

Freshwater Bay

In Freshwater Bay, the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson was probably the most well-known figure, who mixed with a crowd of like-minded individuals including his friend Julia Margaret Cameron, a woman who broke with Victorian conventions and is credited with pioneering photography as an art. These notable individuals were dubbed 'The Freshwater Circle'. Indeed, Freshwater Bay nurtured the birth of celebrity culture; with crowds of visitors flooding the area to get a glimpse of the celebrities of the day, while enjoying the beauty of the scenery and hoping for inspiration of their own.

St Agnes' Church



The only thatched church on the Island, St Agnes' is not as old as many people think. It was built in 1908 on land given by Hallam, Lord Tennyson (Alfred's oldest son). The stone used to build the church came from Robert Hooke's home (hence the 1622 date stone).

Victoria Road



Charles Dodson, better known as Lewis Carroll, stayed at his friend the poet/author William Allingham's Myrtle Cottage/Holly Tree Cottage opposite the Liddell Family in Whitecliffe House. Henry Liddell was Dean of Christchurch, Oxford and his young daughter Alice was the inspiration for 'Alice's Adventures Under Ground', later renamed as 'Alice in Wonderland.'

Also on Victoria Road you will find:

- Tower House, the former home of Alfred Hollis MD, Tennyson's physician. Edward VII and socialite Lillie Langtry had an affair here
 - Monksfield, the past home of Professor Harold Laski (political theorist, economist and writer) and his wife Nancy McNeill (dancer). Nancy's sister Dorelia was married to Augustus John, who for a time was considered the most important artist at work in Britain. John visited and painted here.
- Another visitor was Anna Leonowens, travel writer, educator, social activist and the real Anna from 'The King and I'.

Gate Lane



Many of the Victorian houses on Gate Lane and The Square were commissioned by Queen Victoria for sea captains who developed the properties, not only as luxury villas for high ranking officers and notable individuals, but for other visiting famous Victorians. Some of those include; Henry Sewell, the first Prime Minister of New Zealand; author D.H. Lawrence (Lucerne) who used the location in his novels; the Hon. Catherine and Captain Rushworth (nephew of the great Admiral Holmes, Jamaica's Commander in Chief; William Hearn, Deputy Vice Admiral of the Isle of Wight; Arthur Elliot, journalist and politician.

Hazelhurst



Hazelhurst is now a modern apartment block, but the former Hazelhurst was a hotel and, along with properties that were behind it, provided accommodation for many of the famous Victorians who visited Tennyson and Cameron:

- Anne Thackeray (Lady Ritchie) an author, highly regarded on the late Victorian literary scene
- Mary Coleridge, novelist and poet
- Sir Henry Newbolt, poet, novelist and historian and his lover Ella Coltman who held séances with Tennyson
- Arthur Clough, poet and devoted assistant to Florence Nightingale (his wife's cousin)
- Artist, writer and children's book illustrator Kate Greenaway
- Theologian Professor Benjamin Jowett who translated Plato
- Virginia Woolf, one of the most important modernist 20th century authors, worked here and wrote her only drama 'Freshwater' based on her great-aunt Cameron, while in the bay.

"I feel that this special little English bay with its sparkling sea and bracing cliffs got into my blood as I wrote the book, and I still shed tears whenever, after the briefest stay on the Island, I board the ferry that takes me back to the mainland."

Bestselling author of *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, Lynne Truss, spent time in Freshwater Bay in the mid 1990s while writing her novel *Tennyson's Gift*.

The Square



Ancona (now a care home) displays a blue plaque as the birth place of scientist and Antarctic explorer Sir Vivian Fuchs.

Coastguard Lane



Marine Villa in Coastguard Lane entertained contemporaries Anglo-American poet W.H. Auden; Christopher Isherwood, Anglo-American novelist, playwright and pioneer in the gay liberation movement; George Bernard Shaw, playwright and political activist; writer Edward Upward. Now converted into several houses, Sandpipers/Temperance/Saunders Hotel was visited by former Prime Minister Clement Attlee and attracted music acts performing at the Isle of Wight Festival, including The Who and Island band Level 42.

Terrace Lane



Along Terrace Lane past Dimbola you have: Redoubt House, where guests included Charles Darwin, the world renowned naturalist, geologist and biologist, and opera singer Jenny Lind. Lind, often called the 'Swedish Nightingale', was one of the most highly regarded singers of the 19th century and features in 'The Greatest Showman' film.

Pannells hosted George Granville Bradley, former Dean of Westminster; Sir Leslie Stephen, author, historian and mountaineer; Frederick Tennyson, poet and brother of Alfred. Terrace House was owned by Horatio Tennyson, another of Alfred's brothers. Charles Darwin also stayed here, as did author and illustrator William Makepeace Thackeray, known particularly for his satirical novel 'Vanity Fair'.

The Albion Hotel



The current Albion Hotel has had modern additions, but has been a hotel and public house (The Cabin) for many years. Artists George Morland, John Hassell and J.M.W. Turner all stayed here and painted the bay. Turner's 'Fishermen at Sea' of Freshwater Bay can be seen at the Tate Modern. Geologist Sir Charles Lyell, notable for his pioneering explanation of climate change, also stayed here.

Dimbola Lodge



Dimbola Lodge is now a museum to celebrated Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, who lived and worked here between 1860 and 1875. Many other famous Victorian artists, writers and poets visited Tennyson and Cameron and portraits of them can be seen at Dimbola.

"Everybody is either a genius, or a poet, or a painter or peculiar in some way"

Anne Thackeray, author, on a visit to Freshwater Bay in 1865.

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