

DOWN A COBBLED STREET

REPRINT

Sheila Ellis

One of Britain's most famous villages, told by a lifelong inhabitant and containing a unique collection of photographs taken in the early part of this century by the author's father, Paul Ashton Ellis.

Clovelly is now one of the Westcountry's most popular tourist attractions, but not so long ago it was just a simple fishing village, whose inhabitants knew poverty and hardship. Built as an estate village, and today it is still privately owned by the Clovelly Estate Company, life in this unique village is not without its problems.

Sheila Ellis draws on a lifetime's memories as well as on her father's extensive collection of evocative photographs to record the Clovelly of the past.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The work of Paul Ashton Ellis is well known and sought after in this corner of North Devon. His daughter, Sheila Ellis, wanted his photographs to reach a wider public, and with the writing of her book, she has achieved a lifelong ambition.

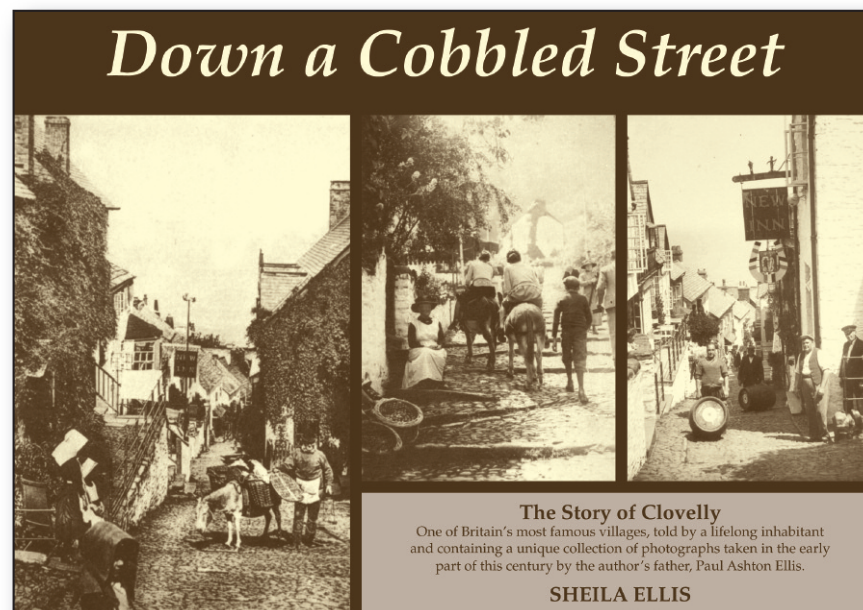
She has over the years, collected together the reminiscences of many of her friends and neighbours and with this book records Clovelly as she and many others remember it.

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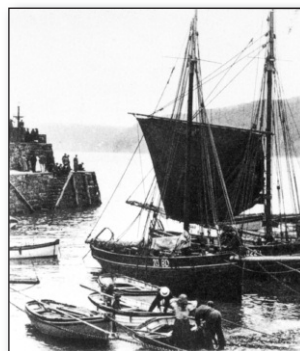


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*Rolling barrels – the hard way to deliver beer.
The coronation picture below the inn sign dates
the picture as 1937.*



Left: *Trawlers in the Quay Pool.*

Right: The lime kiln and Crazy Kate's cottage on far left.



Champion side—The New Era made it

The New Inn sign hung on the left-hand side looking down the street, as this was the main part of the inn until about 1914. Above the sign stood two small wooden figures, a soldier and a sailor. Their arms moved backwards and forwards when the east wind blew. Into the left-hand corner of the building was fitted the bar, quite small, but snug, and coloured glass ornaments decorated the window-ledge. To the right of the steps lay the smoking-room, taproom and kitchen. Boxes of plants were displayed outside on the ground.

In days of old, the hotel or inn must have been charming. A well-satisfied customer writes: "The dining-room was beautifully furnished, blue and white willow pattern plates lined the walls, and brass and copper warming-pans gleamed in the firelight. The food was delicious, all locally produced, and it soon revived us after our long journey." Three tiny cottages in Black Lane were swallowed up in the restoration carried out in 1913-14, and now form the bar. This is opposite the Methodist Chapel. Stables occupied the higher part until 1899.

Murray's *Handbook of Devon and Cornwall*, 1859, says:

"Here the traveller should rest a day at the little inn, which will entertain him with great hospitality. If it happens to be the autumn, he may regale at breakfast upon herrings which have been captured nearby. For Clively is famed for its fishery and every evening about sunset, the boats may be observed leaving the shore to 'hoist' for herrings or mackerel. In thick weather (i.e., fogs), Clively boat has captured as many as 9,000 herrings at a haul, selling at 18/- to 25/- for a brace (pair) of 612 fish."

Nostalgic thoughts, indeed



Dearest of the map of the East—Mrs. Oyster Alden on the railway.

The Red Line, drawing on a collection of essays



"The Red Lion is an old house, charming turnings and lots of steps and low passages. The supper was delicious. Fried chicken, green peas and new potatoes, reggleries and clotted cream. Great naves of flowers are on the tables. They put you to bed with candles, you sleep to the sound of the radio and wake up to the most glorious view of the bay and shore, and feel glad to be here."

The Red Lion is really a collection of cottages, hence the "turnings, steps and dark passages." We know that Nos 50, 51 and 52 are part of it, and someone told me that as many as six cottages were joined up!



Figure 100 shows one – the inner, smaller one, the track on the exterior left – and

his pier; it is much more likely that he enlarged or extended an existing structure. He made a good job in the valley, however. A river ran from a point up in the woods, almost in Higher Clovelly. It twisted and turned on its way down to the sea.

¹⁰“So the brilliant George had cottages built on either side, beginning at the beach and working up gently. Afterwards the water was diverted to a pulpitry through the woods and down the cliffside to the beach. All this cost £2,000. (The W&A of 1877 quotes this). Indeed later, thousands of cobbles were carried up from the beach and laid across the road, dry river bed.” (*History of the English Landscape*—Prof. W. G. Hoskins).

A small stream of water still ran on the right-side, and the bridges connected to the cottages. This remained so until 1865 when a cholera epidemic occurred. Charles Kingsley was staying at Bidford, and chanced to be strolling down one day. He pointed on this unsightly stream as the culprit in which everything foul and dangerous was flowing. The owners of Chelvey at the time were the Hamlyns. They arranged for cobbles to be carted up, and the water was covered in. It still flows to this day, under the cottages on the right (follow the New Inn, and stretch a street down again until Nos. 79 and 78, and on another piece of cobbles, under the cliff, through a cleft, and out into the street above the Bow. Time was when it rained on the beach, but this was when a large amount of water flowed. Here is an extract about Chelvey written between 1534 and 1545 by John Leland:

"Bytynix the south of Tauer and Henty Point, lyath a very compeid bay and about in the middle thereof is a place called "Clawell", wherunto Cary dwelleth and here is the nearest trajecture into Landey Bay. (The copy of Robert Cary who died in 1540.) Again - "At Clawell there is a little port for vessels and the harbour is good for the herring fishery. The land as it yet resteth into the proximity of Hentyland, is by no means remarkable for fertility nor is it either new, or useful enough to be planted to the eye". (Observations of Wynne Gough; W.C. Miers 1794-6).

The milled steel before the stress was removed is



Not very flattering, but nice to know that we were worth a paragraph or two! It was during this period that Cloverly as we know it began to take shape. The pier was lengthened in 1826, cottages re-built or restored, parkland was created and thousands of trees planted. Beautiful walks were cut out of the land, and paths made along the cliff-edge. Tiny shelters were built or carved - "The Cabin", "The Wilderness", "Angels' Wings", delightful names and charming spots. A gate near the top of the Turnpike road is the entrance to this park which is private.



The *Swanhouse* above Marsh Hill built in 1920 and restored in 1995 for Christine Hanson's 80th birthday.

Angela Brown



Examples of double-page spreads.