



## “QUAY NOTES” - March 2007

(News, views and information for residents of Merchants Landing)

[www.mlra.co.uk](http://www.mlra.co.uk)

### Burns Night Supper

For the second year running bagpipes blared at Bathurst Basin as neighbours boarded the John Sebastian for a Burns supper.

The evening turned out to be special because everyone who went contributed in some way, perhaps in the organisation (by Caroline), in chairing the ongoings (Campbell), or in cooking, singing, speechmaking, bringing puddings or buying drinks for and chatting to people near.

Campbell said the Selkirk Grace, then David Thorogood piped in the haggis, which the MC addressed suitably before attacking with his dirk. Thereupon lavish helpings of cock-a-leekie soup, haggis, neeps and tatties were served. (I was too full for dessert after that.)

Campbell told us that Robbie Burns was very well educated and could hold his own in all levels of society. He died tragically young. Fiona Mackenzie and Tina Harwood sang two love songs by Burns, accompanied by Dave Harker on guitar.

A special treat this year was a full rendering by Andy Black of Burn’s “Tam O’Shanter.” Luckily Andy first gave the synopsis of the tale in English. His Scottish rendering was helped by his dramatic grimaces and capering, which conveyed the wonderful humour in the poem. It was a masterly performance.

Gordon Gray, in his toast to the lassies, explained that it was the celtic spirit in the women with whom Burns was connected that helped him to father thirteen bairns by five different lassies! Susan Hart, in reply, wondered how a man who could swear eternal constancy so lyrically in his “Red, red rose” poem could be so inconstant in his relationships with the fair sex.

Just before “Old Lang Syne” Fiona and friends sang “We’ll all go together down to the heather”, the lilting melody of which stayed in my head for many days afterwards.

Susan Hart

**NEWS!!** MLRA has bought a marquee, so we can plan fun events whatever the weather!

**Bank Holiday weekend** - Sun 27th May from 3 pm – ‘picnic in the park’. **A tea and drinks party.** The marquee will be set up in the central area. Music. Raffle. Bring and buy table. Please bring sandwiches, cakes, scones etc to share. BYO drinks and glasses, garden chairs. We will provide strawberries, cream, and tea. Please bring items which could be raffle prizes or be sold on bring and buy table. Proceeds to offset price of marquee. **VOLUNTEERS WANTED** to help put up and take down marquee. If you can offer, contact Joi Demery or Shirley Stark (numbers over).

**OTHER PLANNED EVENTS** - details to follow:

1. Speaker from Council on recycling policy.
2. Well being day - Merchants Landing becomes a health farm - questionnaire to follow.
3. Walk with local historian followed by lunch.



Next year sees the beginning of the end for analogue TV. In Merchants Landing the TV signals are very weak but vary from house to house because of the interference from other buildings between the transmitter and us. Almost all Merchants Landing residences use the Mendip transmitter, which is 20 miles away at a bearing of 186 and just a handful use the Ilchester Crescent transmitter on Bedminster Down. The smaller aerial in the picture is aimed at Mendip, as can be easily recognised because the bars are horizontal (the TV signal is horizontally polarised). The longer aerial is aimed about 20 to the right (204) and has the bars vertical to suit the transmitter at Ilchester Crescent, just 2 miles away, which is vertically polarised. Although the Mendip transmitter radiates 10kW of power it’s average signal here is only half that of Ilchester Crescent which radiates only 20W.

With the lower aerial we observed few channels and very poor signals from Mendip but obtain perfect signals on all channels from Ilchester Crescent – just by rotating the bars to vertical and rotating the array by 20 !!

The first important fact is that there is no such thing as a “digital aerial” – the old “analogue aerials” are identical. The second is that local interference effects mean that the above results are not guaranteed. Next door to us, with an identical aerial, the Mendip signal is excellent.

Michael Hart

### Quay Notes

Next edition will be out on  
1 June 2007.

Contributions to 5  
Merchants Quay or  
preferably to  
[rackham@onetel.com](mailto:rackham@onetel.com)

## Your Committee Members

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### Gordon's Bristol Bites Railway cuttings

Access by rail to Bristol Docks was a problem from the start. Temple Meads, being at the upper end of the Floating Harbour, was not in the right place. It was not until 1865 that a firm railway proposal was promoted jointly by the GWR and the B&E Railway. Their double track of mixed broad and standard gauge ran from Temple Meads via cuttings through a tunnel under Redcliffe Hill to cross the entrance to Bathurst Basin just by The Ostrich. Thence on to the dock side. The line was opened in 1872.

The tunnel ran not under St Mary Redcliffe church itself but its adjoining graveyard. There are tales that the tunnel roof was so near to the surface that excavators actually penetrated the bottom of existing occupied graves so that the bodies fell out, downwards!

The twin tracks crossed the entrance lock to Bathurst Basin just by the Ostrich. It was carried by a bascule bridge that was actually wider than it was long and operated by a stationary steam engine. When the line closed in 1964 this engine was removed to the Industrial Museum.

The stationary engine had a secondary function which was to assist manoeuvring the large boats using the basin both through the lock past the open bascule bridge and alongside the working quays. This was done by ropes threaded round the wheels that are still located on the quay edge by Lower Guinea street.

### Redcliffe Wharf News

1. In the Redcliffe Wharf boatyard Mark Rolt has started to build his Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter. The keel with stem and stern posts are in place. You will rarely get a chance to see a classic wooden boat like this being built. It is a fine sight and the smell of newly-sawn timber is not to be missed.

3. Consultations have started on the development of the site. Your representative with Redcliffe Futures is Anthony Rackham (929 7562) so if you have anything you want raised, let him know. A firm of landscape architects, MUF, has been appointed to work alongside Alec French. They have a good reputation and are excited by the opportunity to work here. Redcliffe Futures Group was involved with the developer, Westmark, and the council, in choosing them.

### SMOKERS' ALLEY

We are writing to all the businesses in Merchants House, protesting about the sordid litter in 'Smokers Alley', copying it to the Council and the landlord.

### Sad News

We are sorry to report the death of Tony "the dentist" Hunt. He was a great character and could be guaranteed to add a little extra to any event. He will be missed.

### Maybe a little out of date - but??

**Shock!** horror! And all Merchants Landing is humming

They're changing the day that the bin men are coming  
Bin day's been Monday for ages and ages,  
How will I cope with such drastic changes?

It seems that my neighbours have very poor memories  
With bin out on Monday as has been for centuries.

But on Friday morning, bright and early

My bins were out by seven thirty.

At lunchtime my wheelies still lying in wait,  
Obviously they are just running late.

But as evening approaches, and still there's no sign  
Will no-one remove this rubbish of mine?

Next morning I'm certain that we've been forgotten,  
The seagulls are circling, the street's smelling rotten.  
So BCC change our routine you may,  
Just remember to change yours as well, okay!

### Neighbourhood Watch

#### Crime reference numbers

If a resident telephones the Police to report any crime and it generates a crime reference number would you please forward the number to J Bates. 9211789.

#### Contacting the Police by telephone

Please report all crime to central Police HQ who will take the necessary action to direct and respond to your enquiry. Police Tel No as previous issue 0845 456 7000 Please state that your call should be Tagged NHW - Cabot sector BC198.

#### Your NHW Community Police - Cabot Sector BC198

Police Officer is PC Martin Turner 1794 and Police Community Support Officer Lisa Shahin 7921. They do patrol the Merchants Landing area. You can contact them by telephone at Trinity road police Station or by leaving a message or answer phone. Telephone number of the Community Beat office is 9455023. They collect your messages the next morning.

#### Crimestoppers

If you ever have a situation that you feel should be reported to the Police but you want to be anonymous you can call "Crimestoppers" 0800 555 111. There is no 1471 identification connection or any way that you can be identified using this number.

John Bates (NHW Co-ordinator)

Cabot Sector BC198

### City and County of Bristol Anagrams

**What a disappointment!! No attempts received at all!**

So for all of those of you that could get some of the locations but were too shy to put in your attempt, try again. Answers to 5 Merchants Quay before end of March. Go for it even if you can't get them all!

