading room 40 ft by 20 ft, a reservoir, computed to hold 10,000 tons of sea water, in a constant state of change every tide, boiler, holding 1,200, large machine sheds and ground in rear of Ethelbert Road, stabling, &c.*

*All in the occupation now, and for 14 years past, of Mr EC Hayward. The sale and purchase, with several machines, gear and apparatus, and all such fixtures, fittings, and personality (sic) as belong to the vendor (of which an inventory will be produced), will be included in the sale.*

*The 14 years' lease has expired, and a purchaser may have possession at Lady Day. Since the granting of the original lease a new town has sprung up – Ethelbert-terrace and Crescent, Ethelbert-road, the New-town, &c. – so that the present rent is no criterion of the value of the property. The present tenant is strongly recommended to a purchaser, or as manager to a company.'*<sup>71</sup>

The baths were also advertised locally:

*'The Clifton Baths, which are most substantially built and have the most perfect internal arrangements. They are situate on the Fort, the favourite*

<sup>70</sup> *Times* 5 July 1867

<sup>71</sup> *Times* 14 and 16 August 1867

*and most increasing part of Margate, and comprise a five-roomed cottage, eight hot-bath rooms, two dressing rooms, a large reading room, 40 by 20, overlooking the sea, and suitable for a billiard saloon, boiler room, reservoirs, the dome, a large circular building suitable for boat-building, and subterranean passage to the sea for bathing machines.'*<sup>72</sup>

At the auction, on 19 August, the Clifton Baths Estate *'was knocked down for £5,000.'*<sup>73</sup>

However, the sale does not seem to have gone through, and, in February the following year, the estate was advertised again, *'for sale by private contract, offering to allow 'a large portion of the purchase money [to] remain on interest.'*<sup>74</sup>

By mid-July that year, Boys had instructed Messrs Ventom, Clarke and Bull to sell the Clifton Baths *'and three plots of valuable building land,'* at auction on 28 of that month:

*'Lot 1 will comprise the Clifton Baths, which are most substantially built, and have the most perfect internal arrangements. They are situate on the Fort, the favourite and most increasing part of Margate, and comprise a five-roomed cottage, eight hot bath rooms, two dressing rooms, a large reading room, 40 by 20, overlooking the sea, and suitable for a billiard room, reservoirs, the dome, a large circular building suitable for boat building, and subterranean passage to the sea for sea bathing machines.*

*Lot 2. A valuable plot of building land, possessing a frontage of about 130 feet to the Cliff road, and extending to the edge of the cliffs.*

*Lot 3. Another valuable plot of building land, with a frontage of 23 feet to the Ethelbert-road, by a depth of 100 feet, and having stables thereon.*

*Lot 4. Another plot of land, suitable for the erection of several cottages.'*<sup>75</sup>

The Clifton Baths were eventually sold to Thomas Dalby Reeve, and conveyed on 6 February 1869. They were sold *'in fee simple [...] with all the lands and premises thereto appertaining' including 'all the sea shore [...] lying in the north or sea side.'*<sup>76</sup>

## 9.42 Thomas Dalby Reeve: The New Owner of the Clifton Baths 1869

Thomas Dalby Reeve (1814 to 1875) was an important Margate figure, of similar local prestige and ambitions as John Boys, but without Boys' panache.

Reeve was to be a significant investor in Cliftonville, where he is commemorated in the name of Dalby Square (as is his son Arthur in Arthur Road).

<sup>72</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 18 July 1868.

<sup>73</sup> *Dover Telegraph* 31 August 1867.

<sup>74</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 8 February 1868.

<sup>75</sup> *Maidstone and Kentish Journal* 13, 18 and 20 July; *Thanet Advertiser* 18 July 1868.

<sup>76</sup> KHL: R/U438/L12.

Reeve's time at the baths ran alongside his wider connections with Margate, both in civic and building terms.

In 1844, Reeve was made a surveyor of the St John's parish highways, and was still in that role in 1848.<sup>77</sup>

When Margate was granted its Charter of Incorporation in 1857, he was appointed its first Clerk of Works and Inspector of Nuisances.<sup>78</sup>

Later that year, Reeve was appointed to superintend Margate's new Water Works, owned by the Margate and Broadstairs Water Company, though not everyone considered him competent, as '*Clerk of Works [...] to have the management or control of a work of this description.*' This councillor also asserted:

*'that he could very well see the difference between an engineer and clerk of works; and if the General Board should ask "Is Mr Reeve a surveyor or an engineer?"', their reply must be that he is not.'*<sup>79</sup>

Reeve was also the founder of Reeve's Mineral Water Manufacturers (see, Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2013 review of Dalby Square, Margate) and Reeve and Co., Soda Water Manufacturers, &c in Hawley Street, Margate. Between the two businesses, Reeve had a considerable, local market selling lemonade and soda water<sup>80</sup>, which would have been a useful, commercial side-line in the Clifton Baths.

He and other family members also seem to have been involved with several, technical innovations in water purification and laundry. Again, we can wonder if there was another link with the Clifton Baths business provisions.

In 1859, Reeve was '*appointed Borough Surveyor, with the understanding that his title as Clerk of the Works should cease.*'<sup>81</sup> In 1872, it was rumoured:

*'that Mr TD Reeve – who has been so largely concerned in the extension of the town in the new district of Cliftonville – would be proposed for the civic chair, this was not so, however.'*<sup>82</sup>

Reeve was, however, made Mayor the following year, and remained so until his death on 26 April 1875.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 30 April 1844 and 7 November 1848.

<sup>78</sup> Clarke 1965: 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 10 March 1857.

<sup>80</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 10 January 1863.

<sup>81</sup> *South-Eastern Gazette and Kentish Gazette* 17 May 1859.

<sup>82</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 12 November 1872.

<sup>83</sup> *Whitstable Times* 14 November 1874.

**P**URSUANT to an Order of the High Court of Justice Chancery Division made in an Action in the matter of the Estate of Thomas Dalby Reeve deceased Parker and others v Reeve and others 1875 P 161 The CREDITORS of THOMAS DALBY REEVE late of Margate in the County of Kent Surveyor and Manufacturer who died on or about the 26th day of April 1875 are on or before the 31st day of August 1878 to send by post prepaid to Mr. Claude Ashley Anson Penley of Number 52 Lincoln's Inn Fields in the County of Middlesex a member of the Firms of Heamant & Penley the Solicitor of the Defendants Mary Ann Reeve and Frederick Parker two of the executors of the deceased their Christian and Surnames, addresses and descriptions the full particulars of their claims a statement of their accounts and the nature of the securities (if any) held by them or in default thereof they will be peremptorily excluded from the benefit of the said order. Every Creditor holding any security is to produce the same before The Vice Chancellor Sir Richard Malins at his Chambers situated at Number 3 Stone Buildings Lincoln's Inn Middlesex on Thursday the 31st day of October 1878 at 12 o'clock at Noon being the time appointed for adjudicating on the Claims Dated this 9th day of August 1878  
C. W. WALKER Chief Clerk

Fig. 44 Times 29 August 1878



Fig. 45 Thomas Dalby Reeve, as Mayor of Margate

### 9.43 Reeve's 'Thorough Transformation of the Baths' c1870

Reeve had ambitious plans to modernise the site, and began his additions to the Clifton Baths almost immediately upon purchasing them:

*'These extensive works and subterraneous excavations were originally designed and carried out by the late John Boys, Esq, JP, a solicitor, residing at Margate.'*

*Within the last two years, they have become the property of Mr. TD Reeve, who is now expending a large sum of money to introduce every improvement which modern science has suggested for the convenience of the bather.*

*These in part will consist of rooms fitted up for shampooing and hairdressing; lavatories for ladies and gentlemen; waiting rooms, with refreshment bars; a large addition to the number of baths, dividing them into first and second class.*

*Steam pumps of great power will be fixed to obtain at all times an abundant supply of pure salt water. It is also the intention of the proprietor, by large excavations of the cliff, to make an easy incline, turfed on either side, to the Sands. There will also be a carriage drive to this establishment, entering from the road leading to Ethelbert Crescent.’<sup>84</sup>*

In mid-August 1869, Reeve produced an inch-scale model:

*‘of a floating bath contemplated to be used in conjunction with the Clifton Baths [...] about 60 feet long and 25 feet wide, with a depth of water of about 4 feet. It [would] have sixteen compartments as dressing rooms, and, on a raised stage, there [would] be a restaurant and a dressing room [with] accommodation for about 24 more bathers.’<sup>85</sup>*

There had been a similar scheme before, but it seems unlikely that any of this was put into place.

In March 1870, the plans for the transformation were publicised:

*‘These old-established baths are now, by the enterprise of our fellow-townsmen, Mr TD Reeve, undergoing a thorough transformation. For many years their external appearance has not been of a character calculated to give much pleasure to our visitors, nor to act as a recommendation to bestow patronage on their proprietor; but now under the direction of Mr Reeve, they are being made more presentable, and, when completed, will be an attractive feature in that part of Margate. The entire cost of the alteration is estimated at £10,000. Only a portion of the work — enough to permit of the bathing being carried on in the season on a somewhat larger scale than before — will be completed this year. In addition to the above-named alterations, the roadway in front of Ethelbert terrace will be widened, [see Fig. 46, below] the present boundary wall of the Clifton Baths estate will be removed, and a new wall will be erected — this work being carried out by the Town Council. Thus, an improvement of some magnitude will be effected, mainly in consequence of the enterprise of one individual.’<sup>86</sup>*

<sup>84</sup> {Anon 1871 Keble’s Enlarged Penny Guide to Margate}.

<sup>85</sup> *Canterbury Journal* 28 August 1869.

<sup>86</sup> *South Eastern Gazette* 7 March 1870.



1870 - Dalby Reeve paid £240 for 400 ft of ground abutting Clifton Baths required to widen the road opposite Ethelbert Crescent + new buildings and alterations at the Clifton Baths.

Fig. 46 (Research note at MLHM)

Substantial excavations were underway by mid-April, when *'a large quantity of earth'* slipped, smashing a cart to pieces and slightly injuring one of the workmen.<sup>87</sup>

Much of this was achieved in the early 1870s, although Reeve's plans for an incline to the shore may either have been dropped, or fallen foul of legal proceedings associated with the scheme to develop the foreshore from c1875.

The old portion of the Clifton Baths was re-opened early in May 1870, *'re-decorated and improved'* and provided with new heating apparatus, and the establishment as a whole was *'making rapid progress towards completion.'*<sup>88</sup>

*'In effecting the many recent alterations and improvements [...] the proprietor [...] has had to make certain excavations, and among others one in one of the archways under the dome. In this excavation a place had been made for the reception of a boiler.'*<sup>89</sup>

However, in swinging the boiler into place, a three-quarter brick was dislodged, severely injuring one of the workmen.

#### 9.44 New Indoor Baths, by 1868

These were built against the southern boundary of the site, opposite Ethelbert Terrace. They had their own waiting room, at their western end, reached by a separate flight of stairs down from Cliff Terrace.

An advertisement for the sale of the establishment, in 1867 (see 9.41), suggests there were still only seven hot baths, and these were probably still in the Bathing Rooms.

The new baths seem to have been brick-fronted, with gothic, arched windows.

The height of this range, and the fact that it is terraced into the cliff-top, well below the level of the adjoining pavement, may have been dictated by a covenant protecting the sea views of the houses on the south side of Ethelbert Terrace – like those of the bathing rooms on the High Street.

<sup>87</sup> *Canterbury Journal* 16 April 1870.

<sup>88</sup> *Canterbury Journal* 21 May 1870; *Kentish Gazette* 24 May 1870.

<sup>89</sup> *Whitstable Times* 11 June 1870.



One feature, which may be early, and which would merit closer investigation, is a high, vaulted chamber extending southwards from near the east end of the original south range, out under the pavement of Ethelbert Terrace.

### 9.45 The Original Waiting Room Becomes a ‘Refreshment Room.’

With the replacement of the original Bathing Rooms, the original Waiting Room was no longer needed as such, and, by the time of the 1872 *Ordnance Survey* (see Figs. 46.1 and 46.2) had become a ‘Refreshment Room’.

Late in 1864, it had still been considered a ‘Reading Room,’ when Professor Sinclair, ‘*the well-known wizard and ventriloquist*’ gave ‘*a voluntary exposé of “the rope trick” therein*’.<sup>90</sup> Reeve also made some significant additions to the Clifton Baths on the south side of the premises.

Reeve’s additions included two buildings, which now form part of the South Range. These were a Drill Hall, further east, in 1872, for the local Cinque Ports Volunteer Artillery and an adjacent building, which we will call the Boiler House, with an exuberant, industrial-style chimney (which survives today as the Lido Obelisk) and was originally sited with care:

*‘The [...] chimney stack [of the Boiler House] was built exactly opposite the end of Ethelbert Road ... so as not to infringe covenant regarding blocking sea views of houses on Ethelbert Terrace.’* (From a research note at MLHM, Reeve)

The Drill Hall and the Boiler House can be seen to have existed by 1875.

Reeve also extended the south range westwards, into the south-west corner of the site, disrupting the original, entrance arrangements and the outbuildings associated with the Porter’s Lodge, in order to accommodate his new baths and hairdressing rooms. These probably included ozone baths, as attested by an advertisement of 1876 (see 9.41).

A number of such innovations seem to have been introduced at the Clifton Baths as part of the general lateC19th struggle to promote the establishment.

These aspects are as yet quite poorly understood, especially as regards their precise chronology, and would be worth further investigation.

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<sup>90</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 19 November; *Kentish Mercury* 26 November 1864.

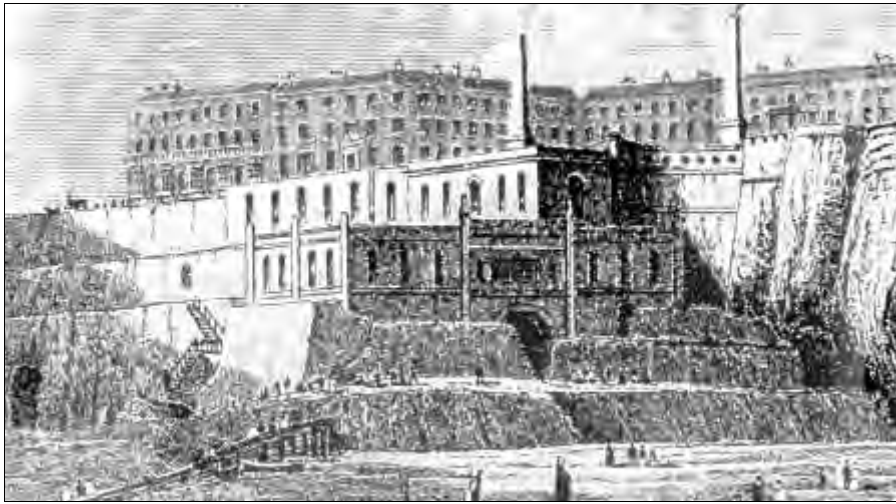


Fig. 47 An engraving of the Clifton Baths, probably of the mid-1860s

## 9.46 The Drill Hall

The Drill Hall was a fairly plain, brick building, of rectangular plan, along the southern boundary of the site, adjoining the Boiler House on its eastern side.

It had a segmental roof with a cylindrical vent at the top and tall, parapet walls at each end. It is interesting that Alderman Reeve should have blurred his business and his official activities in this way. Was the Drill Hall perhaps intended to be used for Clifton Baths' purposes between drills?

There is a tantalising '*report of skating on the rink at the Artillery Drill Hall*' in 1875 (see 14.9).

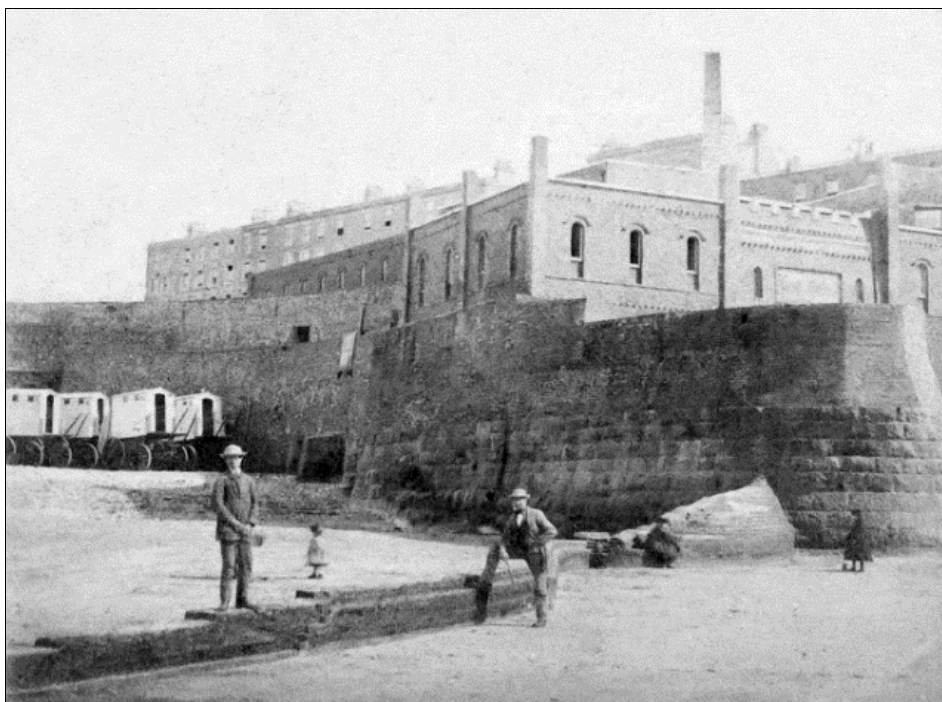


Fig. 48 The Clifton Baths and bathing machines c1870

### 9.47 The Late C19th Boiler House and Chimney, by 1871

Thomas Dalby Reeve seems to have begun his additions to the Clifton Baths fairly soon after purchasing them. A research note at MLHM suggests the works were underway by 1871.

The Boiler House he built still exists. As mentioned above, its elaborate, brick, chimney stack now serves as the Lido Obelisk, and, in this role, has become quite iconic. It has not yet been possible to inspect the building's interior.

In 1870, according to a research note at MLHM, Reeve '*paid £240 for 400 ft of ground abutting Clifton Baths required to widen the road opposite Ethelbert Crescent*' and for '*new buildings and alterations at the Clifton Baths*.' (see Fig. 46). This suggests that the Boiler House was built around this time.

It would, therefore, seem, for a time, to have been free-standing (except that it abutted the site's southern boundary) until the construction of the Drill Hall, but it is not yet clear what the purpose of this building was.

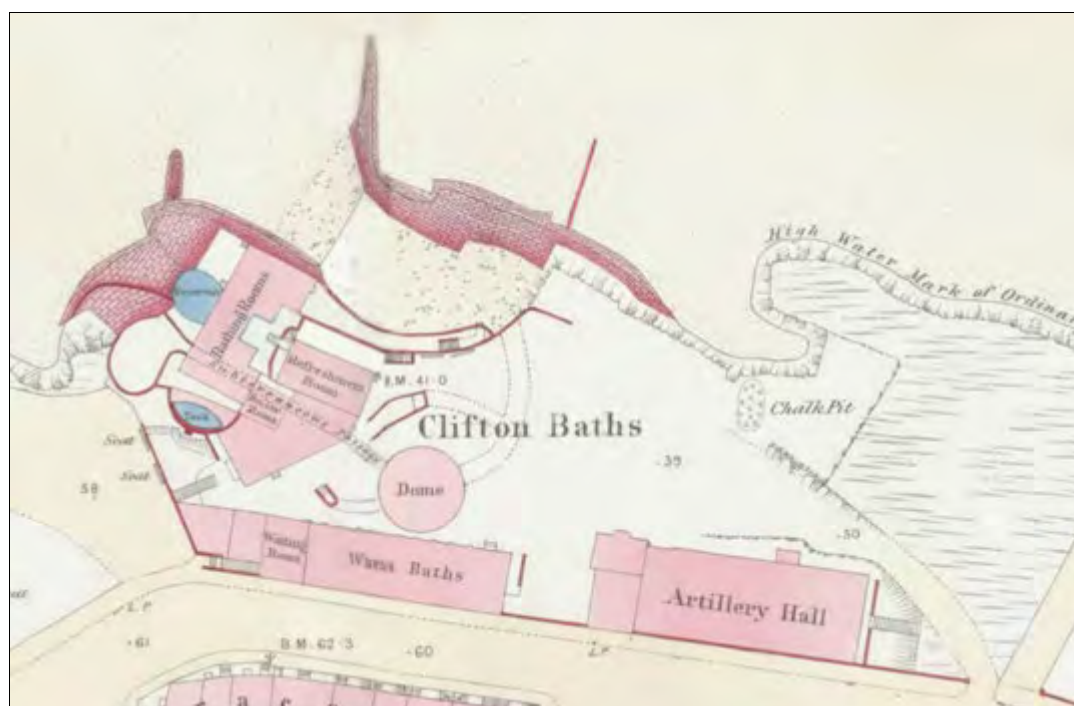
It may have been to supply hot water to facilities in the south range, whatever these may have included at this date. At some point during the late C19th, the Clifton Baths began to offer deliveries of hot sea water around Margate, and, perhaps, this may explain the need for a new boiler.

### 9.48 The First Edition *Ordnance Survey*, 1872, Showing the Clifton Baths and Environs



Fig. 49.1





Figs. 49.1 and 49.2 Two drawings from The First Edition *Ordnance Survey*, 1872



Fig. 50 Bacon's map of Margate 1875; based on First Edition *Ordnance Survey*.

## 9.49 Improved Sewerage

In June 1872, it was reported:

*'A considerable district of [Margate] is about to be placed under the new filtering system of M de Chastelain, and the Royal Sea bathing Infirmary, Royal-Crescent, and the Clifton Baths will be first dealt with.*

*It is stated that under the new arrangements two large receivers could be placed in the Dane, whither the sewage from all parts of the town would be taken, filtered, and the effluent water then conducted by surface pipes to whatever spot might be thought desirable for emptying into the sea.'*<sup>91</sup>

We have not yet determined whether this was carried out.

## 9.50 James Briggs, Tenant of Clifton Baths by Early 1872 to c1895

We as yet have no firm idea when Hayward, tenant, left the Clifton Baths or when their next tenant, James Briggs arrived. It may even be that Reeve managed the Clifton Baths directly in an intervening period.

Nonetheless, Briggs was there by 1875 (Gregory's postal directory for Margate 1878 list him as living there), and is listed in the 1881 census as a *'Proprietor of Baths'*. He continued to be resident in Margate in 1893.

## 9.51 Death of Thomas Dalby Reeve 26 April 1875.<sup>92</sup>

Reeve had been ill for some time, and was being treated by Sir William Jenner in London before he died in 1875.

Reeve left his real estate, including the Clifton Baths, to his wife, MA Reeve until her death, upon which it would pass to their children.

At his death, Thomas Dalby Reeve's role in local Margate life was acknowledged in most of the local papers:

*'The late Mayor, who had been a member of the Council for many years, was a Pier Director, and also filled many other public offices. He was highly esteemed by all his colleagues and much respected by the townspeople generally.'*<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 4 June 1872.

<sup>92</sup> *Whitstable Times* 14 November 1874.

<sup>93</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 1 May 1875.

*'His worship for several years past had taken a very prominent part in the business of the district, and initiated many great and important improvements.'*<sup>94</sup>

## **9.52 The Clifton Baths Pass to M A Reeve, Widow of Thomas Dalby Reeve, 1875.**

Following Thomas Dalby Reeve's death in 1875, and the transfer of his estate to his widow, the Clifton Baths went through a difficult period.

### **9.52.1 Litigation on Storm Damage**

First, there was internecine litigation as to who should pay to repair some severe storm damage on the Clifton Baths' site.

Thomas Dalby Reeve's son-in-law, Frederick Parker, had been *'appointed receiver of the outstanding personal estate'* (Times 21 September 1877).

Soon afterwards, a storm damaged the sea-wall of the Baths *'to the extent of about 50 ft. [...] and the premises [were] thereby dangerously exposed to inroads of the sea'*.

A surveyor recommended *'immediate repair to the extent of about £200'* before winter set in (Research note at MLHM).

Widow Reeve had no money to pay for this, but the personal estate was considered amply sufficient. In 1877, therefore, she and Frederick Parker sought a motion in Chancery allowing the repairs to be paid for out of the personal estate. This was contested by Reeve's brother, George Whitbread Reeve.

A contemporary newspaper article on the case is given, below, in Fig.51.

The judge was unable immediately to decide, but allowed Parker to spend the money on condition that his mother-in-law would repay the money if the case should ultimately be decided against them. We are not sure what the long-term outcome was, but there would be further Chancery proceedings in the 1890s.

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<sup>94</sup> *Whitstable Times* 1 May 1875.



## PARKER V. REEVE.

This suit was one for the administration of the real and personal estate of Mr. Thomas Dalby Reeve, late of Margate. By his will he appointed his wife, M. A. Reeve, his brother, G. W. Reeve, and his son-in-law, Frederick Parker, executors; and he gave his wife his real estate and the income of his residuary personalty for her life, subject to the maintenance of his children during their minorities. After the wife's death the whole of the real and the residuary personalty went to the children, so that in effect the same persons were interested in the whole property. Under orders made in the suit the widow had been let into possession of the real estate, and F. Parker had been appointed receiver of the outstanding personal estate. Part of the real estate of the testator consisted of the Clifton Baths, at Margate, the sea wall of which has been recently damaged to the extent of about 50ft. by a recent storm, and the premises thereby dangerously exposed to inroads of the sea. According to the evidence of a surveyor, the sea front requires immediate repair to the extent of about £200 before the wintry weather sets in. The tenant for life, it was stated, had no money to defray this expense, and a motion was now made on behalf of the receiver and the widow that the former might be at liberty to enter into a contract for repairing the sea wall and pay for the same out of moneys representing the outstanding personal estate. No decree has yet been made in the suit, and it was stated that the estate was amply sufficient to pay the debts.

Mr. NORTHMORE LAWRENCE, for the receiver and the widow, supported the motion.

Mr. M'SWINNEY, for the infant children, stated that the proposed outlay would be beneficial for them, and submitted to the Court that the motion should be acceded to.

Mr. ARMITSTEAD, for the defendant G. W. Reeve, submitted that the repairs should be borne by the widow, the tenant for life, and that the Court had no power to direct a receiver of personal estate to apply moneys in his hands for the repair of the real estate.

Mr. Justice FRY said the question was whether the widow was liable to do these repairs herself. The ordinary position of a tenant for life was that of being liable for all repairs, the only difficulty being that of enforcing such liability. He was not quite satisfied that he was justified in making the order, even although it might be very beneficial to the infants that the repairs should be done. The best order in the circumstances to make would be to allow the receiver to be at liberty to expend a sum not exceeding £200 in the repairs to the baths out of the outstanding personal estate without prejudice to the question by whom and out of what fund such sum should be ultimately paid. The defendant M. A. Reeve must give an undertaking to repay the sum so expended if the Court should ultimately consider her to be liable. The motion otherwise to stand over to the hearing.

### 9.52.2 The Foreshore Housing Scheme and Laird v Briggs 1890

The second major problem was the threat of a massive housing development on the foreshore c1876 (see Fig. 52 below).

It was planned to develop a great length of foreshore in front of the Fort, and a long way to the east. Two long streets, lined with semi-detached houses, were to be laid out on a platform under the foot of the cliff.



Fig. 52 Drawing (top) of the late C19th scheme for housing development on the foreshore (EKA: R/U438 P16)  
Bacon's map of 1875 is appended (second drawing) for comparison since Fig. 52 is based on this map.



The owner of the foreshore, the Marquis Conyngham, had granted the developer, Mark Sanderson, a building agreement, which he later passed on to a Mr Laird.

Under the terms of this agreement, Laird would be granted a lease of the site on the completion of some of the proposed works.

The scheme would, of course, have meant the end of the Clifton Baths, cutting them off from the sea. (Such houses would have been battered mercilessly by winter storms. It is hard to believe any such scheme could seriously have been entertained. Is it possible there was some kind of devious ‘pettifogging’ going on here?)

James Briggs, tenant of the Clifton Baths, understandably refused to cooperate. About 1880 (*Times* 15 December), Laird brought an action against Briggs, intended ‘*to restrain him from carrying away sand, shingle, and chalk from the foreshore and placing bathing machines thereon*’.

This was a second prong of Laird’s attack on the Clifton Baths.

By stopping the operation of the bathing machines on the foreshore, he would effectively demolish the *raison d’être* of the baths themselves. No doubt, in such circumstances, Laird hoped that the Clifton Baths might be forced to close, and his building plans could go ahead.

After complicated proceedings, an appeal of 1881 (*Times* 28 July; EKA: R/U438/L12), ultimately decided in favour of Briggs, on the grounds that, since Laird had only a right of access to the site, and neither tenancy nor possession, he was not entitled to accuse him of trespass.

This case, *Laird v Briggs 1890*, was widely reported, locally and nationally, and attracted a great deal of interest. A selection of contemporary newspaper cuttings is given in Figs. 58-65, below.

(Before MR. JUSTICE FRY.)

LAIRD V. BRIGGS.

The plaintiff in this action sued as tenant under the Marquis Conyngham of the foreshore of the manor of Minster, which extends from Margate Aquarium to Broadstairs Pier. The defendant is the tenant of Clifton Baths, and the object of the action was to restrain him from carrying away sand, shingle, and chalk from the foreshore and placing bathing machines thereon. The defendant by his pleadings stated that in 1824 one John Boys, the owner of what is now the Clifton Baths, commenced works on the foreshore for the purpose of a sea-bathing establishment, which were completed in 1829, and that the foreshore had been used for that purpose ever since by John Boys and those claiming under him, and that for the purpose of the bathing business large quantities of shingle, sand, and chalk had constantly been removed from the foreshore, and, in effect, the defendant claimed a right under the statute of limitations by undisputed user for 40 years. To this the plaintiff replied that a part of the 40 years during which the acts of user were alleged were during the lifetime of the late Marquis Conyngham, who was only tenant for life of the manor of Minster, and that, as this action was brought within three years after his death, the plaintiff, as tenant of the reversioner who had come into possession, was not barred by force of the statute. A point of practice and a point of law were argued—the first, whether the defendant at the hearing should be allowed to amend his pleading by stating that John Boys, through whom he claimed, was entitled in fee to the foreshore; the other, whether a tenant at will of the reversioner was enabled to sue under the right reserved by the Act to the reversioner.

Mr. Cookson, Q.C., and Mr. Follett appeared for the plaintiff; Mr. North, Q.C., and Mr. Brett for the defendant.

MR. JUSTICE FRY held that the amendment asked would be such a complete change of front on the part of the defendant that it could not be allowed at this late stage of the contest, and that an action on the part of a tenant, whether at will or otherwise, of a reversioner, could be brought within three years after the death of the tenant for life, and gave judgment for the plaintiff.



(Before Mr. Justice Fry.)

LAIRD V. BRIGGS.

The plaintiff, as tenant under the Marquis Conyngham of part of the foreshore of the Manor of Minster, between Margate Aquarium and Broadstairs Pier, sought by this action to restrain the defendant from interfering with his rights by the removal of sand and shingle, and the drawing up of bathing machines opposite the Clifton Baths. The title of the Marquis was derived through a grant of the manor in the reign of James I. to Sir Phillip Earle and others, and in 1816 there was a settlement by which the manor was vested in the successors to the marquise as tenants for life. The defendant was the tenant of the trustees of the will of one Reeve, who was owner of the Clifton Bath property under an assignment executed in February, 1869, by John H. Boyes, whose father, John Boyes, being the owner of land adjacent to the foreshore, built upon it the Clifton Baths, and spent it was stated about 15,000*l.* in the erection of the buildings, breaking up the rocks, levelling the shore between high and low water-mark, and cutting gaps to give access to the beach. These works were executed between 1824 and 1829, and since their completion the foreshore opposite to the baths had been uninterruptedly used by the tenant for the purpose of a sea-bathing establishment. The defendant denied the plaintiff's title to the foreshore at that spot, except subject to the rights of the owners of the bath property, and in the course of the argument leave was asked to amend the defence by alleging ownership. Mr. Laird, before commencing his action, had expressed his willingness to grant a licence to the defendant on reasonable terms to use the foreshore for his bathing machines.—Mr. M. Cookson, Q.C., and Mr. Follit were for the plaintiff, and Mr. Ford North, Q.C., and Mr. Brett for the defendant.—Mr. Justice Fry said the statement of defence admitted that the plaintiff was in possession of the foreshore subject to the rights of the defendant, and he could not allow such a complete change of front as the proposed amendment would involve. In his judgment the plaintiff had established his case, and was entitled to an injunction restraining the defendant from carrying away any sand, shingle, or chalk, and from placing, or allowing to remain, any bathing machines on the foreshore fronting the Clifton Baths property. The operation of the injunction would be suspended for two months, and if within that time notice of appeal were given the order would not be enforced for six months.

Fig. 59 *Daily News* 15 December 1880



# CHANCERY DIVISION.

FORESHORE CASE.—LAIRD V. BRIGGS.

(Before Mr. Justice Fry, Dec. 14.)

The plaintiff, as tenant under the Marquis Conyngham of part of the foreshore of the Manor of Minster, between Margate Aquarium and Broadstairs Pier, sought by this action to restrain the defendant from interfering with his rights by the removal of sand and shingle and the drawing up of bathing machines opposite the Clifton Baths. The title of the Marquis was derived through a grant of the manor in the reign of James I. to Sir Philip Earle and others, and in 1816 there was a settlement by which the manor was vested in the successors to the marquisate as tenants for life. The defendant was the tenant of the trustees of the will of one Reeve, who was owner of the Clifton Bath property under an assignment executed in February, 1869, by John H. Boyes, whose father, John Boyes, being the owner of land adjacent to the foreshore, but upon it the Clifton Baths, and spent, it was stated, about 15,000*l* in the erection of the buildings, breaking up the rocks, levelling the shore between high and low water mark, and cutting gaps to give access to the beach. These works were executed between 1824 and 1829, and since their completion the foreshore opposite to the baths had been uninterruptedly used by the tenant for the purpose of a sea-bathing establishment. The defendant denied the plaintiff's title to the foreshore at that spot, except subject to the rights of the owners of the bath property, and in the course of the argument leave was asked to amend the defence by alleging ownership. Mr. Laird, before commencing his action, had expressed his willingness to grant a license to the defendant on reasonable terms to use the foreshore for his bathing machines.

Mr. M. Cookson, Q.C., and Mr. Follitt were for the plaintiff, and Mr. Ford North, Q.C., and Mr. Brett for the defendant.

Mr. Justice Fry said the statement of defence admitted that the plaintiff was in possession of the foreshore subject to the rights of the defendant, and he could not allow such a complete change of front as the proposed amendment would involve. In his judgment the plaintiff had established his case, and was entitled to an injunction restraining the defendant from carrying away any sand, shingle, or chalk, and from placing or allowing to remain any bathing machines on the foreshore fronting the Clifton Baths property. The operation of the injunction would be suspended for two months, and if within that time notice of appeal were given the order would not be enforced for six months.

**HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE.  
CHANCERY DIVISION.  
(Before Mr. Justice Fry.)**

**LAIRD V. BRIGGS.**—This action was brought to restrain the Defendant from interfering with the Plaintiff's rights by the removal of sand and shingle, and the drawing up of bathing machines opposite the Clifton Baths, between Margate Aquarium and Broadstairs.—The Plaintiff is tenant under the Marquess of Conyngham of part of the foreshore of the manor of Minster, at the above point, and the title of the Marquess of Conyngham is derived from a grant of James I. to Sir Philip Earle and others. In 1816 there was a settlement by which the manor was vested in the successors to the marquise as tenants for life. The Clifton Bath property was owned by one Reeve, and the Defendant is tenant of his trustees. The assignors to Reeve, who were owners of land adjacent to the foreshore, built the baths, and spent as much as 15,000*l.* in the building and the adjacent roads, to give convenient access to it. Since these improvements were completed, and from 1829, the foreshore opposite the baths has been uninterruptedly used by the tenants for sea bathing. The Plaintiff's title to the foreshore, except subject to the rights of the owners of the bath property, was denied by the Defendant. Before commencing his action the Plaintiff expressed his willingness to grant a licence to the Defendant for the use of the foreshore for his bathing machines on reasonable terms.—Mr. Cookson, Q.C., and Mr. Follit, appeared for the Plaintiff; Mr. North, Q.C., and Mr. Brett for the Defendant.—Mr. Justice Fry held that the Plaintiff had established his case, and was entitled to the injunction to restrain the Defendant from carrying away sand, shingle, or chalk, and from placing, or allowing to remain, any bathing machines on the foreshore fronting the Clifton Baths property, but suspended the operation of the injunction for two months. If notice of appeal were given within that time the order would be suspended for six months.

Fig. 61 *Standard* 15 December 1880



### THE MARGATE FORESHORE.

That rather ill-defined region along the edge of the sea which is known as the foreshore has long been the subject of dire contention between land-owners, who have engaged from time to time in tremendous law suits both one with another and against the Crown. In such places as Margate, where the beach is a sort of common playground, it is obvious that it makes all the difference in the world to the population how such questions are decided, and who is decided to be the legal owner of the sand which is the paradise of cockney children out for a long holiday. Accordingly, the case of *Laird v. Briggs*, decided on appeal yesterday, must have been watched with some interest, not only by the parties engaged, but by the bathing and sand-digging visitors who are accustomed to frequent this happy watering-place. The quarrel out of which the action arose seems to have involved a rather curious question as to what the lawyers call "easement." The owner of the Clifton bathing establishment had, for about half a century, exercised the right to dig sand and chalk on the shore lying between his buildings and the sea, and also to keep bathing machines there for the use of the bathers. As long as Lord Conyngham, who is the lord of the manor, kept the "foreshore" in his own possession, this practice or right does not seem to have been interfered with. But in 1867 the marquis granted his rights over this part of the beach, with certain reservations, to a Mr. Sanderson, who was to be entitled to build thereupon, and Sanderson assigned the rights in question to the plaintiff, who by the present action attempted to prevent the owners of the Clifton baths from making further use of the spot. The difficulties lying hid under a case apparently so simple will appear from the fact that a Vice-Chancellor decided in favour of the plaintiff, and the Appeal Court reversed the decision. The Clifton baths will now resume their rights, which were in jeopardy, and the case has ended at an agreeable moment for the intending visitors to Margate. Henceforth, lords of manors who have rights over the foreshore will, if they are wise, be careful how they allow neighbouring owners to exercise such acts of partial proprietorship over it.

# MARITIME AND COMMERCIAL LAW,

## SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE.

### COURT OF APPEAL.

FORESHORE DISPUTE.—LAIRD V. BRIGGS.

(Before the Master of the Rolls, and Lords Justices Brett and Cotton, July 26.)

This was an appeal from a decision of Mr. Justice Fry. The plaintiff claimed to be tenant in possession of a part of the foreshore at Margate, and sought to restrain the defendant from removing shingle from the foreshore and from placing bathing machines upon it. The defendant claimed, by 40 years' enjoyment, an easement entitling him to do the acts complained of, and by his statement of defence he denied that the plaintiff was, or ever had been, in possession of the foreshore in question, "save subject to the rights of the defendant." The plaintiff was the assignee of an agreement, dated the 1st of May, 1876, and made between the Marquis Conyngham and a Mr. Mark Sanderson, whereby it was agreed that Sanderson should be entitled to all the rights of the Marquis (except those of wreck and groundage) in and over so much of the foreshore of the manor of Minster, in Kent, as extended from the eastern side of the Margate Aquarium to the north side of the Broadstairs Pier, and that for the purpose of constructing the works and buildings in the said agreement mentioned he might enter upon the same. The defendant alleged that in the year 1824, one John Boys, then being owner in fee simple in possession of certain lands at Margate, adjoining the foreshore, began and completed certain works upon the said lands since known as the Clifton Baths property, for the purpose of facilitating access to the sea for bathing purposes; that ever since the said shore opposite the Clifton Baths property had been uninterruptedly used by the owners and tenants thereof for the purposes of a sea-bathing establishment; and that from that time bathing machines had been constantly placed thereon, and sand, shingle, and chalk removed therefrom. In the Court below it was held that the plaintiff had proved his right, and that an injunction must be granted to restrain the defendant from carrying away any sand, shingle, or chalk, and from placing or allowing to remain on the foreshore fronting the Clifton Baths property any bathing machines. The defendant appealed.

Mr. North, Q.C., and Mr. T. Brett for the appellant; Mr. Cookson, Q.C., and Mr. W. S. Follett for the plaintiff.

Their Lordships held that under the agreement the plaintiff was given no right to the foreshore, and, therefore, no title to one. They reversed the judgment of Mr. Justice Fry.

Fig. 63 Shipping and Mercantile Gazette 27 July 1881



## SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE.

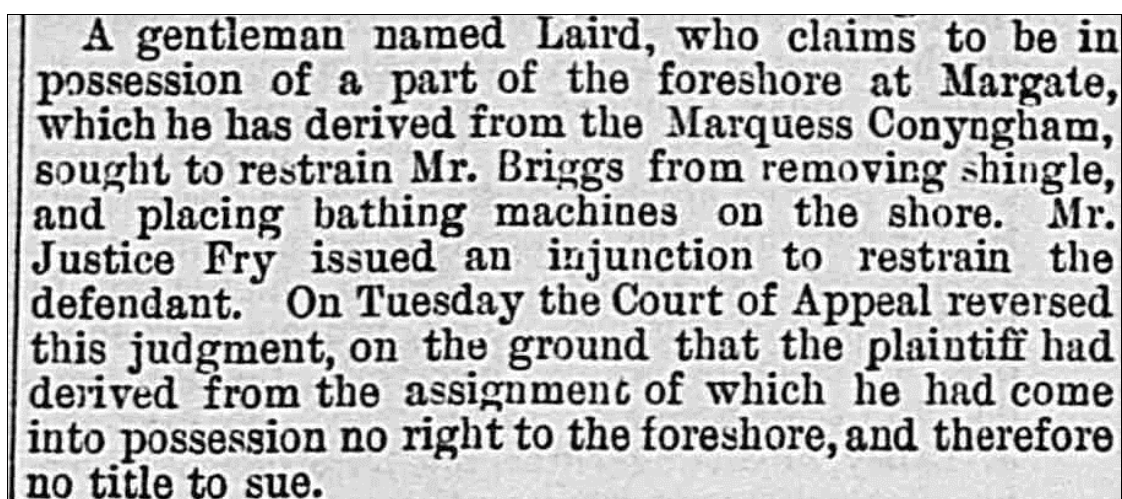
### COURT OF APPEAL.

(Before the MASTER of the ROLLS, and Lords Justices  
BRETT and COTTON.)

**LAYED V. BRIGGS.**—This was an appeal from a decision of Mr. Justice Fry.—The Plaintiff claimed to be tenant in possession of a part of the foreshore at Margate, and sought to restrain the Defendant from removing shingle from the foreshore and from placing bathing machines upon it. The Defendant claimed, by forty years' enjoyment, an easement entitling him to do the acts complained of, and by his statement of defence he denied that the Plaintiff was, or ever had been, in possession of the foreshore in question, "save subject to the rights of the Defendant." The Plaintiff was the assignee of an agreement, dated the 1st of May, 1876, and made between the Marquess Conyngham and a Mr. Mark Sanderson, whereby it was agreed that Sanderson should be entitled to all the rights of the Marquess (except those of wreck and groundage) in and over so much of the foreshore of the manor of Minster, in Kent, as extended from the eastern side of the Margate Aquarium to the north side of the Broadstairs Pier, and that for the purpose of constructing the works and buildings in the said agreement mentioned he might enter upon the same. The Defendant alleged that in the year 1824, one John Boys, then being owner it fee simple in possession of certain lands at Margate, adjoining the foreshore, began and completed certain works upon the said lands since known as the Clifton Baths property, for the purpose of facilitating access to the sea for bathing purposes; that ever since the said shore opposite the Clifton Baths property had been uninterruptedly used by the owners and tenants thereof for the purposes of a sea-bathing establishment; and that from that time bathing machines had been constantly placed thereon, and sand, shingle, and chalk removed therefrom. In the Court below it was held that the Plaintiff had proved his right, and that an injunction must be granted to restrain the Defendant from carrying away any sand, shingle, or chalk, and from placing or allowing to remain on the foreshore fronting the Clifton Baths property any bathing machines. The Defendant appealed.—Mr. North, Q.C., and Mr. T. Brett for the Appellant; Mr. Cookson, Q.C., and Mr. W. S. Follett for the Plaintiff.—Their Lordships held that under the agreement the Plaintiff was given no right to the foreshore, and therefore no title to one. They reversed the judgment of Mr. Justice Fry.

Fig. 64 *Standard* 27 July 1881





A gentleman named Laird, who claims to be in possession of a part of the foreshore at Margate, which he has derived from the Marquess Conyngham, sought to restrain Mr. Briggs from removing shingle, and placing bathing machines on the shore. Mr. Justice Fry issued an injunction to restrain the defendant. On Tuesday the Court of Appeal reversed this judgment, on the ground that the plaintiff had derived from the assignment of which he had come into possession no right to the foreshore, and therefore no title to sue.

Fig. 65 *Whitstable Times* 30 July 1881

### 9.53 Briggs' Changes during the 1880's: Bathing Machines, Water and Wine

In the late 1870's, further turmoil was occasioned by changes to the social standing of Margate that impacted the patronage of the Clifton Baths (see Appendix 3).

Nonetheless, during the 1880s, the tenant, Briggs, was able to make some important additions.

Advertisements of the time suggest, for example, that he patented and manufactured bathing machines to his own specification.

We have not yet been able to discover anything about Briggs' patent, except for indications that these bathing machines were '*well-lighted and well-ventilated*', had a skylight and a partition. (*Keble's Illustrated Penny Guide* for 1889).

In July 1856, the machines on the shore at the Newgateway at the New Town seem to have included one or more designed for the use of married couples in which the man was segregated from his wife by a partition. (*South Eastern Gazette* 15 July 1856).

By the late C19th, however, arrangements seemed much more relaxed. (See photograph in Fig. 53, below).



Fig. 53 This late C19th photograph reflect changes in the use of bathing machines.

Briggs advertised in *Keble's Illustrated Penny Guide* for 1889 that, now, '*hot and cold sea water*' could be sent to all parts of the town, '*baths of all sizes [were] let out on hire*' and salt and fresh water, hot baths, with or without ozone, were available in the private bathrooms.

Briggs also boasted in an advertisement that the sea bathing was '*the best on the coast, being far removed from all sewage matter*' (see Fig. 54, below). In another advertisement, (see Fig. 55, below), this point is again made, by implication, in that he states that the baths have been '*thoroughly cleaned and removed*'.

Further reassurance to the people embarking on the new, popular, leisure sport of swimming is that: '*A boatman was in constant attendance*' (see Fig. 55).

This move led to local praise. In 1873, the *Court Journal* discussed recent '*improvements at Margate,*' among which:

*'The increased bath accommodation, besides being a great boon, is the principal attraction to visitors; and Mr Briggs, the proprietor of the Clifton Baths, is entitled to the greatest praise for the improvements in this direction. Hot or cold, and the Ozone baths, so much recommended, may be obtained here with every comfort and attention.'*<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *Court Journal* 6 September 1873.

Late in August 1877, Briggs was granted a licence 'to sell wine only on certain premises situated in the Clifton Baths.'<sup>96</sup>

By 1883, the refreshment rooms were occupied by one John Moore.

1876 - advert. of May in Gazette.

THE CLIFTON BATHS  
CLIFTONVILLE, MARGATE

After being re-decorated, and thoroughly cleansed  
and several new Baths added, are

NOW OPEN FOR THE SEASON

FROM 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

WARM BATHS from 1s. Terms - Warm Baths 1s. each or  
11s. per dozen. Ditto 1s.6d. each or 15s. per dozen  
Ditto 2s. each or 20s. per dozen. Ozone Baths 3s.  
each, or 33s. per dozen.

The SEABATHING is the best on the Coast, being far  
removed from all sewage matter. The linen is the  
best and the cleanest, and every attention is paid  
to the bathers, the Proprietor having a Boatman in  
constant attendance. Single baths 9d.; two in  
one Machine, 6d. each. Special attention is paid  
to Ladies and Children.

James Briggs. Proprietor.

Fig. 54 (MLHM)

<sup>96</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 1 September 1877.

ESTABLISHED UPWARDS OF 100 YEARS.

# THE CLIFTON BATHS,

CLIFTONVILLE, MARGATE.

WARM BATHS FROM ONE SHILLING.

| TERMS :     |     |     |                |
|-------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| Warm Bath   | 1/- | ... | or 6 Baths 5/6 |
| Ditto       | 1/6 | ... | or " 7/6       |
| Fresh Water | 1/6 | ... | or " 7/6       |
| Ozone Bath  | 3/- | ... | or " 16/6      |
| Sea Bath    | 6d. | ... | or " 2/6       |

Hot and Cold Sea Water sent to all parts of the Town.  
Hot 4d. per can. Cold 2d.

BATHS OF ALL SIZES LET OUT ON HIRE.

**THE SEA-BATHING** is the best on the Coast, being far removed from all sewage matter. **BRIGGS' PATENT BATHING MACHINES** are well-lighted and well-ventilated, and every attention is paid to bathers. A boatman is in constant attendance, the linen is the best and cleanest, and special attention is paid to ladies and children.

Tickets 8d. each or 5s. per Dozen, available for Swimming Bath.

*Swimming Lessons on Moderate Terms. Special arrangements are made with Families and Schools.*

Compare our Linen with that used on other Bathing Establishments. VISITORS are invited to inspect these Baths, which have been thoroughly cleansed and renovated since last season.

**JAMES BRIGGS, Proprietor.**

---

**CLIFTON BATHS, MARGATE.**

**BRIGGS' TEPID SWIMMING BATH**

OPEN DAILY ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

|                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| For GENTLEMEN from                | For LADIES              |
| 6 to 10 a.m., and 12 to 3.30 p.m. | from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. |

Tickets 6d. each, or 5s. per dozen, available for Sea-Bathing.

FRESH SEA-WATER PUMPED IN DAILY.

Fig. 55 Advertisement for the Clifton Baths c1880

This second advertisement (see Fig. 55, above) in *Keble's Illustrated Penny Guide* (Anon. 1889: 41) claimed the Clifton Baths had been 'established upwards of 100 years', no doubt reproducing a similar claim in 1885:

*'The Clifton Baths on the Fort have been established over one hundred years, and are fitted with every convenience for hot or cold fresh water or sea bathing, and a large swimming bath has been added by the proprietor, Mr. Briggs. Under [his] new management several excellent and needed improvements have been carried out; a new entrance from the Fort to the sands made, and seats provided on the terraces, and other attractions have been added to the many which are provided for the visitor.'* (*Isle of Thanet Gazette*, 1885)



This was, of course, inaccurate. (This claim may lie behind recent assertions that the Clifton Baths were established in the C18th).

While Briggs managed to keep out of trouble more than other tenants and owners of the Baths, the Refreshment Rooms engendered one relatively minor incident when he refused to sell alcohol to a visitor to the Baths. The judge, however, agreed with him.

**INTERESTING TO LICENSED VICTUALLERS.—**  
At the monthly sitting of the Margate county court, on Thursday, a case of considerable interest to licensed victuallers came before His Honour, G. Russell, Esq. It was a case in which an action was brought nominally to recover the sum of £1 damages from Mr. James Briggs, the licensed proprietor of the refreshment room at the Clifton Baths, Margate, but the real question in dispute was the right of the defendant to refuse to serve the plaintiff with refreshments, he being able to pay and being at the time in a fit condition to be served. On the 24th April last, the plaintiff George Snow, a plumber and glazier in the town, applied for refreshments at the defendant's bar, and was refused by the manager, the reason assigned for refusal being the plaintiff's disorderly conduct and filthy language on former occasions. Evidence of was produced, but it was contended by the plaintiff's solicitor that the real cause of refusal was a quarrel between the plaintiff and the defendant's manager, and it was submitted that a private quarrel of this kind did not justify defendant giving orders that plaintiff should not be served, the common law of the land compelling a licensed victualler to serve a person who applied in a fit state and at a proper hour. His Honour, however, took a different view of the matter, and held that the defendant was perfectly justified in refusing to serve plaintiff after his previous bad conduct, independently of the quarrel between the plaintiff and the manager. He stated for

Fig. 56 1876 (LHM notes)

Of the few other facts we know of Briggs, it seems that Dr Price stayed on, and was still working alongside him in 1873<sup>97</sup>; that he was involved with, in 1893, the John Moore refreshment rooms and, in the Drill Shed, with Artillery Volunteers. Also, that Briggs' wife apparently had twins:

**Margate—October 9, at Clifton Baths, the wife of Mr. J. Briggs, of twins (sons).**

Fig. 57 *Thanet Advertiser* 13 October 1877

<sup>97</sup> *Whitstable Times* 1 February; *Thanet Advertiser*, 24 May 1873

## 9.54 The Indoor Swimming Pool, Built c1885

At some point prior to 1885, Briggs 'added a swimming bath of good dimensions,'<sup>98</sup> within the north-east corner of the site.

It seems unlikely Briggs would have embarked on such a project before the 'Foreshore' case had been concluded in 1881, suggesting a date within the first half of the 1880s.

A note at MLHM cites a 'Clifton Baths advert' of 1883, which does not seem to mention the new pool, but an advert of 1885 (see Fig. 66, below) refers to a swimming instructor at the new pool, who had been active the previous season. Assuming that this was at the Clifton Baths, then that would suggest that the new indoor pool had been completed by early in 1884.

The Clifton Baths continued, occasionally to be referred to as Briggs' Baths, into the early C20th.

**CLIFTON BATHS, MARGATE.**  
**BRIGGS'**  
**SWIMMING BATH,**  
**OPEN DAILY ALL THE YEAR ROUND.**

For GENTLEMEN from 6 to 10 a.m., and 1 to 8.30 p.m. | For LADIES from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**M**ADAME DARNLEY MITCHELL, who has taught successfully over 150 young ladies the art of swimming during the last twelve months, and who is the holder of four medals and several cups presented to her for her cleverness in the water, ATTENDS DAILY during ladies' hours, and PROFESSOR MITCHELL during gentlemen's hours.

Price 6d each, or 5s per doz. available for Sea-Bathing.

The water is never under 70 degrees of heat during the winter months from Sea Water pumped in daily.

---

**THE CLIFTON BATHS,**  
**CLIFTONVILLE, MARGATE** *Established upwards of 100 Years.*

WARM BATHS 1s. EACH      COLD 1s. 6d. EACH  
OZONE BATHS 3s.      FRESH WATER 1s. 6d.  
Hot and Cold Sea Water sent to all parts of the Town.  
Hot 4d. per can. Cold 2d.

BATHS OF ALL KINDS LET OUT ON WHEEL

**T**HE SEA BATHING is the most on the Coast, being far removed from all sewage matter. BRIGGS' PATENT BATHING MACHINES are well lighted and well ventilated, and every attention is paid to bathers. A boomer is in constant attendance, the floor is the best and strongest, and special attention is paid to ladies and children.

Tickets 6d. each or 5s. per Dozen, available for Swimming Bath.

Special Arrangements are made for INVALIDS and INFANTS.

Fig.66 Clifton Baths 1885

<sup>98</sup> Anon 1885: 40.

The construction of this pool may well have been in reaction to Erasmus Wilson's widely publicised donation of a new wing to the Royal Sea Bathing Hospital on the other side of town. This wing, which was planned in 1881 and executed in 1882, included a large, heated salt water swimming bath (see Seary 2006).

The Clifton Baths' indoor swimming pool would, however, prove far more successful than that at the hospital.

The hospital pool closed early in the C20th, and the Clifton Baths could subsequently offer *'the only structure of its kind in Thanet. Sea bathing with the chill off'* (see Evans 2003: 13).

The Clifton Baths' indoor pool was housed in a large, rectangular, brick building, under a gabled roof with a long, louvered roof-light at the ridge. Two, staggered gables, at the west end of the building, bore painted signage: *'Clifton Tepid Swimming Bath'* and *'Clifton Swimming Bath / 6d each'*, respectively.

Like the various mid-C19th additions which had been made to the Clifton Baths, the indoor pool was terraced deeply into the slope at the edge of the site, so as not to interrupt the sea view from Ethelbert Terrace.

The dimensions of the pool, we are told, were *'60 ft. x 22 ft. and from 3 ft. to 6 ft. in depth'* and it held *'many hundred thousands of gallons of sea water'*.<sup>99</sup>

A photograph of the interior, c1905, shows rows of timber changing rooms along each side of the pool and diving platforms at one end.

The water was tepid, and was intended for swimming, not just bathing. Swimming, as a popular activity, was a leisure development of the previous, few decades.

Instructors would have been on hand, and *'Swimming lessons'* were offered *'on moderate terms'* with *'special arrangements [for] families and schools'* (Anon 1889: 41).

The idea of communal bathing evidently still held fears for some, however:

*'For people worried that the local baths were a likely place to pick up some nasty ailment, there was an answer offered by James Briggs at the Clifton Baths.*

*He provided a unique service to his customers whereby they checked the cleanliness of the pool. Brigg's tepid swimming bath is the only one that can be seen empty and thoroughly cleansed and is repleat [sic] with every sanitary arrangement.'* [Research note at MLHM, based on an article in Keble's Gazette, 1887].

The water was completely emptied and *'renewed at every tide [by] two 4-h.p. steam pumps.'* [Guidebook dated c1896; unattributed photocopy at MLHM.]

Various improvements to the bath would be made the following decade (Seary 2007).

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<sup>99</sup> Guidebook dated c1896; unattributed photocopy at MLHM.

The indoor swimming pool survived into the mid-C20th, operating alongside the Lido outdoor pool for over a decade (although it may have been rather tired, even by 1912).

*'Clifton Baths, Cliftonville. These extensive works and subterranean excavations were originally designed and carried out by the late John Boys, Esq. J.P. a solicitor, residing at Margate. They are fitted up with every convenience for warm and cold baths. Mr Briggs, the proprietor, has also erected a swimming bath of good dimensions' (Anon 1889: 41).*

Probably, the nearby inlet in the cliff, which we have suggested may have been associated with an early C19th lime kiln, was filled in at this time in order to provide a forecourt to the Clifton Baths. It was concealed behind the rather bulbous, projecting, brick revetment in the eastern half of the Clifton Baths site.

This revetment agreed in level with the indoor swimming pool, if rather lower than the rest of the Clifton Baths' site.

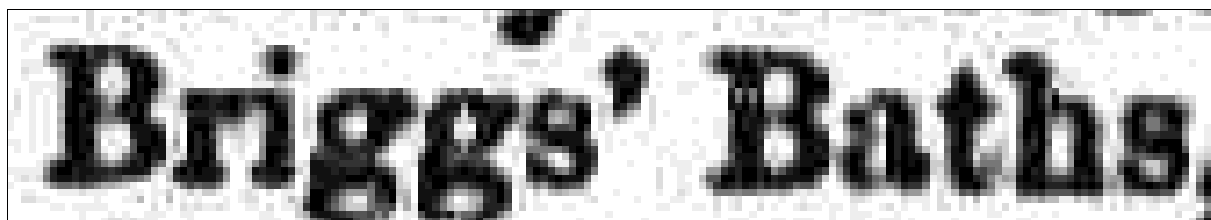


Fig. 67 Thanet Advertiser 18 September 1886



Fig. 68 Late C19th photograph of the indoor swimming pool (MLHM) and Briggs' salt water deliveries



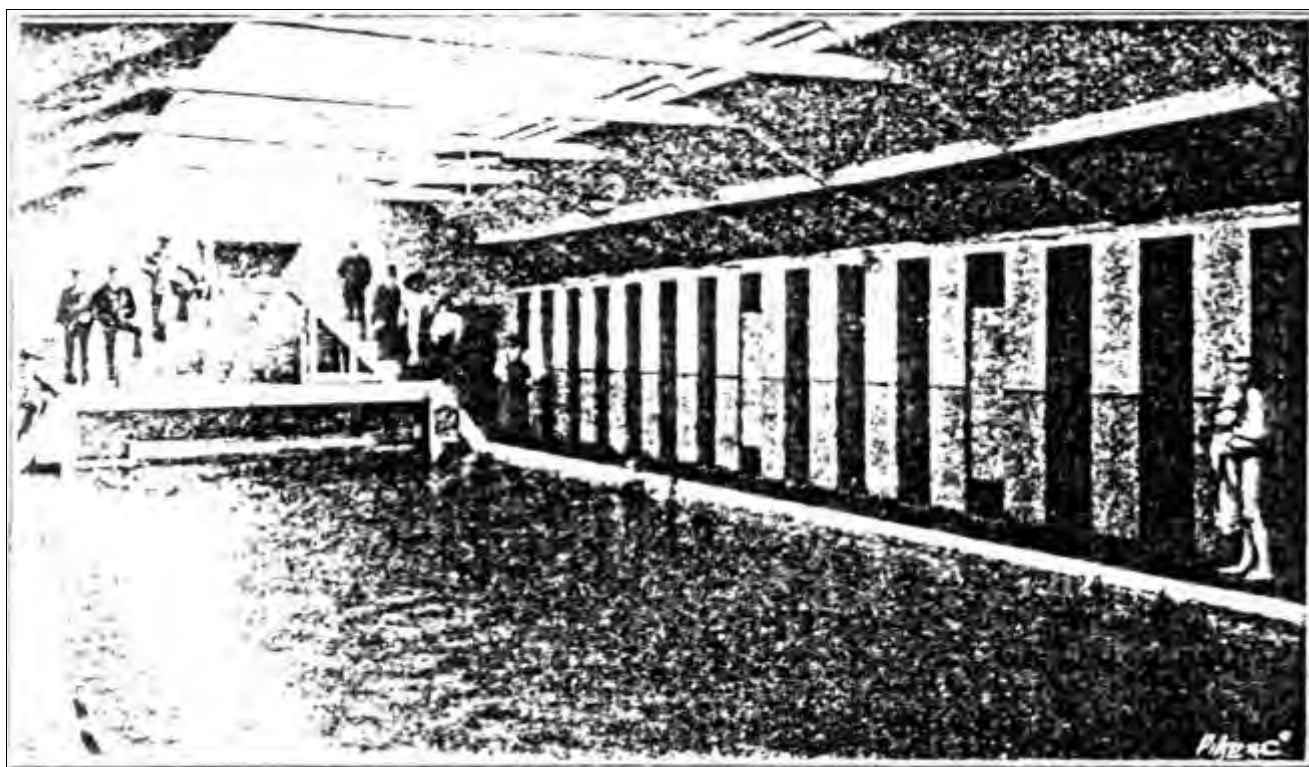


Fig. 69 The interior of the indoor swimming pool, from a tourist brochure of 1903



Fig. 70 A better view of the Clifton Baths interior, 1931  
It doesn't appear to have changed much during the intervening period.

### 9.55 Thomas Pettman, Tenant of the Clifton Baths, c1891

At some point in the late 1860s, the Newgate bathing station passed to Thomas Lewis Pettman's son, of the same name, and daughter, Charlotte Pettman.

By 1871, the Newgate establishment was also in the sole charge of Charlotte Pettman, who operated the baths during much of the late C19th.

*'There are two bathing establishments close to each other both belonging to the same family, although Mrs Charlotte Pettman, the owner and manageress of one establishment, has no business connection with her brother, the proprietor of the other.'* <sup>100</sup>

### 9.56 Purchase of the Foreshore, c1892

Early in 1892, the Council considered *'the purchase of the foreshore [...] from the east end of the Marine Palace Wall to the boundary of St John's parish near Kingsgate,'* in order that they might *'exert proper control'* over it.

They had the opportunity to buy it from the Marquess of Conygham for £3,000, including *'the leases granted to Mr T Pettman and Mrs C Pettman.'*

It was agreed that *'while it would be a great advantage to the town, it would also be a profitable transaction,'* and *'the motion was carried unanimously.'* <sup>101</sup>

This purchase seems to have gone ahead as the Council are known to have owned the foreshore in the early C20th.

### 9.57 An Attempt to Sell the Clifton Baths, 1893

By 1893, there had evidently been further developments in Chancery relating to the Clifton Baths. The *Thanet Advertiser* 15 July 1893 reported:

*'Preliminary announcement.  
In the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division.—Parker v Reeve, Margate.  
Important sale of the following valuable freehold properties forming a portion of the estate of the late Thomas Dalby Reeve, Esq, JP.  
Messrs HE Foster and Cranfield will sell by auction, at the White Hart Hotel, Margate, during August, the following valuable freehold properties: Nos 14, 15, and 16, Eaton Road, Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Dalby Road, Nos 26, 28, 29, 24, and 41, Hawley Street and 3 houses in Spellers Court adjoining, a house in King Street, Nos 31, 33, and 35, Fort Road, a house in Fort Hill, a shop in the Arcade with extensive vaults, &c, adjoining, Dane Cottage, Nos 9 and*

<sup>100</sup> {Harrison GHW 1891 *Travels in various parts of Europe during the years 1888, 1889, 1890; being a short and practical account*}.

<sup>101</sup> *Whitstable Times* 23 April 1892.

*10, Belgrave Villas, Nos 1 and 2 Grotto Hill, the Grotto, the Clifton Baths, with drill shed and stabling in Ethelbert Road. The whole let on leases and agreements, producing an income of about £1,300 per annum.'*<sup>102</sup>

An advert in the *Times*, two days later, added properties in St Johns Villas, Paradise Street, and Fort Parade, bringing the tally up to 'about forty houses' and the whole rental to 'about £1350 per annum.'

The date of the auction was set for 4 September, by which time the 'aggregate income' of the premises on offer had increased to £1,155. They now comprised:

*'Nos 9 and 10, Belgrave Villas, Nos 14, 15, and 16, Eaton Terrace, Eaton Road, Nos 24, 26, 28, and 41, Hawley Street, No 16, King Street, and a licensed slaughterhouse in King Street occupied by Mr Redman; No 6 Paradise Street, Nos 31, 33 and 35 (formerly Nos 1, 2, and 3) Fort Hill, together with the extensive vaults under this and adjoining properties, entered from Neptune Square; two shops in Fort Parade, occupied by Mr Moore; the Grotto, No 1, Grotto Cottages and Nos 1 and 2, Grotto Hill; the Clifton Baths, with Drill Hall, Sergeant's quarters and stabling in Ethelbert Road; Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Dalby Road, and Nos 1, 2, and 3 St John's Villas, St Peter's footpath.'*<sup>103</sup>

The *Islington Gazette* commented:

*'Not only the Grotto, but the Clifton Baths, went under the hammer – good old Briggs's, with the factory-chimney and the intensely ugly front that is enough to frighten the little fishes in the sea.'*<sup>104</sup>

The Clifton Baths, however, failed to reach a satisfactory price:

*'The principal lot, the Clifton Baths, was put up at £4,000 and brought in at £7,500. We understand that an offer of £9,500 subsequently made, was refused. The auctioneers referred to this lot as one that should be purchased by the Margate Town Council, in order to improve the Promenade.'*<sup>105</sup>

## **9.58 Parker and Reeve, Proprietors and Freeholders of the Clifton Baths, c1893**

On the 12 June 1895, there was an Indenture, for disposal of assets, between Herbert Reeve and Frederick Parker and Another (KHLC: EK/U244/1).

<sup>102</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 15 July 1893.

<sup>103</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 August 1893.

<sup>104</sup> *Islington Gazette* 7 September 1893.

<sup>105</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 9 September 1893.

Briggs is still listed as tenant in the *Isle of Thanet Directory and Guide* 1893, but, soon after this, however – certainly by 1895 – he had left, and members of the Reeve family and their relations by marriage, the Parkers, were running the Clifton Baths directly.

Parker and Reeve seem, almost immediately, to have begun very extensive alterations, replacing much of the machinery and opening-up the site.

### **9.59 The Upper Terrace Extended onto the Roof of the Former Bathing Rooms 1895**

By about 1895, the roof of the Bathing Rooms looks to have been converted into a terrace – known as the Upper Terrace. This terrace was contiguous with the cliff-top, and connected, by a bridge, to the cliff-top west of the Clifton Baths. Its castellated parapet was taken down and railings provided all round.

Probably, by now, all the private baths were housed in the south range.

Late C19th views of the Clifton Baths adopt this new vantage point, which is shown crowded with visitors in a turn-of-the-century postcard.

There was a flight of stairs down from Cliff Terrace, and much of the fabric associated with the former Boiler House had been tidied away. The two obelisk-chimneys were probably long gone.

Access to the north-western sea-defences was from the Bathers' Terrace.

### **9.60 The 'Clifton Baths Market'**

In an advert of 1896, William George Holtom advertised in Keble's General Advertiser for a hairdresser to work at his salon for 30s a week at what he called the 'Clifton Baths Market.'

This is interesting in view of Parker and Reeve's plans for the Clifton Baths site.

The circulation of the site seems to have been opened up by the construction of several, new staircases, both leading down from Cliff Terrace and Ethelbert Terrace, and between the different levels of the site.

This reflected the fact that the Clifton Baths were no longer an attraction where one paid for admission, but one where one wandered freely and paid for particular services, such as bathing machines, the swimming pool, hairdressing and medical baths. This represented a major change in the character of the attraction.

This was part of other major changes intended to alter the character of the baths, including the alteration, perhaps reduction, of the sea-defences fronting the Bathing Rooms and mouth of the Lower Reservoir.

*'The extensive range of buildings known as Brigg's Baths is this year [1896] either being renovated or rebuilt. The property has been acquired by an enterprising company, who also intend to improve the bathing ground under the cliff.'* (Anon 1896).

## 9.61 Waterology

The interest in water at the Clifton Baths took many and varied forms.

An advertisement, in Keble's General Advertiser, of 1896 (Fig. 79), offered deliveries of softened water from the baths *'by Doulton's process'* that are *'unanimously recommended for drinking, mixing and domestic purposes'*. (Also, see Fig. 71, below.)

Sea water from the Clifton Baths was also delivered. Deliveries continued into the early C20th from one George Maylum who:

*'used to tour Margate with a horse and cart selling sea water for medical purposes [...] he made calls at hotels, boarding houses and doctor's residences in Margate delivering sea water and brine from the Clifton Baths'*.<sup>106</sup>

Visitors were also invited to inspect the new water heating at the Clifton Baths:

*'which [had] since last season been entirely remodelled at an enormous cost, whereby every detail [had] been minutely studied, rendering it one of the most unique [sic] establishments on the coast. ... A new and expensive system of water heating for the private baths and swimming bath [had] been carried out by an eminent London firm of engineers, and the linen used throughout the establishment [was] thoroughly washed and dried by Mr ED Reeve's Patent laundry machine and hydro-extractor (Wandsworth SE), as [was] now used in the principal laundries, and other large establishments in London and the provinces.'*

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<sup>106</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 23 July 1946.

The Proprietors of THE CLIFTON BATHS beg to announce, that although the Breakwaters, &c., are so greatly damaged, the Private & Swimming Baths Sa'oon, &c., are uninjured, and open for the convenience of the Public.

**THE CLIFTON BATHS**  
CLIFTONVILLE, MARGATE

**WARM BATHS FROM ONE SHILLING**

**Terms :**

|                  |         |                 |          |
|------------------|---------|-----------------|----------|
| Warm Baths ..... | 1s. 6d. | or 6 Baths..... | 5s. 6d.  |
| Ditto .....      | 1s. 6d. | " .....         | 7s. 6d.  |
| Fresh Water..... | 1s. 6d. | " .....         | 7s. 6d.  |
| Ozone Bath.....  | 3s. 6d. | " .....         | 16s. 6d. |
| Sea Bath .....   | 6s. 6d. | " .....         | 2s. 6d.  |

Hot and Cold Sea Water sent to all parts of the town.  
Hot, 4d. per Can; Cold, 2d.

Softened Water, for drinking and domestic purposes  
4d. per two gallons.

**BATHS OF ALL SIZES LET OUT ON HIRE.**

**THE SEA BATHING** is the best on the Coast.

**TICKETS** 6d. each; or 5s. per dozen. Available also for the Swimming Bath.

**TEPID SWIMMING BATH**  
OPEN DAILY.  
Professional Swimming Master and Mist ess in constant attendance.  
PROFESSOR GEO. PLUMS ..... Master.

Fig. 71 Advertisement showing reference to softened water

Many of these improvements seem to reflect the Reeve family's technological interests in the chemical and physical manipulation of water, and in laundry machinery.

There are several obvious avenues for further documentary research in this area, and probably some of the associated plant and plumbing survives below ground.

The proprietors, at this time, were evidently intent on maintaining a reputation as a fairly serious, quasi-medical bathing complex – an approach pitched directly at middle-class sensibilities.

*'These extensive works and subterraneous excavations were originally designed and carried out by the late John Boys, Esq JP a solicitor, residing at Margate.*

*They are fitted up with every convenience for warm and cold baths. There is a swimming bath of good dimensions, and the hot and cold salt water and fresh water private baths have recently been greatly improved by the present proprietors, who have spent a considerable amount of money in making this one of the most unique establishments to be found on the coast.'* (Anon 1896).

*THE CLIFTON BATHS, Cliftonville.*

*These fully-equipped and excellently managed baths, established upwards of a century ago, are now under the direction of the proprietors and free-holders, viz, the family of the late Alderman Reeve. They occupy a*

*prominent and convenient position on the cliff, facing the sea, and partly built into the chalk beneath the level of the roadway. A very considerable area of land is covered by the various buildings, which are thoroughly adapted to the requirements of the several departments, all the arrangements throughout having been made with the view of providing for residents and visitors a complete *établissement des bains* of the highest class.*

#### **THE SWIMMING BATH**

*The swimming bath is 60 ft. x 22 ft., and from 3 ft. to 6 ft. in depth, the temperature being maintained at 72 Fahrenheit. It contains many hundred thousands of gallons of sea water, which is renewed at every tide, and two 4-hp steam pumps, which were formerly in use for this purpose, have been superseded by new and extensive machinery, keeping up a regular in-flow.*

*The bath is kept open all the year round, the two hours between 10 am and 12 am being reserved for ladies. The system of heating is of the latest modern type, and has been fitted up at very great expense, so as to obtain a constant supply of water passing through the heaters to both the swimming and private baths.*

*Another noticeable feature, too, is that all the linen used in the establishment is thoroughly washed and dried by means of Mr ED Reeve's Patent Laundry Machine and Hydro-extractors, as now used in many of the principal laundries in London and the provinces.*

*A professional master and mistress are in daily attendance in the swimming bath to give lessons to ladies, gentlemen, or children in the art of natation; whilst in all the other departments experienced employés [sic] are at hand to minister to the wants of customers.*

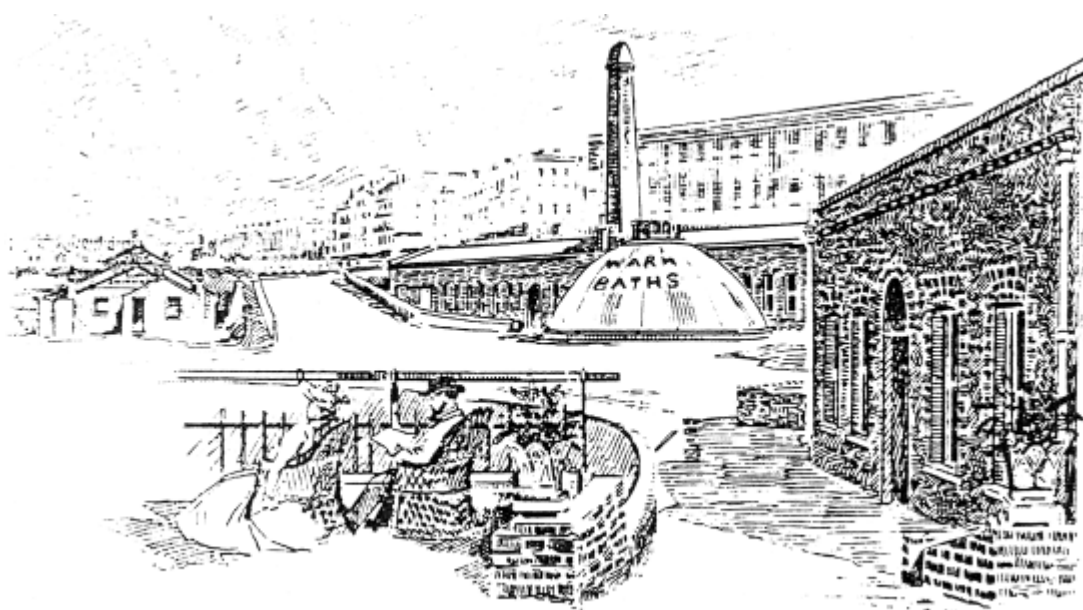
#### **WARM BATHS.**

*Warm baths, with fresh or sea water, ozone baths, shower baths, etc, are all available.*

*Since last season the proprietors have almost entirely re-modelled the establishment, at a very heavy cost, and it has also been very handsomely re-decorated, the appointments and appliances throughout being of the most perfect character, thus rendering it one of the finest places of the kind on the South coast.*

*Special arrangements have been made for families and schools, at reduced rates, for season or yearly tickets, and the general terms in force are on an extremely moderate scale.' (Unattributed photocopy, dated c1896, at MLHM).*





GENERAL VIEW OF CLIFTON BATHS.

Fig. 72 Engraving from a guide of c1896 (MLHM)

Note the top of the subterranean 'dome'. The view is apparently taken from the roof of the old Bathing Rooms. Had this now been remodelled as a promenade?



Fig. 73 Photograph dated c1895 (MLHM)

This shows the late C19th Boiler House, Drill Hall and Indoor Swimming Pool. The retaining wall behind the bathers' terrace has been encased in cement.

Thereafter, little changed until 1907 when the Third Edition of the Ordnance Survey was published (see Fig. 74, below).

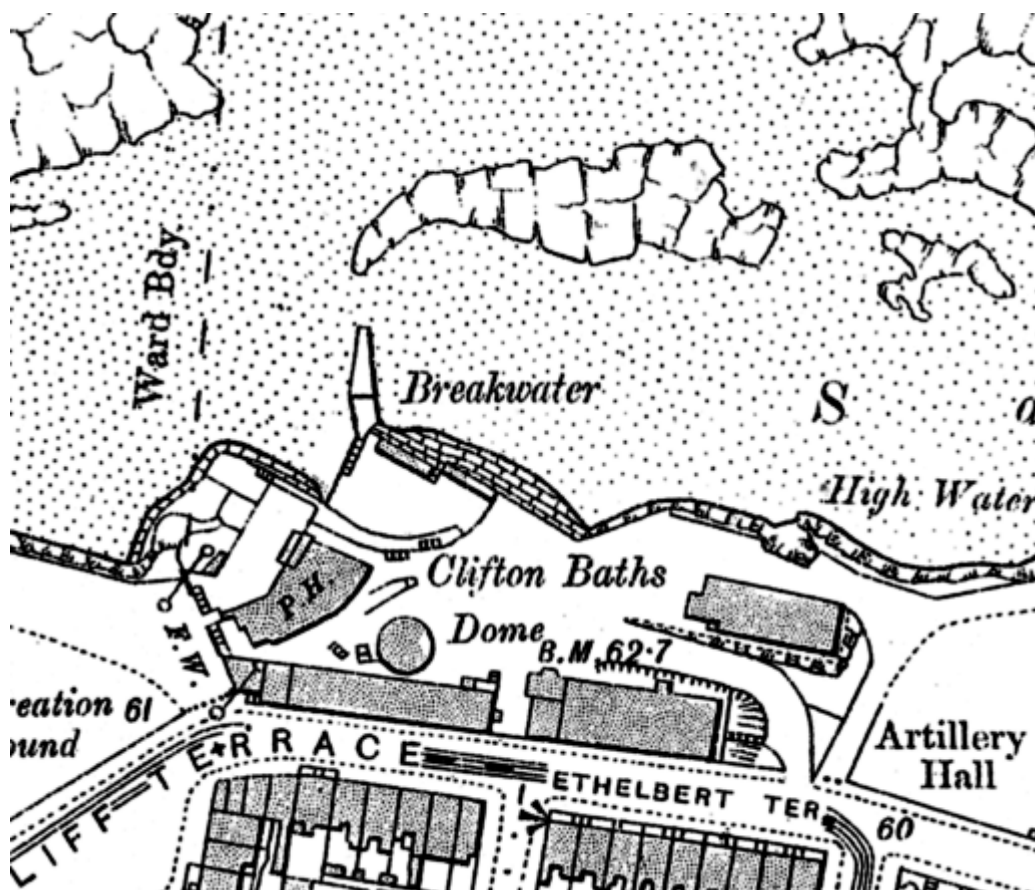


Fig. 74 Detail of 1907 *Ordnance Survey*

Has the roof of the Bathing Rooms been flattened to form a promenade?

## 9.62 The Clifton Baths' Saloon

The Clifton Baths' Saloon was established, as a small public house, in the former Waiting Room (perhaps extending into the former Porter's Lodge).

In 1887, (Keble's Thanet), under James Briggs, this was still a 'Reading Room'. The same directory, in 1899, gives it its new name of the 'Clifton Baths Saloon'.

A view of the interior, with grand public-house carpentry, is reproduced below (Fig. 75). It looks as if the original, round-headed windows and doorway had now been replaced, the former, with large sash windows. A fascia, fixed to the parapet, suggests the pub was tied to 'Bass & Co.'

By 1917, there was '*snooker in the bar.*'<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938.



Fig. 75 The interior of the Clifton Baths' saloon, from a tourist brochure of 1903

### 9.63 Modernised bathing machines, c1896

When Joe Bradley was first employed at the Clifton Baths around 1896, one of his *'first jobs was to modernise these machines by removing the canopies and making smaller wooden wheels for them.'*<sup>108</sup>

These alterations clearly reflected late C19th changes we have noted in the use of bathing machines.

Might the smaller wheels have adversely affected their stability or manoeuvrability? In 1898, for example, one William Cundall went to bathe at the Clifton Baths one morning, and:

*'On coming out of the water found his box submerged up to the seat. While dressing, he heard a shout of hold tight, and did so, and he then felt the machine go over, and the water rushed through the skylight. The machine was completely under the water, and he made for the door and forced his way out [...]. It seemed the horses had been pulling at right angles with the object of getting the machine away from the water, and in doing so had capsized it.'*<sup>109</sup>

It may also have been at this time that the name of 'Brigg's Baths' on the side of the machines was painted out and replaced with that of 'Clifton Baths,' although the Clifton Baths continued, occasionally, to be referred to as Briggs' Baths, into the early C20th.

<sup>108</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938.

<sup>109</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 5 November 1898.



Fig. 76 Turn-of-the-century postcard (MLHM)  
(Also, see 16.6.)



Fig. 77 Bathing machines at the Clifton Baths c1895





Fig. 78 Detail of the Second Edition *Ordnance Survey*, resurveyed 1896

44 Kable's General Advertiser.

ESTABLISHED UPWARDS OF 100 YEARS.

## THE CLIFTON BATHS

*Cliftonville, Margate.*

| WARM BATHS |             | FROM ONE SHILLING. |                |
|------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| TERM       | Warm Bath   | 1/-                | or 6 Baths 5/6 |
|            | Ditto       | 1/6                | or " 7/6       |
|            | Fresh Water | 1/6                | or " 7/6       |
|            | Ozone Bath  | 3/-                | or " 10/6      |
|            | Sea Bath    | 6d.                | or " 2/6       |

Hot and Cold Sea Water sent to all parts of the Town.  
Hot 6d. per ctn. Cold 2d. Baths of all sizes let out on Hire.

**SOFTENED WATER** specially prepared on the premises by Doulton's Process, unanimously recommended for drinking, mixing and domestic purposes. Delivered at 4d. per 2 gallons.

### SEA-BATHING.

THE Sea-Bathing is the best on the Coast, being far removed from all Sewage matter. THE BATHING MACHINES are well-lighted and well-ventilated, and every attention is paid to Bathers. A bathman is in constant attendance, the linen is the best and cleanest, and special attention is paid to ladies and children.

**TICKETS SIXPENCE each or 5/- per Dozen, available for Swimming Bath.**

Swimming Lessons on Moderate Terms. Special arrangements are made with Families and Schools.

VISITORS are invited to inspect these Baths, which have since last season been entirely remodelled at an enormous cost, whereby every detail has been minutely studied, rendering it one of the most unique Establishments on the Coast.

A new and expensive system of WATER HEATING for the Private Baths and Swimming Bath has been carried out by an eminent London Firm of Engineers, and the LINEN used throughout the Establishment is thoroughly washed and dried by Mr. E. D. Rowe's Patent Laundry Machine and Hydro-Extractor (Wandsworth, S.E.), as now used in the Principle Laundries, and other large Establishments in London and the Provinces.

### THE TEPID SWIMMING BATH OPEN ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

For GENTLEMEN From 8 to 10 a.m., and 12 to 8 p.m. For LADIES From 10 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Tickets 6d. each, or 5/- per dozen, available for Sea-Bathing.

FRESH SEA-WATER PUMPED IN DAILY.

PROFESSIONAL SWIMMING MASTER AND MISTRESS IN CONSTANT ATTENDANCE.

This Bath has been entirely renovated and re-decorated since last Season, and has been connected up with the new system of Hot Water.

### THE BATHS SALOON-REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT.

This Department has been entirely re-arranged, and a Handsome Saloon Bar for the convenience of Ladies and Gentlemen has been added. All articles sold in this Department are of Superior Quality and at London Prices.

Beers & Co.'s Acetated Waters prepared from Softened Filtered Water.

The softened water, prepared on the premises, is supplied in this Bath.

WORTH SENT OUT TO ANY PART OF THE TOWN.

SHAVING AND SHAMPOOING SALOON.

Fig. 79 An advertisement of 1896

## 9.64 Edward Howard, New Tenant and the New Use of Technology

By 1903 (*Kelly's Directory*, the Clifton Baths were again operated by a tenant, Edward Howard.

His tenancy saw the beginnings of a technological, recreational reinvention of the complex, which, for a short time, took on some of the characteristics of a seaside funfair.

He also introduced a cinema into the old Drill Hall, a cliff-lift down to the sands (both in 1910) and a fairground.

These additions were evidently designed to broaden the appeal of the complex, which may well, by now, have been struggling to retain its wealthier patrons.

Howard's innovations were not universally welcomed, as we shall see, and were subsequently, in part, reversed.

## 9.65 Licensing of the Clifton Baths, 1897

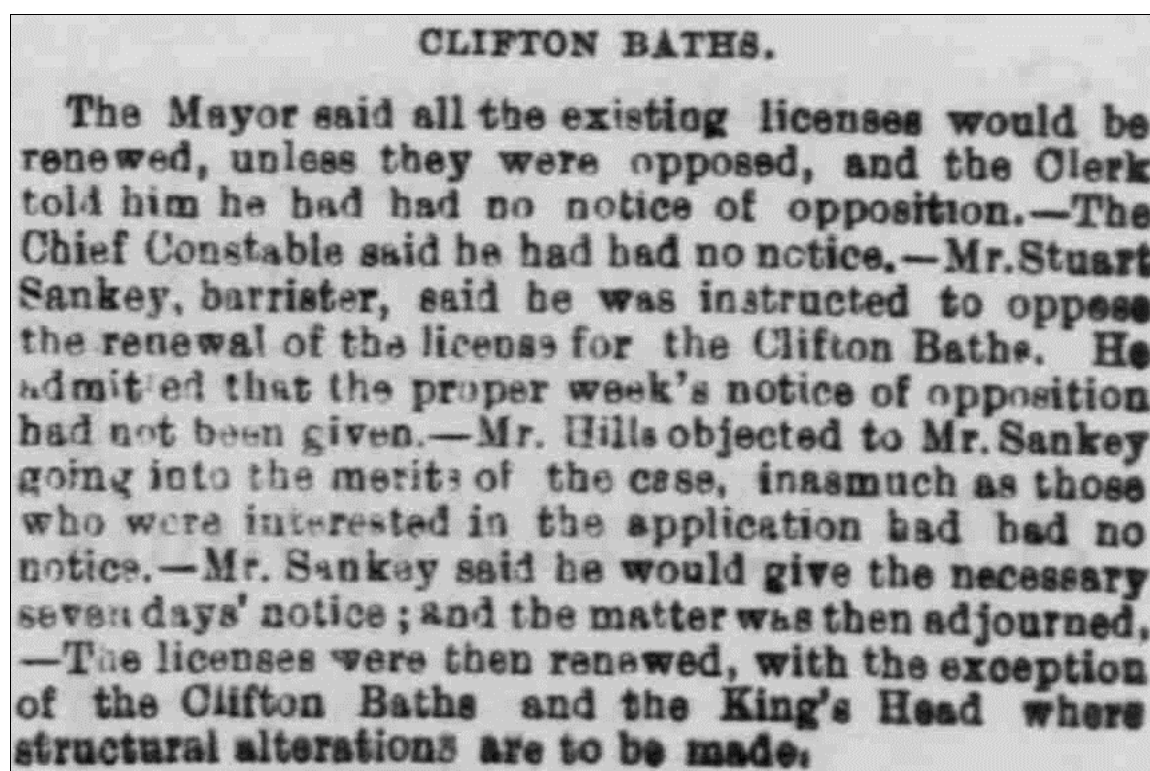


Fig. 80 *Whitstable Times* 11 September 1897



White Hart, were approved. The old license of the Clifton Baths was renewed. The Hereward boarding-house plans were approved, but the application for a spirit license was not granted. The application of Mrs. Hearne for a provisional license was not granted. The High Cliffe application was approved. Mr. H. D. Reeve's for spirits, the Metropolitan and Provincial Co. for beer, and Mr. Ames' for bottled beer, were granted. The application for a music license for Clifton Baths was not granted; Mr. Munns' (on account of condition) was not granted. The transfer of the music license for St. John's Hall was granted.

Fig. 81 *Whitstable Times* 2 October 1897

Mr. Shea applied on behalf of Messrs. Parker and Reeves, as trustees, for a renewal of the licence of the Clifton Baths.—Mr. Sankey, barrister, said he was instructed, at the annual licensing session, to apply for an adjournment of the licence on the ground that a certain nuisance existed on the Ethelbert enclosure, but it was removed on the following morning, and he now offered no opposition. These two adjourned licences were then renewed.

Fig. 82 *Whitstable Times* 9 October 1897

Mr. Shea applied, on behalf of Messrs. F. Parker and Arthur Reeves, for a music and dancing license for a portion of the Clifton Baths premises, viz., on the gravelled space near the Dome. He also applied for a license for the Artillery Drill-hall, which would only be used when the weather was unfit for entertainments outside. Mr. Arthur Reeves gave evidence in support of the application. Mr. Stuart Sankey, barrister, opposed on behalf of Dr. Price, Dr. Nichol, and others, who strongly objected to any license being granted for an *ad hoc* entertainment on those premises. He handed in a memorial signed by residents in the district, who strongly objected to the application, as they considered that no new music and dancing license was needed there.

Fig. 83 *Whitstable Times* 9 October 1897

## 9.66 The Great Storm, 29 November 1897

The great storm of 29 November 1897 seems to have again damaged the sea-defences at the Clifton Baths, and some of the bathing machines *'were reduced to matchwood.'*<sup>110</sup>

A contemporary report says:

*'The damage done by the storm at Margate has been estimated at £50,000. The jetty decking has been completely torn up, the Marine Palace sea walls and the Clifton Baths severely damaged, and the sea walls at Westgate and Birchington also partly destroyed.'*<sup>111</sup>

The storm may not have been entirely negative in its effects on the Clifton Baths.

It destroyed, outright, a direct competitor, the recently constructed 'Marine Palace' (see drawing in Fig. 84, below) on the foreshore a little way to the west,<sup>112</sup> and this is probably the significance of the following, undated and unattributed quotation among the research notes at MLHM:

*'The Proprietors of THE CLIFTON BATHS beg to announce that although the Breakwaters, &c are so greatly damaged, the Private & Swimming Baths [and] Saloon, are uninjured, and open for the convenience of the Public.'*

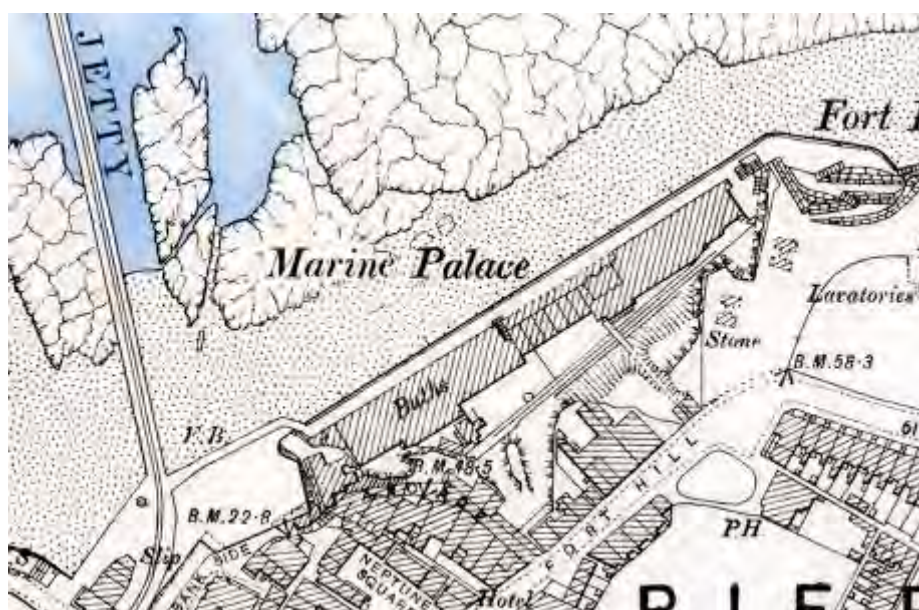


Fig. 84 Marine Palace at The Rendezvous

<sup>110</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938.

<sup>111</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post* 1 December 1897.

<sup>112</sup> *'The Marine Palace and Baths. – This may be considered one of the principal ornaments of the town, situated under the Fort Cliffs. It may be entered from either the jetty or fort. Here is an inviting promenade, 1000 feet in length, which is enlivened by the music of an excellent band. Evening concerts and balls are given in the large hall ... The Marine Baths connected with the establishment are kept supplied with fresh sea water at every tide, and are open daily. Here, Professor Finney gives illustrations of and instructions in, the art of swimming'* (Anon. 1887).

## 9.67 License for the Ethelbert Enclosure

The license was renewed, despite some local opposition to it in that '*the Council had been petitioned not to allow the entertainments to be given there.*' (See Figs. 85 and 86, below.)

AN UNLICENSED PLACE.—*Albert Entwistle*, 1, Thanet Road, was summoned for using a certain place, to wit, a piece of land situate between Ethelbert Crescent and the Sea for public singing and music without being licensed so to do on the 26th ult.—The Town Clerk prosecuted and Mr. Shea defended.—The Town Clerk said there was recently a case before them under the same section of the act, which the bench had dismissed and had consented to state a case on; but he contended that that in no way governed this case. In this case, an enclosed piece of land had been let for concerts, and a stage had been erected for the performances. The Council had been petitioned not to allow the entertainments to be given there. The entertainments were given by the *Pierrot al fresco* singers and the Jubilee glee singers. He pointed out that the Act provided that any room, garden, and other place should not be used for singing, etc., without being licensed. In this case, no license had been obtained. He put in a photograph taken by Mr. G. E. Houghton during the performance on Tuesday morning last.—Sergt. Binnie said he had visited the Ethelbert enclosure, occupied by the defendant. Three performances were given daily. The place was a private garden; and a charge of 2d. was made for admission through two gates. On the 26th ult., he attended all three performances, paying 2d each time. about 300 persons were present in the morning and afternoon, but the evening performance was postponed in consequence of the weather. During each performance, people congregated on the promenade outside the enclosure. He also paid 4d. for a front seat; other seats were 2d. each. There was a stage for the performers, who were in costume, and gave songs, duets, and glees. There was also a ventriloquist.—The Clerk: It was a variety entertainment?—Mr. Kelcey: An *al fresco* entertainment.—The witness added that a piano was used. There was a collection from the audience and those standing outside. The defendant told him he was responsible for the whole troupe, and that he hired the ground of Messrs. Parker and Reeve, they had the money collected of the audience; but that charge for admission and use of the chairs was paid direct to Messrs. Parker and Reeves, but they (the defendant and colleagues) obtained commission on the amount. In cross-examination, he said he had seen 900 or 1,000 listening to the performances.—Mr. Shea referred to the recent summons against Messrs. Bainbridge and Sims on a similar charge on an enclosed piece of land near the Oval, which had been dismissed on the ground, he said, that that was not "a place" within the meaning of the Act.—The Clerk said as the case was *sub judice*, it had better be left to the decision of the judges.—The Town Clerk said the magistrates had granted a case for the superior courts. The Clerk (Mr. Boys) said the magistrates on the evidence dismissed the case.—Mr. Shea said the defendant was also summoned on that day, but, after their worships' decision in the case referred to, this was ordered to stand over till the appeal was heard.—The Town Clerk said this case was not identical with the previous one.—Mr. Shea again asked for an adjournment until the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, and asked that the case be adjourned for three months.—The Town Clerk objected, and the bench decided to hear the case; and Mr. Shea having repeated the grounds of the defence, the defendant was fined 5s and 10s. costs. The magistrates refused to accede to Mr. Shea's application to state a case.

Fig. 85 *Whitstable Times* 11 September 1897



Mr. Shea applied on behalf of Messrs. Parker and Reeves, as trustees, for a renewal of the licence of the Clifton Baths.—Mr. Sankey, barrister, said he was instructed, at the annual licensing session, to apply for an adjournment of the licence on the ground that a certain nuisance existed on the Ethelbert enclosure, but it was removed on the following morning, and he now offered no opposition. These two adjourned licences were then renewed.

Fig. 86 *Whitstable Times* 9 October 1897



Fig. 87 Detail of a turn-of-the-century view of the Clifton Baths (and see photograph below)



Fig. 88 Detail of an early C20th postcard

Note that the chimney of the baths has been 'airbrushed' out for the sake of the view (MLHM).



Figs. 89 and 90 The latest sea defence improvements at the Clifton Baths underway, 1895

## 9.68 The Clifton Baths in the Latest Plan of Margate, 1900



Fig. 91 Detail of Baily's *New Plan of Margate*, 1900

## 9.69 Abortive Purchase by Council, 1902

On 9 September 1902, the town council:

*'Resolved, by a majority of one, to take the necessary steps to put in force compulsory powers for the purchase of the Clifton Baths, &c, Cliftonville. The trustee of the estate estimates the value at £64,000. Among the objects it is proposed to widen the thoroughfare and to have winter gardens.'*<sup>113</sup>

The *Islington Daily Gazette* heard:

*'that the Corporation has determined to purchase Margate's only eyesore, Brigg's Baths, and first bridge it over to make a direct promenade from the Fort to [Hodge's] Flagstaff, and then turn it into a splendid seaside palace with luxurious baths, Turkish as well as selfish, and all sorts of rational entertainments. Both the Corporation and the owners have referred the decision as to price to arbitration. Of course, the ancient ratepayer who lives on Londoners and growls over every farthing spent to attract them is kicking up a row.'*<sup>114</sup>

The decision to purchase was rescinded on 14 October.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> *Daily Telegraph* 11 September 1902.

<sup>114</sup> *Islington Daily Gazette* 18 September 1902.

<sup>115</sup> *Daily Telegraph* 16 October 1902.



**9.70 Overcharging for bathing machines by the Clifton Baths' Proprietors, 1902**

**THE CHARGE FOR BATHING MACHINES.**—At the Margate Borough Petty Sessions, on Wednesday, Frederick Parker and Arthur Reeve, Clifton Baths, were summoned for charging Frank Ashbee ninepence for the use of a bathing machine, being threepence in excess of the amount authorised under the bye-laws for bathing in the borough.—The Magistrates' Clerk said the Town Clerk was away, and both parties were agreeable to a further adjournment for a month.—The case was adjourned accordingly.

Fig. 92 *Thanet Advertiser* 20 September 1902

**BATHING CHARGES.**—There were two prosecutions at Margate on Thursday, having reference to the additional charge recently imposed by bathing machine proprietors at Cliftonville.—In the case of the Clifton Baths, the Town Clerk stated that it was contrary to the bye-laws to charge more than sixpence for the use of a machine, towels, and bathing costume, but ninepence had been charged by Messrs. Reeve, the proprietors.—Mr. Daldy, for the defendants, attempted to show that the bathing was private, that only sixpence was charged for the use of the machine,, and that they were entitled to make an extra charge for the towels and costumes.—The Bench convicted, and imposed a nominal fine of 5s. and costs.—In a similar case against Mr. F. L. Pettman, a like penalty was inflicted.—The magistrates were asked to state a case in each instance, and expressed their willingness to do so.

Fig. 93 *Thanet Advertiser* 18 October 1902

### 9.71 Electric Light, 1905, from a New, Temporary Manager

By 1903, one Leon Parrot was manager of the Clifton Baths.<sup>116</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet Directory* for 1905 tells us:

*'The whole establishment [was] now lighted by an installation of 10,000 arc and incandescent lamps, maintained from the proprietor's own dynamos and batteries.'*

This may have been short-lived, since, by 1906, Edward Howard was again the manager.<sup>117</sup>

### 9.72 A 'Tidal Wave' on 7 January 1905

The Clifton Baths' breakwaters were again battered in January 1905 (See Figs.94 and 95, below).

It is not yet clear whether any significant damage befell them, although there was a *'hurricane ... and the bathers had to grab their clothing and change in the engine-room.'*<sup>118</sup>



<sup>116</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet* 1903.

<sup>117</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet* 1906.

<sup>118</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938.



Figs. 94 and 95 Two views of the effects of the 1905 hurricane

### 9.73 The Third Edition *Ordnance Survey*, Resurveyed 1905

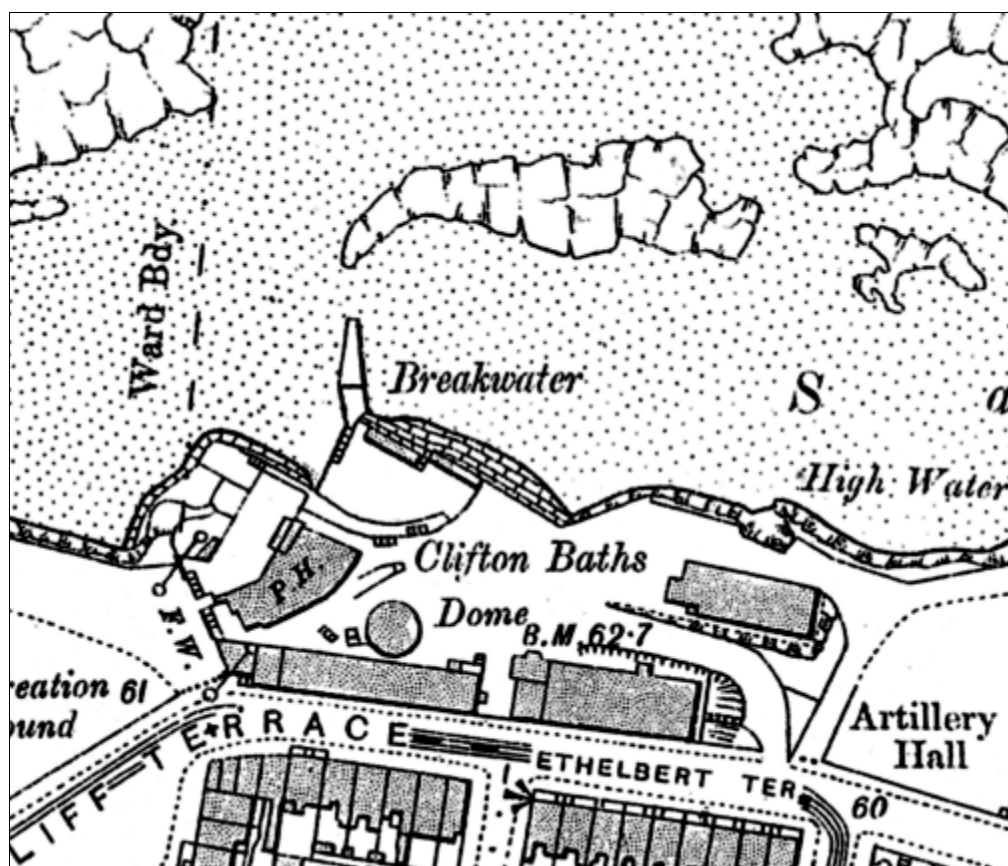


Fig. 96 Third Edition *Ordnance Survey* 1905

### 9.74 Strong's Garage and Motor Co Limited, by 1908

By 1908, Strong's Garage and Motor Co Ltd had been established at the Clifton Baths. By the following year, it was considered one of Strong's '*principal garages.*' <sup>119</sup>

This may well have been in an ephemeral lean-to structure against the southern boundary revetment, between the Boiler House and the late C19th bathrooms, which can be seen in aerial photographs of the 1920s.

### 9.75 A Merry-Go-Round, c1908

By about 1908, Edward Howard had introduced a merry-go-round to the Clifton Baths, presumably on the cliff-top.

Amid other indignities, the introduction of this fairground ride led one local resident to '*protest at the desecration of Cliftonville:*'

*'The merry go round at the Clifton Baths is a positive disgrace [...] do not vulgarise Cliftonville in the name of private enterprise.'* <sup>120</sup>

### 9.76 A New Wall along the Clifton Baths' Cliff-Top, c1908

At some time, before 1910, a new, flint wall was built along the top of the revetment to the east of the Clifton Baths' Saloon.

Early photographs show four cannon placed on the cliff-top, pointing out over this new, long, straight stretch of wall.

This is shown in several early C20th photographs, which give a good impression of this part of the site around this time.



Fig. 97 Detail of a photograph thought to be of 1908, showing the Clifton Baths' cliff-top, looking west

<sup>119</sup> Kelly's Isle of Thanet 1909.

<sup>120</sup> Keble's Gazette July 1908.





Figs. 98 and 99 Photographs showing the newly- built wall atop the revetment



Figs. 100 and 101 C20th views of the Artificial Bay, looking east, with the new wall atop the revetment





Fig. 102 The new wall, from the position where the cliff lift would be built in 1910 (see 8.10)

### 9.77 A New Revetment Wall and the Cliff Lift, 1910

The eastern end of the revetment (see 9.26) was cut back into the chalk, which was left exposed within two broad, segmental-headed, brick arches.

Beyond these, the wall was built out in front of the chalk, straightening out an obtuse, angular concavity in the cliff-face.

This new revetment was headed by a wall of uncoursed, knapped flints bonded with brick, meeting up with the recently completed one immediately to the west (see previous).

A lift was built against this revetment:

*'For the convenience of bathers, the management are building a lift from the sands to the promenade above.'*<sup>121</sup>

The small funicular railway, north of the indoor swimming pool, toward the eastern end of the Clifton Baths, was completed during the 1910 season.

<sup>121</sup> Kelly's Thanet 1910.

It descended westwards from the top of the cliff, in front of the swimming bath, to a small platform on the shore:

*'In recent years the Cliff promenade beyond the Fort has been greatly improved and increasingly popular. With the still further extension of the town along the cliff, it has become necessary to extend the existing [cliff-top] promenade. In the year 1896 several acres were purchased by the Corporation, who hold the remainder on lease. There is a passenger lift situated near the Clifton Baths, constructed by the well-known firm of Messrs Way good. This was completed during last season.'* (Ibid)

The diminutive, railway car was counterbalanced by a weight in a vertical shaft.

Its five-foot, gauge track descended from east to west, down an almost one-in-one concrete slope. This was nestled, for the most part, behind a projecting mass of *in-situ* chalk, passing down the side of a large, new, yellow, brick revetment.



Fig. 103 The funicular railway in action



Figs. 104 and 105  
The Cliff Lift (MLHM)



Fig. 106 Detail of a photograph, thought to be of 1911, showing the new wall at the top of the cliff-lift revetment

### 9.78 The Promenade, on the West Side of the Clifton Baths, c1910

In 1900 (*Times* 13 July), a scheme was devised for the construction of a promenade along the shore extending from the Parade, on the Margate seafront, out to the Clifton Baths.

The details were finalised in 1909 (*Times* 1 December), and are clearly those of the present promenade, west of the Lido.



Fig. 107 The promenade, west of the Cliftonville Lido, under construction, 1910



For the time being, the Clifton Baths, which still needed access for bathing machines, formed a natural end-point.

By an agreement with the town council, the promenade would be continued across the front of the Clifton Baths, in connection with the construction of the Open-air Swimming Pool in the 1920s.

It was not continued beyond the cliffs until after the Second World War.

The present ramps down from the cliff-top, just to the west of the Clifton Baths, seem to have been constructed at this time.

Several press reports about the early days of the promenade plans are shown below in Figs. 108, 109 and 10.

**THE PROMENADES COMMITTEE.—A LARGE ORDER.**  
 —Alderman Green moved the adoption of the first part of the following report, and spoke of the great importance of protecting the cliff:—"The Committee beg to recommend that the sea wall at Fort Point be continued to the Clifton Baths, at an estimated cost of £10,000, according to the plans submitted herewith, and that an iron railing be fixed along the Fort as per the sketch submitted, at an estimated cost of £300; and that application be made to the Local Government Board for sanction to borrow £2,300 of the above sum of £10,300."—Mr. Lewis seconded, and said it was the most important promenade and must be preserved at any cost.—Mr. Simmons opposed, on the ground that the rates were already very heavy, and he expressed the opinion that the Council had now exceeded their borrowing powers.—Alderman Wootton was very sorry to oppose the committee's recommendation, but he must do so on the grounds stated by Mr. Simmons. He thought they had gone far enough and for a time they should act upon the "rest-and-be-thankful" policy. The scheme, he added, had not been definitely brought before them. While admitting that the work needed carrying out, he said he thought the ratepayers were already sufficiently burdened.—Mr. Thornton said no one desired more than himself to have that promenade protected, but he held that the Council were not justified in making so large an expenditure at the present time. Mr. Coleman said he would like to support the motion; but, for the reasons stated, he would move that the question be deferred for six months.—Mr. Macfarlane said all were aware of the heavy rates they had to pay, and he, too, would like to wait before carrying out the proposal, but the sea would not wait, and was carrying away the promenade.—Mr. Perry seconded; and Mr. Redman and Mr. Brown supported the amendment.—The amendment was carried by nine to five, and the consideration of the matter was deferred.—Mr. Green moved the erection of a railing, and stated that the expense would be £200 and not £300, as stated.—The Mayor explained that the fence proposed was an unclimbable, movable hurdle; and, after some opposition from Mr. Simmons, the motion was agreed to.

Fig. 108 *Whitstable Times* 23 April 1892

**THE PROMENADES COMMITTEE.**—This committee recommended that the borough engineer should be instructed to prepare plans and estimates for a sea-wall and promenade from Fort Point to Newgate Gapway.—The adoption of the report having been moved, Mr. Rolfe suggested that, if they were serious, they should thoroughly inspect the state of the cliffs there, before they gave the engineer that "tall order."—Mr. Macfarlane said he had noticed that the iron girders driven into the promenade had in all cases been the precursors of the several falls of cliff that had taken place there. He hoped the Council would be in "deadly earnest" in that matter, and that they would also consider whether a large slip of the foreshore should not be re-claimed.—Mr. Simmons spoke strongly in favour of improving the sea defences near Royal Crescent and Sea View Terrace. He suggested certain improvements which he thought should be effected, and estimated the cost at from £20,000 to £30,000.—Mr. Carter said that, during the recent storms, both the top and the base of the cliffs had suffered, and it was quite time the matter was seriously taken in hand.—Alderman Coleman thought the town could not afford to see the gradual falling away of the cliffs, and that preventive steps should be taken of a comprehensive character. He suggested that a promenade should be constructed under the cliff, both for the cliff's protection and for shelter from the sun. As to the west end sea-wall he said they saw the evils of taking over structures which were not properly carried out. He eulogized the Borough Engineer on the fact that the sea-wall he erected for the re-claiming of the foreshore and the formation of the Marine Drive on its resistance of the recent storm, and on the fact that it was not injured.—The Mayor joined in the eulogy.—The motion was agreed to.—The committee also recommended that they be authorised to negotiate with owners of land along the cliff from the Clifton Baths to the Queen's Promenade, for the widening and improvement of the promenade along the cliffs, upon the basis of the above sea wall being built.—Alderman Maltby moved, and Mr. Macfarlane seconded, and it was agreed to.—The committee also submitted the report of the Engineer on the state of the sea-wall at Royal Crescent and Seaview Terrace, and they recommended that the same be adopted and the necessary work be carried out.—Mr. Simmons seconded; but Mr. Macfarlane thought they should have some rough estimate as to the cost, it would be a pity to hand over a blank cheque, without the Council having any grip on it.—Mr. Rolfe made special reference to the desirability of improving the corner there; and Mr. Hermitage expressed his approval of the repairs which are now being carried out by the Engineer.—In reply to Alderman Coleman, the Engineer said his first estimate of the damage done there by the gale was £500, but, as recently as to-day, he had found other serious defects. The work he would carry out would be of a permanent character; but he would see that needless expense was not incurred.—Agreed to.

Fig. 109 *Whitstable Times* 18 December 1897



### MARGATE IMPROVEMENTS.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons presided over by Colonel Gunter yesterday considered the omnibus Bill of the Margate Corporation, which has already passed the House of Lords, where certain provisions of the Bill in regard to the acquisition of the pier and harbour undertaking and the construction of new works in connexion therewith, together with certain proposals in regard to the water supply, were struck out of the measure. By the Bill, as it now stands, it is proposed to construct a promenade, commencing on the parade, opposite Duke-street, and extending along the foreshore to Clifton Baths, reclaiming land where necessary from the sea. There will thus be provided a continuous promenade and carriage drive extending for about a mile and a-half along the sea front, and having a width of 85ft. A cliff drive will also be made at Westbrook, which, when the new road is laid out in connexion with the Bridewell Hospital estate, will form a cliff promenade extending half way to Westgate. Several sea walls are also to be constructed. The opposition of a landowner in reference to a piece of ground proposed to be acquired was considered and disposed of, and the Bill, therefore, becomes practically an unopposed one.

Fig. 110 *Times* 13 July 1900



Fig. 111 The end of the promenade, hard-by the Clifton Baths, looking west

## 9.79 The Electric Theatre or Clifton Cinema, 1910

By October 1910, a cinema had been established at the Clifton Baths, styled the 'Electric Theatre.' It was initially provided with a piano to accompany silent films. Soon, a gramophone was acquired, but *'did not prove an advantage.'*<sup>122</sup>

In May 1911, the proprietor sought a licence for *'an orchestra of four persons in addition to the pianist'* presenting a petition signed by two thousand people in favour.<sup>123</sup> Nearby residents were concerned *'that the place would degenerate into a rowdy and boisterous music hall:'*

*'When the application was made to Margate magistrates a solicitor assured the court that the music would be limited to a hand-played piano, a 'cello, and two violins; or three violins without a piano. It was also intended to use a gramophone on certain occasions.'*<sup>124</sup>

Nonetheless, residents were concerned that this limited license would be the thin end of the wedge, and cheered when the magistrates refused it.

The license must, eventually, have been granted because, according to a town guide of 1911, *'it was the only cinema in Margate using the stereoscopic screen, assuring steadiness and brilliancy'*, and, in 1920, it boasted *'A fine new Sunbright Screen, the largest and brightest pictures in town'*.

The Clifton Cinema was a popular venue in the town for some twenty years but did not survive the death-blow dealt by the advent of talking pictures.

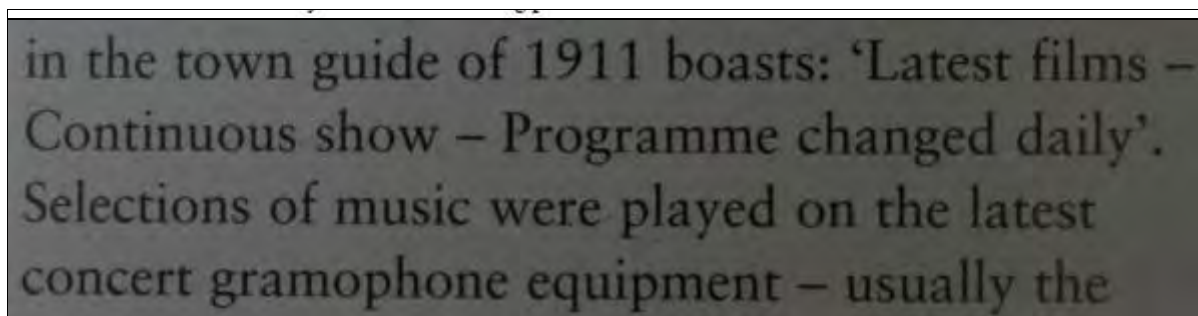


Fig. 112 Guide 1911

<sup>122</sup> Folkestone Herald 8 October 1910.

<sup>123</sup> Bioscope 18 May 1911.

<sup>124</sup> Thanet Times 16 May 1911.

Grenadier and Coldstream guards - during the intervals. Seat prices for adults were 6d and 3d and children were admitted for 3d and 2d each.

Publicity for the cinema in 1912 announced it was: 'The only theatre in Thanet using the stereoscopic screen, assuring steadiness and brilliancy' and by 1920 boasted: 'A fine new sunbrite screen, the largest and brightest picture in town'.

The Clifton cinema was a popular venue for around 20 years but didn't survive the death blow dealt by the arrival of talking pictures. A decision was taken not to wire it for sound, leaving manager Jack Binns who also managed Dreamland's cinema with only one venue to promote.

Fig. 113 The Clifton Cinema (Evans 2003)

19<sup>th</sup> October. The CLIFTON CINEMA, Clifton Baths, a wooden building, opened 1910 as the ELECTRIC THEATRE formed part of the Clifton Baths amusement complex, the proprietors being Clifton Baths (Margate) Ltd. An advertisement in the town guide for 1911 provides a flavour of the entertainment offered in those early days - "Latest films - Continuous Show - Programmes changed daily. Songs by - among other well-renowned artistes - Signor Caruso and Madame Adeline Patti and selections of music by the bands of the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards will be produced on the most up-to-date and perfected concert gramophone during the intervals. By arrangement with the News Agency, All Important Events are exhibited on the screen prior to publication in any newspaper. Prices adults 6d and 3d, children 3d and 2d. Special accommodation for invalid carriages". In 1912, of talking pictures. A decision was taken not to wire the CLIFTON for sound and so top-hatted Jack Binns - a showman of the old school, previously at the Hippodrome - who at that time managed both the CLIFTON and Dreamland theatres, soon found himself with only one hall to promote.

Clifton Cinema originally erected as an artillery drill hall.  
Locally known as "The Electric". Closed 1929.

1914 - February. Claim to recover possession of the Drill Hall at the Clifton Baths which was being used as a picture palace. Clients had been wrongfully ejected, but were willing to rent the hall.

1910 - October. The drill hall at the Clifton Baths was converted into a cinema.

1912

**CORRESPONDENCE**

A SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "GARRITE."

Sir, - May I trespass on your space to point out to the authorities concerned what an immense loss a viaduct over Clifton Baths, etc., would be to Margate visitors and others, who are compelled to make a detour from the cliff promenade into a crowded and dangerous roadway, with extremely narrow pavements. Profits on chair money, etc., ought soon to provide such a necessary convenience.

Yours faithfully, FRANK C. THOMAS.

30, Surrey-road, Margate.

[Our correspondent evidently is not aware that this is private property. - Ed.]

1912 - Summer. Clifton Cinema in Clifton Baths was in the old Artillery Hall.

Change of films Mons. Weds and Fri. Continuous performance, 630 to 1030 with matinees Tues. Thurs and Sats. Only theatre in Thanet using the Stereoscopic Screen. 6d. and 3d. Children 3d and 2d.

Felt that the Clifton swimming pool on the site should have been converted into a modern bath with suitable dressing rooms.

Fig. 114 Anon: Reference Unknown (MLHM)

In February 1914, there was a legal claim:

*‘to recover possession of the old Drill Hall at the Clifton Baths which was being used as a picture palace. The clients had been wrongfully ejected, but were willing to rent this hall.’<sup>125</sup>*

The claimant was presumably J Parker, proprietor of the Clifton Cinema, who is listed in Kelly’s Isle of Thanet in 1913, but not in 1915 or 1916.

The cinema was advertised less after the First World War, but it seems to have adopted many technological improvements, down to the 1920s.

Nevertheless, it was never wired for sound, and it closed in 1929. (By this time the site was in the ownership of Margate Estates Ltd. (see below) who also had a cinema at Dreamland.)

During its use as a cinema, an ornate entrance façade, with a projecting porch, was applied to the east end-wall of the building (see Fig. 115, below).



Fig. 115 Detail of a photograph, thought to be of 1926, showing part of the ornate façade of the cinema

## 9.80 Fairground Rides, by 1911, and a Structure to Contain Them

Kelly’s Isle of Thanet 1911 notes that ‘A Scenic Railway, a Cinematograph Theatre and a Joy Wheel have been added for the amusement of the visitors.’

Early in 1911, Heywood reported:

*‘On the Clifton Baths front there is now being constructed a scenic railway and joy wheel. These will be completed in readiness for the coming season.’*

<sup>125</sup> Research note at MLHM.



These feature in Kelly's Directory of Thanet for 1911. Later that year, a *Sporting Times*' correspondent reported:

*'Up at Cliftonville, by the Clifton Baths, is a colony of side-shows, the Joy Wheel, the Haunted Castle, Fairyland, &c, but I fancy they are closed for the winter.'*<sup>126</sup>

'Fairyland,' as will become clear, was the name of the scenic railway.

These attractions were housed within a large, new building or enclosure, of irregular footprint, to the west of the indoor baths, with the words 'Joy Wheel,' 'Fairyland' and 'Haunted Castle' emblazoned on its convex, canted, north-west corner.

Within a few years, this structure was referred to as 'the Haunted Castle.' The rides were presumably the work of 'Fairyland Ltd, amusement contractors,' who had their premises at the Clifton Baths between 1913 and 1915.<sup>127</sup>



Fig. 116 A photograph, thought to be of 1914, showing the building housing the sideshows

<sup>126</sup> *Sporting Times* 21 October 1911.

<sup>127</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet*.





Fig. 117 Detail of an aerial photograph, thought to be of c1920, showing the 'Haunted Castle' and the adjoining balcony (centre of photograph)



Fig. 118 Detail of another photograph showing the balcony more clearly

## The Joy-Wheel

The joy-wheel was a fairground ride resembling the turntable of a gigantic phonograph:

*'A once-popular novelty, now obsolete, was the 'Joy wheel', or 'Devil's Disc'. This consisted of a power-driven spinning disc, slightly domed and having a smooth surface. It was surrounded by a stationary padded circular platform, which in turn was surrounded by a padded wall. Riders sat on the disc while it was stationary and, as it accelerated, were eventually thrown off against the padding.'* (Engineer 27 August 1954, cited in the OED definition).

Nick Evans described its operation as follows:

*'On this contraption up to twenty people sat for a circular ride. As it got faster and faster, they would start to fall off, till only one was left.'* <sup>128</sup>

## Fairyland

A scenic railway is defined as *'a switchback or miniature railway running through artificial representations of beautiful or spectacular scenery, as an attraction at fairs etc.'* <sup>129</sup> and such rides, in one form or another, had been around since the closing years of the C19th.

That at the Clifton Baths was probably more of a 'miniature railway' than a 'switchback.' The engine took the form of a green dragon, with talons raised and bared, pulling a train of white carriages through a kind of subterranean, Gothic fairyland (see Fig. 119.1, below).



Fig. 119.1 Postcard showing the dragon on the 'Scenic Railway' c1910

<sup>128</sup> Evans (2003: 14).

<sup>129</sup> OED.

The delighted young visitor who sent the postcard in 1910 (see Fig. 119.1, above) reported (see Fig. 119.2, below):

*'My dear Lionel, Mama & I went for a ride on this fearful dragon & we saw gnomes and fairies [driving?] swans it was so pretty only a penny and two pence for Ma [...]*

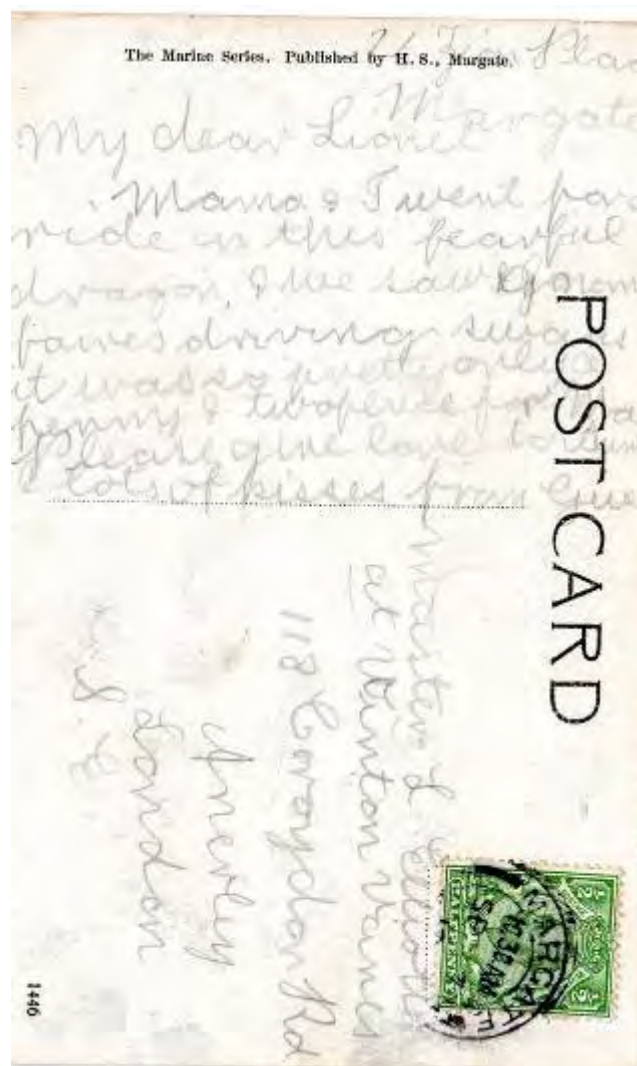


Fig. 119.2 Message on the 'dragon' postcard

The railway indeed passed through varied scenery – including a number of running water features – as recorded in a series of somewhat idealised postcards of the time (see below).

The platform, with brass railings, seems to have occupied a cavern with rockwork walls and semi-circular vaults, with crude mouldings, improbably interspersed with stalactites and jagged, pendent masses of 'stone.'

Rockwork of this kind seems to have continued around the track, framing a series of tableaux. We do not, as yet, know in what order these were arranged.





Fig. 120 The Forest of the Gnomes



Fig. 121 The Waterfall



Fig. 122 The Watermill



Fig. 123 The Ice Grotto was populated by suspiciously gnome-like elves, in Yuletide attire – red hooded cloaks lined with white – and, god-help-us, penguins.





Fig. 124 Titania (?), probably from Fairyland at the Clifton Baths, riding a swan in the Magic Garden at Dreamland in 1950. One of the aforementioned fairies [driving?] swans may have reappeared at Dreamland in the mid-C20th as may some of the gnomes.



Fig. 125 Might these have been some of the former Fairyland gnomes from the Clifton Baths?

### The Haunted Castle

We as yet have no solid information about the Haunted Castle attraction itself.

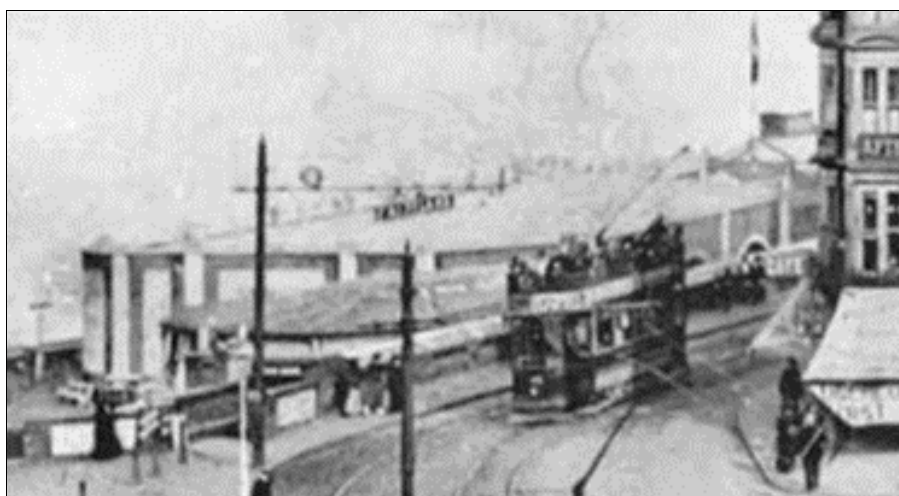
Doubtless, it was populated with ghosts, ghouls, skeletons, zombies, axmen, coffins, werewolves, vampires, bats, cobwebs, suits of armour, imps, hobgoblins, witches, bears, instruments of torture or execution, groans, clanking chains and spiders.

### 9.81 The Dome Enclosed, by 1914

By mid-1914, the brick dome seems to have been enclosed within a polygonal structure. This looks to have been an ephemeral structure – perhaps even just a kind of canvas tent?

It seems still to be shown in a very early aerial photograph of Margate, c1920 (see Fig. 26, below)

Soon after this, the dome would be truncated to ground level.



Figs. 126 and 127 Details of photographs thought to be of c1914. These also give an impression of the 'Haunted Castle' behind (see previous).

## 9.82 The First World War

Margate did not escape the general fate of the Thanet resorts during the War.

The very first aeroplane raid brought a shower of bombs on Cliftonville, and, in February, 1917, enemy destroyers subjected the coast to a heavy bombardment.

The town's worst experience, however, was in September, 1917, when enemy aircraft hovered overhead for two hours, dropping 26 bombs.<sup>130</sup>

The operation of the Clifton Baths seems to have continued well into the war. In February 1915, they were advertised as:

*'Swimming Bath  
Tepid sea water  
Open daily from 6.30 am  
Ladies' hours [from] 10 am until 12 noon.  
Swimming lessons given.  
Sea water or fresh water warm baths,  
Ozone Baths for rheumatism and nervous complaints.  
Hot and Cold Sea Water delivered.'*<sup>131</sup>

A guidebook of that year described the combination of old and new elements of the site:

*'Clifton Baths, an old-established concern that seems as much a part of Margate as the Jetty itself. Baths of all kinds, warm and cold, can be had here, and the ordinary Bathing Machine is also available. There is a tepid swimming bath open to ladies at certain hours. Parts of the Clifton Baths site are used for various entertainments [...]. The lift between the sands and the Esplanade is a boon to many visitors (fare 1d).'*<sup>132</sup>

The Clifton Baths seem to have remained open even into August 1917, when, during one air-raid, reputedly 'seven hundred people' took refuge under the Clifton Baths.<sup>133</sup>

The subterranea provided shelter on numerous such occasions, and parts were appropriated to individual families.

Mr Bradley, who, with his wife, managed the premises at that time,<sup>134</sup> tells us:

*'Good use of the old smugglers' caverns was made in the war, and several Margate families furnished their own particular caves, one of which [...] was called "Fish and Chip Villa", because the temporary occupant was interested in that trade.'*<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> {Ward Lock Margate 1923}: 9

<sup>131</sup> *Thanet Times* February 1915.

<sup>132</sup> Anon 1915.

<sup>133</sup> Research note at MLHM.

<sup>134</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 10 January 1920.

<sup>135</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938. This article refers to a 'ladder to the caves,' existing by the time of the First World War. We are not yet clear where this was.

The premises did not escape unscathed, however.

At one point, a mine drifted onto the nearby rocks, causing the floor of the Clifton Baths' Saloon to '*burst in places.*'<sup>136</sup>

Later, on 19 December 1917, shells wrecked the adjoining manager's office and much else.



Fig. 128 First-World-War damage to the north end of the south range, looking south-east



Fig. 129 Damage to the manager's office, looking west

<sup>136</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938.



Fig. 130 Damage to the manager's office, looking north-east

## 10 The Clifton Baths and the Cliftonville Lido 1919 to Closure in 2000

### 10.1 The Clifton Baths sold to John Henry Iles, 1919

In the early 1900's, the Reeve family owned both the Clifton Baths and the 'Hall by the Sea' (later Dreamland) on the west side of town.

By 1919, Arthur Reeve and his wife, who were into their sixties, decided to retire, and they sold both of these sites to John Henry Iles at a reputed cost of over £12,000.<sup>137</sup> (This sounds very cheap.)

A text in conveyance, dated 18 December 1919, was enacted between (1) Frederick Parker and Arthur Reeve (2) Jane Parker and others (Sellers), and (3) John Henry Iles (Purchaser).

This was a hugely significant decision for the future of Margate, and a most profitable one for Iles. It was particularly significant to the history of the Clifton Baths and their subsequent transition into the Cliftonville Lido.

<sup>137</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 2 July 1927.





Fig. 131 Memorial Bench (damaged) to John Henry Iles (1871-1951) All Saints Church, Birchington

From 1919, the Clifton Baths would be transformed. It would no longer be a place just to bathe, with entertainment as an adjunct, but a place designed and built with the desire to entertain at its heart.

Knowing the customer and what the customer found entertaining were, from then on, to be central to all building decisions.

## 10.2 John Henry Iles: Entrepreneur

Iles was a natural showman, an advertising salesman, a one-time brass-band promoter and entertainment entrepreneur<sup>138</sup> who, in 1906, touring with a brass band, experienced the amusement parks of North America and noted their profitability.

He had also obtained the European rights to the American invention, the *Scenic Railway Roller Coaster*, and built the first British example at Blackpool in 1907:

*'[Isles] returned with the British rights to the switchback ride and with plans for the 'scenic railway', a feature which he soon introduced at Blackpool and the White City in London.'*<sup>139</sup>

In Margate, Iles, in what would prove to be an inspired move, took the various, fairground rides from the Clifton Baths and planted them in a newly-created amusement park, adjoining the 'Hall by the Sea', which would reopen the following year as 'Dreamland'.

Iles had other plans for the Clifton Baths.

From the mid-1920s, under his ownership and vision, the baths were extensively remodelled as a large, modern, seaside, entertainment complex, in a vaguely Mediterranean guise, with

<sup>138</sup> DNB.

<sup>139</sup> DNB.

bars, cafes and restaurants on several storeys, and a large, open-air, bathing pool projecting out into the sea.

(There is much biographical material for Iles (1871-1951) in both Evans (2003) and the *Dictionary of National Biography*).

### 10.3 A Plan of the Clifton Baths as Sold to John Henry Iles

Fig. 132, below, shows the plan of the site as it was in 1919 when it passed to Iles. This was traced from the 1907 *Ordnance Survey* and, therefore, doesn't show the Haunted Castle west of the Indoor Swimming Pool.

The former stabling and machine sheds are shaded blue; the 'Ethelbert Terrace enclosure,' red.

A balustrade wall seems to have been built between the Lido and the former Ethelbert Crescent garden.

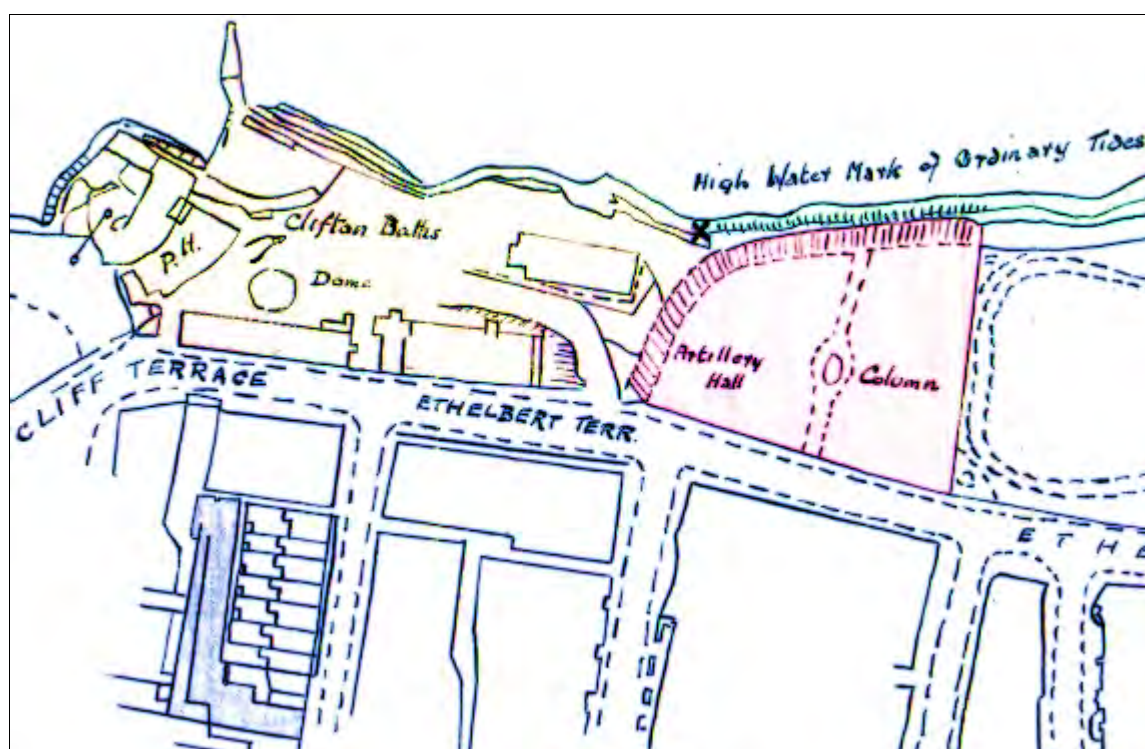


Fig. 132 Later tracing of an annotated copy of the 1907 *Ordnance Survey*, attached to the Conveyance of 1919

It shows the different Portions of the Clifton Baths sold to John Henry Iles.

### 10.4 Entertainment Complex

Having concentrated Margate's funfair paraphernalia at his new Dreamland amusement park, John Henry Iles needed a new model for the renewal of the old Clifton Baths.

An excellent precedent was provided by the well-known, new, outdoor pools at South Bay, Scarborough (1915) and in Blackpool (1923) (Grey 2006). Iles' extensive plans for the new complex were modelled very closely on such examples.

His new plans also included alcohol. So, In December 1919, Iles was '*granted temporary authority... to sell [alcoholic beverages] at the Clifton Baths until the next transfer day, in the place of Mr Arthur Reeve.*'<sup>140</sup>

These renewed Clifton Baths were provided with tiers of seating, diving boards and various aquatic playthings, and they were accompanied by terraces for sunbathing and extensive ranges of buildings in a broadly classical style. They were ideally suited to early C20th physical culture in which '*physical activity, excitement and bodily exposure*' were prominent (*ibid*: 182).



Fig. 133 Detail of an aerial photograph of the Clifton Baths in 1920

## 10.5 Music at the First Clifton Concert Hall, 1920

In April 1919, Leslie Fuller and the Ped'lers were in Whitby '*by arrangement with Lt Col ER Herbert 1/1<sup>st</sup> Hunts Cyc Btn,*'<sup>141</sup> but, later that year, they are thought to have come to the Clifton Baths.

<sup>140</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 29 December 1919.

<sup>141</sup> *Stage* 3 April 1919.

According to the *Thanet Advertiser*, 'the company made its Margate debut in a temporary marquee on the sands.'<sup>142</sup>

Evans, however, tells us they set up in a tent adjoining the site, which makes more sense. It was doubtless in the Ethelbert Terrace enclosure:

*'A company formed from the old cyclist battalions. The company made its Margate debut in a temporary marquee on the sands.'*<sup>143</sup>

Late in April 1920, John Henry Iles applied to extend his music licences at Dreamland and the Clifton Baths to include Sundays. These were granted provisionally 'on the strict understanding that suitable music only should be given, and that entertainments at the Clifton Baths should be under cover.'<sup>144</sup>

Toward the end of May, it was announced that 'various improvements' were nearing completion on the Clifton Baths Estate:

*'Perhaps the most important being the conversion of the Haunted Castle into a concert hall, sheltered from the east winds, but open to southerly breezes, with accommodation for nearly one thousand visitors, and called the Clifton Concert Hall. A commodious stage, with adequate dressing-rooms, is a feature of the scheme, and afternoon and evening concerts are to be given. The hall is in the occupation of a resident party, Leslie Fuller's Ped'lers, who began operations on Saturday evening.'*<sup>145</sup>

The photograph, below (Fig. 134), shows the first Clifton Concert Hall, c1921.

Was the blockish structure to the right of the entrance retained and incorporated into the second Clifton Concert Hall? This also shows the Cliff Tea Gardens which were operating in the Ethelbert Terrace enclosure by c1920.

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<sup>142</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 27 April 1948.

<sup>143</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 27 April 1948.

<sup>144</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 24 April 1920; the license was confirmed in July (*Thanet Advertiser* 10 July 1920).

<sup>145</sup> *Stage* 27 May 1920.

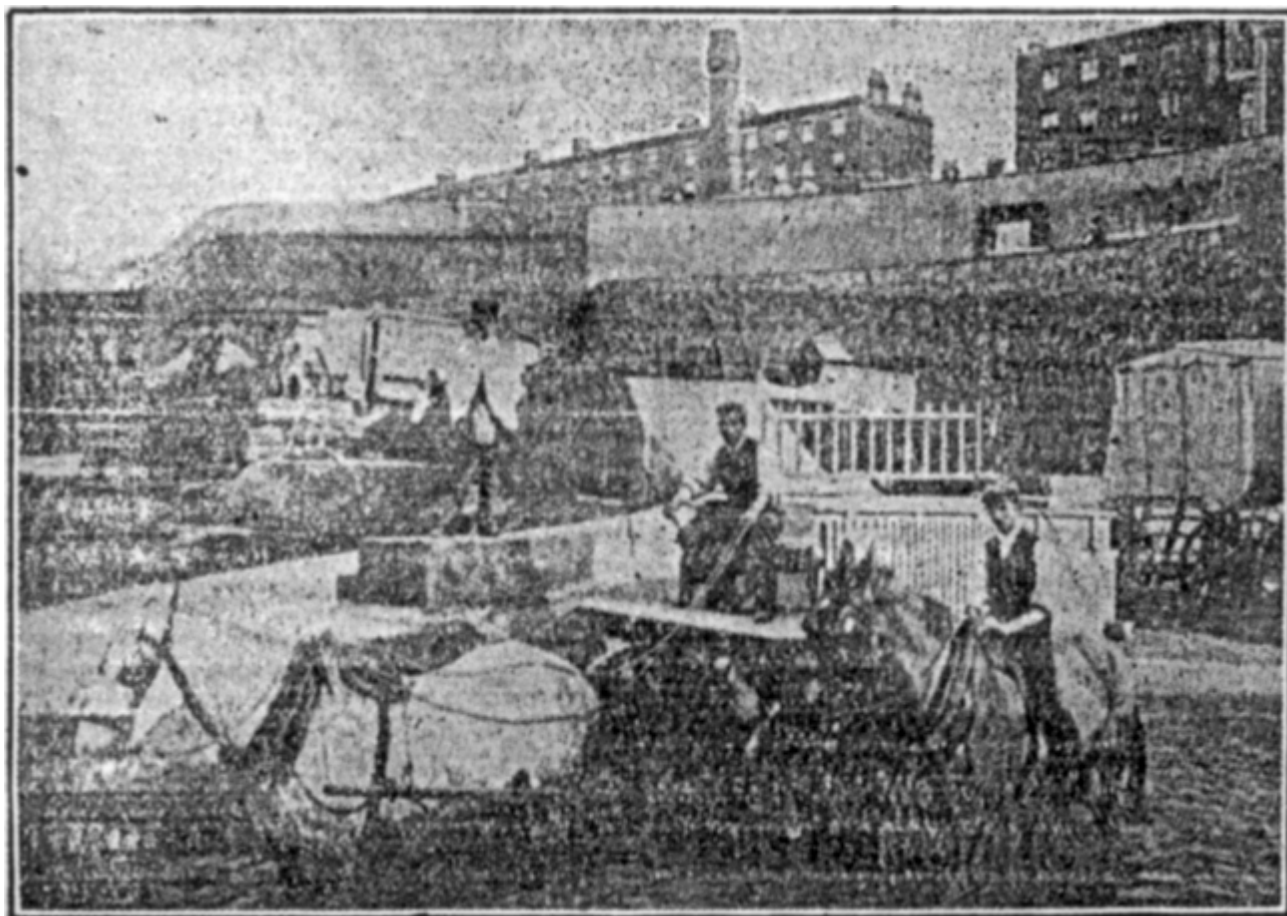


Fig. 134 Newspaper photograph of the baths, dated 1919, taken from the shore, showing the terraces overlooking the Artificial Bay



Fig. 135 The Clifton Baths on the eve of their redevelopment, showing the Clifton Concert Hall and Cinema (Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)



By 1920, the improvements at the Clifton Baths were attracting a great deal of approving, local attention:

*'The Clifton Baths on the Fort have been established over one hundred years, and are fitted with every convenience for hot or cold fresh water or sea bathing, and a large swimming bath. Under new management several excellent and needed improvements have been carried out, and the entire property is now run strictly in accordance with the traditions of Cliftonville, Margate's fashionable suburb. There is a fine Cinema, a large Concert Hall and commodious and up-to-date tea gardens. The establishment is now under same proprietorship as Dreamland Hall, and its future development on the most progressive lines is assured.'*<sup>146</sup>

## 10.6 The Cliff Café and the Adjoining Concrete Balcony, c1920

Also, among John Henry Iles' first alterations to the Clifton Baths may have been the establishment of the Cliff Café, seemingly by converting the former Bathing Rooms at the west end of the site.

The 1932 *Souvenir Programme* calls this *'the parent café of the estate'* (several others would follow), and tells us it *'was originally designed to accommodate eighty people.'*

Although it was attested in September 1923 when the Oriental Dance Orchestra were performing there,<sup>147</sup> the supposed dates of certain historic photographs (reproduced below) suggest it was made a year or two before this.

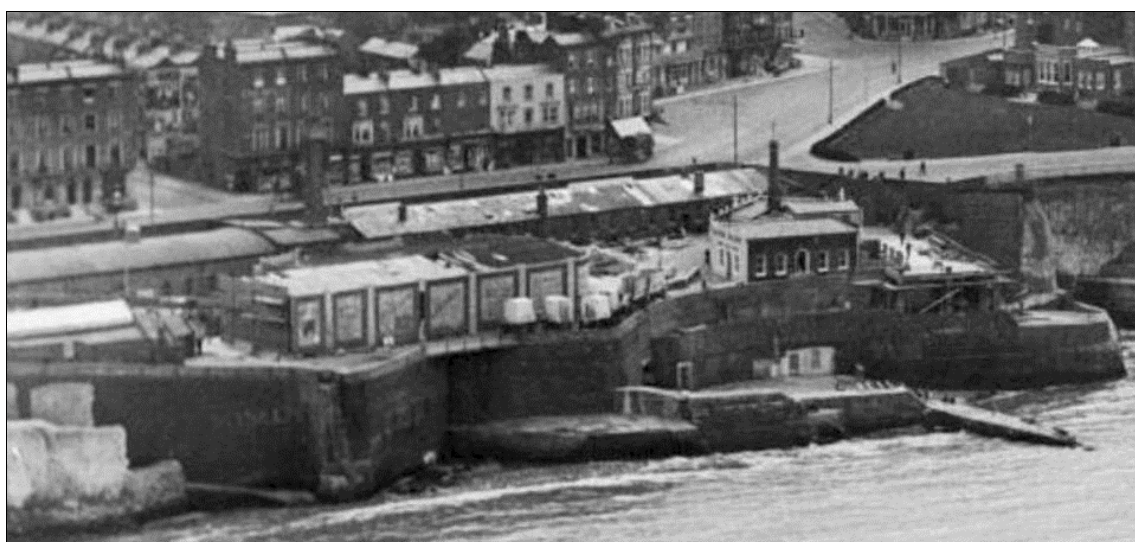


Fig. 136 Detail of an aerial photograph, thought to be of c1920  
Does this show (to the right) construction work converting the former bathrooms into the Cliff Café?

<sup>146</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet* 1920. Also, the *Thanet Advertiser* 14 August 1920 and Stage 27 May 1920.

<sup>147</sup> *Era* 12 September 1923.

At about the same time – perhaps slightly in arrears of the Cliff Café – a second, concrete balcony was built, replacing and oversailing the former Bathers Terrace, and leading up to what must have been the Café entrance.

Below is a slightly later photograph showing the new concrete balcony ending in what appears to be a grand, new doorway, presumably that of the new Cliff Café. Note that the signage on the east front of the Clifton Tavern has also been altered since the last photograph.



Fig. 137 The Clifton Baths and the Cliff Café c1920



Fig. 138 The mouth of the former Bathing Machine Tunnel, with a detail of the concrete balcony (Also, see 16.5.)



Fig. 139 The altered frontage of the Clifton Tavern, with an advertisement for the new Cliff Café

### 10.7 A Proposal for an Outdoor Bathing Pool and 'Refreshment Rooms,' October 1922

In 1892, Margate Corporation had purchased the foreshore from the Marquis of Conyngham, upon which Iles would now wish to build his new pool (see Fig. 140, below).

Early in October 1922, it was reported:

*'A proposal to construct a bathing pool at Margate is being made by the proprietors of the Clifton Baths. The proposal is that a pool 260 feet by 178 feet should be made on the shore of concrete so that people can [bathe] at low water in clear water.'*<sup>148</sup>

<sup>148</sup> *Dover Express* 6 October 1922.



Fig. 140 *Thanet Advertiser* 7 October 1922

By the middle of that month, the Architect for the bathing pool, Charles Samuel Frederick Palmer had drawn up plans: *'including amphitheatre, dressing hall and refreshment rooms [...] proposed to be constructed on the foreshore in front of the Clifton Baths.'*<sup>149</sup>

Clearly something rather like the eventual Cliftonville Lido was already intended.

The council refused these plans, but *'explained that this was purely a formal matter, as the plans had to be approved or otherwise under the bye-laws in a limited period.'* (*ibid*)

Nevertheless, later that month, Iles issue a writ against the Corporation *'to obtain a declaration as to the right of the Council to refuse to sanction plans for the construction [...] of a bathing pool opposite the Clifton Baths.'*<sup>150</sup> (See Fig. 141, below)

<sup>149</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 14 October 1922; the article gives the architect's name as 'CFS Palmer,' but this seems to be an error.

<sup>150</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 3 November 1923.



Margate is also considering it. At a recent meeting of leading townsmen of Margate Mr. G. Cleveland gave an address on the local programme of entertainments and other attractions for visitors. In the course of his remarks he said: "Bathing pools are most necessary, as when the tide is out practically all day 75 per cent. of the money that would be spent is lost. I was more than sorry to see Bro. Iles's scheme for the bathing pool turned down, as it is a crying necessity, and if he has faith in it so should the Corporation. We do not want one bathing pool, we want four; one at each of the two extreme ends of the town to be run by the Corporation, one at Clifton Baths, and one at Bro. Pettman's establishment. Healthy competition is always good, and 'devil take the hindmost.' There is not only revenue to be had from the bathers, but also from the spectators who sit around." Mr. G. Cleveland is, we believe, known to some Folkestonians

Fig. 141 Folkestone Herald 17 November 1923

The following year, Iles was also the plaintiff in an action in Chancery against Margate Corporation.

He was seeking an entitlement, subject to the rights of the public, to:

*'an estate in fee simple in the whole of the foreshore at Margate [...] for a distance of eight hundred and thirty feet from the long breakwater opposite Dalby Road on the east to the short breakwater opposite the recreation ground fronting Cliff Terrace on the west.'* (op. cit.)



## 10.8 The Clifton Baths ‘Thoroughly Renovated’, by 1923

In the 1924 Annual Report for Clifton Baths in 1923, it was noted that:

*‘The Clifton Baths, owned by a private firm, have recently been thoroughly renovated, and offer every facility for the use of hot sea water and ordinary baths. A swimming bath is also provided.’*<sup>151</sup>

## 10.9 The Second Clifton Concert Hall, Built 1923 to 1924

By late December 1923, the then Clifton Baths Concert Hall – formerly, the shed housing several fairground rides – had been pulled down *‘and a new building [was] in course of erection.’* This was expected to be *‘108 ft long, 77 ft wide, 21 ft in height, and [to] have a capacity for 1,700 people,’*<sup>152</sup> although this seating capacity would gradually be revised downwards.

It had been completed by May the following year, and opened 31 of that month.

*‘As each season comes fresh instances are seen of the wonderful enterprise possessed by Mr J Henry Iles in catering for the amusement of the residents of Margate and those who seek to find rest and recreation in the town. His latest scheme has been the building of a new and up-to-date pavilion for the Ped’lers on the site of the old Clifton Concert Hall.*

*During the past few months, it has risen phoenix-like from the ashes of the old structure, and nothing has been spared in thought or expense to make it a handsome and ideal place for entertainment.*

*In addition to the larger stage and increased seating capacity – it is capable of holding 1,600 people – the comfort of the patrons has been considered, for luxurious tip-up seats have been fitted as well as four powerful electric fans together with a tremendous sliding roof.*

*In the hottest of weather, therefore [...] people will be able to listen to an indoor entertainment in a delightfully cool atmosphere.*

*Excellent taste is being shown in decorating the interior for the walls are pale mauve with white panelling and the ceiling white with a pleasing yellow ornamental work.*

*This hall is being opened on [...] May 31<sup>st</sup>, when those established favourites Leslie Fuller’s Ped’lers, will commence their season.’*<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> {McCombe R 1924 Annual Report for 1923 on the Health of Margate}.

<sup>152</sup> Stage 29 December 1923.

<sup>153</sup> Thanet Advertiser 24 May 1924.



Fig. 142 Detail of a photograph of c1926, showing the entrance to the second Clifton Concert Hall.



Fig. 143 The theatre at the Clifton Baths



Figs. 144 and 145 Two photographs from the second Clifton Concert Hall Souvenir programme, 1932

From the outset, this concert hall was closely identified with the personality of Leslie Fuller and his 'Ped'lers Concert Party.' indeed, the very establishment was sometimes featured in the local directories of the time as the 'Ped'lers Concert Hall'. An account of the Leslie Fuller phenomenon is given by Williams (1991).

During a storm on 25 November 1925, *'the north windows of [...] the Clifton Concert Hall and other buildings on the Clifton Baths Estate were washed by the sea.'*<sup>154</sup>

By the 1936 season, the Clifton Concert Hall had been renamed the 'Cliff Theatre.'<sup>155</sup>

### 10.10 The Clifton Baths Saloon Replaced by an Extension to the Cliff Café, 1924

On 30 January 1924, Margate's magistrates inspected plans for:

*'extensive alterations which [would] considerably improve the appearance of the front [...] by Mr J Henry Iles at the Clifton Baths Estate, Margate.'*<sup>156</sup>

The plans were passed *'subject to confirmation at the annual licensing meeting'* (op. cit.) on 5 February.

At that meeting, Iles was represented by Mr S Shea, who:

*'said the proposal was to pull down the Clifton Baths public house and substitute another storey over the Cliff Café, with lifts from the basement to the new storey for the carriage of patrons and goods, and provide new lavatory accommodation.*

*He described the Clifton Baths as an early Victorian drinking saloon, designed and erected when people indulged in the practice which was termed perpendicular drinking – they stood and had drinks and stood and had more drinks. It was desired to bring the premises into conformity with more modern ideas.*

*[...]*

*Mr Iles, in his evidence, said he thought the alterations would be a very great attraction from the highest standard of morality and good conditions and for supplying food and drink under the most desirable circumstances. He did not think it would offer great facilities for drinking.'*<sup>157</sup>

The application was challenged on the basis that Iles ought to give up his old license, and take out a new one under the new terms legislated in 1904:

*'The granting of the application would lead in a few years to there being a grand new public house, much larger than the old one, for which he would have an old "on" license.'* (op. cit.)

The plans were, however, eventually passed by a majority of votes.

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<sup>154</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 28 November 1925.

<sup>155</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 25 August 1936 and 23 July 1937.

<sup>156</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 2 February 1924.

<sup>157</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 9 February 1924.

The plans seem to have been executed remarkably quickly as, late in May that year, it was reported:

*'Mr Iles is [...] carrying out another excellent improvement at the Clifton Baths Estate, this being the building of a large extension to the Cliff Café to take the place of the public house. The work is nearly complete and will prove to be one of the most up-to-date and comfortable licensed premises in the district.'*<sup>158</sup>

At the top, the Cliff Bar stood beside the Sun Terrace as a successor to the old Clifton Baths' Saloon. Entrance was through a projecting bay, with odd, rusticated pillars.

The original interior scheme is, as yet, unclear, the bar having been redecorated more than once.



Fig. 146 Detail of a photograph of c1925, showing the new Clifton Concert Hall and Cliff Bar  
Note also the 'Cinema' signage on the boiler house chimney – the present Lido Obelisk.

<sup>158</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 24 May 1924.



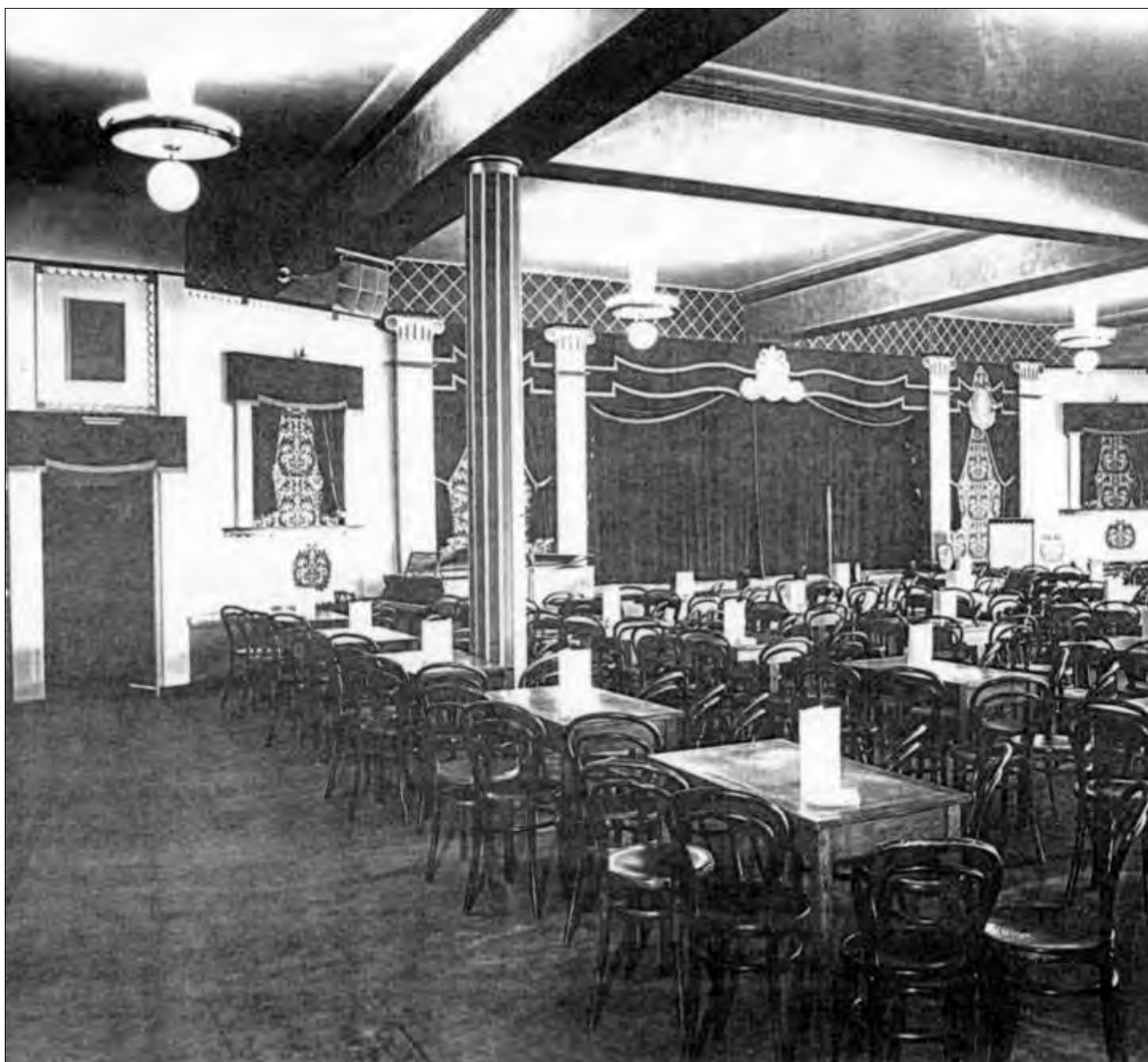


Fig. 147 Clifton Concert Hall and Cliff Bar

### 10.11 A Design Perspective, by Late August 1925

By late August 1925, a watercolour design perspective of the new buildings had been drawn up.

It is not yet clear exactly when, but it was quite possibly as early as October 1922 when Iles proposed his bathing pool '*including amphitheatre, dressing hall and refreshment rooms*'.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>159</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 14 October 1922.



Fig. 148 Design perspective for what would become the Cliftonville Lido

Note that the lido was not built strictly to this design, and several aspects were not realised.

(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)

The *Thanet Advertiser* for 29 August explains:

*'The above picture shows the proposed extensive alterations to the Clifton Baths Estate, which has featured so prominently in Margate history for over 102 years. The huge bathing pool, which will be one of the finest in the world, will make Margate one of the foremost bathing centres in the country. The size of the pool will be 250 ft by 150. The proprietors hope the alterations will be completed by next spring.'*

This was a little optimistic. Also, why would Iles say, so specifically, 'over 102 years,' when the Clifton Baths don't seem to have been started until 1824?

The scheme was subsequently modified and reduced somewhat in scope.

Plans to remodel, or rebuild, the existing, Indoor Swimming Pool and Drill Hall, were not executed – although it may have been intended to do so at a later stage. The semi-circular arcade around the Sun Terrace was also abandoned.

We do not yet know the name of the Architect, although it might well have been Charles Samuel Frederick Palmer, who had drawn up plans for the Clifton Baths' Open-Air Bathing

Pool in 1922. CFS Palmer was the Architect of the Coach Station (demolished) and the Buffet Building (extant) at Dreamland Margate, both built in 1928 in a very up-to-date Modernist style.

Nonetheless, the Clifton Baths site was redesigned, on behalf of its then owner John Henry Iles, with a large, Open-Air Bathing Pool on the foreshore. Extensive new buildings, housing cafes, bars and other facilities, were built onto, on top of, and in front of, the surviving C19th fabric.

The site was later renamed the **Cliftonville Lido**.

## 10.12 The 'Cliftonville Lido' in 1925

The new complex was officially opened by the Mayor of Margate on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1927.

The Cliftonville Lido buildings, naturally, dominate the character of the site today, although, surprisingly, extensive remains of the Clifton Baths survive behind and beneath them.

The accompanying buildings were built to resemble a jumble of buildings – part neo-classical, part Mediterranean – laid out over a series of terraces.

Neighbouring components of the new Clifton Baths, even within a single elevation, were often built and decorated in different ways, albeit drawing on a shared vocabulary including pendants of bell-flowers, channel-rustication and croisetted arches.<sup>160</sup>

These (rather superficial and idiosyncratic) classical motifs may reflect the new buildings' chief prototypes at Scarborough and Blackpool, but they were rather less ambitious in their classicism than their predecessors, perhaps because Iles' was a private, rather than a municipal, enterprise.

The classical details may also have been reined-in to accommodate other features in order to cultivate a more 'Mediterranean' effect – hipped roofs, long, shady verandas and covered ways, tiled with asbestos-cement pantiles and painted gloss red.

These buildings would become yet more jumbled over the following years as they were modified, and as spaces were carved out for various concessions and kiosks.

The effect was unified, however, during the summer months, by a thick blanket of holiday makers and associated paraphernalia.

## 10.13 The Lido Obelisk Motif

The obelisk motif was re-introduced to the complex.

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<sup>160</sup> There are some interesting similarities, in the choice of these motifs, to the nearby Cliftonville Hydro, which was built, in rather superior materials, at almost exactly the same date (see Figs. in Dellar 2001).

Although the old obelisk-chimneys had long since been demolished, the designer of the new Clifton Baths may well have been aware of them. They return as a modification of the late C19th Boiler House chimney, with a prominent sphere – probably intended as a lamp – fixed to the top.

As we have seen, standing at the end of Ethelbert Road, this chimney was the one feature of the Clifton Baths which was allowed to stand significantly higher than the boundary wall. It had, as a result, long been used for advertising purposes, and would have been an obvious choice for an advertising beacon.

This motif was repeated, in miniature, in a series of lamps fronting the Promenade and Café Terrace.<sup>161</sup>

Architectural precedents for this motif are, as yet, unclear, although they could refer to the ‘obeliscolychny’ of Erasmus and Rabelais.

### **10.14 Changes late 1925 to June 1927**

During this period, the Open-Air Bathing Pool, Changing Rooms, Café Normandie and a Ballroom were built, and the Cliff Café was extended.

Also, a deep, curving trench was cut in the floor of the Bathing Machine Tunnel, along its whole length, whilst a timber floor (badly decayed and demolished in 2019) was inserted above the original road level – bringing the foot of the tunnel up to meet the floor of Echoes nightclub, at Promenade Level.

The trench in the floor effectively served as a second tunnel, leading down to the east end of Café Basque, and increasing circulation. It was accessible, via a similar tunnel, running from the aforementioned lift shaft, under the Entrance Tunnel, or by a flight of stairs descending from the Eastern Alcove.

### **10.15 Iles and Margate Borough Council: The Foreshore, the Pool and the Promenade**

The co-dependence of the local council and the Clifton Baths was usually amiable – and of mutual benefit. Sometimes, the relationship was more uneasy.

One dispute was over access of water for a new swimming pool that Iles wanted and the provision of an extension to the promenade which would allow access to the pool.

It was a dispute which balanced power, the reputation of Margate, territory and commercial interest for all parties.

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<sup>161</sup> We do not know for certain that the Lido Obelisk was executed at this date, but it seems very likely that it should have been, since it gives meaning to these lesser illuminations.

The parties ultimately came to a compromise, whereby Iles was granted a lease of a rectangular portion of the foreshore, sufficient for the new swimming pool, whilst the council would extend the existing promenade across the front of the Clifton Baths. (This was duly done in the 1920's, but it was not continued beyond the Lido until after the Second World War).

The portion of the promenade in front of the Clifton Baths was then to be conveyed to Iles. Various conditions were placed on this: Iles was not to obstruct the promenade, and any advertising on the outward faces of the concrete pool was to be confined to the southern half of the structure.

### 10.16 The Bathing Pool Construction

In 1925, Iles applied '*to the Board of Trade for permission to construct a bathing pool adjacent to the Clifton Baths, with a promenade on either side.*'<sup>162</sup>

Nonetheless, the stretch of promenade to the east of the bathing pool – connecting up with the foot of the cliff lift and doubtless intended to be extended further in future – would not yet be put into execution.

In November 1925, Margate town council approved plans for the bathing pool.<sup>163</sup> The lease was drawn up in 1925 and work could proceed.

Nick Evans (2003: 86) suggests the pool cost '£60,000'; however, an advertisement, of 1928, for Margate Estates Ltd, suggests that the whole reconstruction, including the various buildings, may not have cost quite this much.

After all this, it still, we are told '*took two years of litigation with the council to open this bathing pool, since the latter felt it detracted from Margate's image.*' (Foad s.d.)

Work on the '*new piece of connecting promenade between the Fort Promenade and the Clifton Baths,*' was underway by the end of April. Unfortunately, the Margate Ratepayers Association complained of people '*tipping refuse over the cliff,*' to fill in behind the new sea wall, and the resulting '*objectionable odour.*'<sup>164</sup>

Presumably work on the pool itself began around this time so the promenade would have something with which to join up.

The new buildings were, for the most part, built onto and over the existing complex - filling up the old Artificial Bay and extending the footprint to the north and west. Below the level of the late C19th 'cliff-top', relatively little was removed from the existing complex, and the main lines of the new-build followed those of the underlying C19th fabric.

In particular, little further chalk was excavated and, thus, most of the early subterranea survived. Indeed, the early C19th subterranea continued to play an important role behind

<sup>162</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 20 February 1926.

<sup>163</sup> *Portsmouth Evening News* 27 November 1925.

<sup>164</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 1 May 1926.



the scenes by serving in the circulation of the complex and for the storage of scenery and props.

Structurally, the various levels of the outdoor Bathing Pool were essentially plain steel and concrete boxes, with glazed frontages, dressed-up in various, sophisticated guises.



Figs. 149 and 150 The Cliftonville Lido under construction, c1925 (MLHM).

Late in February 1927 it was reported:

*'Rapid progress is being made with the open-air bathing pool at Cliftonville, which has to be completed by May. This concrete pool, which is of horseshoe shape, is 250 feet long and 150 feet wide. It stands 11 ft from the sea-level and is surmounted by a promenade sufficiently wide to provide deck chair seating accommodation for onlookers.*

*The dressing-box hall, which contains several hundred boxes, is roofed over by concrete so as to form a sloping auditorium with permanent seating for over a thousand spectators. From this amphitheatre rises a further series of concrete promenades varying in width from 50 ft to 100 ft.*

*Adjacent to the pool a café which will provide refreshment for 2,000 people at one time has been erected, whilst a fully licensed bar and billiard room, an Open-air garden with seating around a permanent bandstand, a concert hall to hold 1,500, a dance hall for several hundreds, and numerous kiosks, will go to make this part of the resort a city of amusement.'*<sup>165</sup>

Late in June it was reported:

*'Workmen this week have been busily engaged in putting the finishing touches to the bathing pool at the Clifton Baths Estate, Margate.'*<sup>166</sup>

The pool was opened by Margate's then Mayor, Maude Harriet Sinclair Hatfield, at midday on 24 June 1927:

*'As the terraces surrounding the basin are illuminated with electric lights, night bathing should become increasingly popular.*

*A thousand persons are able to enjoy themselves simultaneously.'*<sup>167</sup>

*Lunch was to follow at the new Café Normandie, and the programme arranged for the afternoon at the pool included an exhibition of high diving [...], a humorous sketch by the Ped'lers, a life-saving display by the Margate Borough Police, and boxing and wrestling on rafts.'*<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> *Northern Daily Mail* 25 February 1927.

<sup>166</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 25 June 1927.

<sup>167</sup> *Daily Herald* 25 June 1927.

<sup>168</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 25 June 1927.



Fig. 151 The Lord Mayor opening the new Clifton Baths on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1927 (a very wet day)

*'The concrete pool, which provides nearly 50,000 feet of surface, will afford accommodation to a thousand bathers. Nearly 3,000 people will be accommodated in the amphitheatre in connection with the pool, which at night is to be illuminated from electric standards.*

*The dressing rooms, beneath the promenade, will be fitted with hot and cold plunge baths, showers, and other conveniences.*

*In addition to the construct of the pool, the Cliff Café has been extended, and the new French café, the Café Normandie, built on the lower promenade.<sup>169</sup>*

*Hundreds of people braved the torrential rain on Friday 2th (sic) to witness the formal opening of the latest addition to Margate's attractions, the bathing pool on the Clifton Baths Estate.*

*[...] Last year work was commenced on the new £60,000 concrete bathing pool, where nearly a thousand bathers can enjoy bathing at all states of the tide. The pool which measures 250 ft, by 150 ft, has depths of 2 ft, for children, to 9 ft for high diving. It is daily emptied and refilled by the incoming tide through four sluices.*

*In connection with the present alterations, the Café Normandie, giving accommodation for 100 people, has been built together with a ballroom*

<sup>169</sup> Thanet Advertiser 25 June 1927.

*beyond. The Cliff Café above, which has also been extended, now offers seating for 1,400.’<sup>170</sup>*

Building works were evidently going on around the end of June 1927, when ‘workmen from the Clifton Baths Estate rescued two men who had fallen from the promenade.’<sup>171</sup>

This outdoor pool was obviously a bold advance on anything seen before.

*‘In 1927 a bathing pool to hold nearly 1,000 bathers with amphitheatre for 3,000 people and adjoining promenade and cafes was opened at the Clifton Baths Estate. (Pigot’s 1936).*

*At 250 feet by 150 feet and depth graduating from two feet in the shallows to nine feet, sea water was drawn in through four large sluices at high tides.*

*Around 1,300 tons of cement and 10,000 tons of ballast were used to construct the pool. [...] a huge dressing room with 400 changing cubicles. This was later extended to 800 with plunge, shower and foot baths Some 3,000 people could sit and enjoy the antics from terraced seating — or amphitheatre as it was properly known — set into the cliff edge.’ (Evans 2003).*

By 1929 (*Margate Mirror*), the pool boasted ‘all the latest improvements, rafts, chutes etc.’, and the new fabric was built out in front of, and on top of, the existing fabric, on a series of concrete floors like those of a multi-storey car-park, housing a series of superimposed bars and cafes.

The west elevation, and, particularly, the projecting north-west corner of this range rose above the Sun Terrace as the Cliff Bar. It was provided with grand corner-turrets under glazed domes.

Within a short time of opening, an additional slide had been erected on the east side of the pool.

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<sup>170</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 2 July 1927.

<sup>171</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 2 July 1927.

## 10.17 Photographs of the New Clifton Baths' Outside Pool

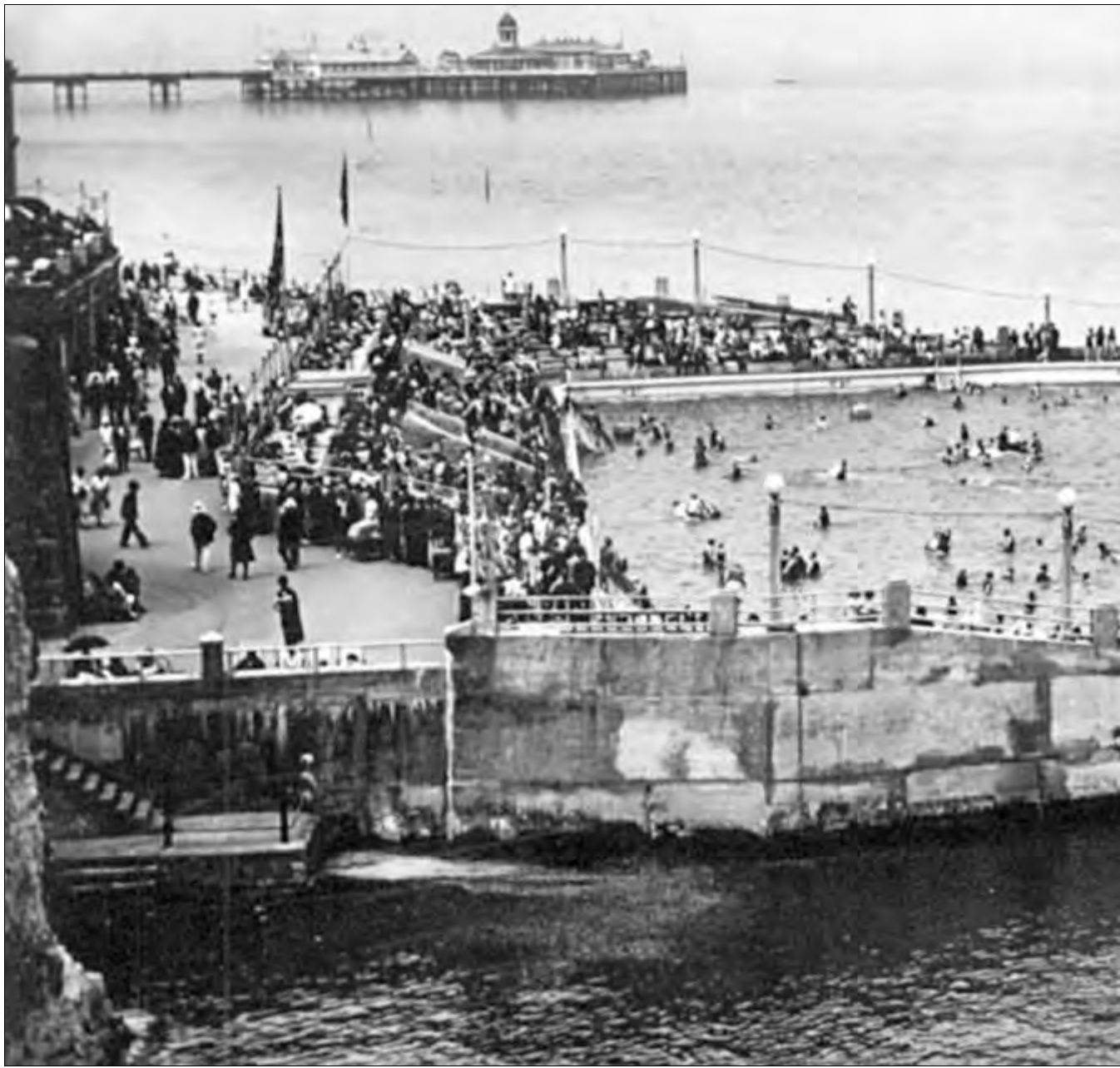


Fig.152 The promenade overlooking the Open-Air Bathing Pool



Fig. 153 The completed outdoor swimming pool, from a postcard sent 1928 (MLHM)





Figs. 154 and 155



Figs. 156, 157 and 158



Fig. 159 The eastern slide in 1931



Fig. 160 The pool as it was by the time of the 1928 season

By the 1928 season, the words ‘Way Up,’ with a helpful hand pointing south, had been painted on the concrete wall on each side of the pool – indicating the steps up to the promenade.

The swimming pool *‘was always busy, and was well equipped with slides, diving boards, moored floats, inflated inner tubes and had two lifeguards/swimming instructors.’* (Mrs EM Harrison and Ms ES Harrison, letter to local newspaper; undated cutting at MLHM).

There are admiring contemporary accounts of the pool:



*'[By late 1925] Mr Iles [had] developed to a great extent the old Clifton Baths Estate, which now comprises [a] fine concert hall, cinema, and up-to-date cafes on continental lines.'*<sup>172</sup>

... and the promenade:

**Construct sea walls and undercliff promenades from Clifton Baths to Newgate Gapway, and from the westerly end of the existing promenade at Westbrook to connect with the promenade and sea wall near the Borough boundary;  
Widen the promenade from Westbrook**

Fig. 161 *Thanet Advertiser* 21 November 1925

... and the open-air bathing pool, in general.

**I**N spite of the "Jeremiahs" who say that everything is bad in the business world, I am constantly coming upon evidence to the contrary.

I happened upon the information yesterday, for instance, that Margate Estates Ltd., which owns the famous "Dreamland" amusement park and the Ordinary shares of the Clifton Baths, has done better this year than ever before, despite the unpropitious holiday weather, which seems to show there is some money to spend somewhere.

Fig. 162 *Daily Herald* 8 September 1931

<sup>172</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 31 October 1925.

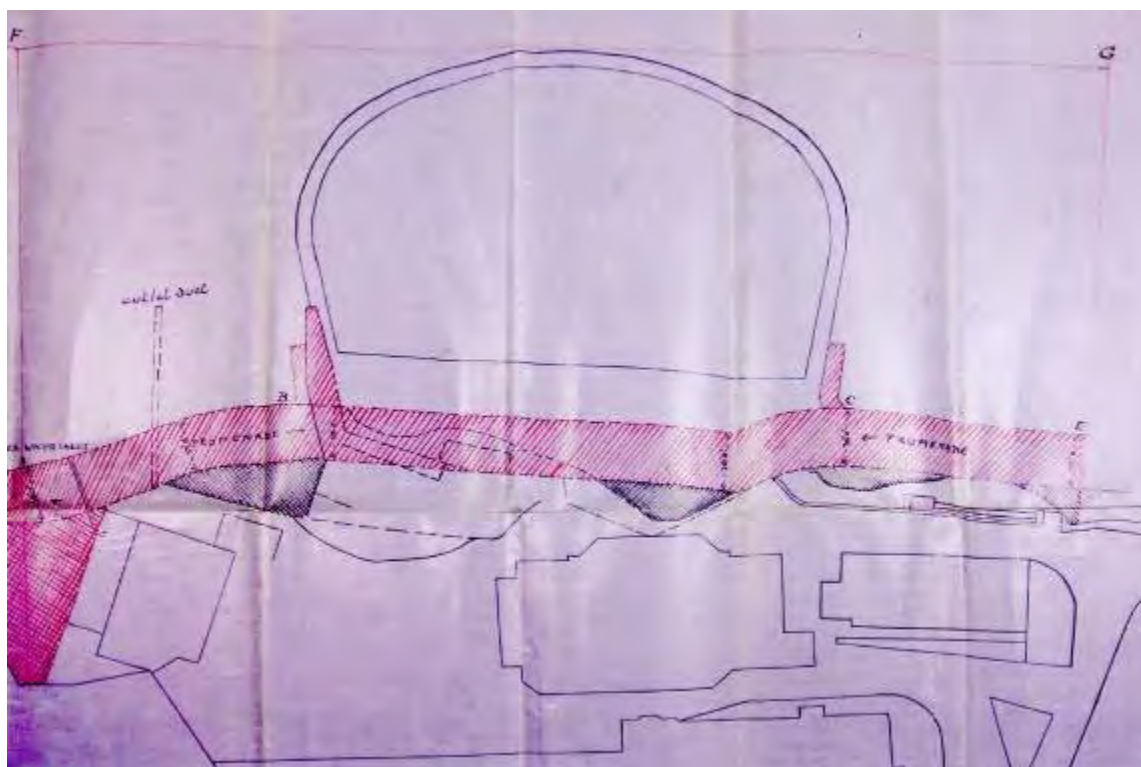


Fig. 163 Plan illustrating an agreement between John Henry Iles and the town council with regard to the proposed open-air swimming pool (EKA: R/U148/213)

Around this time, pools and Lidos had become amphitheatres.

The diving boards [and] chutes were props and the water-cleansing plants, changing rooms and car parks were essential, backstage facilities.

The amphitheatre was probably intended, at first, for edifying athletic and hygienic displays. It would soon, however, in the 1930s, become *'one of the cradles of the beauty contest'* (Evans 2003), which, as is well attested, would mutate through various strange and sometimes disturbing forms, at the Lido, during the middle years of the century.

*'This feat of construction has met with colossal support and patronage. There is dressing accommodate foe 1,000 bathers, the cubicle halls being with warm fresh water plunges, foot baths and showers. A non-stop programme of music is provided throughout the day and warm evenings spell moonlight bathing – in brilliantly illuminated surroundings – until midnight.'*<sup>173</sup>

*In the evening, a searchlight was played on the water, with very attractive and pleasing effect.*<sup>174</sup>

*There are many people, some of them with very considerable experience, who prefer a pool fed direct from the sea to one supplied with filtered, purified water.*

<sup>173</sup> Souvenir programme 1932.

<sup>174</sup> *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 11 September 1929.



*Margate gives us a striking example of this in Mr H F B Iles, one of the directors of the Clifton Baths, Limited, the owners of the bathing pool at Margate and of other pleasure places in that town. [...] He has studied bathing pools in England, the Continent and in America, and he has come to the conclusion that the pool filled direct from the sea is superior to a lake of water filtered and purified [...]. He argues that people come to the seaside for the sea, and when they bathe, they want to bathe either in the sea, or, if in a bathing pool, they want it to be as near like the sea as possible, and with the sea in their view.*

*The water is carried into the pool by means of four sluices, and it is cleared out in the same way. The pool is cleaned two or three times a week. There is accommodation only for about 2,000 spectators, and the company would be glad if it could make it double or even treble that size. (Hastings and St Leonards Observer 6 September 1930.)*

## 10.18 The Changing Rooms

The Lido Changing Rooms, at shore Level, under the promenade and the tiered seating of the open-air bathing pool, occupy the old Artificial Bay.

These were abandoned when the Lido pool went out of use in the 1970s.

They retain pretty much all of their fixtures and fittings, including ‘*sprays, foot baths and warm water plunge baths*’ (*Margate Mirror* 1929), along with rows of lockers and timber changing cubicles and various signage.

The main entrance to the Changing Rooms was through an ornate, tiled rotunda, midway-along the terraced seating above the pool.

There was a kiosk opposite the entrance stairs, where, presumably, the customers could pay.

Having changed, they probably emerged through separate stairways, from the male and female changing rooms, to either side.

An incident in July 1933 suggests that there was a changing room in addition to the two rows of cubicles. A holidaymaker had slipped when returning after a swim, and, in reporting the incident, tells us something of its character:

*‘all the dressing cubicles [...] occupied [and] was obliged to undress in a room 17 ft by 12 ft in company with about twenty other bathers. The room in which he undressed was fitted with benches round the walls and a few pieces of duck boarding, but the centre of the floor was plain concrete.’*<sup>175</sup>

(Also, see 16.7 and 16.9.)

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<sup>175</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 6 and 10 January 1933.



Fig. 164 The Changing Rooms (MLHM)

### 10.19 The Café Normandie

This was a sizeable café occupying what is now the main room of Echoes Nightclub (see later). It was sometimes known as the 'Normandie Dance Cafe' *Era* 14 September 1927:

*'The Clifton Bathing pool has a huge Open-air café along one side where people can sit and watch the bathing.'* <sup>176</sup>

It was clearly a stylish venue:

*'The Café Normandie was decorated after the old style of the French region and was home to various orchestras for dancing during the thirties.'* (Evans 2003: 98)

In September 1930, 'Methodio's Rumanian Orchestra' was entertaining the diners.<sup>177</sup> In 1932 it was described as follows:

*'Decorated after the old Normandy style by French architects, this café is unique. It is fully licensed – and Murray Pilcer's Orchestra, which plays morning, afternoon and evening, is the best dance band on the coast. No charge is made for dancing, the café being run on the same lines as the Paris Cabarets.'* <sup>178</sup>

<sup>176</sup> *Daily Herald* 10 May 1930.

<sup>177</sup> *Stage* 25 September 1930.

<sup>178</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932.



Fig. 165 The Café Normandie from a Souvenir Programme 1932



Fig. 166 Another, later, view of the Café Normandie in 1951 (MLHM)

## 10.20 The Cliff Café and its Terrace

References to a 'Cliff Café', as early as 1924, record an earlier, smaller establishment (perhaps with tea gardens?).

The Cliff Café of the new Clifton Baths occupied a floor of the complex, extending under the Cliff Bar and much of the Sun Terrace. It was large enough to '*seat 1,000 in comfort*' and the Café Terrace to the north '*provided an ideal vantage point from which to enjoy the sea views and pool scenes. Orchestras would play throughout the day and night.*' (Evans 2003).

There were kitchens in the south-east corner.

*'This is the parent cafe of the estate. Fully licensed, it was originally designed to accommodate 80 people. To-day it seats in comfort 1,000 patrons. As a vantage point from which to obtain delightful views of the sea and the setting sun, it is unrivalled. Methodios [sic] Roumanian orchestra that plays morning, afternoon and evening is deservedly famed.'*<sup>179</sup>



Fig. 167 The Cliff Café, soon after construction  
(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)  
(Also, see 16.4.)

<sup>179</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932.



Fig. 168 The Cliff Café c1930

### 10.21 The French Bar, c1927

An advertisement (see Fig. 169, below), obviously published after the completion of the Café Normandie but before that of the Café Basque in 1929 (see later), refers to two bars at the Clifton Baths, besides the Cliff Bar – which was presumably the upper storey of the Cliff Café.

**THE CLIFTON BATHS**  
**THE NEW SPA**  
 THE HUGE  
**SEA BATHING POOL**  
 Accommodation for 1,000 Bathers, all the latest improvements, Rafts, Chutes, etc., Sprays, Foot Baths, and Warm Water Plunge Baths.

---

THE FAMOUS PED'LERS CONCERT PARTY,  
 CLIFTON CINEMA    ::    ::    ::    TENNIS COURTS  
 50 PRIVATE BATHROOMS AND HAIRDRESSING SALOONS  
 WARM SEA WATER SWIMMING BATH

---

THE FAMOUS  
**CLIFF CAFE AND FRENCH NORMANDIE CAFE**  
 THE FRENCH BAR AND CLIFF BARS AND OYSTER BAR LOUNGE  
*"Cliftonville's Fashionable Rendezvous."*  
 Phone: MARION 10-7.

Fig. 169

These are the French Bar and the Oyster Bar Lounge, and were probably built alongside the outdoor bathing pool and Café Normandie.



The souvenir programme of 1932 described 'the French Bar' as follows:

*'On leaving the bathing pool you will find its entrance just opposite ... all hands for the matutinal cocktail. The mural decorations are representations of the days of pirates, and the bar counter stools are unique, being made from the screws of old French wine presses. The intimate atmosphere makes it an ideal spot for a quiet "consomation".'*

One feature survives from the old French Bar - out of sight behind the bar. This is a gaudily painted timber doorway blocking the lower end of the Bathing Machine Tunnel (see Fig. 170, below).



Fig. 170 The French Bar in 1932

## 10.22 The Oyster Bar Lounge, c1927

This was constructed at the mouth of the Lower Reservoir, and became the Jolly Tar Tavern around 1930 (see 10.30, below).



Fig. 171 The Clifton Baths, c1927, with the Oyster Bar Lounge fronting the promenade



Fig. 172 An advertisement from *Margate Mirror*, 1929

### 10.23 Steps up from the Cliff Bar to Fort Promenade, 1928

In 1928, steps were built up from the back of the Cliff Bar after an easement was granted by the corporation for a yearly rent of £1.

Iles had to reinstate the wall, demolished in order to build the steps, if told to do so by the corporation.

### 10.24 Margate Estates Limited, 1928

In 1928, Margate Estates Ltd was established (see Figs. 173 to 176, below). This new company merged John Henry Iles' Dreamland and Clifton Baths Limited. The latter were described as follows:

*'Clifton Baths [...] covers an area of nearly 4 acres, and is situate on the Promenade overlooking the sea, in the most popular part of Cliftonville. In 1925/6 upward of £50,000 was spent on this property in the construction of a very fine Bathing Pool, with Promenade, Dressing Rooms, Cafes, &c. In addition, the property contains a large and excellent Concert Hall (the home of Leslie Fuller's "Ped'lars" Concert Party), Cinema, covered warm sea water Swimming Bath, fully licensed Buffets, and other attractions.'* (Times 4 December 1928).

**MARGATE ESTATES.**

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**DREAMLAND AND CLIFTON BATHS.**

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The attention of our readers is drawn to the announcement which appears on Page 9 concerning Margate Estates, Ltd., which has been formed to acquire the undertaking of Dreamland, Margate, and the whole of the ordinary shares of the Clifton Baths, Margate.

The prospectus will be advertised in the daily press on Wednesday and copies may be obtained on Monday next at any of the Thanet branches of the Westminster Bank, Messrs. Boys and Maughan, India House, Margate, Messrs. Saffery, Sons and Co., 18, Cecil-square, Margate, and Dreamland, Margate.

£100,000 7 per cent. first mortgage debentures, which will carry the right for five years of conversion into ordinary shares, are to be issued. As these debentures, we understand, will be covered for both capital and interest over three times, they form a very attractive investment, and the right at any time during a period of five years to convert into ordinary shares offers a prospect of capital appreciation that may be very substantial.

The success of these two undertakings is well known to our readers, and the fact that Mr. J. Henry Iles and his colleagues will remain to continue the direction and control of the undertaking is an important feature.

The debentures and shares are to be quoted on the London Stock Exchange, and holders will have the advantage of a negotiable security.

Further large improvements are to be carried out this winter at the Clifton Baths and Dreamland in readiness for next season, and no doubt the success of these two establishments will be further considerably enhanced.

Fig. 173 Thanet Advertiser 30 November 1928



## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.**

# **Margate Estates Limited**

**CAPITAL £250,000**

divided into

**500,000 8% Preference Shares of 2/- each, and  
2,000,000 Ordinary Shares of 2/- each.**

---

ISSUE OF

***£100,000 7% First Mortgage Debentures with  
right for a period of five years to convert  
into Ordinary Shares at the rate of 8 shares  
for every £1 Debenture.***

---

**MARGATE ESTATES LIMITED** has been formed to acquire the undertaking, assets and goodwill of Dreamland Margate Limited and the whole of the Ordinary Shares of the Clifton Baths Margate Limited.

The Directors of Dreamland Margate Limited and Clifton Baths Margate Limited have pleasure in announcing that arrangements have been made for preference to be given to applicants for these Debentures from residents in Thanet.

The great success of these two undertakings is well known to Thanet residents and, as these new Debentures and Shares will be quoted on the London Stock Exchange, they will be readily bought and sold and form a very attractive investment with great prospects of capital appreciation.

The Prospectus will show that these Debentures are covered nearly three times for capital and three and a half times for interest.

The Prospectus offering the above Debentures for subscription will be advertised in the leading Daily papers on Wednesday next, 5th December, and copies of the Prospectus will be available to intending applicants on Monday next at any of the Branches of the Westminster Bank Limited in the Isle of Thanet, or from Messrs. Boys and Maughan, India House, Margate; Messrs. Saffery Sons & Co., 18, Cecil Square, Margate; or at the offices of Dreamland Margate Limited.

Those desirous of applying for these Debentures should do so immediately and mark their application forms and envelopes "**Thanet Resident.**"

Fig. 174 Thanet Advertiser 30 November 1928

It is estimated that over £100,000 has been expended in the last five years on the Dreamland and Clifton Baths estates at Margate, and that since the war well over 25,000,000 persons have visited them. Now it is rumoured that "improvements"—some of them to be introduced to Europe for the first time—are in contemplation. So our seaside resorts keep abreast with the times, and Margate makes her bid for increased popularity.

Fig. 175 Sheffield Daily Telegraph 4 December 1928

## MARGATE ESTATES.

### FAVOURABLE PROSPECTS.

The STATUTORY MEETING of Margate Estates, Limited, was held yesterday at Winchester House, Old Broad-street, London.

Mr. J. H. ILES (chairman and managing director) said that all the moneys due in respect of debentures and shares allotted had been received, so that there was not a single shareholder or debenture-holder of the company who had not paid in full for his shares or debentures. The company had purchased its property at a figure much below the sum fixed by the valuers, which valuation was, in his opinion, on a very

conservative basis. Further, he was advised by the auditors that there were certain sources of revenue which might be used for the purpose of reducing the debit balance on their preliminary expenses account, without appropriating any of the future profits of the company. Again, there was no goodwill appearing among their assets, although it must be manifest that the goodwill of their undertakings was of great value.

The company was, therefore, commencing its career on what accountants would call "a sound basis," and a large proportion of their profits each year could be prudently appropriated for the payment of dividends. Their two freehold estates occupied commanding and unique positions which, in all probability, would have a constantly increasing value, and he thought their debenture-holders could congratulate themselves on having a security that would, in his opinion, never let them



down. Improvements were being rapidly made at the Clifton Baths Estate and at Dreamland, which he was confident would have an important bearing on their future profits.

Moreover, he had been fortunate in securing some very valuable rights from America, which would be introduced to England for the first time this summer, and he was arranging for the company to have a substantial interest in those rights, with the result, he believed, of adding very substantial profits to their prospectus estimates. Apart from that, however, the directors were confident that, for many years to come, the business of their company would continue to show the same satisfactory progress which it had enjoyed during the past six years, and that they would be in the happy position this year of establishing a new record of profits, from which they might hope to make a steady yearly increase in future.

Fig. 176 *Times* 8 March 1929

## 10.25 The Café Basque, Built c1928 to 1929

At the Margate Police Court on 10 April 1929, John Henry Iles submitted plans 'regarding certain alterations at the Clifton Baths' by which, he claimed, 'Margate would possess a building which would be unique – the only one of its kind in the country.'

By this time, these alterations were already quite far advanced:

*'Mr Iles stated that the plans had already been passed, subject, of course, to the approval of the licensing committee upon inspection. They had, however, been faced with great difficulty, and in view of the amount of time that had elapsed, he submitted the plan as a matter of courtesy, to show what they were doing at this stage.'*

*[... He] said the additional room on the plan did not mean increased drinking facilities, but was provided for in order to obtain and ensure a better service.'*

*About £3,000 had been spent upon the decoration of the building etc. It was to be a café and was situated under the present Café Normandie and would be underground. The light would always be artificial.'*<sup>180</sup>

The magistrates said they would decide on the application when they had seen the premises. Iles told reporters that:

*'the new building was being erected upon a Basque scheme, the Basque country being the part of France where the late Marshal Foch and many other great Frenchmen were born.'*

<sup>180</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1929.

*It was directly below the present Café – the Normandie – and would be exactly the same size and shape. The scheme was unique, and such a building did not exist in any other part of the country. One of the remarkable and impressive features of the new café would be the magnificent lighting effects. Although the café would be underground, part of the lighting would be arranged in such a manner as to represent the sun's rays streaming through the windows, while other lighting effects and decoration would make it appear as if anyone in the café were looking out upon a French street.<sup>181</sup>*



Fig. 177 Café Basque, looking south-west

(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)

Foch was the Supreme Allied Commander during the First World War, who had died on 20 March that year. Was the café really decorated in a Basque style, or was it just another French-style café, which Iles now re-named to cash in on nationalistic sentiment?

The Café Basque seems to have been completed, licensed and opened by early September.<sup>182</sup>

*'Underneath the Café Normandie was the Café Basque, which at the time was thought to be the only one of its kind. This had been modelled on bars found in the Basque region in the Pyrenees. Rustic treatment of wood beams and stone arches helped build the intimate atmosphere.'*<sup>183</sup>

<sup>181</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1929.

<sup>182</sup> *Era* 10 September 1930.

<sup>183</sup> Evans 2003: 98.

It adjoined the Changing Rooms at shore level, and was lit by a light-well descending behind the Café Terrace. Besides the artificial stone arches, there was other plaster scenery including quaint house-frontages backlit by light bulbs.

The Café Basque was described as ‘new’ in the *Margate Mirror* of 1929, by which time the Cliff and Normandie Cafés were already ‘famous.’ By 1930, entertainment in this café was provided by a troop styled the ‘*Basque Entertainers*.’<sup>184</sup>

In 1932, the café was described as follows:

*‘Situated under the Café Normandie, this latest creation of the Estate has met with a remarkable reception. In original decoration it has no equal in the country – and probably none on the Continent either. The rustic treatment of massive wood beams and stone arches is taken from the Basque country in the Pyrenees. [...] Fascinating lighting effects and Frank Penrose and his Cabaret Entertainers help to create the true atmosphere of the famous Montmartre quarter of Paris. It is almost impossible to imagine a more romantic place of entertainment and, moreover, one that brings the real Continental influence to our shores.’*<sup>185</sup>

Montmartre in the Pyrenees? This bizarre conflation perhaps owes something to a visit by the celebrated journalist Hannen Swaffer the previous year:

*‘Hannen was particularly impressed with the enterprising developments carried out by Mr J Henry Iles at the Clifton Baths Estate where the Café Normandie reminded him of Coney Island, The Café Basque of Montmartre and part of Berlin’s Vaterland, and a third café there [presumably the Cliff Café] of anywhere in Montmartre or the Champs Elysées.’*<sup>186</sup>

Hannen also praised Iles’ indefatigability in fighting ‘the Corporation and all authority’ to secure ‘a licence from roof to cellar’ (*op. cit.*) of the building (see Figs. 178, 179 and 180, below).

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<sup>184</sup> *Stage* 25 September 1930.

<sup>185</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932.

<sup>186</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 7 August 1931.



Figs. 178 and 179 Pictures of the Café Basque from the Souvenir programme of 1932.

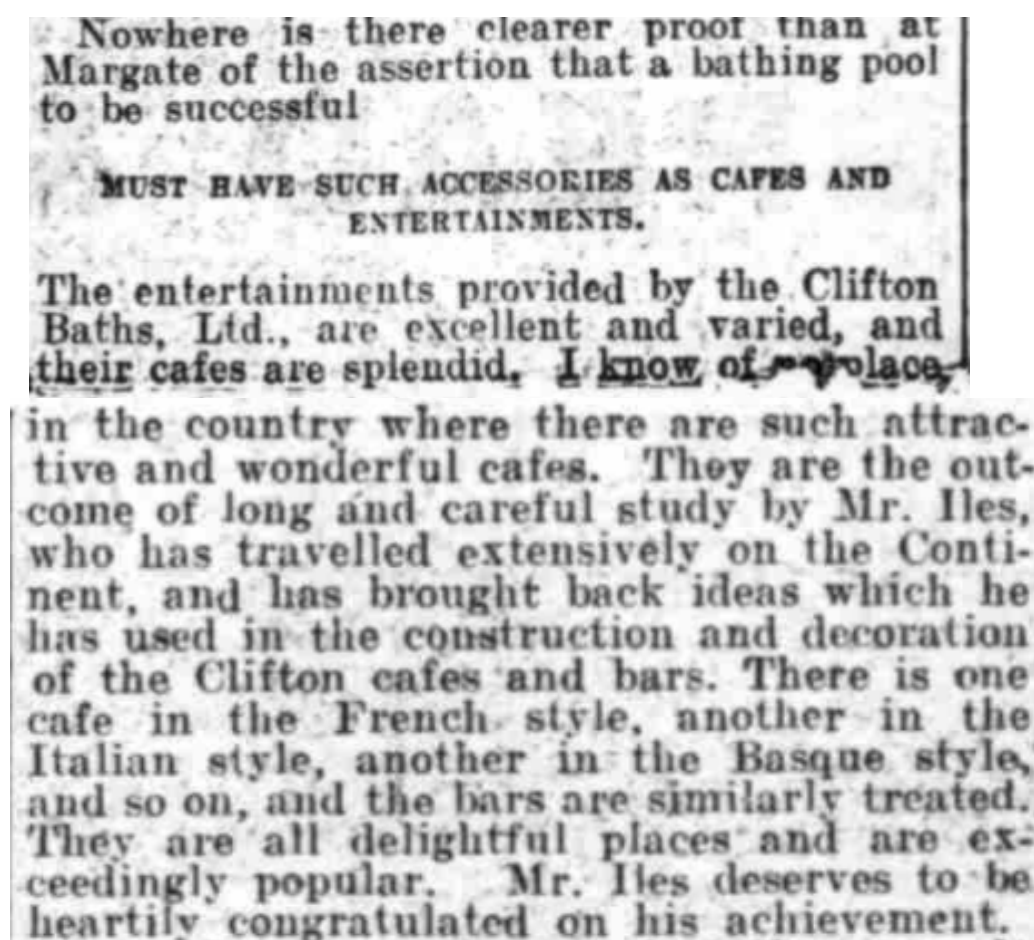


Fig. 180 *Hastings and St Leonards Observer* 6 September 1930

### 10.26 The Sun Terrace, Entrance Staircase, Bathrooms and Hairdressing Salons, c1928

Iles' attention now returned to the upper level of the new Clifton Baths site, and he set about implementing changes that were slightly less dramatic and more superficial than had been sketched out in the design perspective. In so doing, he established much of the present character of this level of the site.

The bathrooms and hairdressing saloons seem to have been completed before the Café Basque.

Contractors are known to have been working at the Clifton Baths in April 1929<sup>187</sup>, and it seems to have been at this point that the brick dome of the original Bathing Machine Store was truncated down to terrace level.

A grid of girders was formed across the top, supported by thick, square, brick pillars. Corrugated-steel shuttering was fixed across the top and – presumably reinforced – concrete was laid on the top.

<sup>187</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1929.



## 10.27 The Bathrooms

Bathrooms and the adjoining '*hairdressing saloons*' were mentioned in *Margate Mirror*, 1929. They were in what is now the snooker club.

In 1932, a souvenir programme, extolling '*hot, fresh and sea water and medical ozone baths*,' described these '*bath*' rooms as follows:

*'These consist of a fine modern range of 50 private bathrooms, each room being luxuriously fitted and equipped with every modern convenience. Hot sea water is in itself extraordinarily exhilarating, and the medical ozone baths are continually effecting remarkable cures of rheumatism, sciatica and nervous disorders. A new feature is the ultra violet sun-ray treatment that may be taken (at a very small cost) in conjunction with an ordinary bath.'*<sup>188</sup>

An advertisement in the same publication tells us that the ultraviolet treatment was '*a new feature*,' and was '*guaranteed absolutely safe [!]*.'

It also boasted of '*marble walls and floors*.' The latter were probably the present 'marble-effect' walls and terrazzo floors, rather than actual marble.

There were first and second-class baths. Some (perhaps the second-class ones) were described as '*slipper baths*,'<sup>189</sup> and these may have been on the first floor.



Fig. 181 Photograph of the bathrooms in a 1932 souvenir programme (thought to have been taken in 1929)

<sup>188</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932.

<sup>189</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 2 August 1932.



Fig. 182 An early view of the first floor of the bathrooms, looking west

## 10.28 The Hairdressing Saloons

The hairdressing saloons were in the south-western corner of the site, between the baths and the entrance stairs, with their own grand entrance.

In 1932, they were described as follows:

*'These are another of the latest reconstructions, no expense having been spared in making them the finest and best equipped in the district. The most modern of fittings have been installed and comfort and cleanliness are everywhere in evidence.'* <sup>190</sup>

The gentlemen's salon (see Fig. 183) was on the ground floor, in what is now the bar of the snooker club.

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<sup>190</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932.



Fig. 183 The gentlemen's hairdressing salon looking south-west, from the Souvenir programme of 1932 (Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)

The 'ladies' hairdressing saloons' (see Fig. 184, below) were on the supervening floor:

*'This new saloon has been established to meet the frequent demands of previous years, and a special staff, highly skilled in all branches of the profession including permanent waving, has been engaged from leading London establishments. Here one is not worried to buy lotions one does not want, or to receive treatment one does not require.'*<sup>191</sup>

The salons were segregated one from another, by half-glazed partitions.

<sup>191</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932.



Fig. 184 The ladies' salons, looking south-west, from the Souvenir programme of 1932

### 10.29 The Entrance Staircase, Lavatories, Bandstand and Colonnade Structures

The present, grand, entrance staircase was erected in place of the late C19th one at the south-west corner of the site.

The hairdressing salons were at the west end of the range. This is now a Snooker Club.

The low-ceilinged upper storey may reflect the old obligation not to obstruct the sea view of the houses on the south side of Ethelbert Terrace. It was lit by 'nautical' loophole windows overlooking the Sun Terrace.

The late C19th south range was probably largely demolished, except for its south wall, which was a revetment under Ethelbert Terrace. In its place was built the present, long, narrow range, extending all the way from the south-west corner of the site, eastwards to the late C19th boiler house.

Of the 'Bandstand and Cliff Bar Terrace', a souvenir programme noted:

*'This level has been recently reconstructed. Skilled architecture and unrivalled situation have made it a popular rendezvous at all hours of the day. [...] Its colonnades are not only picturesque, but also most practicable on showery days. [...] Band performances [...] take place every morning, afternoon, and evening throughout the summer season.'*<sup>192</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Souvenir programme 1932.





Figs. 185 and 186 Photographs of the Bandstand and Cliff Bar Terrace from a 1932 souvenir programme.





Fig. 187 The Cliff Café Terrace, c1930

### 10.30 The Jolly Tar Tavern, by 1930

The earliest reference we have yet come across to the Jolly Tar Tavern is in the *Stage* for 25 September 1930, by which time its customers were amused by the ‘Fo’c’stle [*sic*] Entertainers.’<sup>193</sup>

*‘Seafaring was... prominent at the Jolly Tar Tavern where lobster pot lampshades jostled with oddments of ships’ running and fishing gear.’*  
(Evans 2003: 98).

The Jolly Tar Tavern replaced the Oyster Bar Lounge, but, quite possibly, was very little changed apart from its name (see Figs. 188 and 189, below).

Its original footprint is recorded in the 1963 NUT Conference exhibition plan (see 10.66, below), as ‘Hall A’. It was L-shaped, with the bar occupying the north-east corner of the present space.

The Jolly Tar Tavern, which lay to the south of the Café Normandie, made use of the blocked-up mouth of the Lower Reservoir, as a kind of arched alcove behind the bar, fitted-up with shelves for bottles. Ships’ lamps and other nautical paraphernalia were deployed extensively.

In 1932, it was described as follows:

<sup>193</sup> *Stage* 25 September 1930.

*'This is a happy inspiration of appropriate decoration in the old seafaring style, with lobster pot lampshades and walls festooned with oddments of ships' running and fishing gear. Situated under the Cliff Café, and hewn out of the solid cliff, this port-of-call is guaranteed to provide the coolest of draught beers. Here, too, perform – both morning and evening – the Fo'c'stle Accordion Entertainers.'* <sup>194</sup>



Figs. 188 and 189 The Jolly Tar Tavern in the mid-1930s

(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)

Late in June 1932, a fire broke out in the Jolly Tar Tavern – supposedly because of *'a dropped cigarette end:'*

<sup>194</sup> Souvenir programme of 1932

*'When the brigade arrived on the scene the glare of the fire could be seen for a considerable distance, The flames rapidly increased in intensity, and, unable to gain an entrance, the members of the brigade [...] were forced to smash in the door.*

*A line of hose attached to a hydrant near the Clifton Concert Hall was brought into play on the upholstered settees, chairs and tables which were burning furiously.'* <sup>195</sup>

### 10.31 Photographs of the New Clifton Baths in the Early 1930s



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<sup>195</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 28 June 1932.





Figs. 190 and 191



Figs. 192 and 193

### 10.32 A Kiosk on the Cliff Café Terrace, by c1932

This was built after the adjoining colonnade in front of the lavatories but is shown on the 1932 *Ordnance Survey*.

### 10.33 The Fish Dive Restaurant c1932

In the original complex, there was a popular fish-and-chip venue, known as the 'Fish Dive' restaurant, which, on 12 September 1954, was gutted by a fire.

It was reconstructed as a 'big café' on a new site opposite the main theatre and adjoining the sea front.

We have not yet determined where exactly in the complex the original Fish Dive restaurant was located. There is, however, a good argument for it having occupied the space between the south range and the boiler house in c1932.

On the night of 12 to 13 September 1954, at the Fish Dive café:

*'Fire men wearing breathing apparatus fought a midnight fire at Margate Lido on Sunday. The Fish Dive kitchen and the workshop above were gutted, and the saloon itself was badly damaged by smoke and water. The total damage is understood to be nearly £2,500.*

*Mr LP Wombwell, of 18, Cliff Terrace, told a Gazette reporter that when the timber and felt roof fell in, flames and sparks leapt through. Smoke covered the premises, and the whole building looked as though it was wrapped in fog.*

*It was the smoke that hampered Margate firemen, who were on the scene within minutes of the fire being discovered by the night watchmen. For some time, they could not find the seat of the outbreak. When they did four firemen wearing breathing apparatus went in. They found that a composition gas pipe had become ignited by the heat and a jet of gas flame was shooting across the kitchen.*

*The local firemen, assisted by men from Broadstairs, prevented the flames reaching the amusement arcade next door. There was no danger to the theatre because there was no wind. No one was hurt when the roof collapsed. The contents of the workshop—mostly electrical equipment—were destroyed.*

*The Fish Dive saloon closed shortly after 11 pm. Just before midnight Mr William Wilkinson, the night controller noticed smoke coming from the premises and rang for the fire brigade'.<sup>196</sup>*

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<sup>196</sup> *Isle of Thanet Gazette* 17 September 1954.





Fig. 194 The aftermath of the 1954 fire at the Fish Dive Restaurant

### 10.34 The Double Slide on the Open-Air Bathing Pool, c1932

The original slide is shown in the souvenir programme of 1932, although the photograph might have been out-of-date.

By that year's season, the single slide on the outer edge of the outdoor bathing pool seems to have been replaced by much larger superstructure, carrying two slides: one straight, one undulating, each reached by a separate staircase.

The six finalists in a 'Physical Excellence' competition in August '*demonstrated their litherness and pose from the top of a high diving-board, and could be seen from all parts of the beach.*'<sup>197</sup>

The new arrangement seems to be shown in the 1932 *Ordnance Survey* (Figs. 195.1 and 195.2, below).

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<sup>197</sup> *Daily Herald* 6 August 1932.

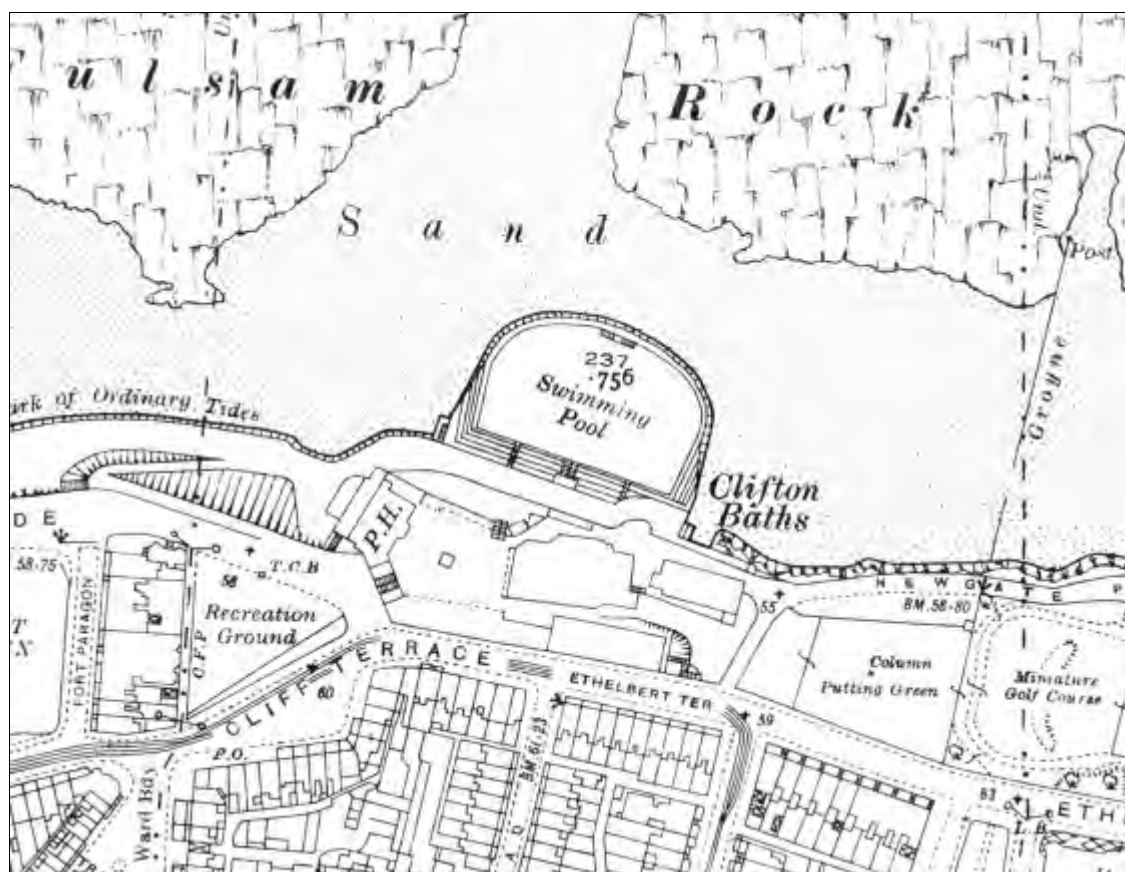


Fig. 195.1 The Ordnance Survey of 1932 showing the double slide

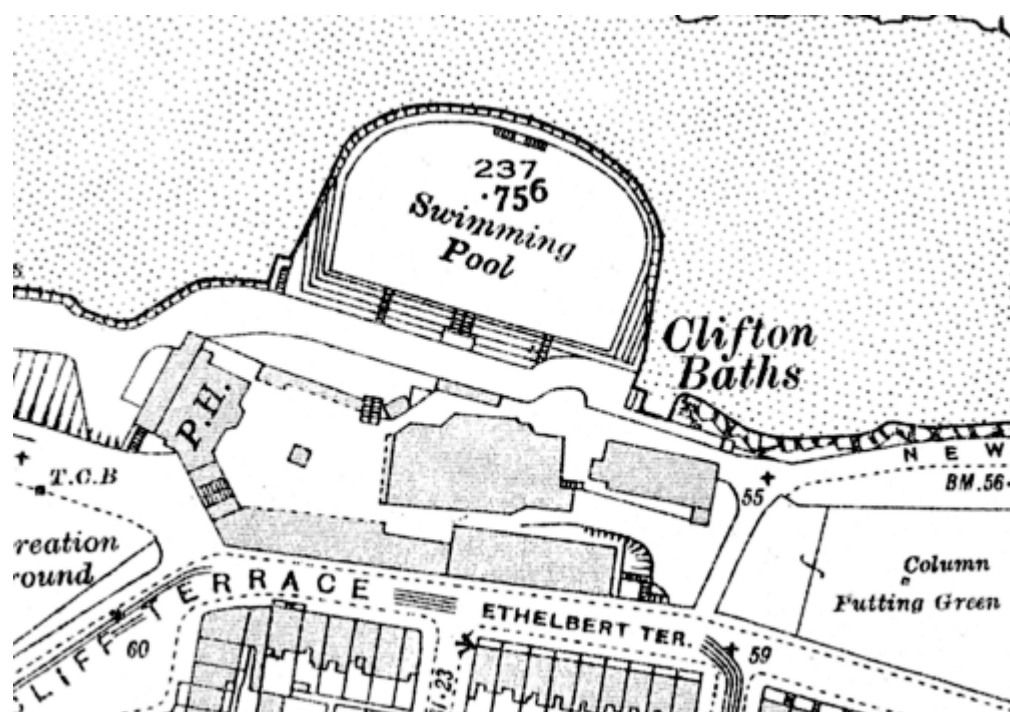


Fig. 195.2 Detail of the 1933 Ordnance Survey

The structure of the double slide looks terribly fragile, but it seems to have survived down to the middle of the C20th.

In August, the following year, the pool was described as being '*floodlit*.' <sup>198</sup>



Fig. 196 Detail of an aerial photograph thought to be of 1933, showing the double slide



Figs. 197 and 198 Two photographs showing the double slide in use c. 1933

<sup>198</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 8 August 1933.





Fig. 199 The double slide lashed by spray, 4 April 1936.



Fig. 200 Detail of an aerial photograph, thought to be of 1937, with the double slide still intact

### 10.35 The Clifton Baths and Margate Estates Ltd, 1933

In 1935, Iles formed Margate Estates Ltd, a public company to own and manage the Clifton Baths, a move that was greeted positively by a local paper since:

*'The companies with which [Iles] has been associated have spent colossal sums of money in the town, and Margate's reputation as a health,*

*recreative and holiday resort has been enhanced by his activities principally at Dreamland and the Clifton Baths Estate.*<sup>199</sup>

This development was reported widely in the local press (see below).

**Margate Estates, Ltd., has been formed as a public company with a nominal capital of £350,000 in 200,000 preference shares of £1 each and £1,500,000 ordinary shares of 2s. each.**

**It has been formed to acquire all or part of the business, property, assets and liabilities of Margate Estates, Ltd., and Clifton Baths, Margate, Ltd., and to carry on the business as proprietors and managers of amusement parks, swimming baths, etc.**

**A new issue of £265,000 of 5½ per cent. debentures at par, redeemable at 102½, will be made on Friday next by Investment Registry, Ltd., for Margate Estates Co., Ltd.**

Fig. 201 *Daily Herald* 1933

## MARGATE ESTATES ISSUE

An issue at par will be made on Friday next of £265,000 Five-and-a-Half per Cent. First Mortgage Debenture stock of Margate Estates Company. The prospectus will be advertised on Thursday. The company has been formed to acquire and to amalgamate the undertakings and assets of Margate Estates, Limited, and Clifton Baths, Margate, Limited, the object of the amalgamation being further to consolidate the interests of the two concerns and to provide additional capital for extensions, &c. These two undertakings have been operated under the same control since 1920 and no change in management is contemplated.

Fig. 202 *Times* 1933

<sup>199</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 26 July 1935.



businesses which are so essential to the prosperity of the town and district.

**PROPERTIES.**—The freehold property known as **Clifton Baths** consists of a portion of the cliff at Cliftonville, occupying one of the finest positions on the coast. The superficial area is approximately 2 acres in extent and it comprises the bandstand and lawns, a fully licensed open-air café adjoining the principal promenade (seating 500), the Dalby Square Hard Tennis Courts, Eighteen-Hole Putting Course, Tea Lawns and other amenities.

The more valuable portion of this property, however, consists of a series of extensive terraces built into the face of the cliff, the lowest being on sea level, and all overlooking the sea. These terraces contain a large covered public sea-water Swimming Bath together with a modern range of 50 private baths, equipped for hot sea and fresh water, medical and ozone Baths; a solidly built Concert Hall, seating 1,500, fitted with a sliding roof and so constructed that with relatively small expenditure the seating capacity can be greatly extended; five fully-licensed Cafés, each decorated in a different and picturesque style, and seating in all about 3,000 customers. In the season as many as 8,000 customers per day are served in the Cafés alone.

The lowest terrace is on the Marine Promenade, beyond which there has been built out some 70 yards into the sea, from which it is walled off by a concrete circular mole, a vast swimming pool, which is undoubtedly the finest of its kind in the country. There are tiers of seats around the walls with accommodation for 2,000 spectators, while in the lower terrace there are well-built dressing rooms with warm fresh-water plunges, foot-baths and showers. Over £50,000 has been expended on the construction of this section of the property alone. The pool itself is held upon lease from the Corporation for a term having 53 years unexpired.

Whereas the above property is frequented by the better-class residents and visitors, not only to Margate and Ramsgate, but to the surrounding district, the property hitherto owned by Margate Estates, Limited, which is far more extensive and covers approximately 15 acres, including the more

**CLIFTON BATHS, MARGATE, LIMITED.**—This Company's Freehold property, situated on the sea front at Cliftonville, occupies one of the finest positions on the Coast, and comprises a site area of about two acres. Practically the whole has been reconstructed at a very heavy cost in a most substantial manner and embraces five Cafés, fully licensed, large Concert Hall with Stage, Hot Water Baths and Hairdressing Saloons for Ladies and Gentlemen. There are three Promenades, and from the lowest a Private Lift conveys people to the main parade. In addition, there are Five Hard Tennis Courts, an Eighteen-hole Putting Course and Tea Lawns, also a residence, No. 7, Ethelbert Terrace, and a house with Stores in Ethelbert Road and Ethelbert Gardens.

Adjoining the lowest Promenade and extending a considerable distance into the sea, is the Open Air Bathing Pool, which is held on a lease direct from the Corporation for an unexpired term of fifty-three years at a rental of £500 per annum.

Considerable thought has been shown in the conception and development of this undertaking.

We value the Freehold property, together with the Bathing Pool, at the sum of One Hundred and Eighty-Eight Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty Pounds (£188,630), of which we attribute One Hundred and Forty-Seven Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty Pounds (£147,630) to the Freehold Property and Forty-One Thousand Pounds (£41,000) to the Leasehold interest, the fixed plant, machinery and fixtures, at £21,638, and the loose tools, furniture and trade utensils at £10,949.

The foregoing Valuations, in all amounting to Four Hundred and Twenty Seven Thousand, One Hundred and Forty Eight Pounds (£427,148), are on the basis of current Going Concerns.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) LEOPOLD FARMER & SONS.

Fig. 203 Times 14 December 1933.

## 10.36 A New Bandstand on the Sun Terrace, c1937

In April 1936, Margate council 'approved plans for a new bandstand at the Clifton Baths Estate.'<sup>200</sup> Historic photographs suggest that this was not implemented immediately, but a year or two later.

The new bandstand looks suspiciously like the 1920s bandstand translated from the middle of the Sun Terrace onto the middle of the colonnade to the north, so that the audience now sat facing out to sea.

<sup>200</sup> Thanet Advertiser 14 April 1936.



Figs. 204 and 205 Details of mid-C20th photographs, showing the new bandstand on what was by then the 'Lido Sun Terrace'.

### 10.37 The Cliff Café Redecorated, c1937

At some point in the 1930s, the Cliff Café was redecorated with curious, Tudor motifs and decorative fascias, of Cupid's-bow form. A circular stage was also inserted under an elaborate coping. These decorative features survive, albeit in very poor condition.



Fig. 206 The stage in the Cliff Café, c1937

(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)

### 10.38 Iles and the Film Industry: An Entertainment Venture too far

Iles' speculation in the film industry (with Leslie Fuller) would end in bankruptcy in 1938.

*'Unsuccessful investment in the British film industry in the later 1930s effectively destroyed Iles' business empire, a loss of some £250,000 resulting in his bankruptcy in July 1938. He resigned from all his directorships, though he maintained control of the brass-band National Championship until 1945, when he finally relinquished it to the Daily Herald. His eldest son, H F B Eric Iles, took over a number of his father's directorships after 1938'.*

Hall, now part of the Iles owned estate.  
Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s Leslie Fuller and the Ped'lers were a familiar part of the estate. His talent for comedy took him on to films, making a total of 14 between 1930 and 1942. In 1934 the local papers reported he had signed a contract with one studio for £20,000 over five years.  
Fatefully, in the late 1930s he set up a film production company with John Henry Iles as Chairman, based at Cricklewood in North London. This was the venture which would lead to Iles eventual financial downfall.

Fig. 207 Evans 2003



## 10.39 Early C20th Photographs of the Baths



Fig. 208 The Clifton Baths from the west, c1937



Fig. 209 The Clifton Baths looking north-east, antedating 1910

This is thought to be of 1907. The Boiler House chimney has been erased so as not to spoil the view. There are still statues on the Ethelbert Terrace Enclosure. There is only a fence at the cliff edge.



Fig. 210 The Clifton Baths, looking west  
Again, this shows the statuary in the Ethelbert Terrace Enclosure.  
(Also, see Appendix 3, 15.8.1)



Fig. 211 The Clifton Baths from Cliff Terrace to the west



Fig. 212 Detail of a photograph thought to be of 1913, showing the Artificial Bay, looking south-east



## 10.40 The Clifton Baths Become the Cliftonville Lido, 1938

The Clifton Baths were renamed the Cliftonville Lido at Easter 1938 after *'the name of a spit of land, a famous beach resort near Venice, [which was] now used generally, for such a spit enclosing a lagoon; a bathing beach or resort; a public Open-air swimming pool.'* (OED) <sup>201</sup>

This re-naming was announced, in mid-April, in an article recapitulating the history of the Clifton Baths, including a rich mixture of real and spurious, *'memories of [a] former smugglers' haunt:'*

*"Memories of smugglers carrying booty in the roughly-hewn passages which honeycomb the cliffs and of voluminously garbed Victorian ladies bathing from hooded machines are recalled by the announcement that at Easter the Clifton Baths Estate will be no more and that the Cliftonville Lido will embark on a new chapter of fun and merriment for holidaymakers. Famous since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a rendezvous for holidaymakers, the Clifton Baths Estate has seen many changes in the customs of fun-seeking visitors, and its reputation as a centre with modern amenities has been unsurpassed throughout its long history.*

*The estate with its modern bathing pool, concert hall, five [sic] unique cafes, bars, and slipper baths, is one of the brightest stars in Margate's merry-making firmament. Although it is a far cry to the days when cumbersome bathing machines were dragged to and from the sea by horses, its luxurious exterior shields many links with the "good old days". Beneath the estate machinery is housed in caverns used in the days when Margate folk were actively concerned in smuggling, then regarded locally as almost a legitimate enterprise. The Jolly Tar Tavern is built over the entrance to one of the longest passages, one of which extends to Holy Trinity Church and another to Grotto Hill.*

*Months were spent more than a century ago by Margate men in tunnelling the cliffs in the vicinity of Clifton Baths to outwit revenue officers by taking contraband goods from the sands to houses in the middle of the town by the underground route, and many amusing stories are told of the happenings of those days.*

*Mr Joe Bradley who has been in charge of the bathing pool since its construction some 11 years ago, has a vivid recollection of the old days, for he has been employed on the estate for 42 years.*

*"I came to the estate when I was 19 years of age," he told the Advertiser and Echo, "and in those days canopied bathing machines were drawn down to the water by horses, and ladies clad in frilled costumes extending to their ankles bathed demurely under the hoods."*

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<sup>201</sup> The earliest such use noted in OED was an article of 1930 discussing the Serpentine in Hyde Park, London, but from this date the use seems to have flourished.

*One of Mr Bradley's first jobs was to modernise these machines by removing the canopies and making smaller wooden wheels for them. He remembers one summer's day years ago when a hurricane suddenly swept two machines out to sea, and people caught in a number of other machines near the cliff had to be rescued with ladders. "The seas were battering the bottom of the machines," he said, "and the bathers had to grab their clothing and change in the engine-room".*

*Talking of 40 years ago, Mr Bradley said "Patrons used to bathe until well into the winter, and I remember one family hired three machines until Christmas. The machines were reduced to matchwood in the great storm which produced the surf boat disaster."*

*He always had an admiration for the patience of the old-time bathers. "For hours on end they would wait outside the machines in order to bathe," he stated, "with the perspiration rolling from their foreheads".*

*Good use of the old smugglers' caverns was made in the war, and several Margate families furnished their own particular caves, one of which he remembers was called "Fish and Chip Villa", because the temporary occupant was interested in that trade.*

*During the war shells and mines exploded in the vicinity of the estate, and Mr Bradley once had a narrow escape. "I was clambering down the ladder to the caves," he said, "when a bomb burst and three Canadians who were arguing in the road above were killed". On another occasion the late Mr Albert Grant, afterwards mayor of the town, Mr Bradley and some friends were playing snooker in the bar when the floor burst in places – a mine had exploded on the rocks.*

*"The grand finale came on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1917," he stated, "when shells wrecked the estate and my office."*

*Although he possesses many happy recollections of the old days, Mr Bradley prefers modern conditions. The horse bathing machines often necessitated ten long hours in the saddle with accompanying manual labour, and he much prefers the ultra-modern Cliftonville bathing pool.*

*"The holidaymaker of today has much to be thankful for," he says, "for the pool can be emptied and filled within two hours, and filled with pure sea water irrespective of the state of the tide.*

*The Victorian bathers could not benefit from sunbathing, for it was unknown, quite apart from the fact that ladies could only have sunbathed their feet. The modern pool is so constructed that we can, and do, cheat the wind. No matter how the wind blows, bathers can always indulge in sunbathing."*

*Mr Bradley enumerated the almost countless facilities available at the Cliftonville Lido, and made comparison with the amenities available when the original baths were built round about 1820. The baths were flint cubicles, and showers were provided with buckets of water thrown over the patrons by attendants.*

*"The good old days were good," he declared, "but as time marches on so progress is made, and I think most of us realise that modern comfort, convenience and amenities provide something much better. Cliftonville Lido is a beautiful spot".'*<sup>202</sup>

#### 10.41 The Cliff Theatre Re-Named in 1938

The Cliff Theatre reopened as the 'Lido Theatre,' on 1 July, 1938 'with Walter Paskin's *Lido Frolics*, a highly spectacular summer entertainment presented by a company of twenty-four artistes [...] and full orchestra.'<sup>203</sup>

New stage lighting had been installed, and the word 'Lido' was everywhere in evidence.

The programme featured the 'Lido Girls' and the 'Lido Orchestra.'<sup>204</sup>



<sup>202</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 12 April 1938.

<sup>203</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 28 June 1938.

<sup>204</sup> *Stage* 7 July 1938.



Figs. 213 and 214 Photographs of the Lido Theatre c1938

## 10.42 'Café Culture' 1938

At this time, 'Jimmy Watson's Band' was performing in the Café Normandie, the 'Basque Cabaret Entertainers' in the Café Basque and 'Harry Gordon and his orchestra' in the Cliff Café.

*'Beach cafes should be romantic, picturesque. The best I encountered [...] were at Cliftonville, the Normandie, decorated by French architects, with long tables, screened benches, dance floor, good band, glamorous colour and lighting; the Basque, a vault with massive beams, stone arches, nightly cabaret; the Jolly Tar Tavern, old seaport style, with lobster-pot lampshades, walls festooned with nautical gear; the French Bar, with buccaneer atmosphere, counter stools made from old French wine-press screws. Above these, the Cliff Café, with a colonnaded terrace, a bandstand and wide seaward views giving the "Deauville" effect.*

*The younger folk packed the Normandie and Basque, the older the Jolly Tar, according to taste. It seemed to me the ideal rendezvous, the scheme of an enterprising promoter, Mr Eric Iles; and the town authorities told me that it was a complete success.*

*You may ask, "Why so Continental?" [...] But I believe that holiday-makers – especially the younger ones – like a "Continental" atmosphere for a change, and the more they find it on this side the less they will be tempted to seek it across the Channel.'* <sup>205</sup>

<sup>205</sup> *London Evening News* 19 January 1944.

### 10.43 The 1946 *Ordnance Survey*, Resurveyed 1940

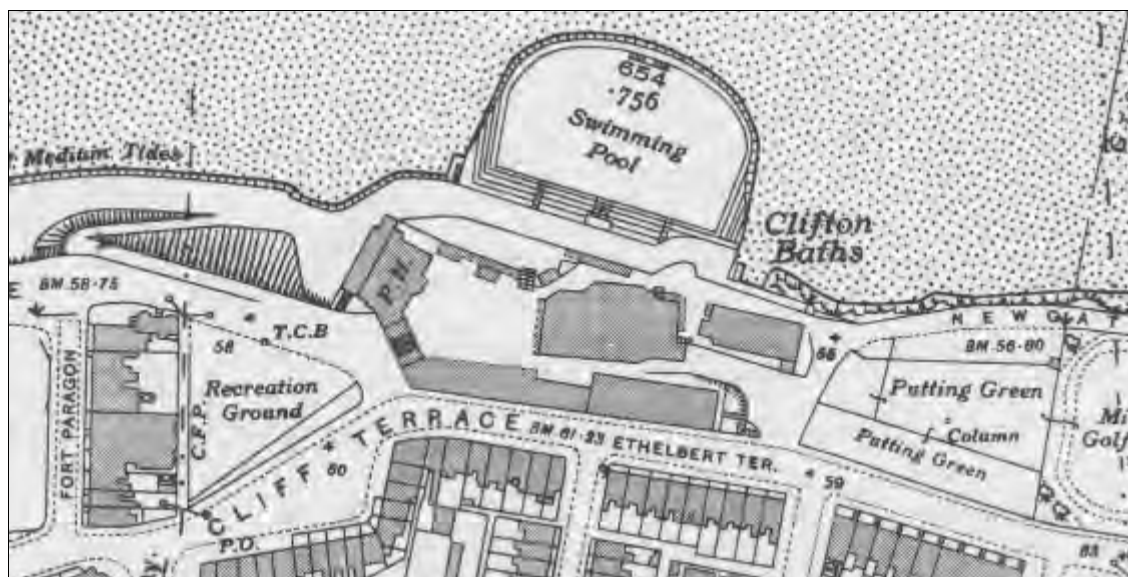


Fig. 215 The 1946 *Ordnance Survey*

### 10.44 The Second World War

Margate's tourist industry naturally suffered very badly during the Second World War.

From 1940, everything beyond the south side of Ethelbert Terrace and Crescent was subject to a coastal curfew. The Fort area, once again, housed a coastal battery provided with six-inch, breech-loading guns with a pillbox on its southern approach. Pillboxes were likewise erected along the foreshore in front of the cliffs.

By November that year, a flame-projecting installation had been installed in Newgate Gap. The Lido – albeit not quite as vulnerable – must also have been defended as a way up from the shore.

The Ethelbert Terrace Enclosure is thought to have been used as a tented Army camp, although we have not yet confirmed this, and it is not yet clear whether this was during the First or Second World War. It may, perhaps have seen military occupation.

The Lido seems to have been damaged early in the war.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>206</sup> CCA: DCC Plans/Y82/11.





Fig. 216 Immediate, post-war, aerial photograph of the Cliftonville Lido

### 10.45 After the Second World War

Changes to the Cliftonville Lido slowed down after the war. No doubt Iles' changed circumstances made a difference to his energy and vision.

The notable, structural changes were that the buttress on the north side of the Open-Air Bathing Pool was built, c1947, and the domes on the west façade truncated, c1948.

The tone of change was also set by the death of Leslie Fuller. He reformed the Ped'lers for the 1946 season, and – despite suffering a stroke – continued in 1947, but died early the following year.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 27 April 1948.



Fig. 217 Cliftonville Lido from the west, 1946 (MLHM)

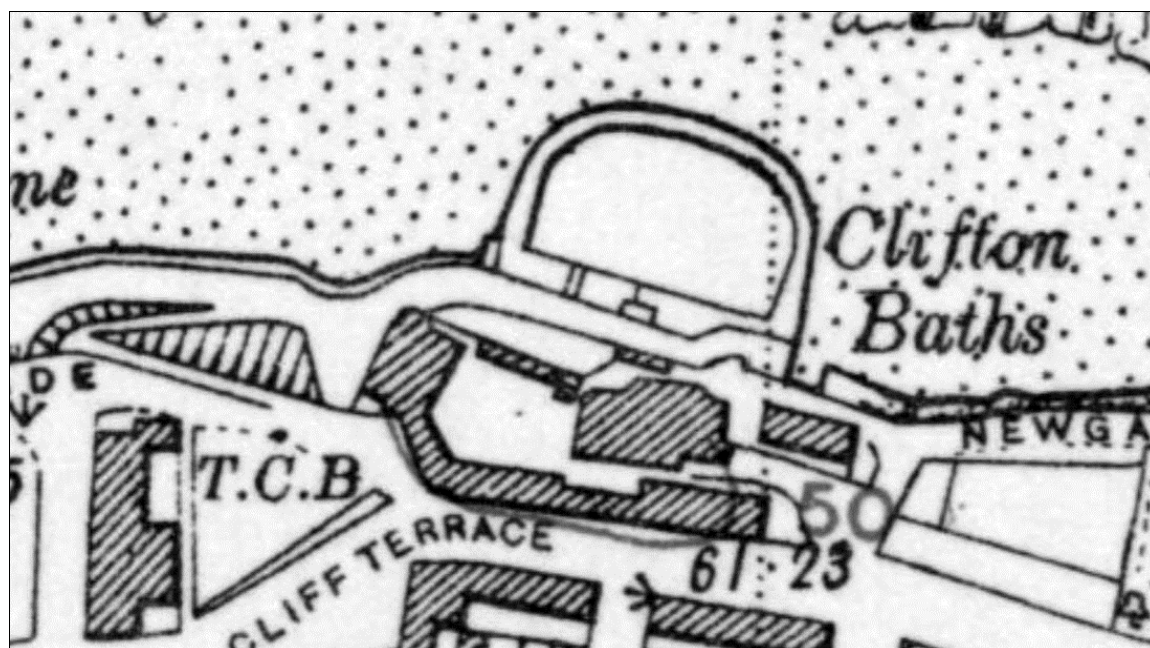


Fig. 218 Detail, the *Ordnance Survey* resurveyed in 1946



Fig. 219 Detail of aerial photograph, plausibly of 1948



Fig. 220 Detail of aerial photograph, also plausibly of 1948





Figs. 221 and 222 The Cliftonville Lido c1949



Fig. 223 Cliftonville Lido from the west (MLHM) c1950

### 10.46 The Tropical Aquarium and Snake House, 1948

The private bathrooms in what is now the snooker club seem to have closed with the Second World War. In the western half of what is now in their place were created an Aquarium and Mini-zoo and a Billiard Hall.

The Tropical Aquarium and Snake House was opened by the mayor, W J Perkins, 14 May 1948. It claimed to be '*the first public aquarium in the history of Kent.*'<sup>208</sup> (*Kelly's Isle of Thanet* 1971)

<sup>208</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 7 May 1948.

Filled with exotic tropical and cold-water fish plus a host of reptiles and even a few monkeys, this attraction was spread out on two levels (Evans 2003).



Fig. 224 The Lido Aquarium (MLHM)

### 10.47 A Puppet Theatre, by 1949

The eastern half of the former bathrooms was fitted out as a puppet theatre.

From 1956, until at least 1963, Mabel Crowther presented her Arno Puppets, in marionette shows, at the Lido Puppet Theatre.

By 1958, it was known at the Sun Terrace Theatre.<sup>209</sup> 'Jumping Jacks' were listed among the Lido's attractions on the back of a Theatre Programme in 1975.

### 10.48 A Jeweller's Shop

A jeweller's shop, abutting the north-east corner of the Lido Theatre, was built in 1947. Its merchandise included cigarettes, lighters and fountain pens.<sup>210</sup>

### 10.49 The Gale of 1 March 1949

At the Lido bathing pool, during this gale, diving boards were ripped away, and the promenade disappeared under a thick carpet of sand.

<sup>209</sup> *Stage* 31 July 1958.

<sup>210</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 1 July 1947.



Tarmac was prized up, and water poured into one of the lower cafes. A low wall was also partly demolished. (*Thanet Advertiser* 8 March 1949).

### 10.50 Improvements in 1951

*'On the site of the old Clifton Baths Estate, and as much a part of Margate as the Jetty itself, ... the old chimney-stack has become a kind of lighthouse; the drab buildings of the baths have been given clever treatment with tiles, and the seaward side of the site turned into a huge restaurant. There are four stages: on the top, open to the sky, is a pleasant tea-lounge; on the next floor is a café where more satisfying meals are served, and on the lowest floors are several continental bars. Projecting from the promenade below is a large Bathing Pool, available at all states of the tide.'*  
(Anon 1951)

### 10.51 The indoor Swimming Pool Part-Demolished, c1950

Around 1936, Iles was 'contemplating the construction of a new super swimming bath on the Clifton Baths Estate [...] near the existing bath.'<sup>211</sup> This scheme may well have fallen foul of his bankruptcy in 1938 (see 10.38, above).

Was the indoor swimming pool damaged during the Second World War, or was it just moribund?



Fig. 225 Detail of a mid-C20th aerial photograph, with the indoor bath truncated.



Fig. 226 Another aerial photograph showing fairground rides on the site of the former indoor bath

## 10.52 The Peter Pan Railway

The Peter Pan Railway appears to have been a monorail, running outwards along the east side of Lido Theatre, and returning via a series of terrifying hairpin bends.



Fig. 227 The Peter Pan Railway, looking north-west.



Fig. 228 Detail of an aerial photograph of this period, showing the Peter Pan Railway 'platform'

### 10.53 The French Bar 1953

This was damaged by a fire in 1953.

### 10.54 The Storm of 1953

The Cliftonville Lido was ravaged by the storm surge on the night of 31 January to 1 February 1953. This storm was considered the worst, peacetime disaster ever suffered in Britain, and it caused severe damage to Margate's resort infrastructure.

The Westbrook Pavilion, Marine Terrace Bathing Pavilion, the Lido and the Jetty were all damaged, and the bathing pavilions and cafes situated in the bays of Cliftonville were completely destroyed.

*'Doors and windows of the Café Normandie and the adjoining premises were forced in by the sea, inches of sand covered the café dance floor and the walls had been stripped of furnishings and coverings, with furniture wreckage heaped against the walls. The promenade was torn up and through the windows of the Cliftonville Bathing Pool ten feet of water could be seen in the dressing rooms.'* <sup>212</sup>

<sup>212</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 18 February 1938.????



### 10.55 Photographs of the Storm of 1953 in Margate



Figs. 229, 230 and 231



Fig. 232

### 10.56 Damage to the Lido of the Storm in 1953

The swimming pool, at the mercy of the raging waves, was extensively damaged. So was the promenade, the adjoining buildings and the double slide.

The Cafe Normandie, opposite the pool entrance was wrecked when a 20 ft slab of concrete hurtled into it. The café was not rebuilt.<sup>213</sup>

### 10.57 Photographs of the External Damage to the Lido of the Storm in 1953



Fig. 233

<sup>213</sup> Evans 2003.





Figs. 234 and 235



Fig. 236 The promenade after the storm of 1953 (MLHM)

#### 10.58 Photographs of the Internal Damage to the Lido of the Storm in 1953



Fig. 237 The Jolly Tar Tavern





Fig. 238 The Café Basque



Fig. 239 Flooding in the Café Basque

### 10.59 The Open-Air Bathing Pool as Repaired

The photographs, below, show that extensive repairs are evident around the everted rim of the concrete Open-Air Bathing Pool.



Figs. 240 The Open-air Swimming Pool (MLHM).



Fig. 241 Mid-1950s

## 10.60 Photographs of the Use of the Lido after WW2 (unattributed)



Fig. 242 The Open-Air Swimming Pool and beauty contest  
(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)



Fig. 243 Miss Mermaid *Daily Sketch* July 1954





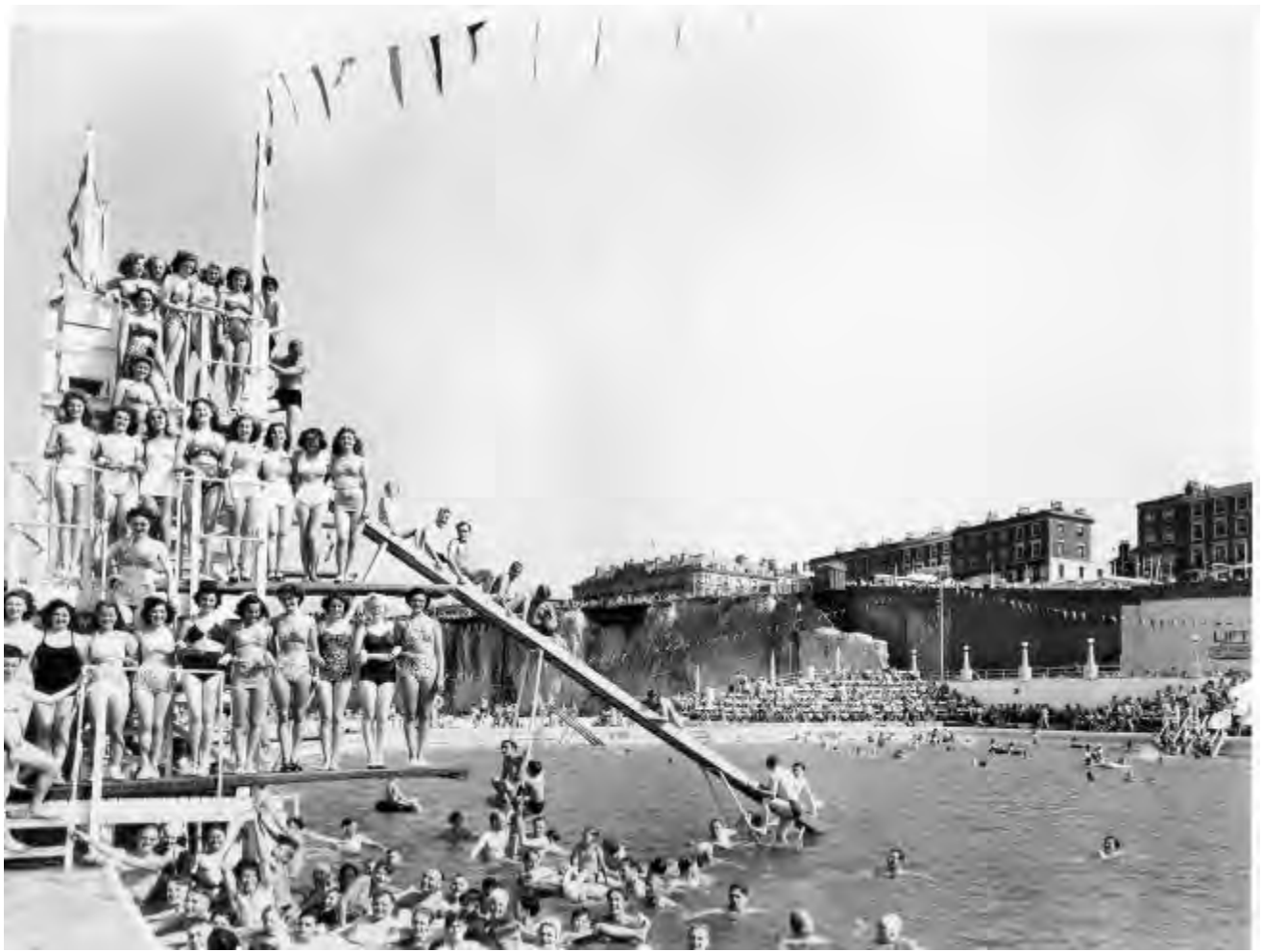


Fig. 246



Fig. 247



Fig. 248



Fig. 249





Fig. 250 *Daily Sketch* 1954



Fig. 251 Miss Shapely Ankles c1955  
Note, each contestant has received a prize.



Fig. 252 Mid 1950s



Fig. 253 Miss Lido 1958





Fig. 254 Miss Lido 1972

### 10.61 The Golden Garter Saloon, by 1954

The Café Normandie was not rebuilt. In its place emerged the Golden Garter Saloon which was, for many summers after, the home of a Wild West type show (Evans 2003: 102). It was provided with appropriate furnishings, including a 'jailhouse' for recalcitrant revellers, a gallows and a variety of characterful signage. (See Figs. 255 to 258, below.) The Saloon remained there until 1975, but, afterwards, became Echoes Nightclub.

A contemporary report on the Golden Garter Saloon observes that:

*'The show is given partly on the stage and partly on the floor, an arrangement which admirably suits the production, which is set in Western saloon style.'* <sup>214</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Stage 5 August 1954.



Fig. 255



Fig. 256



Fig. 257 The Golden Garter Saloon  
(Bill Evans Collection, reproduced with kind permission of Nick Evans. Please do not reproduce further without permission.)

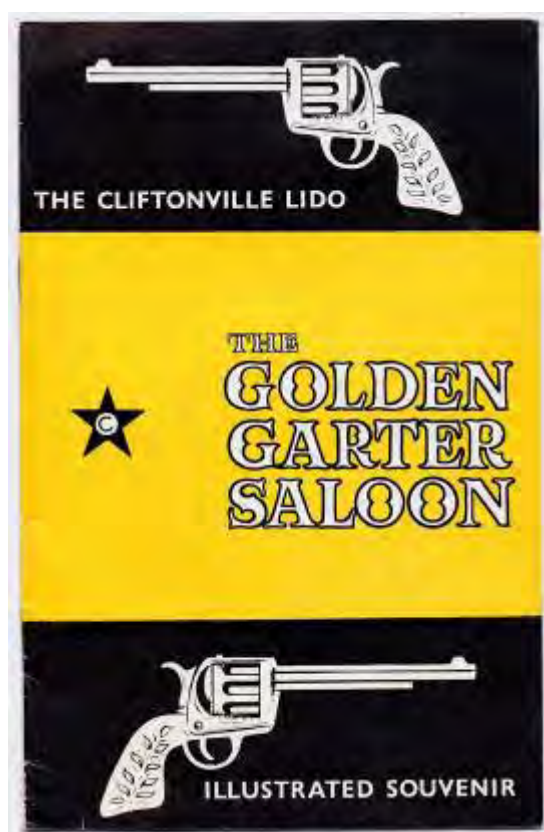


Fig. 258



## 10.62 Other Entertainment

*The Stage* of 1958 reported that 'on the Sun Terrace, Tony Savage entertains at the Compton Organ, and, in the Sun Terrace Theatre, the unique Arno Puppets thrill the kiddies.'<sup>215</sup>

The picture below shows the Cliff Cafe stage in use.



Fig. 259 The Sun Terrace 1947



Fig. 260 Cliff Café 1960

<sup>215</sup> *Stage* 31 July 1958.



Fig. 261 Advertisement for the Cliff Cafe



Fig. 262 The Sun Terrace by day 1955





Fig. 263 The Sun Terrace at night 1950s

### 10.63 The 1954 Ordnance Survey

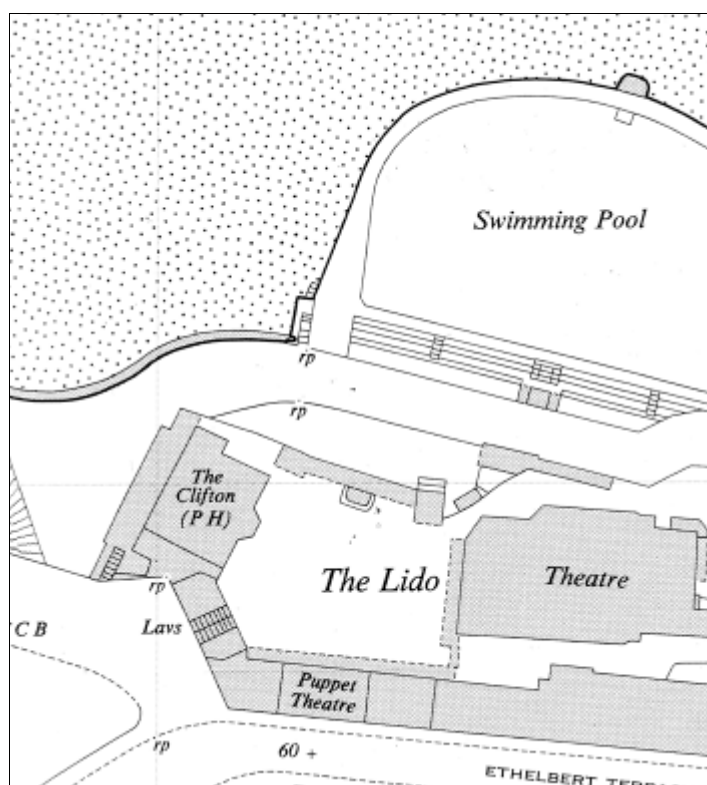


Fig. 264 Ordnance Survey 1954

### 10.64 The Cavern Discotheque, or Dance Cavern, by 1962

By 1962, the Cliftonville Lido had at last recognised the extraordinary character of its early C19th subterranea, and established a nightclub – the Cavern Discotheque or Dance Cavern – in the former Bathing Machine Store, ‘*based on a theme of smugglers’ caves.*’<sup>216</sup> To this end, the Cavern was decorated with appropriate trappings – perhaps cast-off props from the Jolly Tar Tavern.

The early C20th brick column supporting the concrete ceiling was decorated to resemble crazy stonework, with rude timber benches on all four sides.

Other seats and tables were contrived out of old crates and barrels scattered about, and fishing nets and, amusingly, life-rings, festooned the walls. Light fittings incorporated empty, green-glass bottles; their bases sawn off. A string of such lights lit the tunnel leading to the Lower Reservoir.

A small stage, for bands, was formed in the northern alcove, and a timber platform was formed over the boiler in the south-western alcove, providing additional seating, red-lit by port-side ships’ lamps and reached by a short stair.

The staircase down from the surface had probably been inserted in the south-eastern alcove some time before this, but was certainly now in use.

*‘The Cavern was always packed with youngsters who paid, I think, 2s 6d to get in. Access was by a narrow staircase that wound down into a circular space hewn from the chalk and, largely, brick walled. It was a pretty ramshackle set up with dodgy electrics. To the right of the stage there was a staircase that ran down to a flooded area. Around the circular dance floor there were several arched chambers extending radially with seating and tables, one being higher had a second tier of seating.’*<sup>217</sup>

All of this activity must doubtless have encouraged the popular, but erroneous, notion that the Clifton Baths subterranea had originated as smugglers’ tunnels.

The Dance Cavern is listed in Kelly’s Isle of Thanet Directory for 1969, but in 1971 was remodelled as Hades Nightclub (see later).

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<sup>216</sup> Mrs EM and Ms ES Harrison, letter to local newspaper; undated cutting at MLHM.

<sup>217</sup> KHF.



Fig. 265 The *Dance Cavern* in the former Clifton Baths Bathing Machine Store, 1960s



Fig. 266 The Cavern Discotheque, or Dance Cavern



## 10.65 Photographs of the Lido in 1962 and 1963



Fig. 267 Cliftonville Lido Theatre looking east (1), 1960's

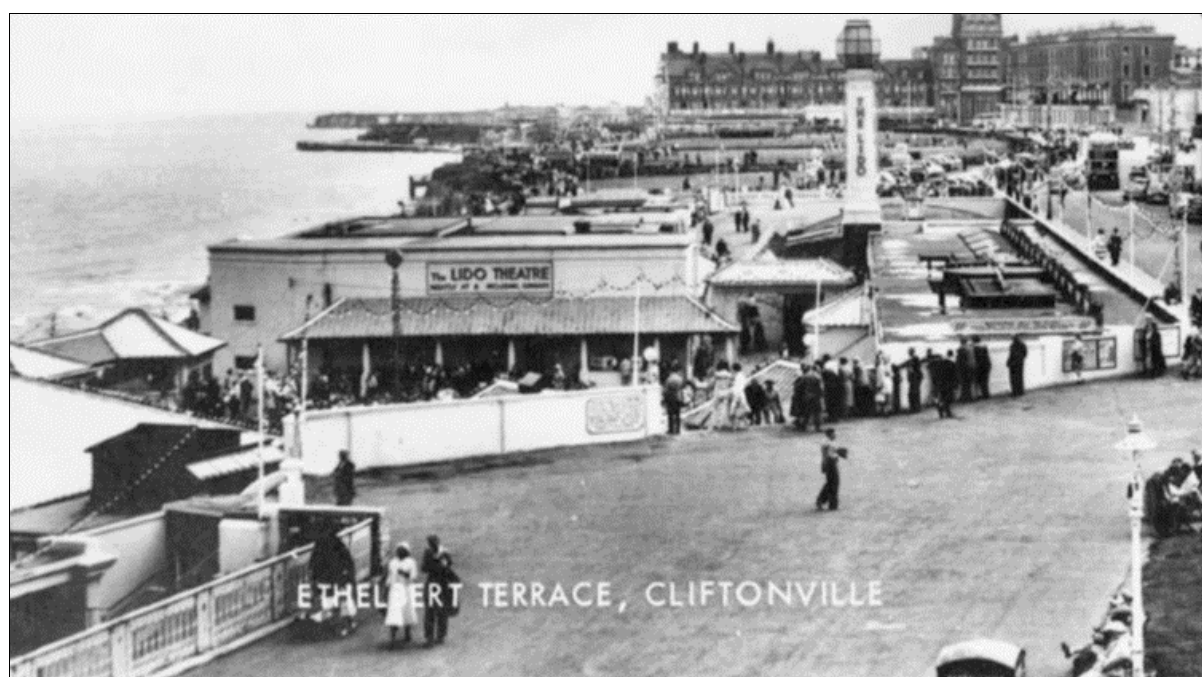


Fig. 268 Cliftonville Lido looking east (2), 1960s (MLHM)



Fig. 269 Detail of an aerial photograph of the Cliftonville Lido thought to be of c1963



Fig. 270 The Cliftonville Lido during the 'big freeze' of 1963



## 10.66 The National Union of Teachers 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference at the Lido, April 1963

To accompany the Annual Conference of the National Union of Teachers in Margate in 1963, an Education Exhibition was held at the Lido between 13 and 18 April.

A plan of the exhibits was produced, which provides evidence for internal arrangements, some of which have since been altered or lost.

The exhibition was held in the 'Hall A' (the Jolly Tar Tavern), 'Hall B' (the Golden Garter Saloon) and 'Hall C' (the Cliff Café).

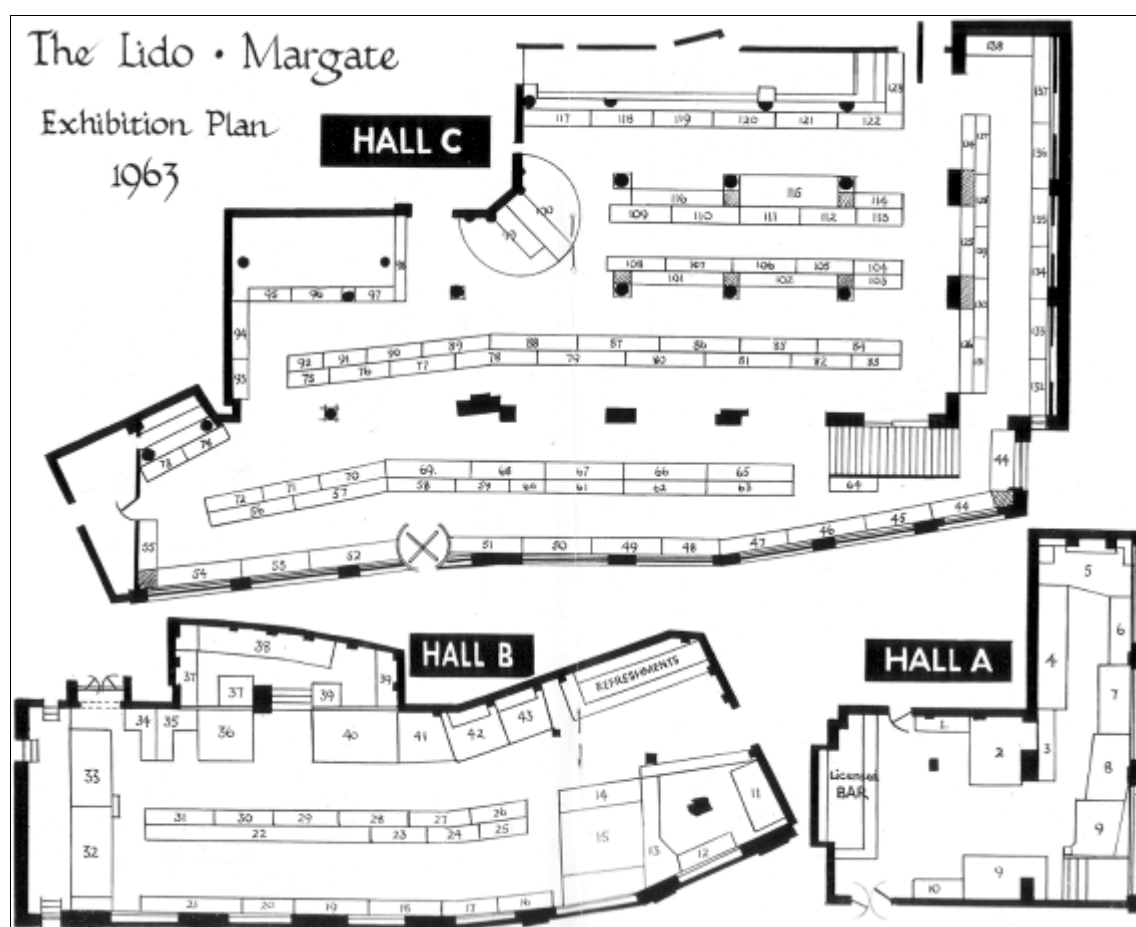


Fig. 271 Plan of the NUT Education Exhibition that was held at the Lido 1963

## 10.67 The Jamaica Inn, c1965

By 1965,<sup>218</sup> the Cliff Bar had been redecorated, inside and out, on a loose, Caribbean theme, with extensive use of fake bamboo and plastic palm trees.

<sup>218</sup> Kelly's Isle of Thanet 1965.

It was later renamed the 'Jamaica Bar'. The name has since reverted to that of the 'Cliff Bar' (it still exists). It has been redecorated, but fragments of the Caribbean decorative scheme survive.

### 10.68 The Lawn Café by 1970

This Lawn Café occupied some of the Ethelbert Gardens space.



Fig. 272 Detail of a photograph thought to be of 1970, showing the Lawn Café from the east



Fig. 273 Another photograph of the Lawn Cafe, from the west



Fig. 274 The Lawn Café and the new, seating area to the east of the Drill Hall (early 1960's), looking north-east

### 10.69 The Billiards Hall, in the Former Café Basque, by 1971

A Billiards Hall, in the former Café Basque space, is mentioned in Kelly's Isle of Thanet 1971. (See Fig. 275, below.)

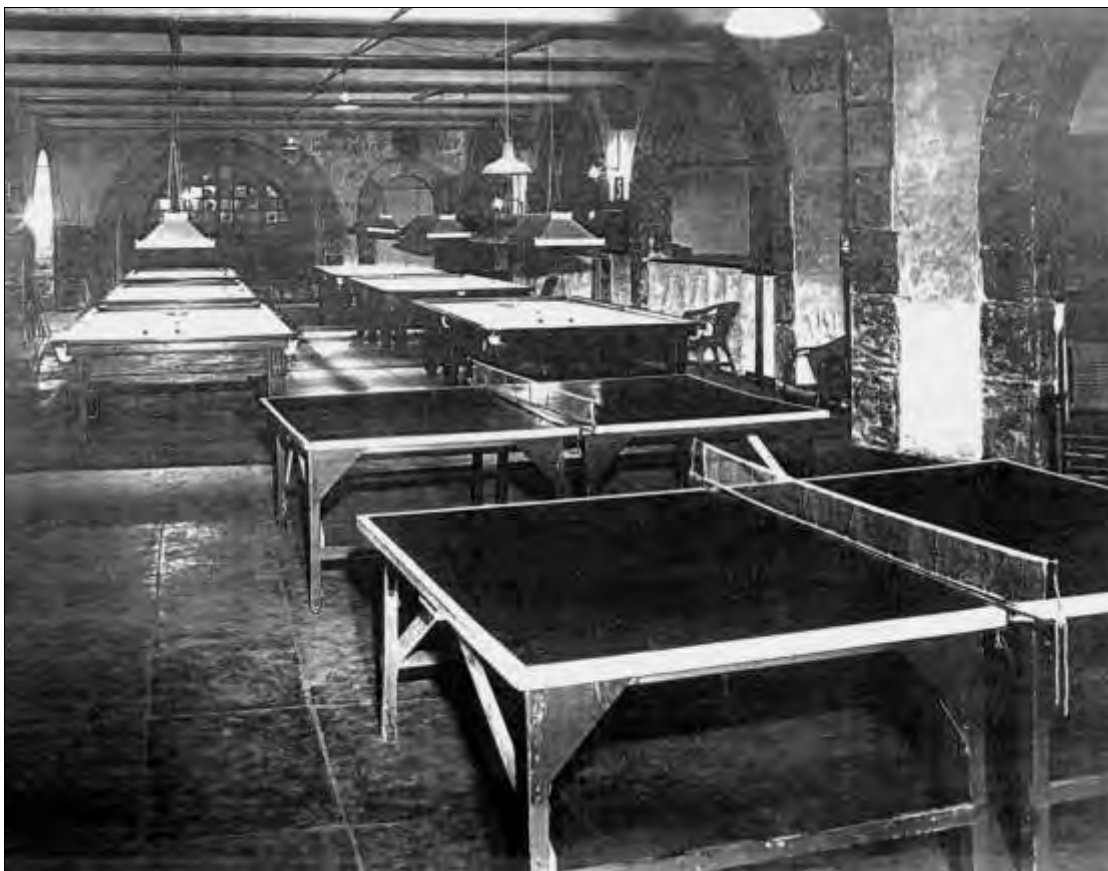


Fig. 275 The Billiards Hall in 1971



## 10.70 Hades Discotheque, 1971

In 1971, the Dance Cavern in the former Bathing Machine Store was remodelled and redecorated as Hades Discotheque.

The present concrete balcony, at mezzanine level and of amorphous plan, was added at this time, and a brick-built, entrance lobby was erected on top of the head of the flight of steps leading to the eastern alcove.

*The Thanet Times* of 1971 recorded that 'constructional works including balcony, entrance & cloakrooms' were undertaken by Rice and Son Limited, of Westbrook Road Margate, and the 'structural steelwork [was] supplied and fixed by Hamilton Slade Co Ltd of Folkestone. Hades opened 3 August 1971, promoted as 'a Helluva place.'

The report went on to describe the new Hades night-spot.

*'Hades, a new night-spot built in what was the former Cavern Discotheque at the Lido. This hell is vastly different from the impression of doom put on canvas by artists of the past. It is luxurious, plus and exciting.*

*The chalk caves under the Lido, which house Hades were bought by Dreamland in 1922 [sic ??]. They were at one time used as a laundry and then as a discotheque.*

*Earlier this year, the management decided to turn the former smugglers caves into a night-spot and, at a cost of over £20,000 Hades was created. Like all good hells, Hades is underground. Patrons will have to descend 30 steps to dance with the devils.*

*Inside, the caves have been transformed. The major colours are black and red. All round the night spot, hanging from the roof and on the walls are huge devils – dragons and bats. These monsters from hell have been bought from the MGM film studios.*

*One new addition to the caves is a balcony which has been built out over the dance area. It will be used as the main eating section.*

*Hades, which will hold 300 patrons, has plush black seating and for those who wish to dance, there is a circular dance floor. The lighting effects are one of the most impressive features of the club. There are four-and-a-half [kilowatts] of lighting, the majority of which is operated by pulsators. Two projectors provide a mass of colour on the balcony. The projectors use liquid colour slides. In addition, there are other lighting effects, including ultra violet spots.*

*The sound system includes one of the latest twin-deck console discotheque units with a maximum output of 140 watts. It is a hi-fi mono unit.*

*The chief devil will be the disc spinner who will be dressed in a red suit. His*

*“imps” will be eight waitresses, dolly girls dressed in scarlet hot-pants. In addition to a discotheque, Hades will feature special guest nights, with groups and solo artists.*

*Later it is planned to open up an underground harbour in the caves. This harbour, which was used by the smugglers, is at present blocked off to the public.*

*[...] A night out at Hades will turn out surprising. There will be no entrance fee for females, but males will pay a charge ranging from 30p. Drinks at Satan’s Palace will be at normal bar prices and in addition there will be a range of hot meals.’<sup>219</sup>*

It may be that food was brought down from the kitchens at the south-east corner of the Cliff Café.

The bar, cloakrooms and turntables seemed to have occupied their respective alcoves – unless the cloakrooms were in the lobby at the surface.

One of the ultraviolet lights presumably shone on a grinning Devil, with horns and peg-teeth, which was daubed, in fluorescent green paint, on an inserted partition blocking-off the southern alcove. This devil was depicted in the original promotional material, and, probably, the other lights illuminated similar iconography.<sup>220</sup>



Fig. 276 The grinning devil painted in the southern alcove

<sup>219</sup> *Thanet Times* 3 August 1971.

<sup>220</sup> NB: *Dungeons and Dragons* was not published until four years after this.





Figs. 277, 278, 279 and 280 Other images from Hades Discotheque

Hades was originally open to over-18s, six days a week, although Evans may describe a slightly later period in its history, when he tells us:

*'Aimed strictly at the over 20s it was open in the summer from Thursday to Sunday between 9 pm until 2 am. Exotic dancers appeared on Thursday nights. A supper licence in the disco's restaurant saw doors actually open from 8 pm.'* <sup>221</sup>

The logistics of bringing food down into the club may have proven challenging, and at some point, part of the Cliff Café may have been used. One KHF contributor later recalled *'there was a second cavern reached by a tunnel that was the restaurant.'* (Kent History Forum website)

The name of the venue remained 'Hades', at least until 1975. After this, it may have, at some point, been styled the 'Diablo' nightclub. It was refurbished again under the name of 'Colonel Bogey's' in the early 1980s.

(Also, see 16.8.)

<sup>221</sup> Evans 2003.

### 10.71 A Film Theatre, by 1972

By the time of the 1972 season, there was, once again, a cinema at the Cliftonville Lido.

At first, this seems to have been styled the 'Silent Film Theatre,' but the 'Silent' had been dropped by 1973.<sup>222</sup>

### 10.72 The Olde Tyme Music Hall at the Cliff Café, by 1970, and Remodelled c1973

This was originally at Dreamland in 1958.<sup>223</sup>

Evans tells us that the 'Olde Tyme Music Hall' show transferred from Dreamland in the late 1960s when Margate Estates sold out to Phonographic Equipment, although this required very little adjustment of the interior decoration:

*'In 1973 their growing success and loyal following justified a £12,000 makeover of the Cliff Café into the music hall's new summer base.'*<sup>224</sup>

It features as the 'Old Tyme Music Hall' in *Kelly's Isle of Thanet Directory* for that year. In mid-June 1986, however, what was then the 'Old Time Music Hall' closed due to falling audience numbers.<sup>225</sup>

### 10.73 An Amusement Arcade in the Drill Hall, by 1973

By 1973, an amusement arcade had been established in the former drill hall.<sup>226</sup> In 1975, this was known as the 'Slot Palace.'

### 10.74 The Jamaica Bar, Restyled in 1973

Out on the sun terrace organist Tony Savage entertained thousands of deck chaired holiday-makers every summer for many years, while the Jamaica Bar, restyled for £10,000 in 1973, saw the arrival of Norris Leslie playing a three manual, 10 rank Lowrey Citation organ. Both Norris and Tony would be working hard seven days a week at the season's height to entertain.

Fig. 281 Evans 2003.

<sup>222</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet* 1972 and 1973.

<sup>223</sup> *Stage* 31 July 1958.

<sup>224</sup> Evans 2003.

<sup>225</sup> *Thanet Times* 17 June 1986.

<sup>226</sup> *Kelly's Isle of Thanet* 1973. Also mentioned in 1973 were the 'Anglo-Danish Children's Circus' and a 'TV Magic Roundabout' – evidently temporary or travelling attractions.



Fig. 282 The Jamaica Bar and Deckchairs on the Sun Terrace, 1970s (MLHM)

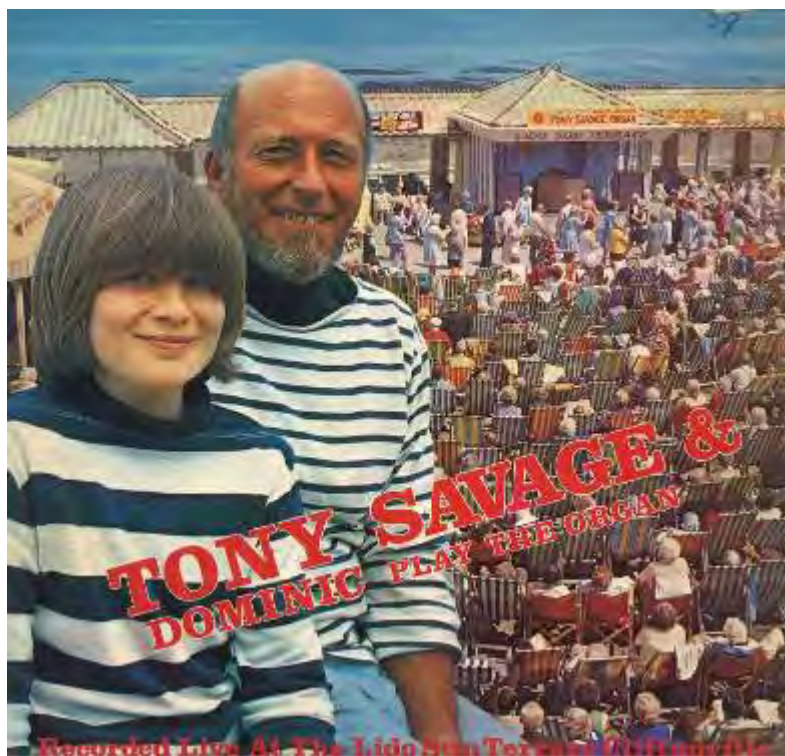


Fig. 283 Album Cover 1975 Tony and Dominic Savage





Fig. 284 The domes reinstated to the roof of the Jamaica Bar

### 10.75 The Lido's Programme of Entertainment, 1975

# The Lido

**SUMMER ATTRACTIONS — 1975**

**Theatre** - The Norman Wisdom Show (Opens 3rd July)

**Olde Tyme Music Hall** - With Al & Kathie Dene.

**Sun Terrace** - Tony Savage at the Organ. Daily at 11 a.m. & 2.45 p.m.

**Jamaica Bar** - Norris Leslie at the Organ. Nightly at 8.0 p.m.

**Golden Garter Saloon** - Family Showtime (Opens 4th July)

**HADES** - Fully Licensed Discotheque

**Bathing Pool** - Opens Saturday 28th June

**other Lido attractions:**

Cliff Cafe. Mini-Cinema. Jumping Jacks. American Pool Room  
 French Bar. Fish Dive. Mini-Marina. Slot Palace.

Fig. 285

### **10.76 Echoes Nitespot, Late 1970s**

The Golden Garter Saloon remained there until 1975, but, afterwards, became Echoes Nitespot.

We do not yet have firm dates for the establishment of Echoes Nitespot in place of the former Golden Garter Saloon (previously Café Normandie), but it was probably in the late 1970s, almost certainly well after the Pink Floyd composition of that name ('Echoes') was released in 1971.

This nightclub was still in intermittent use in 2007, but has since closed, and is now decaying rapidly with extensive water penetration from the terrace above.

### **10.77 Money Back, Turf Accountants, by 1974**

Money Back, turf accountants, had been established by 1974.

The betting shop survives, very little altered, above the bar to the Snooker Club, at the west end of the South Range.

The betting-counters survive, among other furniture and fittings, and a 'Racing Map' of Britain. (Kelly's Isle of Thanet).

### **10.78 A 'Mini Marina,' by 1974**

This is mentioned in Kelly's Isle of Thanet 1974

### **10.79 The Closure of the Pool, 1977 or 1978**

During a serious storm in January 1978, the chief loss was the Jetty that had replaced the old Jarvis's Landing Place, and extensive damage was done to the Lido Pool that same night. Sources differ as to the date when the Lido pool closed. Foad (s.d.) gives the date of 1977. Others blame the winter storm of January 1978, which damaged the pool beyond repair.

There had also recently been a death at the pool. This might have been a factor in the decision not to reconstruct it. It has since been filled-in with sand.

At some point between 1973 and 1992, the putting green was done away with, and the car park enlarged.

Later, the indoor pool at the Lido was demolished, and covered over by the widened Lido entrance drive, as was the wall between the car park and Newgate Promenade. The result was that cars often blocked the right of way. Later, the present fence was supplied in its place.





Figs. 286 and 287 The final days of the Lido. Note the remains of the Margate Jetty in the background.

### 10.80 Colonel Bogeys, Early 1980s

In the 1980s, *'the name [of Hades Discotheque] was changed to Colonel Bogey's, necessitated in part by an unwanted reputation for disorder.'*<sup>227</sup>



Fig. 288 Colonel Bogey Discotheque – External Entrance

<sup>227</sup> Evans 2003.

### 10.81 The Cliff Café (used for all-night 'Rave Events' in the 1980s and 90s)



Fig. 289 Poster of an all-night rave in the Cliff Café 1992

### 10.82 Last Days

The Lido Theatre closed around 1982, and was finally demolished in 1998, the debris being pushed into the western end of the Changing Rooms and Café Basque.

The theatre's demolition is shown in the newspaper report, below.



Fig. 290

The organ performances had been discontinued at the bandstand and Sun Terrace, in 1991, along with the use of the former puppet theatre.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>228</sup> *Stage* 20 August 1992.



Figs. 291 and 292 The Lido mid 1990's

Currently (2020), only the Cliff Bar and the Snooker Hall are still in operation.

(Also, see 16.10.)

### 10.83 Elegy to the Cliftonville Lido

*It's so sad to see these Buildings in decay  
 They were once a hive of activity and enjoyed by all;  
 What happened ???  
 Did we change ???  
 Or did our Children change ???  
 Playstations, Computers, Internet, etc.....Why go out anymore ???  
 At least Wii have the "fit" that gets you moving.....  
 WHAT HAPPENED?*

(from the archives of the Kent History Federation)



## 11 End Piece: The Bathing Machine Store 1825-6



The Bathing Machine Store 1825-6 (see 9.19): Photograph © Frank Leppard 2019

## 12 Appendices



## 13 Appendix 1: John Boys: (1782 to 1861): ‘A man of singular energy’

The Clifton Baths were designed and built by John Boys – a solicitor (and later a Justice of the Peace), of Hawley Square, Margate, and an extraordinary man in many respects.

To understand the extraordinary ambition, both in design and function, of the Clifton Baths, and, its major, unequalled effect on Margate, it is enlightening – and an explanation, perhaps – to touch on the singular life and qualities of the man who designed them.

### 13.1 A Man of Margate

First and foremost, John Boys<sup>6</sup> was a man of Margate. This is a simple but essential fact that underlay the man and the building itself.

Born 25 February 1782, the son of John Boys of Betteshanger and his wife Mary (*nee* Harvey), he is thought to have been educated at the Thanet House Academy, in Margate,<sup>229</sup> and went on to practice as a solicitor in Margate from 1801.

About 1799, Boys was ‘initiated in the system of judicial enquiries,’<sup>230</sup> and firmly attested in Margate by 1801.<sup>231</sup> He was ‘admitted as a solicitor in the Trinity term of 1803,’<sup>232</sup> practising in Margate in partnership with Jacob Sawkins until 1805, and subsequently alone, until he was joined by his son, John Harvey Boys, in 1837.

At the start of August 1804, John Boys married Martha, daughter of Athelstan Stephens the rector of Graveney with Goodnestone, at Faversham. They had a daughter, Sarah Maria Boys, on 16 September the following year; a son, John Harvey Boys, on 2 February 1807; and another, Athelstan, on 16 May 1808.

On 14 January 1816, Martha Boys was delivered of a further son, but the following day the Boys’ first son, John Harvey Boys, died.<sup>233</sup> They named their new son – who wouldn’t – after him. Only a few months later, on 17 April (?), their second son, Athelstan died. In both cases, death was attributed to ‘water on the brain’, both boys ‘having always before been remarkably healthy’:

*‘No cause [could] be traced for this extraordinary visitation, except that of their having, during the whole of [the] last summer and autumn, been in the daily habit of amusing and pleasing each other with a swing of considerable height in Mr Boys’ garden, and by twirling themselves about to a great degree, to produce giddiness to each other in the usual play of children, so as to encourage that disposition to hydrocephalus.’*<sup>234</sup>

<sup>229</sup> Clarke 1975: 60.

<sup>230</sup> Boys 1835 in a letter cited by Goodsall 1963: 7.

<sup>231</sup> *Morning Post* 10 December 1801.

<sup>232</sup> Website of Boys and Maughan, Solicitors, of Margate.

<sup>233</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 19 January 1816.

<sup>234</sup> *Taunton Courier* 18 April 1816.

The Boys' surviving son, the second John Harvey Boys, would feature largely in the mid-C19th history of the Clifton Baths.

Boys was from a 'known, ancient, East-Kent family'.<sup>1</sup>

There was another John Boys in Margate at this time. The other John Boys (1794 to 1849) was a yeoman living at Hengrove. He was the son of Edward Boys, Esq, of Salmestone Grange, Margate, by his second wife, Elizabeth. In 1812, his sister, Mary, married Henry Boys, who was the younger brother of John Boys the solicitor. Edward Boys already had business dealings with the latter,<sup>1</sup> who thus became his son-in-law.

Both John Boys' were well-known locally, and both of them tended to become embroiled in local controversies – sometimes both of them in the same dispute.

John Boys, the solicitor, however, is the main subject of this report. If a distinction needs to be made, the yeoman John Boys will be referred to as Jon Boys of Hengrove

## 13.2 Local Building Projects

Through his dealings as a solicitor, his own property speculations and, from 1809, his role as a pavement commissioner (see below), John Boys helped to shape Margate's townscape in several, important respects intended to exploit, and to promote, its fame as a resort.

**MARGATE.**

**T**HE Visitors of Margate are informed that early in August next, all the remaining **FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND**, on **DANE HILL** and near the **CLIFTON BATHS**, belonging to the Trustees for Sale under the will of **John Cowell, Esq. deceased**, containing altogether about 15 Acres, with beautiful Sea and Land views,

**WILL BE SOLD BY AUCTION,**

in lots of from one to four acres, and will be arranged suitably to the taste of those visitors, who may wish to build detached residences upon their own plans.

The allotments will be finally determined on 14 clear days previous to the day of sale, which will be announced in a future advertisement; and in the meantime any communications or suggestions from those, who may be inclined to secure a portion of this valuable land, both as to size and form of the allotments, will be received and duly considered, on being transmitted (if by letter, post paid) either to **Mr. EDMUNDS, architect**; or to **Mr. BOYS, solicitor, Margate.**

*St. James's-square, Margate,  
June 15, 1835.*

As we shall see, when Boys later established the Clifton Baths, to the east of town, he did so, similarly, thinking *'he might improve the neighbourhood very considerably and improve his own land also.'*<sup>235</sup>

By that time, Boys was certainly no novice in acquiring sites, and planning, commissioning, and constructing buildings. These are exemplified by his work on four, major, building projects: Hawley Square, the New Road, the New Terrace and Margate Pier, all of which showed traits that he later brought to the Clifton Baths' design.

### 13.2.1 Hawley Square

Late in the first decade of the nineteenth C19th, John Boys improved Hawley Square, where he lived and had his office. This was Margate's second largest, residential square, in imitation of those at London and Bath, which seems to have been erected late in the closing quarter of the C18th.<sup>236</sup>

Here, Boys showed his penchant for both style and the pursuit of quality, not only in the design of the square but also in his intention to attract the more upmarket resident – an ambition that lay four-square behind his later plans for the Clifton Baths.

Boys obviously succeeded in these aims. Oulton, in 1809, considered the improved square, *'the most pleasant, regular, and uniform part of the town:*

*'The pleasure-ground preserved for the benefit of the inhabitants of that square, affords a place of safety to children from horses and carriages; is an advantage eagerly sought for by parents, and is besides a great ornament to this part of the town.*

*This ground was planned and laid out by the exertions of Mr John Boys, but although so great an improvement, yet he was much opposed in it by several of the householders in the square, who were fearful of bringing an annual expence (sic) upon themselves, without any profit. [By 1809, it was] as much approved of as it was before opposed.*

*The care of the pleasure-ground [was] entrusted to a committee of seven of the householders, each of whom [contributed] a small sum annually, towards keeping it in order.'*<sup>237</sup>

It was also planned to surround the square with an iron railing, paid for by charging *'respectable visitors (op. cit.)* for keys of admission. This, too, was a strategy that Boys used in his policy of paid access to the Clifton Baths.

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<sup>235</sup> KHLC: R/U438/L12.

<sup>236</sup> It was in existence by November 1790 (*Kentish Gazette* 5 November).

<sup>237</sup> Oulton 1809: 16.

### 13.2.2 The New Road

Around 1808, John Boys was involved in creating the New Road in Margate, and what Oulton considered to have been:

*'one of the greatest improvements made [in Margate] for many years – namely, the making of a new entrance and carriage road into the town opposite [Cecil] Square, and thereby forming a new and shorter coach road from Canterbury to Margate.'*<sup>238</sup>

Such a road had been proposed long before, and, indeed was shown, dashed, on the *Ordnance Survey* field drawing of Margate, c1800 (Fig.1), but, in passing between the marshy Brooks and the sands, it had to be raised upon extensive earthworks, a project that had proved too daunting to others.

John Boys was, not, however daunted, and his determination went down very well locally:

*'In order to perfect this, it was necessary to pull down a house [...] but the enormous expences (sic) of this, and making the new length of road across the Margate Brooks, had, until [1808], prevented the commissioners from making this improvement, when, by the active exertions of Mr John Boys, and his well-arranged sale of Sir Henry Hawley's land, on the condition of building; so large and liberal a subscription was procured, as to require a very small addition to it from the public purse of the town; and to the astonishment of the neighbourhood, this long wished for improvement was in a very few weeks made and completed.'*<sup>239</sup>

Boys' adventurism also had a large, commercial advantage to local residents. The 'New Road' helped more visitors to arrive at Margate by coach – which was still a popular way of getting to Margate at this time.

This refusal to be daunted can also be seen in decisions Boys made in the construction of the Clifton Baths, such as his inventive cutting of a channel down through the Fulsam Rock to the sea which, duly filling with sand, provided a road for the bathing machines (see 9.6 in the main report).

### 13.2.3 The New Terrace, c1809

By 1809, John Boys, now with the bit between his teeth in his ambition to improve his beloved Margate, was proposing to build a new terrace on the south side of his New Road. The style was to be similar to a house already built there by Edward White:

*'Planned by Mr Boys, [The New Terrace] is to be formed by a handsome and uniform row of fourteen houses on the south-side of the new road, superior to all other buildings in the town in elegance and uniformity, and by*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid*: 15. The Canterbury end of this route had likewise been improved, the previous year, by the creation of Guildhall Street.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*: 15-16.

*another row of eleven houses on the east side of the road above it, according to the plan of the house already erected by Mr White, a respectable builder.*

*This situation, for building, is undoubtedly very valuable; and as the front of the largest row will have a northern aspect, it must be very desirable to visitors in the hot summer months; besides which, it will command a view, extending from the Pier and the Bay, to the isle of Sheppy [sic] and the coast of Essex, consequently of all the packets and pleasure boats going and returning to and from Margate.*

*The front and rear of the houses will command a land view through the Margate brooks and valley to Salmestone and Chapel-hill, which is not obstructed by any other buildings.'*<sup>240</sup>

This seems to have included the first block of what would become Marine Terrace, as is shown on Edmund's map of 1821 (see, Fig. 2), and it may have been completed by 1812, when Edward White gave his address as the 'New Terrace.'<sup>241</sup>



Margate – The New Road (Marine Gardens) and its Terrace looking west (Bettison 1828)

#### 13.2.4 Rebuilding Margate Pier

Also, in 1809, John Boys was appointed a Margate Pier and Pavement Commissioner,<sup>242</sup> and at, or around, this time became a director of the Margate Pier Company.

He seems to have had some responsibility for overseeing Rennie's construction of the new, stone pier, from 1810, in close association with Daniel Jarvis, with whom he was later to work on several projects, who had first suggested the idea.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*: 17.

<sup>241</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 3 January 1812.

<sup>242</sup> Obituary in *Thanet Advertiser* 19 January 1861.



In this capacity, Boys was clearly prepared to take builders to task over matters of construction.

A newspaper report in 1815, for example, referred to a dispute over construction of Margate Pier involving ‘Mr Boys ... in his official situation as one of the Directors of Margate pier’ (*Kentish Chronicle* 1815). In another dispute involving Boys, it was reported in the court case that the plaintiff (Boys)

*‘a director of Margate Pier, was charging the proprietor of the White Hart Hotel, William Edmunds, a surveyor of considerable eminence, with having departed from Mr Rennie’s (the engineer’s) instructions in the building of that pier, some part of which, it seems at one time, gave way, or proved faulty.’*

### 13.2.5 The Clifton Baths

Between 1824 and 1828, John Boys designed and built the Clifton Baths. He would occasionally add improvements to the Clifton Baths down to the 1840s, and, in fact, we are told his works at the baths continued for ‘*nearly twenty years*,’ from 1824.<sup>243</sup>

These works may have ended in 1842, when he became a Justice of the Peace. In any case, they all seem to have taken place before 1845.

Boys’ design and construction of the Clifton Baths is the subject of the main report, and the history of Cliftonville, that of Appendix 3.

## 13.3 Clifton Baths and Cliftonville: the Name

So far, the earliest reference we have come across to the place-name, ‘Clifton,’ in Margate is in the *Courier* for 21 August 1826, which called John Boys’ establishment the ‘*Clifton Bathing Place*.’

The following day, ‘newly erected,’ but already tenanted, houses in ‘Clifton-street’ and ‘Clifton-place’ were offered for sale in the *Kentish Chronicle*.

These streets did not feature in *Pigot’s Directory* for 1826, suggesting they had only just been laid out. They were clearly part of a new development on Dane Hill, south of the Northdown Road, facing John Boys’ cliff-top excavations across arable fields.

It is hard to be absolutely certain whether John Boys or the developer of the new streets was the first to use this name. However, the new development also included a ‘Bath Road,’ aligned directly upon the new baths – strongly suggesting Boys’ establishment had

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<sup>243</sup> KHLIC: R/U438/L12.

precedence.<sup>244</sup> The line of this road may well, from this time, have been continued by a track on the line of what is now Ethelbert Road.

Assuming it was Boys who chose this name, it is not yet clear why. Perhaps he was influenced by the well-known baths at Clifton, near Bristol, which had been enlarged and improved in 1814.<sup>245</sup> Bristol's 'Clifton Baths,' however, were a fresh-water, rather than a sea bathing, establishment.

The name of Cliftonville may have inspired 'Clifton-Ville' at New Lodge Road, near Belfast, by 1833, apparently a development of three, large dwelling houses,<sup>246</sup> which was styled 'Cliftonville' in 1835.

By way of comparison, a pleasure ground at nearby St Peters Broadstairs had (by c1824)<sup>247</sup> borrowed its name from London's Ranelagh Gardens, and another, at Canterbury (from c1768),<sup>248</sup> was named after Vauxhall Gardens.<sup>249</sup>

The sea water baths of that name at Gravesend had been in existence since the late C18th, but they are thought only to have been called the 'Clifton Baths' after their redevelopment in the 1830s,<sup>250</sup> and were so-named '*out of compliment to the land-owner, the Earl of Darnley.*'<sup>251</sup>

Perhaps the name in Margate was merely suggested by the topography, and by the adjoining 'Cliff Terrace' and 'Cliff Place.'

A note at MLHM refers to the '*sale of [a] new 30 ft carriage way leading to Clifton Bathing Place,*' in 1827. This can readily be identified with '*a 30 feet road leading to the Clifton Baths property,*' which formed the western boundary of some building land John Boys and William Edmunds put up for sale in June 1835.<sup>252</sup> In 1847, it was referred to as a '*privilege road leading to Clifton Place.*'<sup>253</sup>

This was clearly the origin of the present Ethelbert Road. Although it did not receive that name until the 1860s, it is shown as a road on the tithe map of 1841 (Fig. 8.3.1)

By mid-August 1830, more building land had been marked out to extend Clifton Place, on the south side of Northumberland (later Northdown) Road. The plots were advertised as being '*on Dane Hill, near the Clifton Baths,*' and as being:

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<sup>244</sup> There was also, either by this time or within a few years, a 'Bath Avenue' adjoining this. This redundancy of the elements 'Clifton' and 'Bath' in these street names seems to support the argument.

<sup>245</sup> *Bristol Mirror* 15 October 1814.

<sup>246</sup> *Northern Whig* 1 July 1833.

<sup>247</sup> *Public Ledger* 11 September 1824.

<sup>248</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 16 July 1768.

<sup>249</sup> And, of course, there was Margate's 'Tivoli.'

<sup>250</sup> The earliest instance we have yet come across is in the *West Kent Guardian*, 4 July 1835.

<sup>251</sup> Smith 1996: 537. Or were they hoping to cash in on the Margate establishment's celebrity?

<sup>252</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 28 July and 8 August 1835.

<sup>253</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 24 August 1847.

*'so situated [...] that they are likely for many years to retain their present unrivalled advantages of sea view in front; and of the town and country view in rear of them.'*<sup>254</sup>

Cliftonville seems to have occupied only the western end of the cliff-top, nearest the Clifton Baths, whilst much of the land further east continued to languish under the old name (New Town), with fewer houses, of poorer construction (Anon 1868).

There was a distinctly mediaeval touch to the Cliftonville street names – which echoed the Gothick symbolism of the baths, as well as Boys' own interests (see 13.4, below).<sup>321</sup>

As Feret notes, Ethelbert broke the Hanoverian monopoly in Margate street names, establishing a lasting taste for early medieval royalty on the east side of town:

*'The early Saxon kings lord it over Cliftonville ridiculously. King Ethelbert has a road, a crescent, a terrace, and gardens to keep his memory alive. Well I don't complain of that, for the king has some good points to his credit. He not only consolidated his little kingdom of Kent and compiled the earliest code of laws but was the first king of England to adopt the Christian faith.'* (Seary 2013)

## 13.4 John Boys' Interests and Eccentricities

Boys' non-legal interests undoubtedly fed into his design of the Clifton Baths.

### 13.4.1 Engineering and Science

Boys held an eclectic interest in engineering and science – two interests which later found their apotheosis in his design of the Clifton Baths.

These interests could also segue into the fantastic. In his *Answer to the Reply of John Boys*, Freeman ridiculed Boys as a *'modern day Archimedes'*, who had also invented:

*'a certain machine, a kind of air balloon engine, to convey intelligence to the moon or the planet Saturn, which was banded about by Messrs A and B or some of the fraternity at one time in the public prints?'*<sup>255</sup>

It has not yet been possible to establish any basis for this, but it is by no means inconceivable that Boys could have devised some kind of flying machine, or even a primitive 'space craft'.

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<sup>254</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 17 August 1830.

<sup>255</sup> Freeman 1810

### 13.4.2 Electro-vegetation, 1847

By mid-1847, John Boys was in correspondence with the controversial scientist, Andrew Crosse (1784-1855), who many believed had, in 1836, crystallised tiny living insects out of a mineral solution using electricity.

Crosse suggested certain experiments into the effects of electricity on plant growth, which Boys undertook enthusiastically. He replied to Crosse 29 July 1847:

*'Dear Sir,*

*I obtained in March last two vines raised from eyes of the same shoots, one year old. I separated the roots of each, and cut away all fibres, leaving only six roots to each plant; and those roots I also cut back, to the same length for each. I procured two flower-pots for the two vines each 18 inches deep, and 16 inches across. I stopped the holes at bottom, and planted each vine in precisely the same mixture of soil, as well as contents of each pot.*

*I placed each pot in a large crock, so that I surrounded each internal pot with rain water, and kept them constantly filled; the copper wire was plunged from the positive pole of the battery to the roots of one vine, and [233] the negative wire was placed in the water outside the pot. About twice a week each plant was watered with about half a pint of rain water; and the situation in which I placed the two in reference to temperature, light, and air, was with equal care observed.*

*A small galvanic battery, as advised by you, was then applied to one vine, the other being perfectly detached and left to the operation of unaided nature.*

*I commenced on the 30th March and finished on the 30th June.*

*The result was as follows: -*

*The electrified vine shot 74 inches.*

*The unelectrified vine shot 31¼ inches.*

*Each bore a bunch of white Dutch grapes, the electrified bunch being about  $\frac{1}{3}$  larger than the unelectrified bunch.*

*The electrified stem is the largest in girth and it has (on this day) twenty-nine ripened joints, whilst the unelectrified has only nine, and in all other appearances the electrified is decidedly the best plant.*

*I propose next season to repeat exactly the same process in every point, except that I will apply the galvanic process to the hitherto unelectrified vine, in order to discover if possible whether there might have been any difference in the original healthiness of the two plants.'*<sup>256</sup>

The following season he repeated the experiment, with similar results.

<sup>256</sup> {Crosse CAH 1857 Memorials Scientific and literary of Andrew Crosse the Electrician}.

### 13.4.3 Meteorology, 1849

Boys' interest in meteorology was focused on tides and wave power, which had obvious relevance to his construction of the Clifton Baths on one of the most exposed and gale-ravaged areas of the Margate coast. He often wrote on the subject (see the newspaper report, below).

Mr. John Boys, of Margate, under date of the 26th inst., writing on the same subject, says:—"The alarm may become a false one; for although one cause of such overflow will arise from the remarkable coincidence of both the sun and moon then being at their closest approximation to the earth, and thereby greatly increasing the great tidal wave, yet there must be a far greater cause than planetary influence only to sustain that alarming prediction—namely, there must be a powerful gale of wind from the south-west for many days or hours previously, and the wind must suddenly shift from that quarter and continue to blow with violence from the N. and N.N.W.; whereby, in the first instance, an immense body of water will be forced from the Atlantic Ocean into the North Seas; and, in the second instance, that excess will be driven down the German Ocean, and, before it can obtain vent through the narrow channel between Dover and Calais, all our northern coasts, and especially those most contiguous to the Thames, would feel the worst effects. All these causes must, however, be simultaneous and co-operate; and, therefore, unless at the present time, whilst these remarks are being written, a strong S.W. wind is prevailing in the Atlantic; and unless tomorrow or the following day a similarly powerful wind from the N. or N.N.W. shall prevail in the German Ocean, the single planetary cause of increasing the tidal wave will not of itself produce the alarming effect predicted during the ensuing spring tides."

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette 28 December 1849.

### 13.4.4 The 'Huggett Copy' Affair of 1809 and John Boys' Antiquarian Interests

In 1809, John Boys became entangled in another well-publicised and sensational, if convoluted, dispute, and this time with Rowland Freeman, antiquarian, of Minster-in-Thamet.

Since 1806, Freeman had been working on a new edition of Lewis' *History of Thanet*, based upon the late Rev Richard Huggett's richly annotated copy of the 1736 edition, which he had on loan from a Margate printer.

In mid-August 1809, with this Third Edition '*already in the press*,' Freeman advertised it in the *Kentish Gazette*, together with his *Regulbium: a Poem*.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>257</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 18 August 1809.



Soon afterwards, John Boys visited Freeman, on behalf of Huggett's descendants, forbidding publication and demanding the return of what became known as the 'Huggett Copy.'

Then, surprisingly, another claimant emerged: a Mr Pierce, of Ramsgate, who claimed one of his ancestors had purchased the volume from Huggett's descendants, and that he had conveyed it to the printer to be re-bound, but the printer had since died, leaving no indication as to the whereabouts of the heirloom.

Freeman delivered the book to this claimant, only to find John Boys '*at Mr Peirce's house, very curiously by accident.*'<sup>258</sup> According to Freeman, Boys was:

*'pleased to say that it was not on his own account, but purely to discharge the duties of his office of attorney to the family, that he had been so urgent to recover this lost heir loom [sic.]',*

and that, for his own part, he would '*not give sixpence for it,*' already owning a copy of that edition.

Soon afterwards, Boys advertised his own, new edition of the history, claiming he had not been aware of the value of the annotations before recovering the book. No such publication seems to have been made, however.

Around the start of December, Freeman published his *Account of the Huggett Copy of Lewis's History of Thanet*, beginning a paper war with John Boys and his ally Daniel Jarvis, conducted in the *Kentish Gazette* and a number of angry pamphlets.<sup>259</sup>

Jarvis was a well-known Margate surgeon and apothecary, who was closely connected with John Boys at this time – the two being referred to contemptuously, a few years later, as '*these Margate knights of the bench and the pestle.*'<sup>260</sup>

In his *Answer to the Reply of John Boys*, Freeman asserted:

*'The only foundation upon which Mr Boys rests his pretensions to become the historian of Thanet, (independently of having in his possession a few old plates and certain plans drawn by a surveyor, whose services are as much at my command as his) is the possession of the Huggett copy and notes.'*<sup>261</sup>

Boys' subsequent, historiographic activities were by no means negligible, however.

He was also a keen historian, an interest he probably inherited from his father, John Boys of Betteshanger, author of the well-known *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent* (1794).

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<sup>258</sup> Freeman 1809: 12; italics in original.

<sup>259</sup> E.g. Freeman 1809 and 1810; Jarvis 1810; *Kentish Gazette* 24 November, 26 and 29 December 1809; and 2 and 9 January, and 20 February, 1810; and cf Hawkes 1985.

<sup>260</sup> Anon 1815.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

Between 1809 and 1844, Boys set about recording monumental inscriptions in Thanet churchyards, and he also prepared an extensive genealogy of the Boys (or Bois) family from about the time of the Conquest.

We suggest John Boys' antiquarian interests are amply reflected in the early history and design of The Clifton Baths.

He was, for instance, fascinated by Saxon History. He named his son after Athelstan, the King of the Anglo-Saxons c. 894-939, and, later, Athelstan Road in Cliftonville. He also used multiple Saxon motifs in his design of the Clifton Baths.

### 13.5 John Boys as Local Celebrity and Controversialist

John Boys was also a target for the 'social media' of the day. He clearly enjoyed and exploited the attention – no matter how trivial. There follows just a few of the most notorious examples

#### 13.5.1 'Who stole the Roller?'

There was a rumour that John Boys had failed to return an iron roller he had borrowed, from Matthias Mummery, to improve the enclosure:

*'Mr Boys being a kind of collector for the preservation and regulation of Hawley-square, in Margate, wanted a large iron roller, and accordingly applied to Mr Mummery, a respectable coach-master at Margate, to borrow one. Mr Mummery accordingly did lend [him] such a roller as he said he wanted; but instead of returning it, he sold it for seven guineas to a relation of his. Upon this Mr Mummery frequently threatened to prosecute the plaintiff; and it was a long time current about the town; and the following words were written upon almost every post and wall, "Who stole the Roller?" [...] This story was everywhere told, and everywhere believed [...] it was common town-talk.'* <sup>262</sup>

Freeman may have been alluding to this, when he published the following, in 1810:

*'Ay me! what perils do environ,  
The man that meddles with cold iron?  
What plaguy mischiefs and mishaps,  
Do dog him still with after-claps?'* <sup>263</sup>

The story seems to have excited much local gossip:

*'Mr Mummery frequently threatened to prosecute the plaintiff; and it was a long time current about the town; and the following words were written*

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<sup>262</sup> Anon 1815.

<sup>263</sup> {Freeman R 1810 Answer to the Remarks of Mr Daniel Jarvis, of Margate, Surgeon}.

*upon almost every post and wall, "Who stole the Roller?" [...] This story was everywhere told, and everywhere believed [...] it was common town-talk.'*  
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In 1815, following a reprise of the controversy, Mummery diplomatically explained:

*'that there had been a story circulated about the roller, but that he could only answer to Mr Boys having borrowed a roller of him, and that after a considerable lapse of time it had been returned to him again.'* (op. cit.)

### 13.5.2 A Narrow Escape

Boys also seemed to have a talent for being in the right place at the right time – albeit dangerously so.

Famously, he narrowly escaped death on 18 May 1812, having been standing next to Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, in the lobby of the House of Commons, when the latter was assassinated (see a contemporary drawing of the event, below).<sup>265</sup>



### 13.5.3 'Poetical Libels,' 1814 to 1815

During the second half of 1814, and into the following year, John Boys also found himself the subject of *'a series of libels, published during a period of several months,'* including three defamatory poems and two associated caricatures, posted around Margate.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Anon 1815.

<sup>265</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 19 May 1812.

<sup>266</sup> These were reproduced in an anonymous pamphlet the following year (Anon 1815), including engraved 'faithful copies' of the caricatures. The copies have been attributed to George Cruikshank (Stephens 1978), together with an additional engraving depicting the ensuing court case.

### 13.5.4 The Three Poems

The first poem, besides accusing Boys of lying, meddling, and ‘pettifogging,’ <sup>267</sup> reprised the controversy concerning Matthias Mummery’s iron roller (see 13.5.1 above):

*‘Is there a heart that can be found?  
With foul dishonour blackened round?  
Whose deeds with infamy are crowned – like Boys  
Lives there a man who does not hate,*

*The soul without one honest trait;  
The damning guilt which rules the fate, of Boys,  
Who stands the first to claim the prize,  
Inventive skill which far outries [sic],*

*For telling most atrocious lies – ‘tis Boys  
What is the busy meddler nam’d,  
Who is for making mischief fam’d,  
Regardless of the wound that’s aim’d? – ‘tis Boys*

*The pettifogger you will find  
Indeed a very thief inclined  
Oh mark the very villany combined, in Boys;  
Who was it impudently stole?*

*Nay start not, for ‘tis truth the whole,  
Who cribbed M\_\_\_\_\_’s iron roll? – t’was Boys!!!  
When borrowed goods are not returned  
But basely sold – ask of the learned,*

*If Jack is not a robber turn’d, base Boys;  
Let not then Jack, your hearts ensnare!  
Who can so well the truth forswear!!  
Ye unsuspecting, oh beware! Of pettifogging Boys!!!’*

This poem was shortly followed by a second, accusing Boys of entering St John’s parish church, by night, under false pretences, and sabotaging the new organ.

This poem was accompanied by a caricature (see below) showing Boys, mounted on a ladder, goaded on by the Devil (and witnessed by the all-seeing eye of God), introducing sand into the organ-pipes.

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<sup>267</sup> A ‘Pettifogger’ may be understood as ‘a legal practitioner of inferior status, who gets up, or conducts petty cases; [especially] one who employs mean, cavilling practices’ (SOED).



A 'faithful copy' of the caricature heading the second poem.

*'Whilst some of our moderns are blacken'd in sin,  
Polluted with direful contagion within,  
I'll sing you a man of unrivall'd renown,  
His name is John B's, and the pest of our town,*

*His vile machinations have oftentimes shewn  
His heart is unfeeling and harden'd as stone;  
His motto must strike you, its echo resounds, -  
He cares not on whom, or how deeply he wounds.*

*Restrain'd by no laws, injustice his guide,  
The devil his counsel, and mischief his pride;  
Foul play his delight, petty fees he extols,  
His honesty's known as a dealer in Rolls.*

*But hear me, just heav'n, what vileness succeeds,  
How discordant sounds have emblazon'd his deeds,  
On England he aim'd to bring shame and disgrace,  
By creating discord in harmony's place.*

*As he rambled one night through the church-yard in thought,  
He entered a fabric of sacred resort,  
Where the works of old England are still to be seen,  
Which late by his offspring have harmoniz'd been.*

*Not thinking of heav'n, but Satan and sin,  
With hands sacrilegious he entered within,  
Look'd wistfully round, then ascended on high,  
Sinn'd boldly in sight of the All-seeing eye!!*



*To this sacred retreat of chanting and pray'r,  
It often occurs that the warblers repair;  
When lately assembled to carrol their song,  
The organical structure was all in the wrong.*

*Amaz'd and confounded, their wits they employ'd,  
And found 'twas foul play which had concord destroy'd,  
Old England they call'd, who came to their aid,  
And discover'd the pitiful plot which was laid.*

*No wonder that sounds unharmonious should flow,  
When the wicked knave Jack became England's foe,  
Those pipes lately tun'd by the boast of our land,  
Were nearly all choak'd by his merciless hand.*

*The board was let down which exposed all to view,  
Unwittingly Jack had forgotten to screw;  
'Tis known that by fraud his admission he gain'd,  
In the name of a Ford the keys were obtain'd.*

*'Mongst the warblers he dare not again show his face,  
Doubly lock'd is the fabric he once did disgrace;  
Oh treachery vile, impotent, and vain,  
See England now triumphs in concord again.'*

(The 'Ford' mentioned in the poem was the then organist of St John's, George Ford.<sup>268</sup> Boys had also, apparently, not only fallen out with him, but also with the organ builder.)



Cruikshank's redrawing of a libellous caricature of John Boys, c1815.

<sup>268</sup> Anon 1815; however *Kentish Chronicle* 21 July 1815 gives his name as 'RG Ford.'

The third poem, involving a lime kiln, was perhaps the most cryptic, and was illustrated by a second caricature, albeit scarcely more intelligible:

*'A kiln which for use is admir'd,  
Ye people give ear to my lay,  
How B\_\_s and the devil conspir'd,  
To bear it in triumph away.*

*This Kiln to calumniate 'tis known,  
Wicked B\_\_s resolved not to flinch,  
But in the attempt was o'erthrown,  
And knocked on the head by a winch.*

*Indignant at meeting the foe,  
To work B\_\_s maliciously set,  
How by scheming and plans he might shew  
His luck at a game of picquet.*

*But fortune mischance had insur'd,  
To B\_\_s gave a horrible pinch,  
Ye gods what a pang he endur'd,  
When the game turn'd in favour of Winch.*

*Half breathless with rage and dismay,  
With eyes almost turn'd from their socket,  
The plan which he fain would display  
He cautiously put in his pocket.*

*Provok'd at the scene which transpir'd,  
He fled to invent some new evil,  
View him now in his closet retir'd  
Planning fresh schemes with the devil.*

*To save from his pitiful plight,  
All his skill the Doctor employs,  
It only did laughter excite,  
When the Horse cough'd in favour of B\_\_s.*

*To exalt him to some higher sphere,  
His friend the arch fiend is most zealous,  
By heav'ns it plain doth appear,  
He soon will be released – to the gallows!*

*B-lack are thy deeds and blacken'd is thy fame,  
O-f blackest hue thy harden'd heart may claim;  
Y-et, oh, thy conscience will in blackness vie,  
S-trike to thy soul whene'er thou com'st to die.'*

The origin of the 'lime kiln' references appears to involve one Mr Winch.

He had purchased from John Boys a plot of land on a site '*near the Dane [...] about a hundred yards from the poor house*'<sup>269</sup> which seems to have been on what was then Prospect Place (now Victoria Road).

Mr Winch had supposedly purchased it '*for the express purpose of erecting a lime kiln*,'<sup>270</sup> which he duly did.

About six months later, however, Boys indicted the kiln as a nuisance at the Dover Sessions. He was determined to skew the evidence in his favour, so he employed an artist, by the name of William Pickett (hence the 'game of piquet' in the poem), to '*make a plan of Mr Winch's kilns, according to his [...] direction*'<sup>271</sup> and/or '*to paint a lime-kiln with a great quantity of smoke*'<sup>272</sup> to produce as evidence.

According to Boys' detractors, he instructed Pickett '*to make a drawing of a lime-kiln with the doors wide open, and the road enveloped in smoke*,' but that, shortly before the trial, the artist admitted '*he had been ordered to make such a plan and drawing [...] not from any actual view, but from a sketch given to him by Boys*.'<sup>273</sup>

Upon hearing of this, Winch apparently instructed Pickett '*to make a fair and honest plan and drawing*'<sup>274</sup>, and to submit these, too, at the sessions.

Whatever the truth of all this, when Pickett presented his second, '*true and fair*' drawing of the kiln, Mr Boys put his earlier drawing '*either into his pocket or otherwise concealed it*.'

Boys also called his father-in-law, Edward Boys, to attest that smoke from the kiln had caused him, and his horse, to cough and sneeze. Boys also asked Daniel Jarvis to claim smoke from the kiln had carried as far as the workhouse, and spoiled the paupers' food. Nonetheless, the case was rejected.<sup>275</sup>

### 13.5.5 The Libel Trial

John Boys identified the author of these poems, and many others, as Mary Edmunds, the daughter of William Edmunds, of the White Hart Inn, with whom Boys had fallen out over the construction of the Margate pier (see 13.2.4).

Boys demanded £1000 in compensation, but was awarded the somewhat Pyrrhic sum of £10. The whole proceedings were soon published, anonymously, including the offending poems in full, along with copies of the engravings. [In fact, there was an additional caricature showing the courtroom scene.

<sup>269</sup> Anon 1815. This says Boys leased him the land, but two newspaper accounts by different hands (one of them very likely Boys himself), say he purchased it.

<sup>270</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 21 July 1815.

<sup>271</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 21 July 1815.

<sup>272</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 25 July 1815.

<sup>273</sup> Anon 1815.

<sup>274</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 21 July 1815.

<sup>275</sup> Anon 1815.

It was generally agreed that the various accusations against Boys had long been common knowledge in the town.]

The Defence submitted that:

*'the reports which now form the substance of these libels, were in every child's mouth, long before they appeared in the form in which they are now presented to you. I required not the aid of poetry, nor the talents of my client, to give notoriety to the conduct and character of Mr. Boys. That conduct, and the character to which it very justly entitled him, were known all over the town of Margate and the neighbourhood ...*

*In the case of a malignant and atrocious libel, if you give but a slight compensation, it is inferred, that you held the character of the Plaintiff to be such as calumny cannot pollute; and that he cannot well be brought below the level, to which, by his own depravity, he has debased himself.*

*Your verdict in such a case will strengthen that obloquy and disgrace from which he seeks to relieve himself.'* (Kentish Chronicle 1815)



John Boys' consternation at the verdict: 'What only ten pounds?'

{A later reference to Boys singular ability to make litigious trouble was also affectionately mentioned in another case: *Wightingale v Stockdale*. In this, Boys had apparently fallen out with the organ builder:

*'Mr Boys, however, it would appear, is not so much under the influence of religious feeling, as to prevent his rendering himself somewhat troublesome and offensive to those for whom he may not happen to entertain the most ardent brotherly affection, and the number of the reprobate, alas! is very great in Mr Boys's (sic) opinion.'*<sup>276</sup>

<sup>276</sup> Anon 1815.

### 13.6 The Chandos Peerage, 1835

About 1835, Boys weighed into an infamous controversy concerning the Chandos peerage, with a series of letters (transcribed in full by Goodsall (1963)), to G. F. Beltz, of the then *Lancaster Herald*.

Looking to drum up work, and perhaps revealing something of his attitudes, Boys concluded one of his letters as follows:

*'I have seen continually so much colouring and perversion of the truth, between opposite parties, and injustice done, that I have a real pleasure in a case of this kind, which I consider one of magnitude and importance, to sift the truth whichever way it may turn: - and therefore, hesitate not to make use of me.'* (ibid)

### 13.7 'The Suppression of Armed Smuggling,' 1821

In another side to his quixotic personality and eclectic interests, John Boys, in 1821, was praised for rendering the government '*extraordinary services [...] in the suppression of armed smuggling.*'<sup>277</sup> Unfortunately, it was this sortie into the suppression of smuggling and other irregularities that temporarily shifted Boys cheerful, cavalier reputation in Margate to one of considerable unpopularity, albeit temporarily.

He is supposed to have been involved in the prosecution, at the Maidstone Assizes in 1822, of nineteen members of the North Kent Gang of smugglers, who had been defeated at Marsh Bay (now West Bay in Westgate-on-Sea) the previous year. The leaders were hanged and the rest transported:

*'Mr Boys, the Margate solicitor who conducted the investigation which brought to light the evidence which was to convict the nineteen prisoners, became a hated figure within the town. He suffered great abuse from the locals, not only from the smugglers, but also from the gentlemen of the town for they felt that he had prejudiced their interests. Poor Mr Boys suffered losses of three hundred pounds per annum. He was branded as an informer and his house and person were frequently assaulted.'* (op.cit.)

As a reward, in 1823, Boys was appointed '*assistant solicitor to her Majesty's Revenue Boards,*' with a substantial salary<sup>278</sup>, although he later boasted that he had '*for many years [...] been confidently employed by the Crown-solicitors in obtaining evidence upon great Crown-proceedings.*'<sup>279</sup> To achieve this secrecy, he had sought anonymity from the press.

*'so [savoured] of the modern system of puffing, that [he begged them] to disclaim all knowledge of the author, and [hoped] the editors [would] do*

<sup>277</sup> Thanet Libraries Project Pack Smuggling in Thanet: Margate.

<sup>278</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 19 January 1861.

<sup>279</sup> Letter cited by Goodsall 1963: 7.



*him the favour [...] to abstain from unnecessarily mentioning his name.'*  
(*Kentish Gazette* 18 May 1824).

He then went on to continue his work improving the civil amenities of Margate as an attorney and magistrate of the county.<sup>280</sup>

**MARGATE.**

*Notice is Hereby Given,*

**T**HAT a Petition has been presented, and that Application is now making to Parliament by the Commissioners for Paving, Lighting, Watching, and Improving the TOWN OF MARGATE, for an Act to enable them to make further defences of the Highways and Roads, against the encroachments of the Sea ; for opening several New Ways, and for diverting, extending, and varying the course of others, in and about the said Town ; also for Enlarging the Market, and making various other Improvements ; and to take up and borrow at interest, a sufficient sum of money for those purposes.

**JOHN BOYS, Solicitor.**

**2d March. 1824.**

*Kentish Chronicle* 5 March 1824

<sup>280</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 16 September 1825.

## 14 Appendix 2: Margate Events Linked to the Clifton Baths

The Clifton Baths attracted local interest in many ways, and the baths were so embedded in local life, that there is a rich history of exciting and scandalous events that centred on them – sometimes intentionally so – and all were reported enthusiastically in the local papers.

### 14.1 Smuggling

Smuggling tunnels had long been connected with the Clifton Baths' site, and it seems that smuggling activity had long been common there. Such behaviour certainly preceded the Clifton Baths, and, in the lack of a specific name for this area of the cliff-top, was probably reported as occurring at 'the Fort'.

It may not be a coincidence that John Boys, owner of the Baths at that time and mindful of their safe and exclusive reputation, did so much to disrupt the local smuggling and disperse the gangs (12. 7, above).

A smugglers' tunnel seems to have been discovered on John Boys' land at the Clifton Baths, about 1830.

This was probably an excavation associated with the Clifton Baths' lime kiln, which was known to be used for the temporary storage of contraband goods.

In a local paper of 1991, Alan Kay, cited a Margate builder:

*'When his men were constructing the Quarterdeck Youth Club in Zion Place, they came across a bricked-up tunnel in the cellar they were filling in. Mr. Kay was able to tell him that it was the site of the 18th Century Prospect Tavern and Tea Rooms, which later became the Crown and Anchor Tavern.*

*The Inn was a meeting place for smugglers, and in 1829 six men constructed a tunnel from the cellars to 50 ft. up in the cliff-face to the west of the Clifton Baths - now the site of the Lido.*

*Later the cave was known as Watson's Hole, after a local smuggler. While the tunnel was being excavated, they had difficulty in keeping lamps and candles alight, and had to make small boreholes to the surface every six feet, for air.*

*A large auger was made by the black-smith at Manston for the tunnelling, and chalk brought up was buried during the night and spread on the road then being built on Cliff Terrace.*

*The tavern changed its name to the Crown and Anchor when the body-snatcher, Ben Crouch, took over. He refurbished the building with proceeds*

*from his expeditions as "camp follower" in the Pensinsular campaign, Mr. Kay says.'*

In 1832, a second, smugglers' tunnel was discovered, hard by the west side of the Clifton Baths. Contemporary reportage casts an interesting side-light on the establishment:

*'Some Custom-house Officers having gone to search a house in the occupation of a man of the name of Cook, at the back of Zion Place, near the Fort in Margate, discovered in a lower room, a secret entrance, just large enough to admit a man crawling upon his knees.*

*The officers proceeded downwards, upon an inclined plane, towards the seashore, to the distance of 200 yards, passing under several houses, at the depth of many feet below the surface of the ground, until they reached the lower entrance, which opens on the north-west side of the Clifton Baths.*

*The mouth of this entrance was boarded over, and covered with chalk and earth, rammed down in such a manner, as completely to conceal it.*

*There were found in the interior of the cliff, several trucks on wheels, and implements for the conveying of Smuggled goods, through the tunnel to Cook's house.*

*The work which it is calculated, must have engaged two men at least eighteen months in cutting it, must have cost in labour, from £100 to £200, had just paid for by great silk mercer and riband seller in London.*

*As long as it remained known only to the smugglers, they might at any time, in dark nights, in the space of an hour, have smuggled many thousand pounds' worth of property, and carried it off in safety [...] It is whispered among the sailors on the Pier, that if the officers had not been a little too eager in their pursuit, they might within a week, when the dark nights came again, have made an immense seizure, but that now they have entirely defeated their own object, because not a vestige of any contraband article was yet to be found on the premises.*

*This is the second subterranean tunnel which has been dug under the same property within two years, and the second time the officers being defeated, by their eagerness, to grasp so large a prize.*

*It is but justice to the lessee of this singularly constructed property, to say that not the least suspicion is entertained by the Revenue Officers, of any connivance on his part, he having given them duplicate keys of the subterranean excavation and baths during the winter months, where the property lies.*

*He cautioned them, that unless some of the Revenue Officers were stationed on the premises throughout the night, it was impossible to prevent smuggling.'*<sup>281</sup>

Smuggling could also have dangerous consequences. On another expedition, again '*near to the Clifton Baths at Margate*' (see newspaper cutting, below), a couple of smugglers were killed.

**SMUGGLING AND LOSS OF LIFE.**—On Monday morning, about two o'clock, some men employed in the Coast Guard Service, for the prevention of Smuggling, discovered several persons engaged in hauling bales up the cliff, near to the Clifton Baths, at Margate. They succeeded in seizing twelve of them, which were found to contain tea, the rest of the goods (which it is said were a very large quantity, and imported by a lugger), were got clear off. Three of the smugglers named Jesse Piper, John Lawrence, and Hocketty Minter, were taken into custody, and were examined before the magistrates at Margate, by whom they were remanded. But the melancholy part of our task is—to relate the fate of two men, who it appears were engaged in landing the goods from a boat upon the rocks below; these men were shot by the Coast guard, and one of them named Churchman died in a few hours after at Broadstairs. The other man whose name is Crouch and son of a boat-builder there, is not expected to recover.

*Maidstone Gazette 10 July 1832.*

On another occasion, in 1842, again '*near the Clifton Baths*', a '*leader of the smugglers - 'Long Will'*' was thrown onto the rocks, and arrested '*along with two of his comrades*' (see newspaper cutting, below).

**MARGATE.**—On Friday sennight, between 11 and 12, the crew of the Newgate Station captured a considerable quantity of contraband goods, near the Clifton Baths. The leader of the smugglers, a very powerful man, known upon the coast as "Long Will," made a determined resistance, but being thrown with great violence upon the rocks, during the fray, was severely hurt, and made prisoner along with two of his comrades; the rest of the gang, favoured by the intense darkness of the night, escaped leaving the whole of the cargo in the hands of the preventive men. The men underwent an examination at Margate, and were committed to Dover goal.

*Dover Telegraph 19 February 1842.*

<sup>281</sup> *Times* 19 January, 1832.



## 14.2 Death and Accidents

There was an astonishing range of accidents - and both deliberate and accidental deaths - at the Clifton Baths.

In 1854, for example, it was reported that, in August that year, a gentleman:

*'was bathing from a machine at the new Clifton Baths, to which he was returning, when he complained of a gargling in his throat; he was got into the machine and medical assistance sent for, but he had expired before it arrived' (South-Eastern Gazette 15 August 1854).*

Swimming by the breakwater near the baths was also dangerous.

**NARROW ESCAPE FROM DEATH BY DROWNING.—**  
On the 18th instant, two boys were playing with a toy boat on the breakwater near the Clifton Baths, when one of them fell into the water, and had a very narrow escape. In order to get to the breakwater, they had to climb a gate; and, after the elder of the two had fallen into the sea, the younger one was compelled to re-climb the same fence before he could make the circumstance known. Thus, considerable delay was caused, and assistance was not procured till the boy had been in the water for several minutes. Immediately the alarm was raised, James Pitt and Charles Shaw hastened to the spot, and saved the boy by means of a life buoy. He was then placed in a warm bath, restoratives were used, Dr. Price was sent for, and the next morning, he was sufficiently well to leave the premises. Mrs. Briggs was unremitting in her kindness and attention to the lad.

*Whitstable Times 1873*

As late as July 1933 a bather, *'Returning for his clothes ... slipped in what he called a 'very muddy and greasy' pool on the concrete floor and broke his arm.'*<sup>282</sup>

Other cases are given below (with relevant newspaper cuttings).

<sup>282</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 6 and 10 January 1933.



1925 Miss Helena Byers: Slipped in the bath and drowned

#### DEATH IN BATH.

That she must have become faint whilst in the bath and slipped under the water, was the opinion of Dr. W. G. Sutcliffe, expressed at the inquest, on Friday afternoon, on Miss Helena Byers, 36, of Polish origin, described as a milliner, of Kingsland-road, Shoreditch, who, as reported in our last issue, was found dead in an ozone bath at the Clifton Baths the previous day.

The deceased came to the town for the benefit of her health, as she suffered from neuritis, and went into the bath about eleven o'clock. About half-past twelve, when there was no response to an attendant's knock on the door of the bath, the attendant (Miss Ivy Dupre) entered and found Miss Byers lying in the bath with the seaweed over her. Artificial respiration was performed, but without result.

The Coroner (Mr. C. C. Maughan) returned a verdict that death was due to asphyxia, caused by fainting and becoming immersed in the bath.

*Thanet Advertiser 1925*

## DEATH IN BATH.

### MARGATE VISITOR'S COLLAPSE.

A lady's health visit to Margate was brought to a sudden and somewhat tragic ending on Thursday, for whilst taking a medical bath she collapsed and died.

She was Miss Helena Byers, described as a milliner, about 30 years of age, living at Kingsland-road, Shoreditch. It is understood that she had been suffering from neuritis, and came to Margate for a week's holiday for the benefit of her health, with a friend.

She visited the Clifton Baths for an ozone bath on one or two occasions, and went for another about 11 o'clock on Thursday morning.

As is usual, the attendant knocked on her door about every quarter-of-an-hour to enquire if the bath was all right, and a satisfactory answer was received on every occasion up to half-past twelve. At a quarter to one, when the attendant knocked, however, there was no answer. The door was forced open, and Mrs. Bradley, the manageress, found the deceased lying in the bath—which contained about eleven or twelve inches of water—unconscious.

She had the appearance of having had a sudden seizure, and medical aid was sent for. In the meantime, Mr. Bradley, manager of the baths, carried on artificial respiration with the help of his wife, but it proved of no avail.

This is the first fatality which has occurred at the baths during the thirty years that Mr. Bradley has been connected with them.

*Thanet Advertiser 1925*

1932 Jack Gregory, Visitor from London: Drowned

# DROWNED IN BATHING POOL

## MARGATE HOLIDAY TRAGEDY

The Cliftonville Bathing Pool, a rendezvous for hundreds of jolly holiday makers during the day, was the scene of a tragedy on Sunday evening when a twenty-four-years-old London visitor lost his life whilst bathing.

A poignant feature of the tragedy was that the unfortunate young man, who came to Margate with his young lady, Miss Grace Deacon, of 61, Lingford-street, Stewards-road, Battersea, for a holiday, only arrived at his lodgings in Invicta-road at one o'clock on Sunday afternoon. The young man was Jack Gregory, of Maysoule-road, Plough-road, Clapham Junction.

A large number of people were bathing in the pool at the time of the tragedy, and interested onlookers watched the bathers from the seating accommodation in the pool and the terraces of the Clifton Baths Estate.

Apparently Gregory and his young lady reached the bathing establishment at about seven o'clock, when she left him in order to change into her bathing costume in the ladies' dressing rooms. She did not see him emerge from the dressing rooms and appealed, at about 7.30 p.m., to Mr. Bradley, an attendant at the pool, to find him.

A search of the male dressing rooms failed to reveal any trace of Mr. Gregory, and after several swimming instructors had been searching the pool for a few minutes, the body of the deceased was recovered from the water by Mr. Lee, swimming instructor at the Clifton Baths, who found deceased lying face downwards in the water at the 9ft. portion of the pool.

Members of the Borough Police Force, ambulance men and other officials commenced artificial respiration and Dr. Wynne was summoned. Artificial respiration was continued without avail for about an hour-and-a-half.

The Borough Coroner (Mr. S. J. Wilson Price) will hold an inquest at Margate Town Hall to-day.

*Thanet Advertiser 1932*

1932 Mr John Davis, cyclist: Death in the slipper bath (unknown cause).

At about 5 p.m. on Sunday afternoon Mr. John M. Davis, aged 50 years, of No. 14, The Grove, Deal, who had cycled to Margate for the day, entered a private slipper bath at the Clifton Baths Estate, Cliftonville. Shortly afterwards Mr. Davis was found dead in the bath by an attendant named Savin.

Inquests regarding both cases will be held by Mr. S. J. Wilson Price, the borough coroner.

*Thanet Advertiser 1932*

1933 Peter Witton, 6 years old: Temporarily blinded after tripping by the Jolly Tar Tavern

## **BOY TEMPORARILY BLINDED**

### **BY FALL OVER SLIPWAY**

A six-year-old boy sustained serious injuries as a result of an accident whilst playing on the slipway adjoining the Jolly Tar Tavern, Clifton Baths, Margate, on Sunday afternoon.

Running down the slipway the boy, Peter Witton, of No. 36, Clifton-road, Margate, found himself unable to stop with the result that he tripped head-long over the dwarf wall at the bottom of the slipway and crashed on to the promenade, striking his head violently on the concrete paving.

Severely injured about the head, Witton was rendered blind and first aid was administered by P.C. Beer and members of the Margate Ambulance Corps prior to the injured lad's removal to the Margate and District General Hospital in the ambulance. At the hospital it was ascertained that Witton was suffering from a fracture of the frontal bone of the skull.

On Sunday evening Witton, who was said to be in a little better condition, had recovered his eyesight but was suffering from severe shock in addition to his head injuries.

*Thanet Advertiser 1933*

The owners of the Clifton Baths could also be caught up in various deaths and accidents.

In July 1856, for example, Reeve and his medical attendant companion, Dr Price, during one of their visits to the Baths, were present when a bather at Newgate Gap was knocked unconscious and drowned.

Price attempted the traditional – rather superstitious – remedy: whereby *'the body was conveyed to the Clifton Baths, and placed in a hot-bath, and the usual remedies applied,'* but without success.<sup>283</sup>

(Price was also there in July 1864, when he and 'Mr W Price' also attended a Mr and Mrs Hayward after a carriage accident).<sup>284</sup>

The Baths also attracted suicides.

On 9 December 1830, a Mr Langley, a plumber and glazier, *in a fit of derangement ... threw himself from the cliff near Clifton Baths to the rocks below, where he was taken up lifeless.'*

**SUICIDE.**—On Thursday last an inquest was held at the Poor House, Nargate. on view of the body of Mr. D. Langley, late plumber and glazier in Villiers-street, Strand, London, who in a fit of temporary derangement, on the previous Tuesday, threw himself from the cliff near Clifton Baths to the rocks below, where he was taken up lifeless. A verdict to the above effect was returned.

*Maidstone Gazette* 14 December 1830.

A more dramatic suicide took place at the Clifton Baths in 1882, when a Volunteer Captain, Cpt. Charles Brooksby, shot himself there:

*'the attendants ... on reaching the bathroom discovered the body of the unfortunate captain lying on the floor, with a five-chambered revolver in hand, one chamber of it having been discharged...No cause is known for the act'*  
(*Manchester Evening News* 31 August 1882: see below)

<sup>283</sup> *South-Eastern Gazette* 15 July 1856.

<sup>284</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 9 July 1864.



**SUICIDE OF A VOLUNTEER CAPTAIN.**—Yesterday information was received of a sad occurrence which took place on Tuesday evening at the Clifton Baths, Margate. Captain Charles Brooksby, of the 17th (late 29th) North Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps, was staying at Margate, and during the afternoon visited the Kent Hotel, in company with a brother officer. He seemed in unusually good health and spirits. About four o'clock he proceeded to the Clifton Baths. Shortly after entering the building the attendants were alarmed at hearing the report of firearms, and on reaching the bathroom discovered the body of the unfortunate captain lying on the floor, with a five-chambered revolver in his hand, one chamber of it having been discharged. Captain Brooksby formerly held an appointment in the War Office, and was in affluent circumstances. No cause is known for the act.

*Manchester Evening News 31 August 1882.*

There were many other reports of this event.

### **STRANGE OCCURRENCE AT MARGATE.**

Yesterday information was received of a sad occurrence which took place on Tuesday evening at Clifton Baths, Margate. Captain Charles Brooksby, of the 17th (late 29th) North Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps, was staying at Margate, and during the afternoon visited the Kent Hotel in company with a brother officer. He seemed in unusually good health and spirits, and about four o'clock declared his intention of taking a bath, and proceeded to the Clifton Baths for that purpose. Shortly after entering the building, the attendants were alarmed at hearing the report of firearms, and on reaching the bath-room discovered the body of the unfortunate captain lying on the floor with a five-chambered revolver in his hand, one chamber of which had been discharged. A wound on the right temple showed where the bullet had entered, which had passed through the head. The bullet, which had come out at the opposite side, was picked up off the floor. Medical assistance was immediately procured, but without avail, as death must have been instantaneous. Captain Brooksby formerly held an appointment in the War Office, and was in affluent circumstances, and there is no cause known for the act.

*Newcastle Daily Journal 31 August 1882.*

# SAD AFFAIR AT MARGATE.

On Wednesday morning information was received of a sad occurrence which took place on Tuesday evening at Clifton Baths, Margate. Capt. Charles Brooksbey, of the 17th (late 29th) North Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps, was staying at Margate, and during the afternoon visited the Kent Hotel in company with a brother officer. He seemed in unusually good health and spirits, and about four o'clock declared his intention of taking a bath, and proceeded to the Clifton Baths for that purpose. Shortly after entering the building the attendants were alarmed at hearing the report of fire-arms, and on reaching the bath-room discovered the body of the unfortunate captain lying on the floor with a five-chambered revolver in his hand, one chamber of which had been discharged. A wound in the right temple showed where the bullet had entered, which had passed through the head. The bullet, which had come out at the opposite side, was picked up off the floor. Medical assistance was immediately procured, but without avail, as death must have been instantaneous. Capt. Brooksbey formerly held an appointment in the War Office. He was in affluent circumstances, and there is no cause known for the rash act.

*Leicester Chronicle and Leicestershire Mercury 1882*

**Inquest.**—On Thursday morning an inquest was held at the Town Hall, before Mr. Coroner Roys and a jury of whom Mr. Sedart was the foreman, on the body of Charles William Brooksbey, a visitor, aged 35, who committed suicide on Tuesday, under the circumstances reported below:—Edith Brooksbey, the widow, identified the body of the deceased as that of her husband, who resided at 4, Gaisford-street, Kentish Town, and was a gentleman. He had lately had very bad health, and was greatly depressed in spirits. She last saw him alive on Tuesday week, when he came to Margate hoping to be restored to health. She knew he bought a revolver two or three months ago. He was formerly captain in the Volunteers, and bought it because he missed his rifle and was fond of fire-arms. She expected him home on Tuesday. He had been attended by three medical men during the year, but not by anyone within the last month. In reply to the foreman, she said she believed his spirits gave way owing to the failure of his health.—Clara Thurston, daughter of the proprietor of the Kent Hotel, said the deceased had been greatly depressed during his stay at their house. He drank considerably and ate very little. She last saw him alive at two o'clock on the day of his death. He then told her he was much worse and was miserable, and that he should go for a stroll. At that time he did not appear to be the worse for drink.—Alfred Grant, jun., of the Liverpool Arms, gave similar evidence as to the deceased's habits, and said he appeared to be very depressed, as though he had been drinking heavily.—James Weddon, an attendant at the Clifton Baths, said the deceased went there on Tuesday, at about twenty minutes to four, and asked for a warm bath, which was prepared for him. He did not notice any strangeness in his manner or that he was under the influence of drink. About twenty minutes afterwards he heard the report of fire-arms, and went into the bath-room at once. The deceased was then lying on the floor. He had had his bath and was partially dressed. He was quite dead and was bleeding from his head. He at once sent for assistance and afterwards saw the revolver produced lying between his legs and near his right hand, as though it had just fallen from it.—Robt. Madden, 106, Pall Mall, said last Tuesday afternoon he was at the Clifton Baths. After corroborating the previous witness' evidence, he said he saw a wound in the deceased's head, and also a bullet mark and the bullet on a china bracket fastened to the wall.—P.C. Morgan gave evidence as to the finding of the body, and said one chamber of the revolver had been discharged and four were still loaded. He removed the body to the mortuary.—The Coroner said he believed he acted in ignorance, but hoped that, in future, the police would not remove dead bodies without his order.—The witness added that he searched the deceased and found a 25 note, half sovereign, 9s. 6d. in silver, and 2d. in bronze, several letters, gold watch and chain, diamond ring, a bracelet, links, studs, &c., on the body.—Percy Ash, surgeon, assistant to Dr. Price, having deposed that he found a bullet wound behind the left ear and another on the right side, the bullet having gone through the neck, the coroner summed up, and the jury found a verdict of suicide while in a state of temporary insanity.

*Whitstable Times 1882*



There were also accidents in the local area around the Clifton Baths, occasionally involving some of the more up-market residents of the local houses and the Cliftonville Hotel, although the issue of inebriation was never raised.

In 1883, for example, record was made of 'A mysterious death' at the Clifton Baths. A body was found in the enclosed yard of the Baths, and:

*'How the gentleman got into the yard is at present a mystery, but it is assumed that he trespassed upon the bath premises and fell down into the yard where his body was discovered [by another man walking on the baths roofs] ... He was well-dressed and in his possession was found a watch and a chain and a decent sum of money'. (Thanet Advertiser 1883)*

There was no clue to his identity. (See first cutting, below. The second cutting casts more light on the case.)

**MARGATE.**

**A MYSTERIOUS DEATH.**—At about six o'clock yesterday (Friday) morning, Mr. Briggs, of the Clifton Baths was walking on the roof of the old baths when he saw the dead body of a gentleman lying in a pool of blood in the yard below. Mr. Briggs at once sent for a policeman and a doctor, and Mr. Thornton, jun., and a constable were quickly in attendance. The doctor gave his opinion that the gentleman had been dead some hours. The body was taken on a stretcher to the mortuary in Addington-road. The place where the body was found is private property, and to get to it the deceased must have trespassed on Mr. Briggs' premises. How the gentleman got into the yard is at present a mystery, but it is assumed that he trespassed upon the bath premises and fell down into the yard where he was discovered. He was well dressed and in his possession were found a watch and chain and a decent sum of money, but there was nothing upon him to lead to his identity.

*Thanet Advertiser 1883*

**AN inquest has been held at Margate, concerning the death of Bruno Hageman, of 56, Union-road, Southwark, London, a clerk in the Railway Clearing-house, Euston-square, whose dead body was lately found in a pool of blood, in the yard of the Old Clifton Baths, he having evidently fallen down a flight of steps. The evidence disclosed that the deceased arrived at the Grand Hotel, Margate, the day before, and that he had dinner there at six o'clock. He left the hotel about nine, being then apparently sober, and he was found, as intimated, on the following day. It appears that the fall took place shortly after he left the hotel, as at half-past nine on the previous night the proprietor of the baths heard a heavy thud, but, thinking it was something thrown from the road, he did not go to see the cause. The medical testimony was to the effect that death had been occasioned by a fracture of the neck, caused by the fall. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.**

*Bicester Herald 1883*

Since the construction of the Clifton Baths, there had also been numerous fatal falls from the cliff-top to either side of the Clifton Baths – but especially on its eastern side.

Some of these were suicides, some due to recklessness or drunken misadventure,<sup>285</sup> but occasionally the fragility of the cliff-top contributed, as in November 1838, when a fisherman was ‘*found drowned*’ at the foot of the cliff, ‘near Boyson’s Hole:’

*‘It [was] conjectured that deceased fell over the cliff, near the Clifton Baths (which is in a dangerous state) [...] as the chalk at that spot was broken down and he was found underneath.’*<sup>286</sup>

This part of the cliff-top was clearly unsafe to casual walkers.

**ACCIDENT.**—One evening last week, as a lady visitor was walking on the breakwater at the Clifton Baths, she accidentally fell on to the shingle and was severely shaken. As it was high water at the time, and as there was a heavy sea on, it is fortunate that she fell on the land side, as, if she had gone into the water, she might have been drowned. We hope that this accident will act as a warning to those who are so venturesome as to climb on to the breakwater, especially at high water and in rough weather. Great inconvenience was experienced in this instance in consequence of the lady’s husband being unable to obtain any stimulants on the premises.

*Canterbury Journal* 1870.

Late in 1853, the cliffs fell ‘*in several places along the Fort,*’ and the fence was ‘*removed 300 feet further in, shewing the necessity there is for a sea-wall between the jetty and the Clifton Baths.*’<sup>287</sup>

The cliff-top was also unregulated. Besides smuggling – a few instances of which we have mentioned above – refuse and effluent were often tipped over, soiling the beach below. Around the end of July 1858, Hayward, the then tenant of the Clifton Baths, complained to Margate’s new Borough Council, ‘*of gas lime being shot under the cliff, which caused an intolerable stench, very prejudicial to his business.*’ (*op. cit.*)

Evidently, employees of the Margate Gas Company were wheeling waste hydrated lime up from the gasworks in King Street – where it was used to purify the gas – and tipping it over the cliff on the Fort.<sup>288</sup>

<sup>285</sup> *Dover Telegraph* 17 August 1844.

<sup>286</sup> *Kentish Chronicle* 7 November 1838.

<sup>287</sup> *South-Eastern Gazette* 6 December, and *Canterbury Journal* 10 December 1853.

<sup>288</sup> *South-Eastern Gazette* 3 August 1858.



Refuse was also tipped over the cliffs near the baths, sometimes with fatal consequences.

**FATAL FALL FROM THE CLIFF.**—Another of those fatal accidents which happen on our coasts only too frequently, occurred at Margate early yesterday (Friday) morning. It seems that three men named Thomas Price, William Sackett Ansell, and John Lawrence were engaged emptying the contents of a cart over the cliffs near the Clifton Baths, opposite Ethelbert Terrace—a portion of the cliffs not open to the public, and consequently not fenced in like the adjoining portion. While thus engaged Price (who lived in Wellington-gardens) missed his footing and

*Thanet Advertiser 1880.*

almost imperceptible. He was put to bed, as soon as his clothes were cut off. I found that the right thigh was fractured in two or three places. I set the leg. He was in a semi-conscious condition, and complained of pain and cold. There were no cuts on the head or face, but a little blood oozed from the nose. There was no hope for his recovery from the first; the shock and injuries were so great. There was, in all probability, an internal fracture, or death would not have been so sudden, as there was no loss of blood. All the usual remedies were resorted to, and everything that was possible was done for him. His spine was not injured. I think he fell on his right leg.

Mr. H. F. Hermitage said: The deceased has worked for me 3 or 4 years. He was a very steady, sober man. I knew he and the others were going to empty a cesspool; and where they were going to shoot the "thin." I have not ordered any other sullage to be emptied over the cliff there. Mr. Sheerman, to whom the cesspool belongs, told me he had permission from Mr. Briggs, of the Clifton Baths, to throw it over there. Replying to Mr. Chitty, he said: I did not know there was a notice there, ordering that such matter should not be thrown over the cliff.

The Coroner having summoned up,

*Whitstable Times 1880.*

Occasionally, there were instances of what, today, would be termed an industrial accident.



**ACCIDENTS.**—On the 4th instant an accident happened at the Clifton Baths, by which two bathing machines were destroyed. Mr. Briggs has been in the habit of keeping his machines out on Sundays for the accommodation of passengers by the London boats. Some of them were drawn up, but the tide came in suddenly, and there being a nasty sea on, two of them were destroyed before they could be removed.—Later in the day some of Mr. Briggs's men were engaged in removing the *débris* when the horse took fright, ran over one of the men named Watler, and trod on his thigh, bruising him somewhat seriously. Fortunately no bones were broken.—Next

*Whitstable Times 1878.*

### 14.3 Theft at the Clifton Baths

Valuable Items were often stolen from the bathing machines (see 15.3), but thefts of lesser value were still faithfully reported in the local press, including that of a man's trousers from the Clifton Baths Estate (owner unspecified) in 1934.

#### **BATHER'S LOST TROUSERS**

#### **MAN CHARGED WITH STEALING THEM.**

The fact that further charges might be preferred against him was disclosed at Margate Police Court, on Thursday, when Thomas Reuben Collins (20), of Whiteheart-street, Kennington, was charged with stealing from a bathing cubicle at the Clifton Baths Estate a pair of trousers and 9s., together to the value of £1 10s., the property of George Augustus Vieweg, on Monday.

On the previous day evidence of arrest had been given by D.C. Futter, who said he saw the defendant at 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday and told him he answered the description of a man who was alleged to have stolen a pair of trousers and 9s. from the Clifton Baths Estate. When charged that morning accused replied "That's right."

On Thursday the Chief Constable (Mr. W. Palmer) said he was unable to proceed with the case at that stage and he would ask the magistrates to remand the defendant in custody until Friday next. It was possible that other charges would be preferred against Collins.

The magistrates acceded to the Chief Constable's request and Collins was remanded accordingly.

*Thanet Advertiser 1934*

The Clifton Baths also had its fair share of pickpockets and break-ins.

In one lucky case, (but not for the thief) a pick-pocket's haul of a £5 note was found by a local policeman:

*'Late in June 1864, a police constable, investigating a pocket recently picked, searched the Clifton Baths and found the stolen five-pound note 'behind a post just at the entrance that leads into the dome from the sands.'* <sup>289</sup>

A report of the case is given below:

**THE PLATE ROBBERY.**—A strict search is still being made for the missing portion of the plate stolen last week from Royal Crescent, and a reward of 5*l.* has been offered for its recovery. It has been ascertained that the two brothers Turner were concerned in a pocket-picking case, which occurred six years ago in Margate. They were apprehended one Saturday night on the charge of picking a lady's pocket of a 5*l.* note, in the Market-place, and brought before the magistrates on the following Monday morning, when they were remanded till Wednesday. The note could not be found, and the evidence being insufficient to support the charge, both prisoners were dismissed. The police, however, were satisfied of their men, and a strict search was made in the vicinity of the Clifton Baths, where the prisoners had been known to frequent. After searching some time, P.C. Richard Horn (No. 5), in company with a young man named Hayward, son of the proprietor of the baths, found the note secreted behind a pillar in that part of the building called the Dome, situated at the end of the tunnel leading from the sands. The note was cut in halves, one half being taken possession of by the police, and the other deposited where it was found. Sergeant Shelvey and P.C. Horn then watched the place, and after watching a night and part of two days, their vigilance was rewarded by seeing the two men visit the place about three o'clock in the afternoon. The "light-fingered" gentlemen, however, in looking about sighted "the bluecoats" before they actually went to the place where the note was hidden. They were apprehended, and on being taken before the magistrates, pleaded guilty; they were sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

Kentish and Surrey Mercury 16 July 1870

<sup>289</sup> Dover Telegraph 9 July 1864.

On another occasion, in 1936, an unemployed labourer of no fixed abode was tried for breaking and entering a café on the Clifton Baths Estate, and stealing three packets of cigarettes.

## ARREST IN GARDEN

### MARGATE SHOPBREAKING CHARGE

Found hiding in the garden of a private house in Warwick-road, Cliftonville, in the early hours, on Sunday, William Spencer, 22, an unemployed labourer, of no fixed abode, was at Margate Police Court, on Monday, remanded until to-morrow on a shop-breaking charge.

Spencer was charged with breaking and entering a café on the Clifton Baths Estate on Saturday night and stealing three packets of cigarettes, value 1s. 11½d., belonging to the Margate Estates Co., Ltd.

Applying for a remand, Inspr. Freeborn said that at 1.50 a.m. on Sunday P.S. Wilkinson was on duty in North-down-road when he saw the defendant emerge from Norfolk-road. He questioned the man and, not being satisfied with his answers, commenced to search him.

He found a glass cutter, a screw-driver and a torch in the defendant's possession. The torch fell to the ground and as the officer stooped to pick it up the defendant bolted and was eventually discovered in the garden of No. 21, Warwick-road, by P.C. Williams. Three packets of cigarettes were found in the garden and in a statement subsequently made by the defendant he admitted taking them from a café on the Clifton Baths Estate. He gained entry to the café by removing a shutter by taking out the screws.

P.C. Williams told the bench he and other officers were searching at the rear of Warwick-road when he saw someone in one of the gardens. "I climbed over several gardens," said witness, "and saw the occupier of the house, who pointed out the defendant. Defendant who was in the garden, said he had run away from a sergeant."

Later witness searched the garden and found two small and one large packet of cigarettes beneath a tree. Defendant told him he stole the cigarettes from the café he broke into.

Defendant said he had no objection to being remanded in custody.



## 14.4 Lime-Burning

The baths were plagued by the use of lime kilns which were still 'upon the grounds of the Clifton Baths' in 1846 (see newspaper report, below).

Lime-burning and the use of kilns could be linked profitably to smuggling, as the lime kilns were often on the beaches and the lime-burners knew the caves and tunnels well.

The activity of lime-burning was, however, fraught with hazards – as well as hazardous opportunities:

*'50 tubs of spirits were taken under very singular circumstances. Abutting upon the sea, upon the grounds of the Clifton Baths, near the Fort, is a lime kiln, and the lime burner from time to time, as he required chalk for making the lime, penetrated the cliff until he reached one of those deep, natural caverns formed by the sea. It is, therefore easy to conceive, that a line, attached to tubs or packages, sunk within a certain distance at high water, during a dark winter night, could be drawn up within the mysterious depths of the cavern, and brought up on the cliff through the aperture of the lime kiln. What adds to the singularity of the case is, that the lime kiln is rented of a gentleman, who for many years, has been the Solicitor to the Treasury, and a most vigilant officer.'*<sup>290</sup>

The link between lime- burning and smuggling could also be fatal.

On 24 December 1848, there was the accidental death of a lime burner who was drowned by the weight of the 73 tubs of brandy he was pulling ashore (see newspaper reports, below).

**EXTRAORDINARY AND FATAL ACCIDENT.**—On Sunday morning last, a man named Watson, residing in the Dane, a master bricklayer and lime burner, was discovered on the beach facing the Custom-house, by one of the coast guard, quite dead. It appears that the deceased was engaged in smuggling 72 tubs of brandy on the morning in question, and had waded into the water opposite his lime kiln, adjoining the Clifton baths, to tow the tubs ashore, and no doubt, by reason of the strong tide and heavy sea, was taken off his legs and drowned. The tubs were attached to the deceased by means of a long rope.

Maidstone Gazette 26 December 1848

<sup>290</sup> Standard 17 April 1846.

**LAMENTABLE OCCURRENCE.**—About five o'clock on Sunday morning, as the officers in the Coast Guard Service were removing some tubs of spirits (in number 79), which they had discovered entangled in the Margate Jetty, Mr. George Watson, of this place, bricklayer, was found lying on the beach on his face, partially covered with sea-weed, quite dead. It is generally believed that he was connected with this smuggling transaction, and that the tubs, or the line attached to them (for the purpose of drawing them under the cliffs), becoming foul, he had ventured into the sea for the purpose of clearing them, and either got out of his depth or was seized by the intense cold, whereby cramp was produced, which led to his untimely end. He was much respected, and his death is generally regretted: he has left a wife and a large family of young children to deplore his loss.

On Sunday morning, at break of day, the Coast Guardmen, upon the look out at Jarvis's Landing-place, had his attention drawn to a large quantity of tubs, apparently containing foreign spirits, floating near his boat. He proceeded immediately to take possession of the same. After getting them to the beach, the parties assisting were horror-struck at finding the body of a man entangled with the tubs—quite dead. It proved on investigation to be a bricklayer (a master in a small way), by the name of Watson, residing in the Lane, Margate. The unfortunate deceased owned a lime-kiln adjoining the Clifton Baths, which are situated about two or three hundred yards from the spot where he was found; and it is conjectured, that the tubs having been deposited at low water mark, he swam out to bring them in for concealment in his lime-kiln, but the current proving too strong, or being seized with the cramp, he was not able to get out of the coil, and thus became a victim to his own cupidity. He was a steady and exceedingly industrious man, and leaves a widow and four young children to lament his loss, with every probability of a fifth being soon added to the bereaved family.

Several of our luggers have been actively engaged bringing in portions of the cargo of the barque *Braman*, lost on Friday last on the Tonnage. She is a total wreck, and the cargo, consisting of hosiery, books, chimney ornaments, skins, &c., is, as might be expected, in a deplorable condition—much as it is not worth the trouble of picking up.

*Kentish Gazette* 2 January 1849

## 14.5 A Fight

Early in April 1860, Thomas Lewis Pettman asked the town council:

*'to assist him in gravelling and gas tarring the path leading from the Clifton Baths to the Margate Coastguard Station [at Newgate Gap]. The path being private property, the application could not be entertained, as the late Local Board were once threatened with an action by the owner (J Slater, Esq,) for doing a similar act.'*<sup>291</sup>

<sup>291</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 10 April 1860.



Pettman may already have carted some gravel to the cliff-top for this purpose, which, on 18 June, he caught a Clifton Baths employee spreading on Clifton Baths' land. Pettman reacted violently:

*'Albert Walter, a young man in the employ of Mr Hayward [... had been] directed by his mistress to spread some gravel, which had been deposited by [Pettman], on [Hayward's] land, when [Pettman] came up, and, after a few words, knocked the shovel against his nose, screwed his ears, and held his arms against him and pressed him up against the fence.'*<sup>292</sup>

## 14.6 Indecency: Notices in bathing machines, 1862

By the mid-C19th, Margate had developed quite a reputation for 'indecent bathing,' and especially for men bathing naked and in too close a proximity to the shore or to female bathers.

In 1857, the Marquise of Westmeath introduced an *Act to make Regulations for Male Bathers on the Sea Coast, and to prevent abuses contrary to good Morals*, allowing local magistrates to make byelaws to regulate men's bathing and levy fines; providing these were inscribed *'in the most conspicuous places used for such bathing [...] painted either in white characters on a black ground or in black characters on a black ground.'*<sup>293</sup>

Margate's proposed byelaws were approved in mid-July 1862.<sup>294</sup> The new byelaws were printed in booklets and as posters, one of which was posted in each Bathing Machine.

Markers were set up on the shore and, together with buoys, defined the bathing grounds appointed to men and women. (*Thanet Advertiser* 25 July 1863).

## 14.7 Local Admiration for the Baths

The robust structure of the Clifton Baths was widely admired.

A section in Cooke's *Steam-boat Companion* in 1830, for example, reassures visitors to the baths that:

*'To many persons it would seem at first, that these works are exposed to rapid inroads of the sea; but the out-works are so planned and constructed, that the force of the sea is broken and dispersed before it can reach the foundation, and a very slight observation of the effects of the sea during tempestuous weather, will convince the most timid, that the works are securely defended.'*

*We frequently see great projects undertaken by public bodies, and persons*

<sup>292</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 26 June 1860.

<sup>293</sup> *Canterbury Journal* 13 June 1857.

<sup>294</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 19 July 1862.

*who have the control and expenditure of public money: where those works fail, the public only have to suffer; but there are surely no works of such magnitude and originality as the present, where an individual, upon his own judgement, risk, and responsibility, has undertaken the task; and, upon that account, it is to be sincerely hoped that the public will patronize and support it in the manner it deserves.’ (Cooke 1830)*

Similar reassurance was given in Bonner’s 1831 travel guide to Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs:

*‘We cannot close our account of the public buildings at Margate, without soliciting particular attention to the Clifton Baths, not because they are superior to similar establishments in High-street, for the purpose of bathing, but because they are of curious character, and are placed in a novel and interesting situation.*

*At this place, situate on, or rather in, the fort [sic], the solid rock has been extensively excavated, and domed subterranean passages have been formed; arches for the reception of 25 machines have been erected; a road for them and for carriages, to the sea-side, has been cut through the cliff; a dwelling-house, to which are attached the baths, with large and convenient dressing rooms, and a spacious reading room, has been constructed; and in front of the latter we find an extensive promenade, which has been formed by lowering the cliff, where the company may sit or walk, and revel in all the pleasures which the ocean can afford.*

*The whole is secured by ingenious and singular defences, and while it may be considered by the curious observer, as a remarkable instance of the flights of humour and fancy, and of the extent to which human ingenuity can attain, must at the same time be regarded as a proof of the perseverance, the ability, the exertion of its proprietor, Mr Boys, a solicitor of Margate, who, with very commendable humility, has not suffered his name to appear upon the tablets, which are placed upon these expensive and elaborate works, completed at his individual cost.’ (Bonner 1831)*

In 1873, the Clifton Baths’ hot and cold baths and ozone baths were admired in the Court Journal which, while discussing recent ‘improvements at Margate,’ noted that:

*‘The increased bath accommodation, besides being a great boon, is the principal attraction to visitors; and Mr Briggs, the proprietor of the Clifton Baths, is entitled to the greatest praise for the improvements in this direction. Hot or cold, and the Ozone baths, so much recommended, may be obtained here with every comfort and attention.’* <sup>295</sup>

Ozone gas was sometimes dissolved in bath water as a disinfectant. At the Clifton Baths, however, the ozone bath seems to have been a kind of medicated seaweed bath, like the one at the Granville in Ramsgate, described in 1877:

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<sup>295</sup> Court Journal 6 September 1873.

*“Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;” but not nearly as soft as an ozone bath prepared by a careful hand. The weed should be carefully picked, and boiled until it is as soft as jelly, the warm bath should be liberally supplied with concentrated essence of iodine juice, and into this sea-smelling mess the patient gets. I cannot describe the soft feeling. [...] As you move, the weed moves you; it wraps you round with clinging tresses. You sink in it, you soak in it, and you sigh in it. It is a poem of a bath, and the only danger is that you will remain there too long. It is a disastrous parting, but out you must get without more ado, so wrap that warm sheet around you, and come under the coldest douche in the establishment.’*<sup>296</sup>

This admiration for ozone baths at the Clifton Baths seems to have lasted well into the C20th, although there was the occasional mishap.

In 1925, a woman suffering from neuritis fell unconscious during an Ozone Bath and was found *‘lying in the bath with seaweed over her.’*<sup>297</sup>

Despite this, by 1915, Ozone Baths were recommended *‘for rheumatism and nervous complaints.’*<sup>298</sup>

Extending even these benefits, the Clifton Baths were also the subject of a miraculous claim in June 1858 when the *South-Eastern Gazette* reported on a visit to the Clifton Baths by *‘a young lady who had been totally blind for four months,’* with her family:

*‘She accompanied them to the Clifton Baths, and, though blind when she went into the sea, when she came out again her sight was perfectly restored to her’.*<sup>299</sup>

## 14.8 ... and Some Mild Criticism

*‘The Clifton Baths, which are situated at the other extremity of the town, at the further end of the Fort, consist of a series of excavations out of the solid chalk, and comprise domed subterranean passages, with arches for the reception of machines, and a road for them through the cliff to the sea shore, together with a regular bathing establishment and all its appurtenances – such as warm, cold, plunging, and medicinal baths, with the requisite washing and dressing-rooms, and a kind of terrace open to the sea, where visitors can promenade.*

*Skirting the cliffs which rise up on our right hand, like a long range of perpendicular ramparts, with cavernous-looking entrances at their base, we shoot past the queer-looking Clifton Baths, with their obelisque chimneys, intended of course to be ornamental, but which are precisely the reverse, and their dozen or more bathing machines, and in a few minutes are alongside the Newgate bathing station.’* (Anon 1864)

<sup>296</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 6 October 1877.

<sup>297</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 22 and 29 August 1925.

<sup>298</sup> *Thanet Times* February 1915.

<sup>299</sup> *Examiner* 26 June 1858.

## 14.9 The Drill Hall

The Drill Hall, located within the complex of the Clifton Baths, was a popular, local amenity in many ways, and represents a full integration of the baths with the lives of the local residents.

Interestingly, this happened as the baths were moving into its more down-market phase during the 1870's onwards, and represents, in its retreat from exclusivity, a desire to 'follow the money' of local people rather than the diminishing, tourist market.

The Drill Hall was instigated and built by Thomas Dalby Reeve.

In late May 1872, he was a gunner with the Cinque Ports Volunteer Artillery Corps, who practised on the grounds of the Crescent School, and, that year, with James Briggs' permission, they held their annual general meeting at the Clifton Baths.<sup>300</sup>

The Cinque Ports Volunteer Artillery Drill Hall was built 1872 to 1873 on the grounds of the Clifton Baths, and used by many of the local population.<sup>301</sup>

'Upwards of 100 ft long by 42 ft wide,' it may have been completed by the start of April 1873.<sup>302</sup>

Reeve also built a house for the Sergeant Instructor.

Another research note at MLHM, perhaps from a local newspaper, records that in September 1872, a '*drill shed*' was under construction at the Clifton Baths by '*the Deputy Mayor, Alderman Reeve ... for the Cinque Ports Assocn. Voluntary Corps*'; also, that '*the house for the sgt. (sic) instructor [was then] nearly completed.*'<sup>303</sup>

Besides drill, the Corps would use the hall for their annual general meetings,<sup>304</sup> and to hold balls.<sup>305</sup>

This venture was also enthusiastically supported by Briggs, who also used the Drill Shed for the Artillery Volunteers.<sup>306</sup>

The following newspaper cuttings show how widely and enthusiastically the Drill Hall and its activities were regarded locally.

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<sup>300</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 1 June; *Whitstable Times* 8 June 1872.

<sup>301</sup> MLHM research note.

<sup>302</sup> *Canterbury Journal* 1 March 1873.

<sup>303</sup> We have no further knowledge of this latter building, perhaps it was elsewhere.

<sup>304</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 30 October 1875.

<sup>305</sup> *Whitstable Times* 19 February 1876.

<sup>306</sup> *Grant's Isle of Thanet* 1883.

THE distribution of prizes to the Margate Artillery (which had been twice postponed in consequence of the illness of Captain Drewe) took place on Thursday evening, September 3, in the drill shed, Clifton Baths. There was a good muster. The number of detachments who entered the competitions was six, and half that number of prizes were offered. The first prize, consisting of a silver cup (presented by Captain Drewe) and a sum of money, was presented to Corporal Gurney's detachment; second, a silver cup (presented by Mr. Briggs, of the Clifton Baths) and a sum of money, to Band-Sergeant Bassett's detachment; third, a prize consisting of a sum of money, to Sergeant Elliott's detachment.

*Volunteer Service Gazette* 12 September 1885.

**VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY.**—On Wednesday the annual inspection of this corps took place in a field belonging to Mr. Cliff, of the Dane Farm, kindly lent for the occasion. Colonel Harcourt, Colonel Rotten, and Adjutant Hunter, arrived between twelve and one, but the inspection did not take place until two o'clock. In the meantime the men were put through company drill at the Town Hall, by Adjutant Hunter. The corps mustered strong, and presented a very military appearance, being attended by the brass band, which has very much improved. After the inspection at the Dane, the men marched to the battery, and were put through gun drill. Col. Harcourt expressed his approval of the latter, but he did not compliment the men upon their company drill. The volunteers were in the evening liberally entertained by Lieut. Talfourd, at the Crown and Anchor Hotel, and the proceedings terminated in a very pleasant manner.

*Kentish Gazette* 9 June 1863.

**MARINE ARTILLERY.**—Lieut. Talford has recently given another instance of the interest he takes in the volunteer movement, by establishing a marine battery in connection with the Artillery Corps of this town, and of which he has the command. Already upwards of 20 men have been sworn in, which makes the Artillery Corps over 70 strong.

*Thanet Advertiser* 5 March 1864.



THE ARTILLERY CORPS assembled at the Town-hall on Monday evening last, and (numbering 35 rank and file), under the command of Lieutenants Crump and Talfourd, and accompanied by their very excellent band, proceeded to Cecil-square, where they underwent a course of company drill. The corps was to have been inspected by the Adjutant, but that officer was unable to be present through indisposition. At the conclusion of the drill the corps marched back to the Town-hall by a circuitous route, where certificates of efficiency were given to 62 of its members—that is, to the whole corps with the exception of the surgeon, chaplain, &c. Lieutenant Crump stated that he had communicated with Lieutenant-Colonel Rae with regard to the Easter Monday grand review, and that officer had advised them not to go, as it was quite uncertain when they would get back; but to let the west of England Volunteers have it to themselves this year. At the same time Lieutenant Crump stated that he was quite at the service of the corps if anything could be arranged amongst themselves for Easter Monday. The gallant lieutenant informed them that there were 41 detachments entered for the Rye competition this year, but he was sure the Margate corps would maintain her present high position. He then remarked that they had had proof that evening of the progress the band was making, and he thought they had played in an excellent manner.—Lieutenant Talfourd concurred in the remarks made by Lieutenant Crump, and urged the corps to meet more frequently, and in greater numbers, for company drill; and he was glad to say that he had noticed a marked improvement—more steadiness—in their marching that evening.—The corps was then dismissed.

*Thanet Advertiser 4 April 1868.*

2ND CINQUE PORTS BATTALION VOLUNTEER CORPS.  
—The annual competition for the Challenge Cup and other prizes was held at Canterbury on Monday, when the Ramsgate men were again victorious. This is the third year in succession they have been the victors, which is quite sufficient to satisfy the public it was no fluke. Considerable interest was attached to it, as Ramsgate and Margate had in previous matches this year won each on their own range, and this was to be a deciding match. As the sequel proved it was not only deciding but most decisive, as Margate were left behind 64 points. It has also set at rest the idea which prevailed, and which had been freely expressed, that the previous cup won twice by Ramsgate would not have been won had Margate sent a team against them. Score:—

*Dover Telegraph 31 August 1867.*

**ARTILLERY CORPS.**—Monday last the day appointed for the competing for the various prizes that had been given, the weather could not well have been worse than it was, it rained in torrents up to noon when it held up for an hour or two which enabled the competitors to shoot. The range was at Pegwell Bay, opposite to the Clifton Baths, at ranges of 100, 200 and 300 yards (carbines) with small 2 feet round centres, centres scoring only, outers and centres not counting. Major Rea and Adjutant Hunter officiated as umpires, the firing squads being under the command of Lieut. Stevens (the only commissioned officer present.) The prizes to be shot for were sundry money prizes, one of £5 given by the Col. of the Brigade, Col. Harcourt was won by Gunner Flanigan. The other prizes were a silver goblet presented by Hon. Member T. Elgar, two drinking mugs by Surgeon Thompson, one by hon. member Hands, silversmith, of Queen Street, who supplied the chief articles and three other mugs, one by Mr. Sawyer, sen., who, although 86 years of age was present, and was the oldest volunteer there, he having been one 60 years, were also given. We have been unable to ascertain the scoring or who were the winners, beyond this that Gunner Moulder won the goblet. The firing was got over by dusk, after which a dinner was set out by Gunner Tatnell of the Clifton Tavern in his new dining room, to which Mr. Tatnell has made great additions, which are also improvements. Lieut. Stevens presided (the other officers were conspicuous by their absence) and Sergt.-Major Lefequin acted as Vice-Chairman. The toasts proposed were of a purely complimentary nature, and none was more heartily drunk than that of Mr. Tatnell. There was some first-rate amateur singing, and the evening passed very pleasantly away.

*Canterbury Journal 1865*

The artillery volunteers' guns (which would not have looked out of place on the castellated terraces of the Clifton Baths) seem, however, to have been sited elsewhere, nearer Newgate Gap:

*'The Clifton Baths, the property of TD Reeve, Esq., are on a first-class scale, and very pleasantly situated. You can here obtain ozone, warm and cold sea-baths, and bathing machines. Here is also the drill-hall of the 8th Cinque Ports Artillery Volunteers.'* (Spectator 1874).

Later, reference is made to:

*'Artillery volunteers' drill shed; Cinque Ports (1<sup>st</sup>) Volunteer Artillery, Eastern Division Royal Artillery (No. 7 Garrison Co.) ... headquarters Clifton Baths (Keble's Directory 1899).'* (op. cit.)

In 1875, the drill hall became a (roller?) skating rink:



*'Lieutenant-Colonel Hall [...] entered into an arrangement with Captain-Commandant Dorman for the hire of the Artillery Corps Drill Hall, at the Clifton Baths, as a skating rink, for three months in the year. Messrs Paramor and Son [...] contracted for the laying of the floor which [...] would] be of an unusually substantial character, constructed of cement, and capable of being wrought up to a high state of polish.'*<sup>307</sup>

It was expected to be ready by the first week in July.

The Drill hall was also used as the location for various local events, including a bazaar.

**MARGATE.**

**OPENING A BAZAAR.**—At noon on Tuesday, the Mayor (Mr. Councillor Wood, J.P.,) opened a bazaar at the Artillery Drill Hall, Clifton Baths, in aid of the funds of the new Wesleyan Chapel at Cliftonville. His worship spoke of the pleasure it afforded him to take part in that good work. Some might think it strange that he, a Churchman, should take so prominent a part in those proceedings; but he gladly accepted the invitation to do so, because of the respect he had for several of the prominent Wesleyans in the town. He hoped that, in their new chapel, much good would be done, and that it would soon be out of debt; that the beautiful articles he then saw before him would soon be disposed of at good prices; and that the young people present would become faithful followers of our Great Master, Jesus Christ. He then formally declared the bazaar open, and made a minute inspection of the articles offered for sale. There were several stalls presided over by several ladies connected with the Margate (Hawley-square), the Cliftonville, the Ramsgate, and the Minster chapels. In addition to the bazaar proper, there was a museum and art exhibition in the band room, consisting of goods kindly lent by Mrs. Rowe (Warrior-crescent), Mrs. Morgan, Dr. Rowe, Mrs. H. Morton (Ramsgate), Mr. Chas. Hobday, Mr. Hester, Mr. John Cadby, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Stodart, and others. During the days the bazaar was open several ladies presided at the piano, and the Artillery Band played each evening. The bazaar remains open till Thursday night.

*Thanet Advertiser* 17 August 1878.

<sup>307</sup> *Whitstable Times* 26 June 1875.

## 15 Appendix 3: The Clifton Baths and Cliftonville

The Clifton Baths and the Margate suburb of Cliftonville rose in prominence together.

They both grew from a desire to cater to an expensive, up-market clientele, and supported each other and benefited each other in the process.

What is not open to doubt is that the image of the Clifton Baths was, for a significant period between the 1840's and the late 1880's, one of classy, exclusive entertainment for the upper classes, an image that reflected, and was symbiotic with, the built environment of the suburb of Cliftonville surrounding it.

This transition can be traced from the Clifton Baths' earliest days, and the intentions of its designer, John Boys.

### 15.1 Boys' Vision of the Clifton Baths

That the Clifton Baths should be an exclusive, up-market establishment was entirely the intention of its designer and builder: John Boys (see Appendix 1).

John Boys had always been motivated by the desire for quality in civic design. He had, for example, actively sought the patronage of wealthy visitors when he made his changes to Hawley Square (see Appendix 1) which were intended to make it imitate the high-class, exclusive squares in London and Bath. It seems that Boys succeeded. Oulton described the finished square as Oulton:

*'the most pleasant, regular and uniform part of the town ... preserved for the benefit of the inhabitants of that square.'*<sup>308</sup>

Boys used this exclusivity to make money, but only from the well-heeled.

To achieve this, he planned to surround the square's grounds with an iron railing, paid for by charging '*respectable visitors*' for keys of admission and requiring the householders on the square to commit '*a small sum, annually, towards keeping it in order.*' (*op. cit.*)

The same principles and strategy were to apply to the Clifton Baths, where Boys undoubtedly also saw a marketing opportunity in combining quality, exclusivity and paid access.

He also perceived that, while there were already vapour baths at Hubbard's bathing rooms in Margate, the flourishing market for vapour baths at the more stylish and modern Isabella Baths in Ramsgate hinted that the better class of visitors to Margate might be receptive to something more special on their doorstep.

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<sup>308</sup> Oulton 1809: 16.

Once the construction of the Clifton Baths had started, Boys decided to underline their up-market image immediately by cultivating the local and monied gentry. Around August 1826, for example, he managed to convince suitably elevated persons to preview the excavations for the baths:

*'The Marquis [of Worcester] and his party [...] visited the Clifton Bathing Place, excavated out of the chalk rock near the Fort, and expressed themselves pleased with the novelty of the situation.*

*Mr Secretary Peel and Lady inspected the above place a few days since, and expressed themselves much delighted with the charming prospect from the Alcoves and Terrace.'* <sup>309</sup>

Boys was a shrewd operator. He knew that Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850), the then Home Secretary, owned a considerable quantity of land to the east of the Clifton Baths, beyond Newgate Gap.

Margate was expanding rapidly, and Boys had guessed that Peel would anticipate an increase in the value of his property should the Clifton Baths succeed. Peel did, indeed, come to develop the land from the 1840's.

It was a fortuitous contact for Boys. Not only did Peel's social *cachet* enhance the Clifton Baths' upmarket image, but Peel would, c1828, intercede with the Marquis of Conyngham, on Boys' behalf, over the lease of the foreshore (see 8.14).

This social *cachet* was further enhanced by the exclusive, affluent nature of the houses that had sprung up in the area around the baths and the popularity of the area as a holiday resort among the upper classes and aristocracy.

Forming, as it did, one of Margate's most prestigious districts, Cliftonville will have guaranteed Boys' proposed bathing station a suitably genteel clientele. Indeed, according to some of the earliest reports, the baths were intended, specifically: *'for the accommodation of the numerous houses built on the Fort'* (Seary 2013, p. 9).

Eventually, however, up to the late 1860's, houses built near the Clifton Baths also benefited from the exclusive backwash of the Clifton Baths which, at that time, were very much an up-market, holiday attraction for the leisured classes. The process of affluent influence became mutual.

Charles Feret, who evidently was fascinated by early Cliftonville, and had assembled a quantity of evidence in several of his early C20th *'Bygone Thanet'* newspaper articles in *Keble's Gazette*. (Seary 2013, p. 45) also showed that the estate enjoyed a close symbiotic relationship with the prestigious Clifton Baths – one valued by both sides.

The Clifton Baths were also an attraction for those seeking to lease or buy houses in Cliftonville, and many C19th advertisements for the sale or lease of nearby houses stressed their proximity to the baths.

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<sup>309</sup> *Courier* 21 August; *Kentish Gazette* 22 August 1826.



The Cliftonville estate, full of grand houses and extending eastward along the cliffs, remained, for many years, a distinct and exclusive satellite of Margate, frequented by a higher class of visitor and resident than its neighbouring, parent, town.

John Boys, perhaps sensing from very early on the ripple effect of the Clifton Baths on local housing, had, by the time of the Tithe Survey of 1841 (see Fig. 23 in the main report), set out the site of the present Ethelbert Terrace, behind the Clifton Baths ('573' *ibid*), as building land – although nothing seems to have been done with it before 1858.



Detail of an engraving dated July 6 1857, showing the new houses overlooking the Clifton Baths.

## 15.2 The Social Environs of the Clifton Baths: Exclusivity and Affluence

For at least forty years after Boys built the Clifton Baths, the plots fronting Fort Crescent filled up with large, stylish, dwelling and lodging houses, whilst a further short terrace, of similarly elegant houses, named 'Cliff Terrace', extended, at its eastern end, almost to the town boundary.

Ethelbert Crescent was very grand, with houses of four storeys over a well-lit basement. The projecting ground-floor bays and porches were provided with slender, Ionic columns and friezes decorated with laurel wreaths, and carried a first-floor balcony with cast-iron railings and canopy.

According to Feret, in 1865, the trade magazine, 'The Builder', noted:

*'The handsome houses in progress and already built upon the Cliftonville Estate, as the extension of the Fort is called, show a most praiseworthy endeavour to improve the quality of accommodation, and do great credit the enterprise of Mr Reeve, who pioneered and has supported the investment.'* (Seary 2013, p. 45)

Although the name, Cliftonville, reflected '*a weak grasp of, or indifference to, the usual roots of English place-names*' (Seary 2007), it managed to engender positive associations, and looked '*delightful on our notepaper and visiting cards, and our vanity [was] satisfied by their use.*' ('Bygone Thanet,' undated Keble's Gazette article at MPL).

According to 1869 (Bear's Directory), when, in July and August 1867, John Harvey Boys tried to sell the Clifton Baths, his advertisement in the Times, of 14 and 16 August, noted that, over the previous fourteen years, '*a new town [had] sprung up – Ethelbert Terrace and Crescent, Ethelbert Road, the New-town, &c' adding greatly to the value of the Baths.*'

In 1868, a guidebook (Anon) reported on the progress of the estate:

*'Clifton Ville [sic]. Beyond the Fort, an estate has been laid out for building purposes, upon which some first-class houses have been erected called Ethelbert Terrace, Ethelbert Crescent, Athelstan Villas, &c; also a large and commodious hotel, which, when completed, will afford superior accommodation, and command the most extensive and beautiful sea and land views to be found on the coast.'*

In sales particulars of the time, the quality of the houses' occupiers was extolled. Even freehold cottages were put up for investment '*Having Private Rights, and occupied by excellent Tenants, producing a rental of £62 per annum*' (see advertisement, below):

**MARGATE, KENT.**  
**TO BREWERS, INVESTORS, and OTHERS.**  
 Six very Comfortable and Commodious  
**FREEHOLD COTTAGES ON THE FORT,**  
 Having Private Rights, and occupied by excellent  
 Tenants, producing a rental of £62 per annum.  
**Messrs. SEAR and BOYD**  
 Are favoured with Instructions  
**TO SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION,**  
**AT the WHITE HART HOTEL, Margate,**  
 On TUESDAY, 28th of AUGUST, 1865, at  
 FOUR o'Clock in the Afternoon, in Two Lots.  
**Lot 1.**—All these Four Commodious Freehold Brick-  
 Built Cottages, with the Appurtenances, situate and  
 being Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6, Bath Place, Margate, in the  
 respective occupation of Messrs. Claysen, Setterfield,  
 Sankey, and Scott, at an annual rental of £10 each.  
**Lot 2.**—All these Two Excellent Freehold Dwelling  
 Houses, situate and being Nos. 7 and 8, Bath Place,  
 Margate, in the respective occupation of Mr. Philpott  
 and Mr. Fisk, at rents amounting to £22 per annum,  
 No. 8, having a double frontage and being a corner  
 house.  
**N.B.**—The projected road in continuation of that at  
 present leading past the Grotto to join the new road  
 from Clifton Terrace to the Clifton Baths, will pass  
 close to No. 8 House, and will render its commanding  
 corner position particularly desirable for an Inn or  
 Shop of any kind, and in addition to which, there is a  
 valuable Piece of Ground, extending the whole length  
 of Bath Place, available as a Garden or Pleasure  
 Ground.  
 The Property may be viewed at any time before the  
 Sale by permission of the Tenants. Particulars and  
 Conditions of Sale may be obtained of Messrs. Sankey,  
 Son, and Flint, Solicitors, Margate; or at the Offices  
 of Messrs. Sear and Boyd, Surveyors and Valuers, 24,  
 Cecil Square, Margate.

The area also attracted good quality developers.

The advertisement below celebrates the rumour that '*Mr Hayward, a builder of considerable standing in the county of Sussex, is about to commence the erection of a number of semi-detached villas*' in the area.

**THE EXTENSION OF THE TOWN.**—There is a rumour current, and we understand that it is well founded, to the effect that Mr. Hayward, a builder of considerable standing in the county of Sussex, is about to commence the erection of a number of semi-detached villas on that portion of the New-town lying between the Ethelbert Road and the Godwin Road. Our local builders have already shown their appreciation of this site by the erection of several houses thereupon within the last few months, and when Mr. Hayward, who we understand intends to expend several thousands of pounds upon the site, shall have finished his buildings, we have no doubt that the neighbourhood will be very greatly improved.

*Thanet Advertiser 1864*

Central to this area, The Cliftonville Hotel personified the exclusivity of the early Cliftonville, catering for the wealthy patrons who visited the Clifton Baths. (It is noted that Oscar Wilde was to lecture there in his tour of the area.)

The hotel opened in June 1868, sited midway along Ethelbert Crescent, to the east of Dalby Square and between two near-symmetrical terraces. It was a confident addition to this area of exclusive, large mansions.

*'Here again is a magnificent hotel which rivals in extent, furnishing, and character any of the hotels at Brighton, Scarborough, &c.'* (Anon 1867)



The Cliftonville Hotel and Grounds c1890



The following year, The Builder predicted: *'when the right man comes, Margate will make a start that will astonish stagnant owners and regulators.'* Arguably, however, that start had already been made.

*'Beyond the Fort is the Cliftonville Estate, upon which some first-class houses are erected, viz., Ethelbert-terrace, Ethelbert-crescent, Athelstan-villas; Dalby-square, etc. In the centre of the Crescent stands the Cliftonville Hotel, which is a large, handsome building fitted up in a very superior manner, and affording every accommodation for the higher class of visitors, who have so extensively favoured the proprietor with their patronage since it has opened. It commands one of the best sea and land views to be found on the coast, and the grounds in front are tastefully laid out with walks, croquet lawn, &c.'* (Anon 1881).



Ethelbert Crescent and the Cliftonville Hotel 1880

The hotel offered privacy, and also afforded:

*'easy access to the highest cliffs on the coast and but was also separated from them and from the promenade by private grounds, extending its whole length and covering nearly two acres. These are laid out with walks and summer-houses, and beautiful shrubs and flowers, and with lawns for badminton, tennis, and other games.'* (Anon 1890).

In 1868, the Cliftonville Hotel Company was formed, with shares offered to the public.

The *Wrexham Weekly Advertiser* 6 August 1864 carries an advertisement by the Cliftonville Hotel Company (see below), offering the hotel for sale and extolling its main virtue as:

*'The Hotel is situate in the healthiest part of Margate being upon the Fort, near to the Clifton Baths ...Margate is so well-known as one of the favourite*

watering places of England [and] many thousands of visitors are unable to find accommodation during the season.'

## THE CLIFTONVILLE HOTEL COMPANY.

**MARGATE (Limited).**—Incorporated under the Companies' Acts, 1862 and 1867. Liability of Shareholders limited to Shares taken. Capital £30,000, in 12,000 Shares of £2 10s. each, with power of increase. 10s. per Share to be paid on application, 10s. on allotment, and it is proposed to call a further sum of £1 per Share three months after allotment. The liability, therefore, will be limited to 10s. per Share, which the Directors do not anticipate will be called up.

### DIRECTORS.

G. F. Anderson, Esq., Nottingham-place, Regent's-park.  
Joseph Moreland, Esq., Highbury New-park, and 76, Old-street.  
Herbert T. Sankey, Esq., Margate, and Canterbury.  
Colonel Spalding, Pelham-road, New Wimbledon.  
James Andrews, Esq., Northampton-park, Canonbury, and Margate.  
With power to add to their number.

### BANKERS.

Messrs. Barnett, Hoare, and Co., Lombard-street.

Messrs. Cobb and Co., Margate.

SOLICITORS—Messrs. Sankey, Son, and Flint, Margate and Canterbury.

SECRETARY—Mr. H. A. Linford.

MANAGER—Mr. Sidney Spence.

OFFICES—8, Old Jewry, E.C.

This Company is formed for the purpose of purchasing and carrying on the Cliftonville Hotel.

The Hotel is situate in the healthiest part of Margate, being upon the Fort, near to the Clifton Baths, and commanding magnificent sea and land views. It is about 100 feet above the level of the sea, and contains gentlemen's and ladies' coffee-rooms, dining-rooms, drawing-room, table d'hôte-room, library, billiard and smoking rooms, numerous sitting-rooms, and about eighty bed and dressing rooms, bath-rooms, &c. Stabling accommodation will also be provided. The private ground in front of the hotel (upwards of two acres) will be laid out in croquet lawns for the use of visitors. The Hotel will be opened in June next.

A preliminary arrangement has been entered into for the purchase of the property of £18,500, of which £11,000 will be taken in shares of the Company.

Margate is so well known as one of the favourite watering places of England, and as the resort of many thousands of visitors, numbers of whom are unable to find accommodation during the season, that any description of it would be superfluous. That part on which the Hotel stands is very highly recommended by the medical profession for the extreme purity of its air.

In offering this to the public at a time when confidence in the success of joint-stock enterprise has been so rudely shaken, the Directors do not desire to ignore the fact that many of the large hotel companies have not realized the advantages held out by them when first submitted to the public. But it will be found on examination that the disappointment has not arisen from a diminution in the estimated trade profits. These have invariably been very good, and the smallness of the dividends paid by some of the existing companies is entirely attributable to the expenditure on capital account being out of all proportion to the probable maximum receipts, the expenditure ranging from £200,000 to about £320,000. This fatal rock will be entirely and carefully avoided by the Directors of this Company, as the total outlay on capital account will not, it is confidently anticipated, exceed £27,000, and it is their firm belief in the inherent goodness of this undertaking that has induced them to give it their cordial support, and to offer it as a safe and bonâ fide investment.

It is not intended to saddle the Company with heavy preliminary expenses for advertising, &c., and there being but a limited number of shares to dispose of, they will be offered to the public for a few days only.

If no allotment be made the deposits will be returned in full.

The articles of association may be seen at the Solicitors', and at the Company's Offices, where a copy can be had on payment of one shilling.



### 15.3 Exclusivity for Wealthy, Up-Market Patrons

Noting that the Clifton Baths were patronised by only the best classes of people was a common selling point in advertisements for the baths.

Dixon, in 1827, arguably the first tenant of the Clifton Baths, advertised them as follows:

*'Clifton Bathing Place, Reading Room, Terrace, and Subterraneous Passages, near Fort Crescent, Margate J. Dixon Respectfully announces to the nobility, gentry, visitors, and inhabitants of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and the Isle of Thanet, that the above novel and interesting bathing place... is now open to the public.'* (See Fig. 12 in the main report.)

In the *Isle of Thanet Directory* of 1849, Edward Read, begged:

*'respectfully to return his sincere thanks to the Nobility and Gentry of Margate Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and the Isle of Thanet, for the liberal support he [had] experienced for the last twenty-six seasons [sic]' and expressed his hope 'by assiduity and attention, to merit a continuance.'*

An indication of the wealth of these patrons can be inferred from the report in the *Thanet Advertiser* in 1868 (see below) of a servant girl's theft of jewellery from one of the Clifton Baths' bathing machines. It seems that the user had been happy to leave these behind while she bathed:

*'a half-hoop diamond ring and another a half-hoop diamond and emerald, and the third a diamond and ruby ring... they are of the value of £20... and I deposited them upon the little box in the machine.'*

The value of these items today would be around £2500.

**YESTERDAY.**

**A SERVANT GIRL STEALING THREE GOLD RINGS.—** A domestic servant named, *Rose Huggett*, was charged with stealing three gold rings of the value of £20 the property of Rueben Hibberd.—Elizabeth Hibberd said : I live at Upper Norwood, and I have been staying at 10, Elizabeth-terrace. On the 8th of July last I went with my child to bathe at Clifton Baths. I had three rings on my finger, and I took them off in the machine. One was a half-hoop diamond ring, and another a half-hoop diamond and emerald, and the third a diamond and ruby ring. I identify the three rings produced as my property. They are of the value of £20. I took them off to dress and undress my children and I deposited them upon the little box in the machine. As we were coming out we met the prisoner, her mistress, and some children, and they entered the machine as we left. I left my rings behind, and I asked the man who drove the machine to let me go back to see after them. He let me go back, and I asked the lady to let me into her machine to look for my rings. She did so, and I looked all over the machine for my

*Thanet Advertiser* 25 July 1868.

Advertisements for the baths also used the rather formal language of the upper middle-classes, including a sprinkle of French.

This use of French was a flattering nod to the patrons' education, the perceived style of the French language - and Parisian fashion - of the time and, also, a hint at a confidential whisper to the readers who would speak French in front of their servants for privacy.

An advertisement placed by Reeve in 1897 (MLHM), for example, refers to both '*employés*' and '*établissement des bain.*' (Undated photocopy, dated c1896 at MHLM)

## 15.4 Protection of Exclusivity

The owners and tenants of the Clifton Baths were concerned to protect the exclusivity of the baths and its environs, correctly perceiving it to be a lucrative selling point for their facilities. They did this in three ways.

First, there was a constant emphasis on the fact that houses, hotel and baths in Cliftonville were protected from contact with the wider, Margate population, and certainly any rough elements.

*'[Proceed] by the Fort to the New Town of Cliftonville .... near here are also Baths, so that the resident on this side can get a plunge without the trouble of going down to the Marine Parade, where the majority of bathers take their matutinal dip.'* (Anon 1887).

In 1862, Boys jnr., and his tenant, Hayward, decided to publicly emphasise that Cliftonville was not part of Margate in general by challenging new byelaws that sought to link, inferentially, the two areas.

These byelaws stipulated that markers were to be set up on the Margate shores which, together with buoys, would define the bathing grounds appointed to men and women. The byelaws were approved in mid-July 1862,<sup>310</sup> and it was decreed by the council that they should be printed in booklets and as posters – the latter to be affixed in each bathing machine.

Hayward, however, resisted these developments at the Clifton Baths, and, when the police superintendent visited him on 22 August, he referred him '*to his landlord, Mr J. H. Boys.*' The superintendent reported that:

*'Mr Boys called on me at the police-station the same day, and said that on the part of Mr Hayward he must respectably decline having anything to do with the bye-laws, as they did not apply to the Clifton Baths, which was out of the borough of Margate, and private property.'*<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 19 July 1862.

<sup>311</sup> *Thanet Advertiser* 30 August 1862.

After brief investigation, the Town Clerk asserted the Clifton Baths were within the borough.<sup>312</sup> We are not yet sure of the outcome of this.

Second, the owners and tenants of the Baths were concerned to protect the gentility of the area by controlling any attempts to over-develop the area or introduce any vulgar activities.

In 1862, when the coveted reputation of the area was at its zenith, the *South-Eastern Gazette* 2 September 1862 reported on the text of a covenant, contained in an indenture dated 24th August 1863 and relating to what was to be a large-scale development of Cliftonville, including Dalby Square's large, three- and four-storey houses, with basement, residential terraces and c 0.3 hectare garden enclosure (1919 Conveyance map, Fig. 3 in main report).

This covenant between Thomas Dalby Reeve and John Harvey Boys stipulated, among other things, that: no bathing facilities should be built on the land (thus protecting the interests of the owner of Clifton Baths, Margate); no buildings of any kind should be erected, save for a boundary fence not exceeding five feet in height; and that the enclosure should remain an ornamental garden (*Abstract of Title*, 6th March 1920).

Importantly, there should not be:

*'any noisy or offensive or other trade or dealing or be party or suffer any act or thing which might tend to the deterioration in value of the said Clifton Baths and other property marked "A" upon the Plan drawn thereon or which might be or grow to any annoyance, damage or inconvenience to the occupiers thereof without the consent in writing of John Harvey Boys, his heirs or assigns.'*

Lime-burning, furthermore, which was practically a local, cottage industry, of varying legality, was also to be banned from this area.

John Boys attempted, for example, to prevent lime-burning from a site opposite 'Belgravia Villas', the name perhaps indicating the superior nature of the houses.

His attacks on local smuggling (see Appendix 1) were also, no doubt, not unrelated to his self-interest as the owner of the baths. He was obviously concerned to protect the safety and exclusivity of his clientele from the threat of lime-burners and their perceived links to smuggling.

Thirdly, reassurance about the safety of the area and the protection of its visitors were emphasised, whenever possible, by a type of early public relations through the local press.

This reassurance was heavily emphasised in an article - '*A providential escape*,' (The Times 21 September 1844), which, describing how a man fell into the sea under the cliff opposite the Fort Cliff Crescent, Margate, gave full credit to his survival to the fact that '*Ropes were immediately procured from the Clifton Baths*' and, when back on dry land:

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<sup>312</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 2 September 1862.

*'exhausted as to be unable to speak. He was taken to the Clifton Baths, where he was most benevolently treated with the proper restoratives and in a short time was ... recovered.'*

## 15.5 The Clifton Baths' Location as a Healthy Choice

The site of the Clifton Baths was well-secluded from the bustle of the town and harbour, and was well away from any urban effluent.

The baths would, of course, make a virtue of this seclusion, offering privacy, cleanliness and social exclusivity at a time when sea bathing was considered a health pursuit by the monied classes. (Also, see Section 6.2.1 on The Royal Sea Bathing Hospital in the main report.)

*'It had long been a matter of complaint that, amidst the many improvements of this public-spirited town, no attempt had been made to render the sea bathing more pure and more private; and these considerations, it appears, gave rise to the present undertaking;'* (Cooke 1830)

*'The influx of inhabitants to [the Fort], which, inasmuch as it is the most salubrious, is the most sought after by invalid visitants, calls for increased accommodation for those to whom bathing is recommended.'* <sup>313</sup>

Equally, the baths offered to provide for those who had no intention of healthy pursuits, and just wanted a quieter life. An advert of 1850 (cited in MLHM research notes) announced that:

*'for the convenience of those customers who disliked fresh air there was a covered arched passage for sedan chairs so that people could move from their lodging houses to the Clifton Baths.'*

The *Wrexham Weekly Advertiser* 6 August 1864, carries an advertisement by the Cliftonville Hotel Company, offering the hotel for sale, and extolling one of its main virtues as being *'situate in the healthiest part of Margate being upon the Fort, near to the Clifton Baths'*.

## 15.6 Education

Around this time, Cliftonville became a magnet for up-market educational establishments. This included boarding schools, local schools and the import of tutors for the residents' children.

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<sup>313</sup> *Public Ledger* 11 September 1824.

**TO LADIES' SCHOOLS, COLLEGES,  
AND FAMILIES.**  
**A** Gentleman, who has had much experience  
 in tuition, gives Lessons in the English, Latin,  
 and French Languages; Arithmetic, Globes, also lectures  
 on Astronomy, Pneumatics, &c.  
 For terms, &c, apply to D. S., 2, Ethelbert Crescent,  
 Margate.

Thanet Advertiser 1865 (Ethelbert Crescent)

**BOARD AND EDUCATION AT LONDON AND  
MARGATE.**  
**M**R. DARNELL, in conjunction with his Son,  
**J. DARNELL, M.A.** of Trinity College, Cambridge,  
 respectfully inform their friends, that in addition to their  
 Academy at Prospect House, Pentonville, they have opened  
 one at Clifton House, Paragon, on the Fort, Margate, so  
 that the pupils may have the advantage of residing at either  
 Establishment, as their health, or the wishes of their parents,  
 may require, and no additional expense will be incurred, ex-  
 cepting that of the voyage. Terms, including all the various  
 branches of literature, 30 guineas, under 10, with a gradual  
 increase exceeding that age. A Prospectus explanatory of  
 terms, &c., may be had at either of the Establishments, where  
 all letters, post paid, will be immediately attended to.

Morning Advertiser 11 July 1829.

## 15.7 The Promenade

A promenade is for leisured folk, and it was felt that a promenade for the up-market patrons of the Clifton Baths, Cliftonville and the Cliftonville Hotel to 'take the air', untroubled by the wider Margate population, would be a good investment for the area.

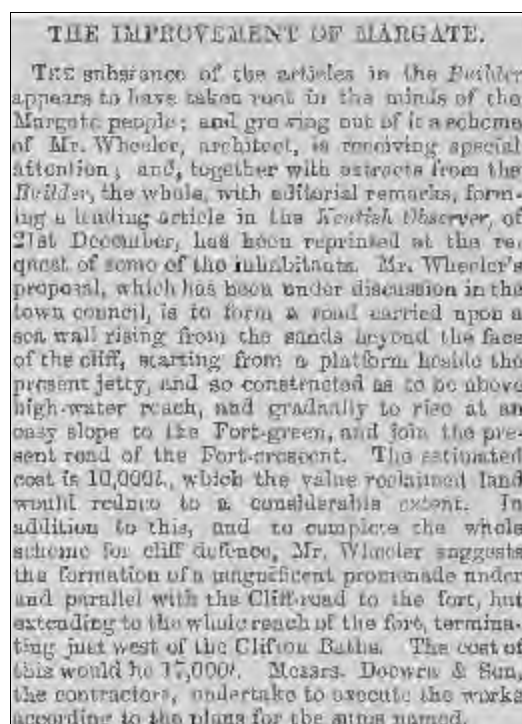
By 1858, a track or path had existed along the cliff-top on the approximate line of the present Newgate Promenade – perhaps newly-created as a picturesque and vertiginous amenity to tourists and residents of the Fort area.

In 1861, a Captain Hodges built an iron bridge, with the inscription '*Pro bono publico*,' across Newgate Gap, leading to his guns and flagstaff at Palm Bay.

In 1866, plans were presented to the local council for a '*magnificent promenade*' to be built along this route.

That the costs were estimated at around £10,000 - £17,000 (see newspaper cutting, below), which is equivalent to about £850,000 - £1,000,000 today, and happily approved by the council, suggested the perceived, investment value of the project.





The Builder 1866.

The promenade, when completed, was an elegant affair. It had its own fence at the cliff edge, and was planted with 'park' benches facing out to sea.



The Promenade above the Clifton Baths 1868 (Rock & Co 1 July)



The Eastern Cliftonville Promenade c1890

## 15.8 The Process of Decline: 1840 – 1914

From early Victorian times to the turn of the century, Cliftonville changed from an exclusive enclave for large, single-household houses, hosting wealthy and aristocratic families, to an increasingly down-market collection of shabby, multi-occupation houses and cheap, seaside boarding houses.

The baths also changed. Over the same period, they transmogrified from an expensive, exclusive, up-market facility to a mass-market, cheap, entertainment-based product that grew increasingly shabby and unclean.

It may also be said that Cliftonville and the Clifton Baths declined together, but in different ways and at different speeds. The baths fought their decline through a series of major changes well into the C20th, and Cliftonville made a more gradual withdrawal into dereliction as demand for its accommodation fell.

### 15.8.1 The Decline of Cliftonville and Ethelbert Terrace

By the early 1840's, new houses had been built at the east end of Cliff Terrace, and, in 1855, it was recorded that '*the Freehold Land Society have purchased some land for building (on property of the late Sir R Peel), to be called Margate New Town.*'<sup>314</sup>

<sup>314</sup> *Post Office Kent* 1855.

By early June 1863, a Mr Brown had prepared 'plans of houses proposed to build [...] in Ethelbert Road,'<sup>315</sup> and, by late January 1864, 'building operations [were] progressing on the Ethelbert Road and Eastern Esplanade.'<sup>316</sup> and 'Ethelbert-terrace and Crescent, [and] Ethelbert-road' were built by 1865.' (*op. cit.*)

By 1867, the new town, including Ethelbert Road, Terrace and Crescent, had arisen (*Times* 14 and 16 August 1867), and, according to Feret (*op. cit.*), in 1865, the trade magazine *The Builder*, drew attention to 'the new estate then beginning to arise beyond the Fort,' the work of Thomas Dalby Reeve.

By the 1870's, the golden age of exclusive housing was reaching its zenith, and was starting its social decline, a state of affairs symbolized by changes in Ethelbert Terrace.

The three pictures, below, show its transmogrification from an elegant, Victorian place of leisure, through a larkier, Edwardian place of family holiday to a more down-market place of motor bike and deckchairs.



c1850: Ethelbert Crescent off Ethelbert Terrace: Margate Local History.co.uk

<sup>315</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 9 June 1863.

<sup>316</sup> *Kentish Gazette* 26 January 1864.





1913: Edgar Road, York House Margate, just off Ethelbert Crescent and Ethelbert Terrace:  
[margatelocalhistory.co.uk](http://margatelocalhistory.co.uk)



c1913 Ethelbert Crescent, off Ethelbert Terrace, Margate: [margatelocalhistory.co.uk](http://margatelocalhistory.co.uk)

The gardens of this area, particularly those of Ethelbert Crescent, also followed the process of decline.

Down, at least, to July 1868, the gardens between Ethelbert Crescent and the Newgate Promenade appear to have been simple lawns, surrounded by railings on the north side, and by what appears to have been a low chain fence to the south.

Engravings suggest the gardens were, at first, continuous down the entire length of Ethelbert Crescent, without subdivisions (Figs. 25 to 30 in main report).

At some point thereafter (Figs. 31 and 32 in main report), railings were supplied, in place of the plain fence, along the south side of the gardens, opposite and coterminous with the westernmost terrace of Ethelbert Crescent. These railings ended in simple pedestals, topped by decorative urns.

The eastern pedestal, with the base of the urn broken off, survives today.

Possibly (in contradiction to contemporaneous engravings), these railings returned northwards at their eastern end, segregating the gardens in front of the terrace from those in front of the Cliftonville Hotel.

Midway along the southern railings, facing the terrace, was a gateway flanked by a large and ostentatious pair of stone lions, couchant, on tall, brick and stone pedestals.

Next, and probably before October 1872 (Fig. 33 in main report), formal paths had been laid out around this garden – which had certainly, by now, been separated from that in front of the Cliftonville Hotel.

These comprised a straight central path, interrupted by a central roundel, flanked, to east and west, by a symmetrical pair of winding paths.

Shrubs were planted in the central roundel, and elsewhere, whilst, possibly, the first of a series of draped statues and garden ornaments set up on the lawns. Possibly, these statues could be taken inside in winter, because they appear and disappear, and change positions, in later engravings and photographs.

The larger garden in front of the hotel was also provided with paths, to a similar design, around the same time. A large and ornate urn, festooned, with a heavy square base, stood on a large, square, classical pedestal. Statues proliferated to the point of embarrassment.





Ethelbert Crescent c1880

Evidently, the Crescent was the site of much gentrified activity, but its use and maintenance declined as the reputation of the baths declined.

By the end of the C19th, it still had some style, so much so that, by the turn of the century, 2d was being charged for the use of the Ethelbert Crescent garden.

*'This garden, and that in front of the Hotel, urgently signalled Clintonville's exclusivity and social ascendancy – the taste and sophistication of its residents and proprietors. Such efforts were rewarded, across the late nineteenth-century and into the twentieth, by appreciative remarks in guidebooks: Cliftonville summer-houses, and beautiful shrubs and flowers, and with lawns for badminton, tennis, and other games.'* (Anon 1890).

Amusingly, the 1899 Ward Lock Guide to Margate (19), described this as *'a private enclosure [...] decked with what Artemus Ward would call "moral statoots."* '

Probably between 1900 and 1907, the paths in the garden were simplified – retaining only the straight central path; the northern railing was removed, opening the garden onto Newgate Promenade.



Ethelbert Crescent Gardens 1915

By the early c20th, the statues had been removed, including the stone lions at the southern gate, leaving only the central urn and pedestal.

The western end had been divided off by a light, rustic fence and, in summer, was crowded with windbreaks, picnic tables and parasols.

A photo of about this date shows it the worse for wear, with chairs and tourists scattered about a threadbare lawn.

Its decline was to continue throughout the early C20th. The plinths of the former 'lion gate,' were removed, leaving only the central urn, and the adjoining portion of the previously prestigious Cliftonville Hotel garden housed a miniature golf course.

### 15.8.2 The Decline of the Clifton Baths

A similar process of change was happening at the Clifton Baths, starting with a curious reversal of effect.

Previously, the houses in Cliftonville had ridden on the reputation of the baths, but, in c1876, with the 'Foreshore Scheme', a portentous reversal occurred (see 9.52.2 in main report).

The scheme, to build housing on the foreshore by the Clifton Baths, would have meant the end of the Clifton Baths, cutting them off from the sea.

Ultimately, after much litigation, the matter was settled in favour of the Clifton Baths, but it does illustrate how the reputations of the baths and the housing nearby were becoming dislocated. The increasing value of the houses was contrasted with the lowering tone of the baths.

By mid-July of 1868, sensing the decline of the baths and the reversal of the baths' fortune in relation to local building, John Harvey Boys had instructed Messrs Ventom, Clarke and Bull to sell the Clifton Baths *'and three plots of valuable building land,'* at auction on 28th of that month:

*'Lot 1 will comprise the Clifton Baths, which are most substantially built, and have the most perfect internal arrangements. They are situate on the Fort, the favourite and most increasing part of Margate, and comprise a five-roomed cottage, eight hot bath rooms, two dressing rooms, a large reading room, 40 by 20, overlooking the sea, and suitable for a billiard room, reservoirs, the dome, a large circular building suitable for boat building, and subterranean passage to the sea for sea bathing machines.*

*Lot 2. A valuable plot of building land, possessing a frontage of about 130 feet to the Cliff road, and extending to the edge of the cliffs.*

*Lot 3. Another valuable plot of building land, with a frontage of 23 feet to the Ethelbert-road, by a depth of 100 feet, and having stables thereon.*

*Lot 4. Another plot of land, suitable for the erection of several cottages.'*<sup>317</sup>

This was, in effect, the beginning of the end for the Clifton Baths as they used to be, and, in a similar way, the beginning of the end for Cliftonville as an exclusive resort.

As the century progressed, Margate declined as a seaside resort, and, mirroring this decline, the Clifton Baths started to struggle to retain some of their wealthier customers, and developed a more down-market reputation.

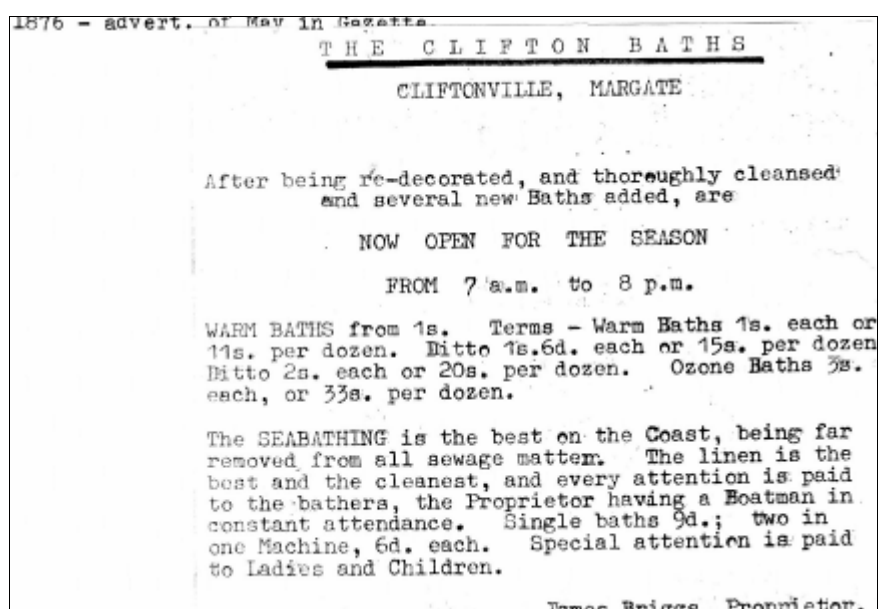
In 1873, for example, it was noted that:

*'In Kent, England, four miles from Ramsgate, upon the beach, is the little town of Margate. It is a free-and-easy watering-place, to which in the season as many as a hundred thousand people are attracted. They start there for enjoyment; when they arrive, they wonder why they have come, for Margate is not a cheerful place either in or out of the season. The Clifton Baths are there, cut out of the solid cliff, and a little, dingy theatre is there, which sometimes holds audiences not too large, nor too critical, nor too refined.'*<sup>318</sup>

<sup>317</sup> *Maidstone and Kentish Journal* 13, 18 and 20 July; *Thanet Advertiser* 18 July 1868.

<sup>318</sup> *Galaxy* May 1873.

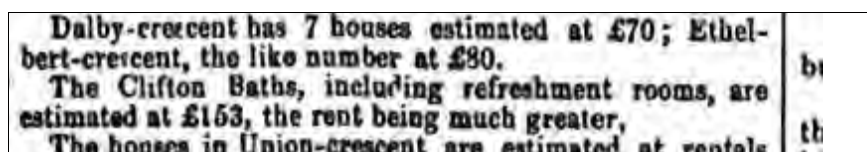
The decline in the baths' quality can also be seen in a rather tawdry advertisement for the baths in 1876 (see below). It shows modest prices for the baths' facilities, and advertises one of the baths' advantages to be that it is '*far removed from all sewage matter*'. Note the reference to 'cleansed'



Advertisement for the Clifton Baths 1876 (LHM notes)

Although the baths' proprietors, at this time, were evidently intent on maintaining a reputation as a fairly serious, quasi-medical bathing complex – an approach pitched directly at middle-class sensibilities - it is clear that the social cachet of the baths was declining by the 1870s, and at a faster rate than the local housing.

This is seen in the following document comparing the rateable value of some local houses with that of the baths, with the entire baths being valued at only twice that of the houses.



Rateable value *Thanet Advertiser* 3 June 1876

The decline in the baths' reputation continued inexorably throughout the rest of the C19th. In 1893, The *Islington Gazette* commented:

*'Not only the Grotto, but the Clifton Baths, went under the hammer – good old Briggs's, with the factory-chimney and the intensely ugly front that is enough to frighten the little fishes in the sea.'*<sup>319</sup>

<sup>319</sup> *Islington Gazette* 7 September 1893.

Also, in 1902, that:

*'the Corporation has determined to purchase Margate's only eyesore, Brigg's Baths, and first bridge it over to make a direct promenade from the Fort to [Hodge's] Flagstaff, and then turn it into a splendid seaside palace with luxurious baths, Turkish as well as selfish, and all sorts of rational entertainments.*

*Both the Corporation and the owners have referred the decision as to price to arbitration. Of course, the ancient ratepayer who lives on Londoners and growls over every farthing spent to attract them is kicking up a row.'* <sup>320</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> *Islington Daily Gazette* 18 September 1902.

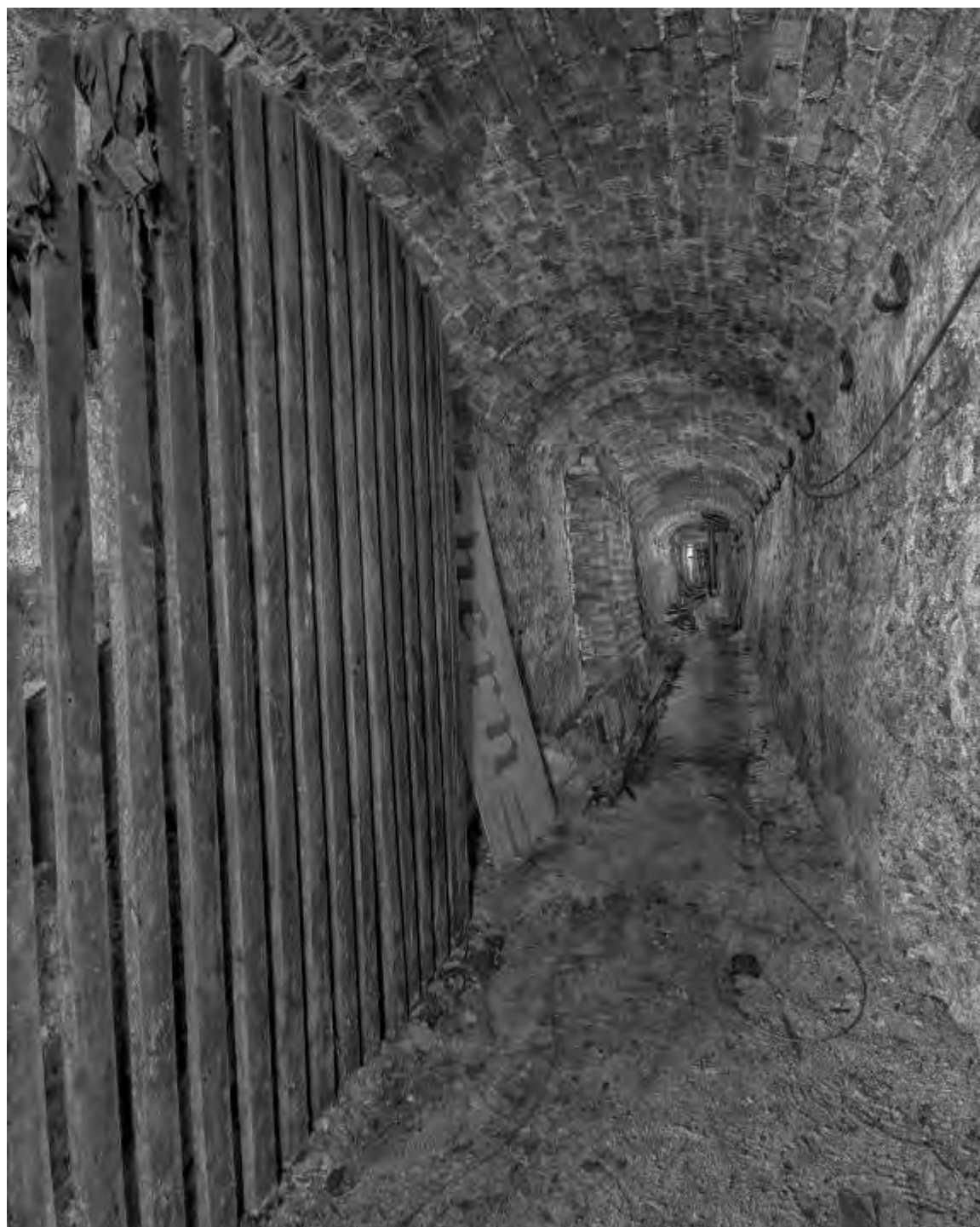


# **16 Interior of the Clifton Baths and Cliftonville Lido as Photographed in 2019 (© Frank Leppard 2019)**

**16.1 Plate 1: Junction of the Bathing Machine Tunnel and the Entrance Tunnel (see 9.20)**



## 16.2 Plate 2: The Horse-Pump Tunnel Looking East (see 9.21)



### 16.3 Plate 3: The Boiler (see 9.19, South-West Alcove)





#### 16.4 Plate 4: Former Cliff Café (see Fig. 167)





**16.5 Plate 5: Base of the Bathing Machine Tunnel (see Fig. 138)**



**16.6 Plate 6: Ticket Offices at the Base of the Revetment Wall (see Fig. 76)**





**16.7 Plate 7: Freshwater Plunge Pool to Men's Changing Rooms (see 10.18)**



**16.8 Plate 8: Inserted Floor at Hades Night Club in Former Bathing Machine Store (see 10.70)**



**16.9 Plate 9: Men's Changing Rooms (see 10.18)**



**16.10 Plate 10: Changing Rooms Back-filled with Debris from the Demolition of the Lido Theatre (see 10.82)**



**16.11 Plate 11: Tunnel to Lower Reservoir (see 9.22)**

**Plate 12: Doors to Ladies' Changing Rooms (see 10.18)**





16.12 Plate 13: Lower Reservoir Looking West (see 9.23)



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