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**‘TO KEEP OPEN AND
UNENCLOSED’:
THE MANAGEMENT OF
DURDHAM DOWN SINCE 1861**



THE BRISTOL BRANCH OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
LOCAL HISTORY PAMPHLETS

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'To Keep Open and Unenclosed': Management of Durdham Down since 1861 is the one hundred and sixteenth pamphlet in this series.

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**'TO KEEP OPEN AND UNENCLOSED':
THE MANAGEMENT OF
DURDHAM DOWN SINCE 1861**

Introduction

The 442 acres of the Clifton Down and Durdham Down (known together as the Downs) are one of Bristol's finest assets: an accessible and protected green open space within a mile of the heart of the City. Those who enjoy these facilities now are indebted to the actions of those citizens of Bristol who obtained the Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act to ensure that the Downs 'shall for ever hereafter be kept open and unenclosed as a place of public resort'. The terms of reference of the Downs Committee established to implement this duty include: suggesting and effecting rules and bye-laws; opening new roads and closing or diverting existing roads; preventing obstructions and nuisances; draining, planting and improving; closing and filling up existing quarries. This account reviews how these duties have been discharged primarily with respect to Durdham Down.

There is no formal definition of Durdham Down but the boundary with Clifton Down is taken here to be Bridge Valley Road. The boundary markers on the Downs relate to the ecclesiastical parishes of Clifton and Westbury on Trym (stones having CP on one side and WP on the other) and the 1897 City Boundary. In a Survey of the Manor of Clifton in 1746 the area on the Clifton side of the parish boundary is marked 'Durdham Down in Clifton (parish)'. Even in the map attached to the Bill for the 1861 Act there is a disputed strip of land claimed to be both part of Clifton Down (owned by the Society of Merchant Venturers) and part of Durdham Down (owned by the Corporation) and the disparity between the Parish markers and the City Boundary markers is still visible adjacent to the Ladies Mile!

**The Establishment of Clifton and Durdham Downs
as a Public Open Space**

The preamble to the Downs Act states that 'both Downs have from time immemorial been open and largely resorted to as places of recreation for the inhabitants of Bristol'. Clifton Down and Durdham Down have thin soils covering the carboniferous limestone making them unsuitable for

Cover illustration: A view from Tower Hirst across the Sea Walls to the Gulley, Tennis Courts Quarry and Clifton before the First World War

arable use or woodland for hunting (such as Kingswood Forest). Both Downs were originally common land which in England came under the control of the Lord of the Manor: open fields were generally cultivated in strips under the control of the manorial council while uncultivated areas were available for common use as pasture and as a source of firewood and food. Rights of use of the common were subject to payments to the Lord of the Manor and latterly were associated with title to land. Clifton Down came under the Manor of Clifton and Durdham Down under the Manor of Henbury. As will be discussed further below, the Commoners of Durdham Down still exist with rights independent of the Bristol City Council (the land owner) and the Downs Committee established under the 1861 Act comprising representatives from the Society of Merchant Venturers and the Council.

The decline of open fields under the process known as inclosure affected the northern edge of Durdham Down when in 1811 an Act was obtained by landlords over a large tract of common land in Henbury and Westbury parishes. As the tide of suburban building swept north from the City across Kingsdown and the fields of Clifton and Redland, the open space of Durdham Down was next under threat. Specifically in 1858 Mr William Baker, the owner of the Sneyd Park estate, enclosed a strip of land at Sea Walls and in 1859 Samuel Worrall IV enclosed two fields at the western end of what is now Worrall Road which had been regarded as common land. Bristol Corporation in 1857 bought the right to graze 50 sheep on the Durdham Down and a cottage in Westbury on Trym with grazing rights to try to influence, if not control, the use of Durdham Down. In April 1858 the Corporation exercised the pasture right in respect of 30 sheep 'marked with the letters CB' on Durdham Down. While this gave a right to object to encroachments as a Commoner, it was not considered sufficient to secure public access.

Thus a Council committee was empowered to open negotiations with the Society of Merchant Venturers (with respect to Clifton Down) and Sir John Greville Smyth of Ashton Court and Mrs Mariann Colston, widow of Edward Francis Colston of Roundway Park, as the owners of three-quarters and one quarter respectively of the Manor of Henbury (with respect to Durdham Down). The Lords of the Manor of Henbury agreed to sell Durdham Down for £15,000 including the mineral rights and quarries then being worked.

The Society of Merchant Venturers was established in medieval times to promote and protect the mercantile trade of Bristol. However it was only at the end of the seventeenth century that the Society became a major landowner. In 1676 it purchased the Manor of Clifton and also obtained rights over the common land known as Clifton Down. In the negotiations

with the Corporation, they reserved their rights over the turf or the minerals of Clifton Down but agreed to see the public assured of the free enjoyment of the open space. In reserving the mineral rights, the Society of Merchant Venturers retained ownership and control of the quarries on the east side of the Avon Gorge which are discussed further below.

The Bristol City Council agreed these terms in May 1860, in June 1860 the Corporation and the Society of Merchant Venturers agreed a policy for the future management of both Downs and a Bill was submitted to Parliament which received Royal Assent on 17 May 1861. It established a Downs Committee comprising the Mayor and six members of the Council and the Master of the Merchant Venturers and six members of the Society with terms of reference noted in the Introduction above. The Committee met for the first time on 21 November 1861 and the minutes of its meetings are held in the Bristol Record Office.

The area established by the 1861 Act has been added to by various transactions. A strip of land was given by Mr G W Edwards on the far side of the wall adjacent to the Sea Walls toilets in 1885. In 1901 a strip of land 50 feet wide from Henleaze Road to North View was purchased from the estate of H St Vincent Ames (deceased) of Cote House for £2700 to preserve the trees on the Downs. The area between the wall of Wills Hall and Saville Road has been a source of contention over the years, custom and use making it part of Durdham Down although it is now owned by the University of Bristol.

Practical Politics

The Downs Committee

The constitution of the Downs Committee, with equal representation from the City Council and the Society of Merchant Venturers, has proved to be a wise, albeit conservative, mechanism for decision making. Action only results if matters command agreement of both parties. In most instances, the representatives of the Council have been bound in practice, if not in fact, by decisions of the City Council. One very early instance of this was the matter of Baker's Road, discussed below in more detail. The Downs Committee decision to contribute £350 on 9 January 1862 towards the road was modified at the next meeting on 5 March in the light of a Memorial from Citizens and reversed at the meeting on 13 March following a Council resolution against it. The Society of Merchant Venturers have always reserved their rights with respect to Clifton Down and matters affecting them require their approval separately from consideration in the Downs Committee. For instance, widening of the Circular Road from the Sea Walls to Fountain Hill from 15 feet wide to 24 feet wide had been established in 1908 as

a work under the Unemployed Workmen Act 1905 (along with the making of the Eastville Park Lake). However it was realised in November 1908 that approval of the Society of Merchant Venturers had not been sought and the Downs Committee was censured for their failure to send the plans to the Society of Merchant Venturers. In general, the Council nominees represent the will of the Council; however a notable exception to this was the prolonged opposition to the Blackboy Hill roundabout scheme of the 1960s when the Downs Committee rejected the Corporation proposals on three occasions over four years only finally 'with great reluctance' acceding to the Planning Committee proposals under threat of a Compulsory Purchase Order.

The Downs Committee has always been legally advised that the requirement 'to keep open and unenclosed' precluded erecting or agreeing to any permanent buildings on the Downs. One of the few exceptions is the toilet at the Sea Walls which was allowed to remain after construction in the Second World War for military use (the public toilets at the Water Tower dating from 1893 are on land sold in 1846 prior to the Downs Act to Bristol Water Works Company and those at the Suspension Bridge are on land sold to the original Suspension Bridge Company in 1831). For events, the Minutes record that the Downs Committee 'do not object to' rather than permit use.

The Commoners of Durdham Down and Pastoral Matters

The Downs Committee also have to recognise the interests of the Commoners of Durdham Down who possess grazing rights over Durdham Down (and a wrangle right, i.e. an undocumented right of use, of pasture for their sheep over Clifton Down). In 1917 the Commoners and the number of sheep they were entitled to depasture were as follows:

Mrs Mary E Knott, Stoke House	(655)
W E George, Downside (now Wills Hall)	(275)
G W Daubeney, Cote	(30)
Mrs Amos, Cote	(120)
J E Harford, Blaise Castle	(30)
A C Castle, Northcote, Westbury-on-Trym	(25)
H Lloyd Hardwicke, Tytherington	(110)
A M Holman, Southmead Manor	(300)
James Kennedy, Westbury Road	(30)
S H Badock, Holmwood	(30)
Rev T Wade Smith, Oldfield Road, Bath	(100)
F K Wedmore, Red House Farm	(30)
Miss Florence Smith, Stoke Lane	(40)
Bristol Corporation	(110)

There is no evidence that the number of sheep ever reached the above total of 1875. The Durdham Downs Commoners' Book records that between 300 and 400 sheep were depastured on the Downs in 1872.

Before sheep grazing finished in 1926, the Commoners were jealous of any activities that could affect the pasture. One contentious area was payments made to Commoners where the Downs Committee stated in 1863 that they 'refuse recognition of the right of the Commoners to grant any right of way or take compensation for such a right of way'. The payments made to the Commoners by the Army are discussed later. Another area was the claim by the Commoners that any new road required their agreement - the Downs Committee replied that the Act of Parliament gave them an absolute right to form new roads but that they would inform the Commoners out of courtesy. When grass was cutting started, it would appear that the permission of the Commoners was sought - it was reported that the Commoners had only given permission on 10 July 1916 to begin cutting grass so that there were still 100 acres to be cut at the end of the month.

For events such as major agricultural shows, delicate negotiations ensured that sufficient pasture was still available. When the Clay Pit Road area was drained for recreational use, alternative facilities for the sheep to get water were arranged by continuing to maintain a pond near the White Tree and subsequently in 1876 establishing water troughs fed by standpipe. The standpipes to the troughs were removed in 1932 when it was reported that all three troughs at Stoke Road, Parry's Lane and Ivywell Road were broken; however the latter still survives as a last link with the use of the Downs for pasture.

The day to day management of the Downs came under Downs Rangers employed under the auspices of the Downs Committee. Up to about 1898 the Commoners employed a shepherd; the Police complained in 1898 about injured sheep and the neglect of his duties by the Downs Shepherd. However the following year the Clerks to the Commoners, wrote complaining that 'Mr Apperley was pasturing sheep on Clifton Down and has no commoners right, asking for the Downs Ranger to investigate' implying that there was no Shepherd to do this. Correspondence in the *Bristol Evening Post* gave an interesting side light on management of the sheep before the First World War: Mr Hathaway (later to join Long Ashton Research Station) contracted to shear 500 sheep for the owner of the Post Office Tavern at Westbury-on-Trym. He and his man Fred and his dog used to yard the sheep behind the Lion in Westbury village. Driving sheep from the Downs to Westbury must have been an interesting experience even with the lower traffic levels then and it is not recorded whether it continued after the electric trams were extended to Westbury in 1908! The Commoners faced increasing problems in protecting their sheep; as early as 1881 there



The remains of the last water trough for sheep on the corner of Ivywell Road



Bristol Turnpike Trust Milepost on Ladies Mile. The cast iron plate disappeared in July 2001



The tramway carrying spoil from Cumberland Basin to the Downs rises out of the Gorge c.1870. The Portishead line on the left is still broad gauge and the Port and Pier line along the Gorge was opened in 1865

were cases of dogs injuring sheep and in 1906 injuries from golf balls were recorded. In 1909 it was noted that two sheep had been killed by motor cars in the last year. The Downs have never been permanently fenced and so there were clearly going to be increasing difficulties with respect to conflicts between sheep and motor traffic.

Some doubt exists as to whether there were sheep grazing on the Downs during the First World War; however a complaint from the Commoners to the Downs Committee was made in July 1918 that the Ivywell Road sheep trough was not kept filled in recent dry weather. The Ranger replied that he had never been responsible for more than reminding the Commoners' Shepherd to keep it filled. It may well be that there was no Shepherd employed by the Commoners at the time. In November 1924 it was reported that there was an outbreak of sheep scab at Filton among sheep that had previously been on the Downs. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries advised in February 1925 that there should be no sheep on the Downs between November and April and the Commoners agreed at their meeting on 18 March 1925 not to depasture any sheep on the Downs in 1925. The Downs was declared free of sheep scab in November 1925 but the Commoners resolved not to appoint a shepherd and not to depasture sheep at their Annual Meeting in May 1926.

However the Commoners continue to exist and, by periodically exercising the right of depasturage of 'token' sheep on Durdham Down, ensure that their rights are not extinguished. They have contributed by paying for fertiliser in the 1930s (recognising that the loss of the sheep manure was causing degradation to the quality of the grass) and for seats and tree planting, notably the 1977 Jubilee group of trees opposite the top of the Gully. As late as 1955 the Downs Committee received a strong letter from the Commoners complaining that they had not sought consent from the Commoners for the circus which was to come onto the Downs in 1956. Referring to their rights of pasturage, it was stated that 'the Commoners require permission to be sought, quoting as a precedent that for the Bath & West Show 1921 the organisers paid them £25. The Town Clerk should notify the Commoners of all events on Downs to get prior permission from Commoners'. The Town Clerk stated his view that the Commoners may claim compensation after the event but were not entitled to be consulted before the event. As pasturage rights had not been exercised for many years, it was not clear how the Commoners could claim to have suffered a loss.

Finance

The 1861 Act provided for an annual grant of £300 to the Downs Committee from Corporation funds. Allowing for the £25 per year paid to Frederick Ashmead for his services as Surveyor to the Committee and

the employment of Rangers, this sum was insufficient for major works and by the 1890s did not even meet the wages bill. As this sum was fixed by Act of Parliament, for sums above this figure recourse had to be made to charity; the Circular Road of 1876 was paid for by public subscription, the fountain at Bridge Valley Road by a bequest from Thomas Proctor and the fountain at the Water Tower from profits from the 1874 Bath and West Show. Modifications to the amount were included in the Bristol Corporation Acts of 1904 and 1926 to take account of inflation and eventually in 1960 powers were obtained to define the maximum grant as 1/2d City rate which allowed for indexation on increasing rateable values.

Without adequate funds of their own, the Downs Committee transferred costs wherever possible to other Departments: the footpaths along the roads were deemed to be part of the responsibility of the Sanitary Committee in 1900 as were the footpaths across the Downs in 1909. These responsibilities passed to the City Engineer who also took on responsibility for the sports facilities, i.e. management of the Changing Rooms and the marking out of pitches and the posts and equipment for sports.

In February 1959 it was determined under the Local Government Act 1947 Sect 132 that charges could be made for use of up to 10% of Durdham Down allowing for circuses and shows. It was not initially clear whether charges could be legally made on Clifton Down because of the Society of Merchant Venturers' interests but this has never arisen. The entire Downs was registered in 1973 under the Commons Registration Act 1965. In 1959, 25% of income went to the Entertainment Committee and the 75% balance to the Downs Committee. The fee charged was set initially at £200 per week in 1964 which had risen by 1973 to £500 per week.

Matters of Flora and Fauna

The flora of the Downs has been heavily modified by introduction of species and elimination of weeds and unwanted species. Comparison of pictures and early photographs of the Avon Gorge (*see the illustrations on the cover and on page 6*) with the current view illustrates the increase in tree growth in the last 150 years. It has been argued that cessation of sheep grazing has led to the invasion of the Gorge and the Downs by shrubs and trees, which, taken with the tree planting activity of the Downs Committee and escapes and deliberate planting of garden varieties, has resulted in what has been described as 'a degenerate secondary woodland'. As there is no 'original' condition of the Downs to preserve, it would seem more appropriate to use conservation and active management to maintain a variety of habitats and recreational spaces.

The Downs Committee has always sought to maximise recreational use of the Downs consistent with not obstructing the freedom of use. For instance, when asked whether a bowling green could be set out on the Downs, the Town Clerk replied, 'Yes, but you would not be able to charge for its use or limit access to it'. The priorities in 1861 were to eradicate quarrying, to level the ground to facilitate sport, to drain marshy areas (particularly around Clay Pit Road) and to set out proper roads so that driving of vehicles across the Downs could be prohibited.

In most years since 1861 at least ten to twenty trees have been planted. However in some years many more were planted as follows:

- 1871/2 300 large elms and limes, 150 pines and firs, 200 silver birch, 50 yews and 50 mountain ash particularly the Old Avenue and the Middle Avenue (Ladies Mile) where 150 large elms were planted;
- 1879 100 Irish yews and 24 wych elms;
- 1899 50 scotch firs on cliffs and banks. By 1913 six out of the thirteen pines were removed from the Gulley end of Sea Wall and replanted along north side of the Gulley and later that same year there were complaints that the view from the rocks on Clifton side of the Gulley was obstructed due to tree growth;
- 1929 six Lombardy poplars, six English elms and eighteen double crimson thorns around the Pound to replace losses due to drought; 1935 96 mixed thorn, 24 laburnums, twelve almonds, 120 double gorse and one scotch fir for Seven Sisters. By 2001, the Seven Sisters had been reduced to three trees only and a replacement group of seven trees were planted about 100 yards to the north-west. Despite the attention of vandals to the growing tips, the trees survive and hopefully will continue to flourish.
- Severe gales in Sept 1935 resulted in 23 trees in Westbury Road and eleven trees in Stoke Road being felled and twice that number in each location lopped. In replanting Westbury Road the trees were planted at a sufficient width to allow subsequent construction of a dual carriageway.

Most large trees have been planted along roads and avenues. However, an early example of more strategic planting is the group of scotch firs adjacent to Westbury Road known as the Seven Sisters, planted on a filled quarry in October 1872. Other interesting plantings have been the line of horse chestnuts parallel to Saville Road originally to demarcate a boundary between horse-riders and the Clifton Cricket Club cricket pitch and those planted in the 1960s near St John's School on what would have been the roads of the Blackboy Hill roundabout.

Dutch Elm disease was first identified in 1919 and the first recorded loss of an elm tree on the Downs was in 1927; however, Bristol

University Department of Zoology's diagnosis was honey fungus. The disease has appeared from time to time, for instance in September 1931 when it was noted wych elms were affected. However the more recent major outbreak began in September 1971 when it was reported eight trees had been felled in Gloucester Row, Clifton, and another 20 were affected. By November 1972 60 trees were affected and concern began to be felt for the 95 elms in Ladies Mile, 31 of which were English elms. Injections of fungicide were started at a cost of £400 but abandoned within six months as the inexorable progress of the disease continued. It was estimated that between 600 and 700 trees had been lost by February 1978 due to drought (especially in the summer of 1976), gale damage and disease. Amongst the 1973 casualties was the White Tree; another tree was painted white and a replacement lime tree was planted on 28 January 1974. In September 1980 only ten elms were left and two of them showed signs of disease. This left about 500 stumps to be removed each of which would cost about £10 to grind out. It was agreed that this work would be carried out over five years. The Downs Ranger advised that 154 was the maximum number of trees that could be planted in a season. The 1980 programme was: 62 trees on the Circular Road, 17 on Upper Belgrave Road, ten on Clifton Down, ten at Folly Goss (between Sea Walls and Ivywell Road), seven on Stoke Road, 28 on Westbury Road, four on Saville Road, four at Westbury Park and six at Downleaze.

Grass cutting by machine started before the sheep disappeared from the Downs in 1925. The season for cutting hay was between May and July. Some of those who contracted to do this were Joseph Dare and Company prior to First World War (the Dare family were hauliers with stables off Worrall Road) and Sydney Curtis of Springfield Farm, Henleaze, in 1919 and 1920. James Dare cut Clifton Down free of charge and was paid £3 for Durdham Down in 1926 followed by James Robinson of Druid Stoke Farm in 1927 and W A Pepworth of Westbury on Trym in 1929 and 1931. As will be noted from the addresses, the disappearance of these farms under suburban housing resulted in a loss of local labour and equipment, space for storage of the cut grass and demand for hay. This taken with the increases in costs prompted the Downs Committee to look at using a tractor and their own labour. The City Engineer originally advised that multiple mowing machines could not be used because of stones near the surface. In 1932 a Fordson tractor was demonstrated to the Committee using a bar mower rather than a revolving cutter, taking one month to cut 300 acres. Thus for £150, using a driver already employed by the Downs Committee, three cuts per annum could be achieved, whereas a contractor horse mowing with a

single horse cost only £120 but dealt with a much smaller area. Grass cutting was undertaken by Downs staff until outsourcing to contractors in January 1991.

In 1933, the Commoners offered to pay £50 for five years for fertiliser to replenish the grass, which was suffering from the lack of sheep manure, provided the Downs Committee distributed it. Following advice from A W Ling, Agricultural Officer and Chief Advisory Chemist of the University of Bristol, 60 acres were treated with high grade high soluble British basic slag.

In the Second World War 35 tons of grass was cut from the Downs and collected for silage. Even so, concern was expressed at the fire hazard from the long grass. Hayricks were established in the grounds of Wills Hall. In 1944 hay was made by the City Engineer's staff and produced eleven tons of hay which was sold for £75. In 1946 a lorry had to be hired to dispose of grass to Chapel Pill Farm, Ham Green. Damage caused by vehicles on the parts of the Downs requisitioned during the Second World War resulted in substantial areas from which all topsoil had been removed. Remedial action in 1945 was to bring in 800-1000 tons/acre of topsoil to achieve 6-8 inch depth of soil, then harrow and roll it to a suitable tilth and top dress with fertiliser. The seed sown matched the Downs herbage. Soil was available from the Southmead and Lockleaze housing estates then under construction and the lowering of College Green. It was not practical to skim the turf from these locations so about six inches of soil and turf was excavated and stood on the Downs for six months to kill all existing grass seeds before use. After the Bristol 600 Exhibition in 1973 the damaged car parking area was reseeded using a mixture of 60% perennial New Zealand ryegrass, 20% certified fine leaved sheep's fescue, 10% *Poa pratensis* and 10% certified Highland bent grass. More recently several areas of the Downs have been left as meadow grass and only cut once per year in August. This has been very successful in promoting wild flower growth with the re-appearance of cowslips and orchids.

Besides birdlife, the thin soils make few habitats for wildlife however there was a request to catch rabbits in September 1940 (refused!). The urban fox reached its peak in the early 1970s but they have been almost completely eradicated by sarcoptic mange and the introduction of the 'wheelie bin' which removed a major food source. In the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak of February 2001 there was a concern over deer on the Gloucestershire side of the Avon Gorge which lead to restriction of public access to the wooded areas for a time. Several publications are available on bird life on the Downs; however increased competition from magpies and seagulls taking eggs has had severe affects on the number of small birds.

In general insects do not figure largely in the life of the Downs; however the activities of ants in the Clay Pit area near Westbury Park caused considerable problems in the 1930s and 1940s. Chemical warfare was tried, without success, and in 1948 the Corporation bulldozer was reported as not being big enough to clear the anthills! A larger machine had to be hired from Joseph Pugsley at 9/- per hour to complete the job.

The Staff

At their fifth meeting in 1862, the Downs Committee authorised the local nurserymen Garraways to continue to superintend trees near the Zoo and the plantation around the Water Tower reservoir. They also authorised the Town Clerk to employ a man, as long as the wages were less than £1 per week. Francis Edney was engaged upon trial as 'Hayward' at 16/- per week and his appointment was confirmed in April 1862 when it was also ordered 'a proper distinguishing dress be provided'. By August 1862 he was being referred to as the Downs Ranger. The appointment was made by the Town Clerk which began a confusion as to whether the Downs Committee staff were or were not Council employees only resolved in 1951.

In September 1865, the Downs Ranger was instructed to employ a man to cut the thistles and by October 1878, three men were employed but this was reduced to two in September 1882. Edney was dismissed in June 1886 over irregularities in paying wages and no immediate action was taken to replace him thus reducing the wage bill. He was 68 and died soon after. In May 1887 his replacement Albert Inch (late in the employ of William Harford of Old Down House, Alveston, as gardener and bailiff) was eventually appointed. He was 35 years old and he was required to enter his report in a book and to wear a badge or band on his hat bearing the word 'Downs'. In November 1889, the Downs Committee asked the Watch Committee to appoint the Downs Ranger as constable to act only on Clifton and Durdham Down but the proposal was turned down. In December 1889 it was reported that one of the Assistant Rangers was ill and the Downs Ranger was permitted to pay him half wages (an early example of sick pay). At the same meeting, the Ranger was allowed to pay the men at the Pound near the Zoo instead of their having to go to the Council House (at that time in Clare Street). In August 1896, the Ranger was allowed 1 week holiday with pay.

Albert Inch died in April 1899 and 25 guineas was awarded to his widow. His successor W J B Hobbs had been an assistant Ranger for seventeen years. However things were not entirely satisfactory for in December 1902 it was decided to appoint 'an experienced working Downs Ranger at £100 p.a.' At the next meeting James Findlay was

appointed over the head of Hobbs with effect from 5 January 1903. However in 1909 Findlay was asked to resign with 3 months notice and Hobbs was appointed working foreman. With the outbreak of the First World War, Rangers E Gilbert and Mundy went into the forces, E Gilbert being killed in action in July 1917 and George Mundy not returning until January 1919. In July 1916 it was reported that the men employed were aged between 60 and 70 and in July 1917 the Downs Ranger employed two women to pick up litter.

In 1928 Hobbs died and George Mundy with 29 years service was appointed as Downs Ranger. A bizarre instance occurred in May 1932 when it was reported that his coat had caught fire while burning rubbish at Folly Goss and £5/10/- had been lost of which £2/8/- was Downs Committee money (at 2005 values, these sums represent about £225 and £100!). As a commentary on the contemporary employment situation, in February 1935 it was reported an Assistant Ranger had joined a religious body who kept Sabbath on Saturday. His offer to make up time by working on Sunday was not acceptable to the Downs Committee. At the next meeting it was reported he had withdrawn from the religious body! In 1936 the staff establishment was the Downs Ranger at £3.75 per week and three Assistant Rangers at £3.00 per week. Hours of duty were, for the Ranger, all hours with two weeks holiday, and for the Assistant Ranger 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8.00 a.m. to 12 noon Saturday with one week holiday.

The Visiting Committee concluded that G W Mundy was unsuitable because of his health for controlling men and recommended recruitment of a 35-40 year old to be appointed as Working Foreman Ranger at £4.00 per week, G W Mundy to be reduced to £3.25 per week on appointment. In September 1936, Ernest Pummell, who had been employed as a Labour Supervisor by the Bristol Public Assistance Committee, was appointed. He was required to live near Downs so the Downs Committee paid his removal expenses from Winterbourne to Redland Park in September 1937. Three of the four staff were called up or directed in September 1939 and it was December 1945 before all of them returned to the Downs. In October 1951 the Foreman Downs Ranger was put on Staff Grade III Miscellaneous Class Officer on an annual salary of £352.30 for 44 hour week (at this time other Corporation workers were still working a 47 hour week).

Difficulties in retaining labour in the mid 1950s are evident; one man resigned for a job in the building industry and a Bristol University student was employed as a part-time assistant ranger. C Denyard was appointed as Downs Ranger on the retirement of E Pummell in November 1961. Gordon Millward came to the Downs in June 1969

from Cross Elms Nursery in Stoke Lane. He succeeded C Denyard when he retired in 1976. In January 1991 the labour was 'outsourced' to Continental Landscapes and the only employee was the Downs Ranger. The contract has since been held by Continental Landscapes except for the period from January 1994 to December 1998 when it was with SITA.

The Pound and its Equipment

The Downs Committee inherited two Pounds or enclosures for stray animals on common land. The Pound for the Clifton Down was at the top of Bridge Valley Road in the location later used for Proctor's Fountain and the Pound for Durdham Down was at the top of Blackboy Hill (when St John's School was built in 1850, part of the Pound was removed for the school grounds). In May 1862 the Downs Committee had to pay for an iron railing to enclose 'the Old Pound near the School House, Durdham Down'. By November 1862 they were planting trees in the Old Pound which may well indicate it was not being used.

Construction of Proctor's Fountain at Bridge Valley Road was agreed in January 1869 but it took the next three meetings to agree that the new Pound site would be 'the unfilled up space over the tunnel entrance to the Board of Health Quarry' (which was alternatively described as being 'behind the space now used for beating of carpets on Durdham Down'). In October 1869, the Society of Merchant Venturers formally agreed to the removal of the Clifton Pound to Durdham Down.

The Downs Ranger offices, workshop and storage space have been at the Pound adjacent to the Railway Tunnel ventilator at Pembroke Road since 1870. No money was allocated so improvisation appears to have been the order of the day. Twenty five years later, an inspection of the Pound found it to be very dilapidated and in need of repairs. It would appear that much use was made of corrugated iron; in 1922 after damage to iron sheeting in Pound, it was reported that the parents of the boys involved had been interviewed but they had no money to pay for restitution. By 1938 a telephone had been installed but lighting in the Pound was still by hurricane lamp for there was no electricity connection until 1952. The works associated with the Northern Stormwater Interceptor resulted in an electrical supply: eight lighting points and one 15 amp socket outlet were installed! This was despite erection in 1948 of a new implement shed and improvements to the mess room.

With limited finance available, only very basic equipment use on the Downs was purchased and other items had to be hired or borrowed. For instance in April 1893 a horse was hired and a roller borrowed for rolling turf and 50/- was paid for a hand water cart from Bristol Water Works Company for watering turf and young trees. The first machinery

purchased was a small lawn mower in 1913 for £1. In 1932, Gardiners demonstrated Lloyd's Triple Gang Mower (horse drawn) but a Fordson motor mower was also tried and bought in 1933. In 1937 an Allen self-propelled motor scythe was tried with a capacity of four acres per day. Eventually two machines were purchased and were in use into the 1950s - the unprotected cutting blades projected beyond the machine and would not meet current health and safety standards. Progressive mechanisation has seen a variety of tractors and other vehicles in use on the Downs.

Quarries

The Downs have been quarried for lead, calamine and limestone, the latter being used either for roadstone or burning in limekilns. Rights to mine lead were given by the Lords of the Manor of Henbury on Durdham Down and James McMurtrie (in charge of Frances Countess Waldegrave's coal mines at Radstock) stated in the 1870s that he had found lead ore in the spoil adjacent to the quarries parallel with Upper Belgrave Road usually known as 'the Dumps'. However most of the known lead workings on Clifton and Durdham Downs appear to follow lodes which are right angles to the strata, i.e. parallel with the river. A geochemical soil survey in September 1974 was able to detect higher concentrations of lead across the lines of the lead workings marked on the Ordnance Survey map. It is possible that the workings following the strata could have been for calamine but were more likely for building stone or for burning to make lime.

Ready access to water transport made the Avon Gorge an attractive site for quarries and much of the present rocky profile is the result of man's efforts and not nature's (or the giants Goram and Vincent!). The original profile is however visible between Tennis Court Quarry and the Gulley where dolomitic limestone is too soft to be used as roadstone and contains magnesium making it inappropriate to use for lime. The Society of Merchant Venturers retained ownership of the gorge quarries in 1861 and the Downs Committee has never been responsible for the rock faces. Quarrying on the surface of the Downs was quite extensive and the site of four major quarries can still be identified. An indication of the scale of quarrying can be discerned from the Glen, now the BUPA Hospital, which was purchased by local residents in 1871 and converted into a pleasure garden. Quarry No. 2 (see Map) truncates the remains of the Roman road and was the site of the discovery in 1842 of a fissure containing bones of hyena, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, elephant, bear and deer. The cave was about 90 feet in extent and is thought to have been a hyena den as the bones were all broken into small pieces and displayed signs of gnawing. At maximum extent, this quarry had an area of nearly four acres and a volume of 180,000 cubic yards, while Quarry No. 1 was

nearly three acres in area with a volume of 140,000 cubic yards, i.e. both had an average depth of 30 feet. From a complaint in the Bristol *Mirror* in 1859 it would appear that the quarries were unfenced.

In line with their statutory duties, one of the Downs Committee's first actions was to give all the surface quarry users notice to quit by October 1862 (except the Chain Quarry at Upper Belgrave Road (the Aust Turnpike Trust) and the Pembroke Road Quarry (Local Board of Health)) as their 'mode of working is unsatisfactory and injurious'. The Chain Quarry was enclosed by an embankment four feet high with fences and planted with gorse by September 1862 and the remaining quarries were reported as being fenced later the next month - there is still a house in Upper Belgrave Road named Chain House which is virtually opposite the site of the quarry. The Local Board of Health improved access to their quarry at the top of Pembroke Road in 1865 by forming a tunnel into the bottom of the quarry. In 1877 public concern grew over the rapid expansion of Pembroke Road Quarry and the City Engineer attended to define the limits of working. Within ten years it appears that it was no longer economic to work the quarry as no extension to the surface area could be agreed hence further extraction required it to be deeper. In 1887 the Sanitary Authority were told to fence off the entrance and in 1890 it was identified as a possible place to dump spoil from the Frome Culvert proposed under the Bristol Flood Prevention Bill. Slow progress was made in filling the Quarry and by 1892 the tunnel entrance could no longer be used and it was agreed that a road could be made (now entrance road to Pound). Twelve years later, the City Engineer thought it would be filled by end of 1905 but in September 1905 that had become another eighteen months. In February 1907 the Ranger was told to remove stones and railings to the Pound which were being covered over during filling of Pembroke Road Quarry and next month Mr C H Moline of Heathside, The Avenue, complained that material was still being taken away from the Quarry. In 1921 it was suggested it should be formed into an ornamental lake. Over the last fifty years, the fill of the quarry has continued to consolidate and the rim of the quarry has become more visible near the plateau behind the Pound.

With the demise of the Turnpike Trust in 1867, responsibility for the roads passed to the Lawfords Gate Highway Board who approached the Downs Committee about continued use of the Chain Quarry. The answer was negative and it was not until the Highway Board threatened to use the old quarry at the top of Parry's Lane to replace the stone they would have obtained from the Chain Quarry that the Downs Committee agreed to use of the Chain Quarry. This may reflect the relative influence of the residents of the large houses at Cote and along Saville Road compared to the



The Pound and the Zoo lie behind the trees in the background and the figure stands in the centre of the filled Pembroke Road Quarry whose lip is visible right to centre foreground



The Water Tower and trees planted for the Blackboy Hill roundabout form the backdrop to cyclists (contravening Bye Laws!) riding over the lip of the former Chain Quarry

residents of Upper Belgrave Road! It is unlikely that substantial amounts of rock were removed from the Chain Quarry as by 1870 there were complaints of rubbish being dumped in it and the offensive smells resulting. In 1871 permission was given by the Local Board of Health for it to be partly filled with dock spoil and in August 1879 the Downs Ranger was instructed to level the bank around the Chain Quarry. The rim of the quarry is still visible between Upper Belgrave Road and the Dumps.

The large quarry in the Gorge between Bridge Valley Road and the Gulley has been variously known as the Merchants' Quarry, Eaglestaff's Quarry (after the lessee in the 1880s) and finally the Tennis Courts Quarry. The crest of this quarry forms the western boundary of the Downs under the 1861 Act and so any changes were a source of friction. Accusations of encroachment were made in 1866 because either quarrying or the actions of workmen had caused the railing to be moved and recourse was made to arbitration. In 1876 and 1882 Mr Ashmead was instructed to act over geological faults and potential rock falls. In September 1883 Alderman Harvey complained to the Downs Committee over the explosion of an extraordinary amount of powder at 9.00 a.m. in Eaglestaff's Quarry and he expressed concern as there were preparations for an even larger charge. The matter was referred to the Society of Merchant Venturers and it appears the quarrying ceased soon after. With the cessation of quarrying, it was used as a rifle range to at least 1926 before eventually municipal tennis courts were opened there which were in use until the 1970s.

The Black Rock Quarry immediately under the Sea Walls was worked from 1868 to 1877 when quarrying transferred to the Somerset bank of the Avon Gorge up until the First World War. However it would appear that there was a limited amount of working carried out at Sea Walls because in 1883 there was an alleged encroachment by working of a quarry and in 1884 and 1886 Black Rock gravel was used on footpaths on the Downs. Nearly a century later an unstable block of rock on the Sea Walls weighing an estimated 2500 tons was identified and the Portway was closed between Bridge Valley Road and Sylvan Way from 14 August 1974. As part of the remedial works, it was necessary to rebuild the parapet wall at the Sea Walls which was completed in March 1976 sympathetically using original materials (including the distinctive triangular brass slag coping stones) as far as possible. It was originally thought that the Sea Walls Road would have to be closed for four weeks but in fact it took six months and a temporary diversion was instituted from March 1975 to October 1976.

There were two quarries at the foot of the Gulley which were also the property of the Society of Merchant Venturers. Following a complaint

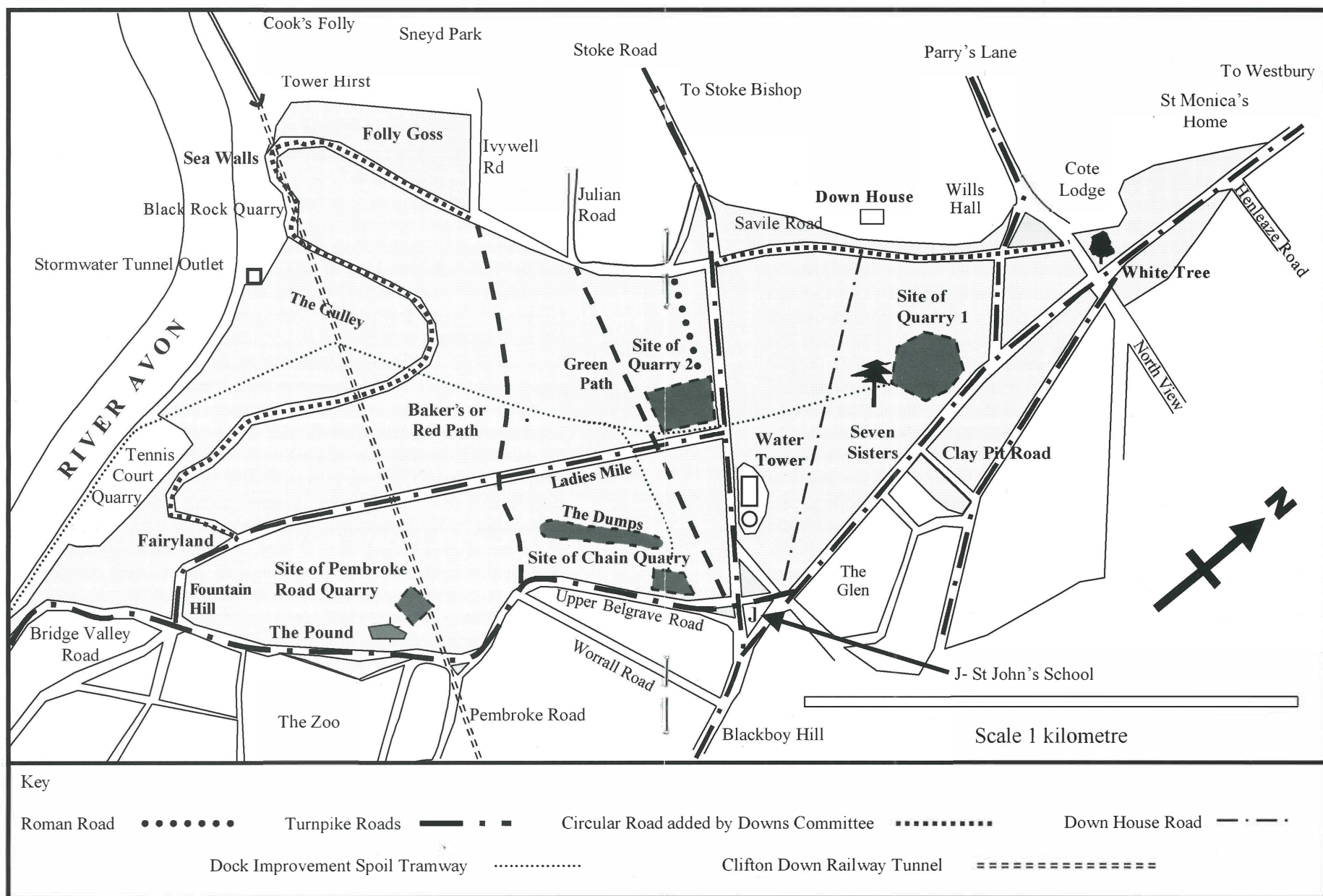
in 1877, the Society of Merchant Venturers agreed no fresh ground would be broken up and a railing would be formed at foot of Gulley path. Within a year, the Society of Merchant Venturers stated it would shortly be discontinuing the Gulley Quarry of Mr Rogers and overhanging rock would be removed, thereby decreasing the nominal area of the Downs! One quarry was used for the terminal works of the Stormwater Tunnel but the other quarry on the Sea Walls side of the Gulley has recently been partially filled.

With the cessation of quarrying, it was only a matter of time before weathering caused the rock faces to fail. In 1904 and 1905 there were various falls of rocks at Black Rock onto Avonwood, Sneyd Park and in Bridge Valley Road and at Round Point. In Bridge Valley Road, the conglomerate at the sharp bend has always been a problem as it is composed of large rocks 'cemented' together. Only in the last ten years has the installation of netting provided sufficient security against the road being blocked. An annual inspection of the rock faces is undertaken each autumn causing a Sunday closure of the Portway over several weeks.

A more unusual extractive activity is preserved in the name Clay Pits Road. As noted above, the clay in this area enabled a pond to be formed for the sheep, most of the remainder of the surface of the Down being porous limestone. However it also resulted in a boggy area so the first requirement was to drain off the unwanted surface water which was done ingeniously by laying land drains leading to faults at the White Tree end of the area during the summer of 1864. The pits and hollows were then filled with rubble and covered with topsoil. At this time the Zoo was having considerable problems with their ornamental lake and they received permission to extract clay for puddling their lake and to replace it with earth and rubble.

The Dock Spoil Tramway 1867-1873

At the Downs Committee Meeting on 1 August 1866, Mr Thomas Howard, the Docks Engineer, presented a proposal for the material from the works in the Gorge to remove headlands, straighten the river and to construct a new entrance lock at Cumberland Basin to be disposed on the Downs: 'Seeing there are two quarries, one on the south side of Stoke Road and the other between the Stoke Road and the Westbury Road making together seven acres and of volume 320,000 cubic yards, the spoil would about fill both quarries and add to the useful area of the Downs. To get the wagons up, an incline would have to be formed over or under the Port and Pier railway and leading up to the Downs. This would be worked by a fixed engine. From this point, it would require some filling to carry it over broken ground at the head of the Gorge but



the lines would not form a barrier to carriages or horsemen. It is proposed to work the spoil on the Downs by a small contractor's locomotive. A number of horses working the wagon especially in wet weather would cause much more inconvenience and temporary danger.' The Downs Committee agreed to this proposal, having been given suitable undertakings against accidents, cost and restitution of the ground.

In October 1866, the Docks Committee awarded the contract for the harbour works to Mr William Treadwell of Birmingham who had been constructing the Bristol and Portishead Railway and Pier since 1864 and who was therefore provided with continuity of work after the opening of the Portishead line in April 1867. The two lines of track from Cumberland Basin to the foot of the incline to the Downs were in use by June 1867. The contractor's construction line for the Portishead branch appears to have been laid to standard gauge and an engine named 'Jack of Newbury' had been drawn by 14 draught horses to the Portishead line in January 1867: 'this engine is somewhat larger than the engine previously used for conveying trolleys'. Philip V Desprez wrote in 1947 recalling having been given 'rides on the footplate of the engine working on the surface of the Downs. The engine was named "Jack of Newbury".' It would seem therefore that the engine was transferred from the Portishead line to the Dock spoil tramway. The inclined was a balanced plane, i.e. the rising and falling trucks were connected by a rope around a windlass driven by a steam winding engine at the top and was formed generally on the line of an old pathway loading from the Merchants' Quarries to the Downs (*see photograph on page 6*). The plane was about fifteen feet wide necessitating quite substantial walls on both uphill and downhill sides which can still be found in the undergrowth. The Commonsers protest in September 1867 alleging they had exceeded their powers in 'making a Rail Road with erections and running an engine across the Common without Commonsers approval and reserved the right to action to protect their rights' was rejected by the Downs Committee.

Within two months of use, on the 27 July 1867, there was an accident on the incline. Three loaded trucks were nearly at the head of the incline when the balancing descending load of two empty trucks became derailed. The signal was passed to the engineman to stop, which he did, but too quickly. The momentum of the loaded trucks overran the link from the winding rope to the wagons at the head of the incline and they became disconnected. About midway down, prior to crossing the viaduct over the Port and Pier Railway, they were shunted into rocks by the pointsman at this point of the incline. The trucks were going so fast that they ran over the embankment and dashed with great force against the blacksmith's shop in Mr Eaglestaff's quarry. The quarrymen were at breakfast in the

shop (it was about 9.00 a.m.) and were buried in debris but the only major injury suffered was one broken leg.

On the surface of the Downs, the two largest quarries were substantially filled by October 1871 and filling then transferred to the Chain Quarry. The Docks Engineer confirmed that the track and ballast would be removed and the road crossing of Stoke Road taken up. In October 1872, the Downs Ranger was instructed to level the banks around the quarry lately filled up on the Westbury side of the Down and to plant a clump of firs thereon now known as the Seven Sisters (or at least the surviving three!). As late as January 1873, the Downs Committee received a letter from Mr Courtenay Taggart complaining that the tramway prevented foot passengers crossing. The new Cumberland Basin entrance lock was opened in July 1873 and the tramway tracks were recovered in September 1873.

Clifton Down Railway Tunnel

In March 1871 a notice had been served on the Corporation by the Midland and Great Western Railways Clifton Extension Joint Committee to treat for land required for the tunnel under the Downs. Three conditions were specified: no spoil heaps were to be made and all the line was to be in tunnel; three turrets were to be erected to a design approved by the Downs Committee; all land temporarily used was to be made good. The tender of Lawrence (already appointed contractor for the Avonmouth Dock) was accepted in August 1871 and construction of the tunnel began immediately at Cooks Folly Wood, the top of Pembroke Road and two other points. The Pembroke Road shaft was subsequently retained to ventilate the tunnel. The sinking of this shaft had reached rail level by May 1872 when Captain Beaumont's compressed air diamond drilling machine came into use. Most of the machinery associated with the diamond drilling machine was on the surface: the machine had a 4" diameter compressed air service from a 50 hp steam engine at the surface. By comparison, the engine to lift spoil and water from the tunnel was only 20 hp. The drill had to be cooled by water which was run into trucks and presumably wound to the surface. Dynamite charges were set in the holes after the dynamite had been softened by steam before use! On 10th May 1872 four pounds of dynamite exploded while being 'softened' at 2.30 a.m. blowing off the engine-house roof and smashing windows in the three houses facing the Downs at the top of Pembroke Road. Fortunately no-one was injured and when the glazier called at one house he found that the occupant had slept through the whole episode!

On the Avonmouth side of the Pembroke Road shaft two further shafts were made (one vertical to a ventilation turret in the Gulley and the other

horizontal to an opening in the face of the Black Rock Quarry. It is not clear whether both were used for construction but both were in place by 1911. According to one account, the horizontal gallery was used for stabling the horses used to haul the spoil away within the tunnel. The Gulley air shaft was rebuilt between June and September 1950 using concrete blocks.

On the originally projected timetable, the first Avonmouth Dock was due to be completed earlier than Clifton Down Tunnel. However by February 1873, problems with subsidence and failure of the dock walls had relieved the pressure on completion of the railway and the rate of tunnelling was slowed down. The Clifton Extension line was opened in October 1874 for passengers only from Stapleton Road and Fishponds to Clifton Down. In March 1875 a distinguished party including the Mayor was taken through the tunnel from Sea Mills in a truck pulled by two horses. It was noted that 250,000 tons of rock had been excavated using 70 tons of gunpowder and three tons of dynamite. Most of the stone apparently went to Avonmouth for use in the dock construction. The Board of Trade inspected the Clifton Down to Sea Mills section on 10 May 1875 but would not agree to its opening to passenger traffic because of the arrangements at Sneyd Park Junction where the new line met the Bristol Port Railway and Pier opened in 1865. The Port and Pier was in receivership and had no money to pay for the improvements required at the junction and the Great Western and Midland had to obtain further Parliamentary powers to pay for them. Goods traffic began in February 1877 when the first Avonmouth Dock was opened and eventually a Clifton to Avonmouth passenger service began in September 1885. The tunnel remains in use although reduced to a single line since 1971.

Northern Stormwater Interceptor Tunnel

The Northern Stormwater Interceptor Tunnel was constructed between 1951 and 1962 to alleviate flooding in the Eastville area from the River Frome and the Zetland Road area from the Cran Brook. It runs from the Frome diversion gates adjacent to Stapleton Road Station (the works can be seen clearly from the M32 between the railway and the IKEA building) to the Avon Gorge at the foot of the Gulley. The main tunnel is sixteen feet diameter, lined with concrete and over three miles long. Construction was started from the Portway end and all the excavated spoil was removed on a tramway within the tunnel to the Portway and discharged into lorries for disposal thus avoiding heavy lorry traffic in residential areas. Locations used for disposal included the Trym valley beneath the Portway viaduct and the field adjacent to the Sylvan Way/Portway junction at Sea Mills. A series of access shafts was constructed to supply materials at Clifton Down Station, the junction of Hampton

Park and Cotham Hill, Cotham Gardens, Montpelier Station approach and St Andrews Park. In addition to the above, access shafts were established for safety including 'Manhole 2' almost opposite the Zoo where the square concrete entrance can still be seen. On their first discussion in October 1950, the Downs Committee were alarmed because a large area of the Down was said to be required which had only just been restored after use as a vehicle park in the Second World War. When plans were finalised in December 1950, the area was limited as far as possible and access was not across the Down. Over six acres of the Downs were actually occupied at the Gulley and the Zoo. Work began in September 1951 and a crane was installed at the zoo access shaft between 1956 and 1957. By early 1957 the Zoo Shaft was being used for ventilation only, construction of the main tunnel having moved further east. In July 1957, the contractor (A E Farr of Westbury, Wilts) was instructed to remove the advertisement board, green cement wash the concrete head and wing walls, paint the fence around the shaft and cut the thistles and weeds inside the fence at the Zoo Shaft.

Water Supply

The Reservoir

Bristol Water Works Company (BWW) was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1846 and its first engineering works included three service reservoirs: Bedminster Down for the area south of the River Avon; Victoria Reservoir at Oakfield Road for the lower areas north of the Avon; and the Durdham Down Reservoir for the higher districts. The water flowed from the Barrow Reservoir to Oakfield Road by gravity where there was a pump driven by a steam engine to raise the water to the Downs level. Land was purchased from the Lords of the Manor of Henbury for the Durdham Down Reservoir free of any covenants or restrictions on building. As noted above, the requirement in the 1861 Act for the Downs to be 'open and unenclosed' has always been interpreted as a ban on permanent buildings on the Downs. Thus BWW land has been used for public toilets (1893) and Dressing Rooms (1932 and 1994) to avoid challenges under the 1861 Act. The Reservoir water surface is at 328 feet above Ordnance Datum but originally a more distinctive feature was an iron standpipe 70 feet higher. The reservoir with a capacity of 625,000 gallons was in use by October 1850. It has walls of stone blocks with an outer layer of clay supported by an earthen embankment. The inner walls slope outwards and have buttresses to provide added strength. By local repute, the bungalow at 46 Upper Belgrave Road was owned by BWW and was of reduced height so that the man in charge of the pump at Oakfield Road could see the standpipe and stop pumping when the reservoir was full!

Wartime Arrangements

During the air raid of 24 November 1940 all water supply to Victoria Pumping Station was lost, so an alternative emergency supply to the Durdham Down reservoir was arranged from the 27 inch diameter water main running under the Portway to Avonmouth (it was the failure of this water main in September 2001 which caused the retaining wall of the Portway to fall into the river at the bottom of Bridge Valley Road). A brick pump-house was constructed at the foot of the Gulley and twelve Coventry Climax petrol engines installed with a total capacity of 6000 gallons per minute. A 21 inch diameter cast iron main was laid up the Gulley and across and below the surface of the Downs with connections to both the reservoir and the mains. Where the main crossed the Ladies Mile, there was originally quite a mound of chippings until the back-fill settled - it could be quite painful if you hit it too fast on your bicycle! Work started in December 1940 and the installation was in use in two severe raids in February 1941. The pipe remained until August 1945 when the pumps were recovered but it took another five years before BWW removed the cast iron main and refilled the trench. The pumping station had a further lease of life as a plant room for the Northern Stormwater Interceptor project and still survives.

Another result of the November 1940 raid was the establishment of emergency water supplies by the National Fire Service (NFS). Surface water tanks 75 feet long, fourteen feet wide and eight feet high holding 75,000 gallons were established at strategic locations such as the apex of triangle formed by Stoke Road with Reservoir Road and adjacent to 72 Worrall Road to protect the Army Gun Operations Room. In January 1941 one of the 'Dumps' opposite Upper Belgrave Road was puddled with clay to form a reservoir of 300,000 gallons connected to the mains at the Stoke Road/Ladies Mile junction. This remained full of water until late 1945 when the NFS were asked to remove the two rows of large white stones marking the pipeline from Stoke Road to static water reservoir. The NFS only released it in February 1946 and it was decided to fill it to within two feet of the top with concrete recovered from the Sea Walls plateau tank depot debris. By the following April sufficient rubble had been placed on top of the concrete for the City Engineer to agree to level it, cover it with topsoil and reseed it.

The Water Tower

After the Second World War there were problems in maintaining adequate water pressure in supplies to the new higher suburbs of Bristol for which one solution was a raised water tower at the Downs. The first proposal came before the Downs Committee in June 1947 for a structure

90 feet high where the Downs Committee followed the line taken by the Planning and Reconstruction Committee of the Council that it would be acceptable provided the design and colour were accepted. By May 1948 it was referred to the Fine Art Commission who approved the revised design and colour scheme in October 1951. The start of work on site was expected to be authorised on 1 April 1953 but it was agreed that nothing would be done until after the Coronation Celebrations in June. However in January 1953 BWW announced that they wanted to postpone starting until 1954 as they had still to resolve the hydraulics of the operation of the new pumping station at Oakfield Road. Work started in July 1954 and by June 1956 the outside surface of the tank was reported to be silver grey with a coarser grade finish on the tank. The reinforced concrete structure has a 21 feet deep tank raised on twelve columns to 100 feet above the Downs surface. The capacity of the tank is 250,000 gallons. There is a central access shaft containing staircase and the rising water main which actually passes through the centre of the tank. The steam engine operated pumps at Oakfield Road were replaced by electrically operated pumps in 1953 and their control is achieved automatically by remote sensing of the water levels. Originally carried by telephone line, most telemetry is now carried out by radio and an array of aerials can be seen on the upper surface of the Water Tower for this and other purposes.

There are various water mains under the surface of the Downs besides those connected with the reservoir. A new 21 inch main was laid in 1950 from Pembroke Road cutting across from the west end of Worrall Road round north of the Dumps to the Reservoir. Other water pipes from the Water Tower to the White Tree were renewed in 2004. The only restriction made by the Downs Committee is that BWW is responsible for making good the excavation and restoring the turf.

Roads and Footpaths

Roman Road

One of Bristol's least advertised historical monuments is the section of Roman road on the Sea Walls side of Stoke Road (see Map). Excavations in 1897 revealed a paved surface 20 feet wide. While there is evidence that the Roman invasion had reached Sea Mills by the mid 50s AD, the earliest documentation of this section of road between Bath and Caerwent is in the Antonine Itinerary of the second century AD. The line towards Sea Mills is preserved in the alignment of Pitch and Pay Lane and Mariners' Drive; however to the east the line is conjectural until the Bitton area. Some more of the road on the Downs was destroyed in the quarrying at the end of Ladies Mile up to the 1860s and the construction

of the Reservoir in 1846. It is interesting that later roads have not used the Roman formation, reflecting the absence of any substantial population in, and therefore traffic from, what is now Central Bristol.

The Turnpike Era

The Bristol Turnpike Trust was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1727 and included in their original Act were the Westbury Road and Stoke Road. The installation of turnpike gates was not popular! The Kingswood colliers were immediately affected and took direct action, burning the turnpike gates in their own locality, and within a few days the 'gate near Durdham Down' went the same way. The gates on the south side of the Downs were at Whiteladies Gate, the head of Bridge Valley Road and at the top of Pembroke Road (then Gallows Acre Lane). However it is possible a further gate is being referred to nearer Westbury village. Turnpike Trust mileposts still exist on Westbury Road between the White Tree roundabout and the Henleaze Road junction and on the Ladies Mile (*see photograph on page 6*).

The 1746 maps of the Parish of Clifton prepared by Wilstar and Hammersley show a road that has disappeared leading to the New Hotwell which was on the river bank approximately half way between the Gully and Bridge Valley Road (or the Clift as it was then called). It was open in 1743 but gained some fame when John Wesley stayed in 1754 when recovering from consumption. By 1785 it had fallen into total disrepair. Access was by a rocky pathway which according to the Donne Map of 1826 was lower than the route used for the road to the Merchants' (Tennis Court) Quarry later used for the Dock Improvement Spoil incline of 1867-1873.

Unfortunately few records survive of the management of roads by the Bristol Turnpike Trust. It is known that in 1817 and 1821 new roads were made on Durdham Down (one of which was Ladies Mile) and in 1823 what is now Bridge Valley Road was made. The Turnpike Trust was wound up in 1867 and responsibility passed to the local Boards of Health.

One initial concern of the Downs Committee in 1861 was to plan roads that would regularise access and enable carriage and horse access to the open space to be restricted. It had become the accepted practice that carriages could be driven anywhere on common land which caused considerable problems.

Baker's Road

William Baker was a builder and landowner instrumental in the development of Stoke Bishop. At the first meeting of the Downs Committee he proposed roads of which consideration was postponed.

In January 1862 it was reported that he had made a road across the Downs at cost of £550 and the Downs Committee agreed to contribute £350 towards the cost. However pressure from the Council and citizens forced the Downs Committee to backtrack and agree with Baker to stop up the road which he agreed to do for £200 (including re-turfing), being also paid £550 for making it in the first place. To prevent it being used by vehicles, posts and rails were put up.

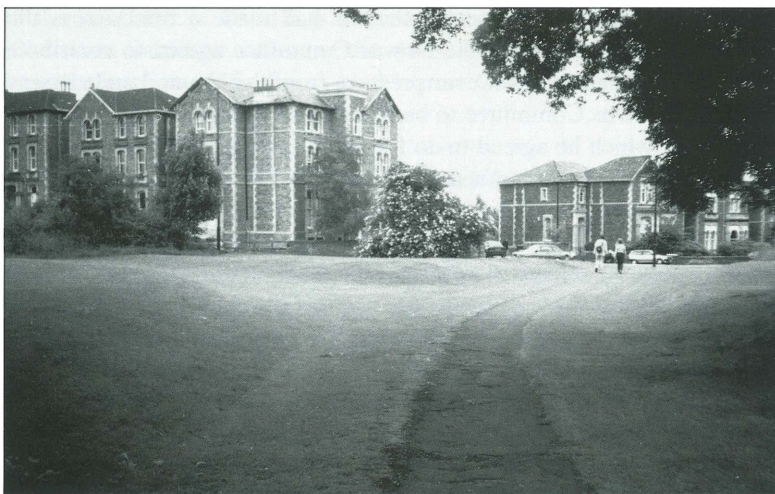
In 1874, Baker's Road was used for access to the Bath & West Show established on an area of 30 acres between Stoke Road, Clifton Road and Sneyd Park Road for six months (the profit from the Show was used to build the Fountain adjacent to the Water Tower). Having been reminded of its presence, in 1875 E S Robinson and George W Edwards offered contributions of £500 towards the £800 required to implement the Ashmead proposals (i.e. Circular Road) provided that Baker's Road was reopened as well. This was not accepted by the Downs Committee. At the same meeting, the Commoners asked for the posts across Baker's Road to be replaced, which had already been done.

The alignment of Baker's Road was used for a new footpath known as the Red Lamp Path (from the red lamp placed at the junction of Ivywell Road and Rockleaze to give coachmen direction at night). As the Downs Committee had no money, they called for public subscriptions for the path in June 1880 and obtained the full cost within one month. Having met the Society of Merchant Venturers' concerns that Baker's Road was being re-opened, the new footpath was opened by early 1881. In June 1889 Sir George W Edwards returned to the fray giving notice of a motion at the Downs Committee to reopen Baker's Road which was carried at the meeting on 12 December. The following February an estimate was received of £132 for the cost of reopening Baker's Road which 'Alderman Edwards will guarantee'. At the March 1890 Town Council meeting, the Council refused to pay the maintenance cost which effectively vetoed the proposal as only the initial costs of reopening the road would be paid by subscription and the Downs Committee had insufficient funds for the upkeep of the road.

For many years the footpath from the top of Blackboy Hill to Julian road was referred to as the Green Path from the colour of the light there to guide coachmen.

White Tree

The White Tree was originally a marker on the Westbury Road for the side roads leading to the large houses. The two candidates for its instigation are George Henry Ames (who lived at Cote House from 1839-1873 and whose initials can be seen on the lodge at the entrance



Looking from Ladies Mile to the junction of Upper Belgrave Road and Worrall Road along the path laid on Baker's Road. The banks to the left and right show the width of the road



The First World War tank at the top of Blackboy Hill 1919-1923

from the Downs into St Monica's) and George Rocke Woodward who rented Cote House from 1854-1860. The earliest reference in the Downs Committee Minutes is 11 February 1869 (agreement for the Highway Board to lop trees overlapping the road 'from the White Ash Tree to the end of Durdham Down') followed by 9 January 1873 ('the footpath from Alveston Lodge to join the footpath at the whitened tree'). G R Woodward's grandson, Clifford Salisbury Woodward, (Bishop of Bristol 1933-1946) said that he had 'always heard that my grandfather had the White Tree painted in order that his coachman, and the coachman of his friends, might know where to turn off the Westbury Road down to Cote on dark winter nights'. A White Tree has been maintained despite road widenings for roundabouts, being painted black in rag week 1965 (for which a student was fined £3) and the dutch elm problems on the Downs; after the elm tree was felled in 1973, another tree was painted white and a replacement lime tree was planted on 28 January 1974.

The access road to Cote was re-sited in 1923. H H Wills had earlier asked for a few years delay in closing it while St Monica's Home was built. One proviso was a covenant on the road via Cote Lodge to prevent it becoming a thoroughfare from Henleaze Lane. In July 1923 the widened road from Parry's Lane to White Tree opened and with it the old road was abandoned although it is still visible.

Construction of the hexagonal White Tree Shelter was agreed by the Downs Committee in March 1929 and carried out by Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company. They agreed to build and pay for it as long as it was there for at least five years and the Corporation agreed to maintain it. It was ready for use in September 1929. In 1937, presumably after complaints about draughts, it was agreed to fill in the triangular spandrels with wood panels.

The junction at White Tree was widened in 1932 and was infamous as an accident black spot. The Downs Committee suggested in 1932 that the Chief Constable consider installing traffic actuated traffic lights at the junction and this suggestion was repeated in July 1935 to the Watch Committee. The trams ceased on the Westbury service on 7 May 1938 (which may have been one problem with installing traffic lights) and then the outbreak of War intervened. After the Second World War, the matter was raised once more but a proposal from the Watch Committee in November 1946 for traffic lights was changed in January 1947 to a roundabout. Originally proposed to be 140 feet diameter it was begun in November 1949 at a reduced diameter of 90 feet. This meant felling three trees (including the White Tree) and in January 1951 resiting the shelter to its present position. Extensive maintenance and re-roofing of the shelter was carried out in 2002.

The Circular Road

The main feature of the scheme of roads presented by Frederick Ashmead to the Downs Committee in 1875 was a new road from the top of Pembroke Rod via the top of Fountain Hill and the Sea Walls to the top of Stoke Hill and Parry's Lane. As the Downs Committee did not have the funds to build it, a public subscription was raised but only enough was raised to build the section from Ladies Mile to Stoke Road via Sea Walls. In August 1878 it was proposed that it should be known as Proctor's Road after Alderman Thomas Proctor (who had given his house to become the Mansion House); however it was then and has always since been known as the Circular Road. The extension from Stoke Road to Parry's Lane was also paid for by public subscription in 1877. At first it was not going to be named but somehow the name Saville Road appeared, perhaps from the then owner of Down House. A bizarre side note occurred in May 1938 when the Downs Committee, the City Engineer and the University of Bristol were not entirely in accord about the number and position of road nameplates. The Downs Committee wanted to remove three nameplates from Saville Road but the Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University wrote objecting to it being called Saville Road and wishing it to be known as Down Road or Downs Road. The Downs Committee said they would prefer Down House Road or Down Road and only two name plates fixed to walls - Saville Road it remained!

The Ostrich Inn Road

Down House was formerly the Ostrich Inn famous for its cockpit and bowling green and a very popular resort for Bristolians and those frequenting the Hotwell in the eighteenth century. However by the 1840s it had become one of a number of substantial dwelling houses with access via a road across Durdham Down from the Westbury Road and Redland Hill junction. When the extension of the Circular Road to the Westbury Road was proposed, it was also decided that the landowners would be approached to close the private road. In June 1877 it was reported that consent had been received from Canon T D Harford Battersby, Elizabeth A Savile of Down House, Alfred George and Francis W Fox and by October 1877 the private road was closed. By 1881 gravel was being removed from it to make footpaths (the Red Lamp Path was constructed at this time). Faint traces of the road are visible especially when the buttercups are out on the slight ridge about three-quarters of the way from the Water Tower to Saville Road.

The Blackboy Hill Roundabout

One result of the formation of the Traffic Engineering Section of the City Engineer's Department in 1961 was to subject vast tracts of Bristol

to planning blight under the system of urban motorways proposed to promote free flow of traffic. The main proposals in the Plan were the Outer Circuit Road (of which the section of dual carriageway through Easton and the desolation of the Three Lamps area of Totterdown were the only results) and the M32 Parkway. However also in the 1961 proposals was a major roundabout at the top of Blackboy Hill using part of the Downs to manage traffic from Stoke Road and Whiteladies Road crossing the major stream using Westbury Road and Bridge Valley Road (which before the construction of the M5 Avonmouth Bridge included many travellers to and from the South West). A major weakness of the Plan was that the proposals were justified on the basis of data available and local knowledge without any real consideration of cost implications and it was another two years before work was carried out to survey the journeys people actually made.

In March 1961 the Planning and Public Works Committee approved a scheme at a total cost of £35,000 and the immediate response from the Downs Committee was to reject it. In July 1961 and January 1962 the matter came back again. The arguments used by the planners were that there had been thirteen accidents in 1960 (including the deaths of two GPO employees) and if they did not agree, a Compulsory Purchase Order could be obtained in two years. The Downs Committee voted 7 to 2 against and the matter was shelved by which time the cost had risen to £53,500. The proposal was raised again in June 1965 as a result of the use of Canford Lane and Sylvan Way for traffic to the South West causing disruption in residential areas. It was proposed to use about 3½ acres and would result in the felling of nine trees. The Downs Committee visited the permanent planning exhibition in Quakers Friars and, because they were convinced that the roundabout was the only practical solution and that they could only delay and not stop the project, agreed 'with great reluctance to accede to the request of the Planning Committee to proceed with the scheme'. One of the public concerns expressed was that a similar proposal would follow for the White Tree roundabout causing even greater loss to the Downs. In July 1966, the Planning Committee and Downs Committee approved a modified design with pedestrian subways costing £123,000 and in September 1966 the City Council approved the scheme as part of the Development Plan Review.

At this point the Bristol Civic Society and *Western Daily Press* mobilised popular support in Bristol against the Plan and this part of the scheme in particular. A petition with over 13,000 signatures was raised and as a result in November 1966 it was announced that a three-day public inquiry would be held in March 1967. Considerable information and misinformation was put about on the traffic levels at Blackboy Hill

where a 42% increase was claimed between 1961 and 1966, that the net loss to the Downs would be only 1½ acres and the present arrangements only meant a four to five minute delay on a journey.

In October 1967 it was stated that a decision would soon be announced but by March 1968 a further delay publicised as the planning decision on the Parkway (M32) would have to come first. However the Downs Committee did not allow a circus to come on the site in 1968 as they thought work would soon begin. Finally on 31 August 1968 it was announced that the Downs Roundabout scheme had been approved. A key part of the approval was that the University of Bristol had offered 2½ acres of land to the City comprising a strip of land in front of Down House and Wills Hall by way of compensation for the land that would be lost at Blackboy Hill. In February 1969, seventeen semi-mature trees were planted on the alignment of the proposed roads to replace the fourteen that would have to be felled.

Unfortunately for the roundabout, the strip of land in question, while owned by the University, had always been regarded as part of the Downs anyway. The land had been transferred by the Lords of Henbury to L F George (the then occupant of Wills Hall) 'reserving the rights of the Commoners'. The boundary between this strip and the part of the Downs that came under the 1861 Act had long been marked by posts and boundary stones. The Commons Society intervened in June 1969 noting that there had been public right of access since at least 1925 and under the Use of Acquisition of Lands Act 1946, any land exchange must be equally advantageous to the public. So in September 1969 the Minister of Housing refused to sanction the land exchange. When asked whether this would end the proposal, the Planning and Traffic Committee said it would only delay it.

The final throw of the dice came in June 1970 when a revised scheme costing £190,000 was announced which eliminated footpaths and included the St John's School site, which it was claimed could be demolished and returned to use as an open space. Thus progress with the roundabout now depended on the replacement or closure of St John's School. Since 1958 an area to the south of Worrall Road had been designated for a new school to replace St John's and the Anglesea Place Annex. By 1970, safe access to St John's School had become more difficult with the implementation of a one-way system around the triangle on which it stood and the rapid increase in traffic levels. After attempts to close the School completely were blocked by the intervention of Canon Norton of All Saints', construction started on new buildings in Worrall Road. When the 1973 highways programme was issued, the Blackboy Hill roundabout was not included and the only signs remaining are the replacement trees

defining the limits of the proposed road system. St John's School moved to its present site in Worrall Road in 1974. In 1978, the original school building (used as offices by Social Services) came within the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area and has since been re-roofed in accordance with the original design (it has been stated that there is a link between the St John's School design and buildings at St John's College, Oxford, although it has not been possible to substantiate this).

Military Use of the Downs

Prior to the 1861 Act, the 'Freeholders Book of Durdham Downs' for 1854 records the Barrack Master at Horfield offering a fee of £30 for the use of 20 acres of the Down for exercising the Royal Artillery. It would appear that by 1873 this fee had risen to £50 per annum for what was a weekly exercise. In March 1876 and again in October 1893 the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Downs Committee, wrote to the Commanding Officer at Horfield Barracks complaining about the damage to the turf caused by the exercising of horse artillery. In 1879 there was a request to discontinue firing on the Downs and the compromise agreed in April 1880 was that only blank shots would be used (implying that shot or live rounds had been used hitherto!).

As always, in peacetime the payments made to the Commoners was questioned by the military. Replying to the complaints of damage in 1893, the Secretary of State for War pointed to the payment made to the Commoners since 1873 in compensation for any damage caused. However the Downs Committee countered that the activity was in contravention of Bye Laws made with the approval of the Secretary of State in December 1892. The payments appear to have continued as in 1909, responding to a letter from the Commanding Officer of the Royal Engineers at Exeter, the Downs Committee pointed out that they had never made a charge and it was up to the Army to take legal advice on the consequences of ceasing the payment. Notwithstanding all of this, the military continued to exercise and the Downs Committee continued to complain about the damage caused in wet weather as late as 1924!

First World War

There is no record of any requisition of the Downs during the First World War. Most of the events are a commentary on the use of Avonmouth as a major route for importing of men and materials from the Empire, the supply of horses and pack animals via the Central Remount Depot at Shirehampton and the armaments factories at Chittening. All road traffic for Avonmouth had to come up Bridge Valley Road or Whiteladies Road as there was no Portway until 1926.

In December 1914 lavatory accommodation was provided for troops under training on the Downs and it was noted that if necessary additional accommodation might be required at the end of Parry's Lane and at the head of the Gulley. In view of the intensive use of the railway lines from Hotwells and Clifton Down to Avonmouth, it is interesting that it was decided in January 1915 to put a seat at the junction of Westbury Road and Clay Pit Road for 'persons waiting for Centre to Avonmouth motorbus'. The Downs Haven shelter to the east of St John's School was erected and paid for by Mr S J King because by this time the Queen Victoria Convalescent Home was in use as a war hospital and the haven was used by many wounded soldiers.

Military use of the Downs appears to have started in June 1915 when transport wagons were stationed on the Downs and it was later in the same year that 3/1st South Midland Division used the Downs for driving drill with vehicles. A more novel use proposed as late as October 1918 was for No. 6 School of Aeronautics to use eight acres of the Downs for flying instruction. Included in the area was a hangar 100 feet by 30 feet and it was said that the area would be roped or fenced when used for flying instruction! There is no evidence that it ever happened.

The final result of the First World War was the Presentation Tank to raise money for the War Loan Appeal. It was placed in the triangle adjacent to St John's School and the tram terminus in December 1919 for a six month period and features in many contemporary postcards (*see photograph on page 30*). In April and September 1920 the Lord Mayor was asked to have it removed. By September 1922 it was reported that the tank was difficult to remove and the strength of protests about it remaining there redoubled. However it was not until February 1923 that it was removed to the Headquarters of the 6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment in St Michael's Hill.

Second World War

Signs of impending hostilities were evident when in September 1938 a demonstration slit trench air raid shelter was dug at the top of Blackboy Hill comprising a trench eighteen feet by four feet six inches wide and five feet six inches deep with a mound three feet high. By November 1939 an air raid shelter for the 70 children of St John's School had been built on an enclosed plot immediately to the south of the school, i.e. adjacent to the Urijah Thomas memorial. In May and June 1940 public surface shelters were built as follows:

- against wall of St Monica's Home near Westbury Road;
- on west side of Westbury Park Road near junction with North View at the White Tree;

- at Durdham Park junction of two paths Westbury Road to Belvedere Road;
- at Clifton Down near Pembroke Road;
- at the Stoke Road junction of Stoke Road and Middle Road;
- on Downleaze near junction of Stoke Road and Downleaze.

A further shelter was added at North View in May 1941.

The White Tree Shelter survived by being converted into toilets in 1947. It required a public inquiry to agree the proposal that it should be retained for 5-10 years as a public toilet provided the Public Works Maintenance Committee (a) indemnify Downs Committee against any claim (b) plant shrubs around three sides (c) camouflage it by colouring the concrete. By 1950 it had been painted olive green and covered with a red virginia creeper. However there was an increasing nuisance to local inhabitants from cars pulling up and it was demolished in early 1961.

In March 1939 there was a barrage balloon demonstration at Sea Walls to boost recruitment for the local Auxiliary Airforce (BB) Squadrons 927, 928 and 929. Immediately after the outbreak of War, the Air Ministry requisitioned five barrage balloon sites each approximately 200 feet in diameter:

1. opposite Henleaze Road;
2. on the north side of the Reservoir (Water Tower);
3. on the Sea Walls plateau south of the junction of Ivywell Road and Rockleaze;
4. east of the junction of the Middle Road with Fountain Hill;
5. east of the Observatory near the Suspension Bridge.

Only site 5 was occupied immediately although subsequently all except site 1 were used. In March 1940 sites 2 to 5 were occupied although it was decided to adjust the position of site 4 to the west side of the Ladies Mile adjacent to Fairyland (see Map). Each site required telephone connections and that for the Fairyland site had to be carried on four telegraph poles from Clifton Down Road. In May 1940 permission was given to the balloon crews to cultivate a part of each site for vegetables and in the following October, the turf was removed from the Reservoir site to fill bare patches on the Down. There are references after the War to the amount of concrete remaining at the Reservoir site which may indicate the areas where turf was removed. The Balloon sites were released at Fountain Hill on 31 August 1945 and at the Reservoir on 10 September 1945 and barbed wire had been removed by end of that month. Concern over clearance of the sites was evident as a Parliamentary Question on the topic asked on 7 November 1945 received a written reply in February 1946 that the Air Ministry was paying the Corporation £330 to clear balloon sites.

As part of the review of air defences in May 1941, the War Department requisitioned eight acres of the Down for an Anti-Aircraft gun site between Baker's Path and a line at right angles to Sutherland Place. Local residents recall a gun having been sited here and having heard it fired but it was only occupied from 13 March to 24 May by four three-inch semi-mobile guns. Some 2½ acres of the area requisitioned became part of the US Forces vehicle park but the rest appears to have remained open to the public.

With the fall of France and the threat of airborne invasion, stone cairns were placed on all open spaces that could be used as landing grounds, including the Downs. During 1944, once the threat of invasion had receded, they were removed subject to the availability of labour and transport. In May, 41 cairns had been removed to release more football pitches; in July all the rest were to be removed except those within Sea Walls area still occupied by the Tank Repair Depot; by September all the stone cairns had been removed.

Damage on the Downs resulting from the air raids was limited. In the raid of 4 September 1940, three bombs blew down one thorn tree, damaged another near Worrall Road and broke seventeen tiles and one pane of glass in the Pound. The resulting craters were filled in immediately. In the heavy raid of 2 December 1940 several bombs fell on Mansion House Green and there were fifteen bomb craters to fill in. At the Downs Committee meeting immediately following the raid of 16-17 January 1941 it was reported that six bombs had fallen between the Zoo and Ivywell Road and three unexploded bombs near the top of Stoke Hill remained to be dealt with.

An interesting piece of lateral thinking was the requisition in November 1941 of the long disused Pembroke Road Quarry access tunnel as a store for Home Guard small arms ammunition. The entrance was excavated from the Pembroke Road end by the City Engineer's staff and a vertical shaft made at the quarry end for ventilation and emergency egress. By May 1942, the Home Guard did not mount a night guard which may indicate that it no longer contained ammunition. A rental of £5 per annum was agreed in August 1942 reduced to 5/- in October 1944 when it was de-requisitioned except for the Anderson shelter at its mouth which was still in use. Finally in January 1948 the War Department land agent agreed compensation of £5 for restitution of the site of ammunition 'hut' near the Pound.

In May 1941 public access to 32 acres of the Down to the east of the Ladies Mile was prevented by fencing for a vehicle park for the Mechanical Transport School billeted at Clifton College (the College had evacuated in January 1941 to Bude when the War Office requisitioned the school

buildings). Parking for 149 vehicles was in six canvas hangers measuring 30 feet by 26 feet. American forces came in August 1942 and a road was laid from the Tunnel Airshaft to the parking area enabling use of Baker's Path to be prohibited. Between December 1942 and January 1943, the vehicle park was extended to take in the carriageway of Ladies Mile (but leaving the footpath) and a strip 25 yards wide on the far (northwest) side of Ladies Mile from Fountain Hill to Baker's Path respectively. A barrier was erected at junction of Stoke Road and Ladies Mile and vehicles were parked on the roadway 'as a temporary measure'. After D Day, by September 1944 the vehicle park on Clifton Down was empty and Clifton College was de-requisitioned in November 1944 (although the pupils did not return from Bude until the following year). By the following month the Ladies Mile barriers had been removed but there was pedestrian only access pending removal of vehicle park site. The vehicle park was still surrounded by barbed wire fence and it was decided to leave it in place for the time being until the concrete hut bases and access roads had been removed and the grass had regenerated. The 34½ acres of the vehicle park were finally de-requisitioned on 27 November 1945. The War Office offered as compensation for this and the Sea Walls tank repair depot either the cost of restitution or the cost of the land. The Downs Committee had no trouble in settling for the cost of restitution and a local contractor, C A Hayes, removed rubble from the American vehicle park although the Downs Ranger reported finding concrete rubble under a number of trees subsequently. By April 1947 excavation of the hard core had started but removal of the roadway from Pembroke Road shaft to the vehicle park had not yet been started.

In February 1944 Southern Area Command requisitioned 42 acres for heavy army equipment between Ivywell Road and Fairyland on the west side of the Ladies Mile. Public access was left to Ivywell Road, the Gulley and the row of seats at Sea Walls. By November 1944 it had been necessary to remove the topsoil from the site of the Issue Park in order to prevent soil from being deposited on the roads outside the depot causing danger to vehicular traffic. The following month it was reported that water used to wash down tanks in the AFV Depot at Sea Walls was percolating into railway tunnel via the Gulley and pipes had been laid to drain away surface water. No entry was allowed into Fountain Hill from Bridge Valley Road to avoid accidents from tanks proceeding down Fountain Hill. The concrete paved area at the Sea Walls was de-requisitioned on 31 July 1945 and the problems in re-grassing the area have been discussed already.

The City Engineer suggested in January 1946 the retention of army huts for conversion to a restaurant, any latrines for use as public conveniences and hard standings as motor/coach parks but the Downs

Committee responded that no temporary buildings were to be left. Levelling and seeding of the area was to be done by the City Engineer at the expense of the military with the barbed wire fence left in situ to protect reseeded areas from wear. Concrete was deposited in an old quarry near Observatory and in the static water tank near the junction of Stoke Road and Upper Belgrave Road. In July 1946, German Prisoners of War began to demolish the structures at Sea Walls; however three Romney huts and a small brick building were retained and used for food storage. As late as 1948 there were 1500 tons of food still stored there awaiting release of storage space at Fry's at Keynsham and it was not until April 1950 that the concrete bases and huts were removed. One building that remained was the latrine block which was adapted for public use and rebuilt as the present Public Toilets in 1963.

The public road at the Sea Wall was not reopened until September 1947 and no football was played on the plateau area until the 1949/1950 season.

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