



SEAHORSE



Newsletter of the Friends of the Midland Hotel, Morecambe

Number 18 February 2008

Welcome to the 18th issue of *Seahorse* and hello to all members new and old! The year 2008 is here and the month of June is nearly upon us (sorry to mention it, Kieran). The Midland will then be open for business and I know many of you have already made reservations for rooms and dinner. The recent sunny weather we have been enjoying has certainly set her sparkling. I took a stroll around the seaward side of the hotel this week and there was much activity on the new glass sun lounge. Once the boarding is removed the views from it will be sensational and the sunsets - wow!

Thanks to everyone who braved the elements to attend our recent AGM held at the Elms Hotel, details of which can be found on page 2. The tour of the Midland the following morning was also very well supported with around 100 members arriving at the gate. I always get more turn up than have actually booked and I apologise to those of you who had to wait. Because of the numbers we had to have three tours. Our grateful thanks go to Matt Redhead who conducted all three and must have been hoarse by the end of the morning! Thanks also to Urban Splash for allowing our visit, and to Rachel and Emma who helped organise everything. Although the weather was very cold and windy at least the rain kept off. At the AGM I received an unexpected, but welcome, present - an original piece of Midland Hotel crockery complete with seahorse motif! It is wonderful and a special thank you to the Committee for your kindness. It was lovely to see so many Friends over the two days and hopefully the next time we meet it will be in the hotel itself.

Our Friends' Weekend is booked for the beginning of July and it promises to be a really special event. Sadly, not everyone was lucky enough to obtain a room. Not surprisingly, they were oversubscribed and a ballot was necessary - thanks again to Matt for making the draw. For those of you unable to stay that weekend, or attend the Saturday evening buffet, we shall be organising another event later in the year and I look forward to seeing you then.

Following the success of our Midland mugs and calendar, we have commissioned a limited edition plate to commemorate the re-opening of the hotel this year. Many were snapped up at the AGM and those that remain are available on a first come, first served basis (see offer inside).

I hope to see you in the hotel soon.

Sue Thompson

THANKS

We are now at a very special time in the Friends' history, the re-opening of the Midland. This is what we have all been waiting for. It has been a long haul – almost nine years - with some very difficult and fraught times along the way. This hotel needed us in those dark days and together we fought to keep it safe until the right people came along to breathe new life into it. Thanks to Evelyn Archer for showing me how to organise a Friends group. A giant thank you to all the Committee who have always been there for the hotel - and for me! Special thanks to Barry and Lesley for being at the other end of the telephone when needed. Huge thanks to Ian for coping with it all. And, last but not least, thanks to all of you, the Friends. We came together with a mutual love and appreciation of this wonderful Grade II* building called the Midland and our determination to see it reborn as a working hotel has finally come to fruition. Each of you has played a very important part through joining the group and adding your support. When she opens her doors for business please join me at the hotel bar for a very special toast to an iconic building with a fantastic future!

Sue Thompson

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Midland Hotel was held at the Elms Hotel, Morecambe on Friday 1st February 2008. 66 members attended.

Before the main business of the AGM took place, Sue introduced Olivier Delaunoy, Operations Director of Urban Splash Hotels, who addressed the meeting bringing members up to date with the current situation at the hotel. After a short talk Olivier invited questions from the floor and a question and answer session took place covering many aspects of the proposed development of the Midland. At the conclusion of the session Sue thanked Olivier both for talking to the Friends and for his work at the hotel. Sue then invited Evelyn Archer (Chairperson of the Friends of the Victoria Pavilion) to give a brief presentation to the meeting regarding their restoration project. A short coffee break followed and Sue then opened the AGM at 8.45pm by reading out the apologies.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting had been distributed to members and were certified by the secretary as being a true and accurate record. They were proposed by Gillian Cowburn and seconded by Evelyn Archer.

Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Chairperson's Report

Sue welcomed everyone to the AGM and said she could not add a great deal more to what Olivier had already told the meeting. She remarked that it had been quite a year for the Friends and that she was very excited by the prospect of the hotel opening in the summer. The Friends had an excellent new website created by Kate Drummond which was very eye-catching and which had received many favourable comments. Membership had noticeably increased in recent weeks and the majority of new members had joined using the facilities afforded by the site.

Committee members Barry Guise and Pam Brook had researched and written a fascinating and beautifully illustrated book about the Midland which was proving to be so popular that only a few copies were left - we hope it may be reprinted. To commemorate the re-opening of the hotel the Committee had commissioned a limited edition plate, a sample of which was on display. The image of the hotel had come out particularly well and Sue commented that the building itself was now beginning to look like the image - brilliant white and sparkling!

Sue mentioned the Friends' Weekend which was being organised in the hotel in July. She said all the rooms had been allocated for the weekend and that the Saturday night event was also booked up, adding that she would be speaking with Matt Redhead (the House Manager) to see if he could accommodate any more members wishing to attend.

Regarding the hotel, Sue was concerned that local people may be excluded from using the building when it was taken over for corporate events or special occasions. However, she had been assured that the rotunda café would always be available for the general public even when the rest of the hotel had been booked for special functions and, of course, the ground floor facilities would be available at all other times.

She noted that Morecambe was undergoing change, referring to the fact that new amenities were opening, house prices were increasing and the resort was moving forward. This could be attributed in no small way to the imminent opening of the Midland, together with the planned central promenade area redevelopment. She emphasised that the hotel would always be 'Our Midland' just as Urban Splash call it 'Their Midland'. The Friends had always fought for the building and if it wasn't for the members, old and new, it was quite possible that the hotel would not have survived for Urban Splash to renovate it.

In closing, Sue thanked all the members for their continued support and particularly those who had stayed with the group over the years.

Treasurer's Report

Barry presented the end of year report to the meeting which showed a balance of funds of £1404.47. Income was largely made up from membership fees, membership renewals and the sale of calendars. The main items of expenditure were the setting up of the new website, the production and postage of newsletters and the cost of the room and refreshments for the AGM.

Membership was currently 506. There had been quite an increase in applications probably due, in part, to the new website. Barry noted that over the years we had lost a number of members for a variety of reasons but if you counted all the members we have had since inception, it came to over 600. This is remarkable for such a small hotel and was an indication of the widespread interest in the Midland.

Barry then submitted the accounts which were proposed by Peter Wade and seconded by John Peat.

Election of Officers

The following posts were up for election: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary. The serving officers were asked if they were willing to stand again for the next year and all indicated that they were. The Secretary asked if anyone wished to be considered for any of the posts. No other names were forthcoming and it was therefore unanimously accepted that the existing officers stood in post for a further year.

The officers for the coming year are therefore as follows:

Chairperson	Sue Thompson
Vice Chairperson	Jane Wright
Secretary	Ian Thompson
Treasurer	Barry Guise
Membership Secretary	Lesley Guise

Committee members are Pam Brook, Neil Byers, Kate Drummond, Stephen Jones, Steve Swithin and Peter Wade.

Any Other Business

William Assit asked if next year's AGM would be held in the Midland.

Sue said that she hoped all our functions would be held in the hotel from this summer onwards. She believed that the Friends were a good advertising tool for Urban Splash and it showed that we were very happy with the company.

Ann Hutton asked if there would be photographic coverage of the Friends' Weekend in July.

Ian replied there would be, either by the local press, ourselves or both.

Ron Sands mentioned that one of the previous owners of the hotel, Les Whittingham, had a list of *Art Deco* links and he wondered if we could do the same.

Sue pointed out that we already had numerous *Art Deco* links from our website and were linked to other sites at the request of their owners. We were receiving requests for links on a frequent basis and these are looked at carefully before we agree to be associated with other sites. We are also listed with the Google search engine on the World Wide Web.

Ron Sands said there was a new antiques emporium opening in Morecambe on the promenade and maybe it would be a good idea to have an *Art Deco* influence to coincide with the opening of the hotel.

Sue agreed it would be a good idea.

George Heaton asked what arrangements had been made for the tour of the hotel on Saturday morning (February 2nd).

Sue outlined the arrangements to the meeting.

Barry gave a brief resume of the formation of the Friends group, paying particular attention to Sue's involvement and enthusiasm for the hotel over the years. On behalf of the Committee he then presented her with an LMS saucer bearing the hotel's seahorse motif which had been part of the original crockery used in the hotel in the early days.

In reply Sue thanked Barry and the rest of the Committee for all their hard work and staying power over the years.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Ian Thompson

NEW MANAGER

Urban Splash have appointed Matt Redhead to the post of House Manager of the Midland Hotel. Matt will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the hotel and is currently working alongside Operations Director Olivier Delaunoy to ensure that everything is in place when the Midland re-opens to the public in June.

Born and brought up in Cornwall, Matt has spent all his working life in the catering and hospitality industry, most of it on the luxury liner, the QE2. Since returning to dry land he has been in charge of the Headway Hotel in his native county. Matt is delighted with his move to Morecambe and is full of enthusiasm for the challenge of making the Midland a success. 'A whole lot of passion has gone into the renovation of the Midland Hotel. It's my job to make sure our team is filled with the right personalities to be able to complement such an outstanding building. Every member will be personally selected and trained to ensure that each and every one of our guests has the best possible experience when visiting the hotel. So whether they're enjoying a drink in the bar or they're staying in one of our terrace suites, they feel happy and relaxed.'



Sue Thompson looks on as Matt Redhead draws out names for the Friends' Weekend

A range of jobs in reception, reservations, housekeeping and maintenance has recently been advertised, as well as places for bar and restaurant staff. Matt wants applicants who like to challenge conventional ideas and do things differently. 'While skills and experience are a huge asset, a personality is absolutely essential. We're looking for outgoing people who are on the verge of doing great things, regardless of age or experience. The right person can pick up the skills they need along the way.' Local people are being encouraged to apply and short-listed candidates will be invited to a recruitment day to be held in Morecambe next month.

Other new faces on Urban Splash's team at the hotel include Reception Manager Rachel Toulmin, currently trying to cope with the avalanche of booking inquiries, and Emma Harper who is responsible for Sales, Events and Marketing.

WADE'S WALKS



Another season of Peter Wade's popular walks starts this Easter. Places on all the walks are priced at £2.50 per person. For further details telephone Peter at (01524) 420905.

Echoes of Art Deco

An evocation of the 1930s heyday of Morecambe conjured up from its surviving *Art Deco* buildings. The tours begin and end with an exterior exploration of the landmark Midland Hotel now undergoing restoration. Meet outside The Platform at 2pm.

Easter Weekend: 21st - 24th March

Bank Holidays: 5th & 26th May

Saturdays: 28th June, 26th July, 30th August, 27th September & 25th October

A Date with Dame Thora

A gentle stroll past the places familiar to Morecambe's favourite daughter, the late Dame Thora Hird. Meet outside the Post Office at the corner of Victoria Street and Market Street in Morecambe at 2pm.

Saturday 20th September

Eric's Morecambe

A walk back in time from Eric Morecambe's seafront statue, unveiled by the Queen in 1999, to the humble backstreet terrace where Eric (Bartholomew) was born in 1926. The walk starts at the Eric Morecambe statue on Morecambe Promenade at 2pm.

Saturday 16th August

In Search of Turner's View

JMW Turner's watercolour *Heysham and Cumberland Mountains*, owned at one time by Turner's champion, John Ruskin, is hard to reconcile with what is now regarded as Turner's View. Meet at the bus terminus in Heysham Village at 2pm.

Saturdays: 7th June, 5th July, 2nd August & 6th September

A Perfect Landscape: artists' impressions of the Lune Valley

The Lune Valley has proved a source of inspiration to artists old and new, from Turner and Lamorna Birch to the creation of upside-down trees. The walk starts from the car park at the old Halton Station on the Lancaster to Caton cycle track (off Denny Beck Lane) at 2pm.

Saturdays: 12th July & 9th August

Dinosaurs, Helium & Scientists

An exploration of the early lives of four world renowned scientists who were born or lived in Lancaster at the start of the nineteenth century. Meet at Queen Victoria's statue in Dalton Square, Lancaster at 2pm.

Saturday 19th July

Lancaster's Lost Observatory

The tale of how a lost Victorian observatory linked Lancaster to a north west cotton empire. Meet at the entrance to the Ashton Memorial in Williamson Park, Lancaster at 2pm.

Saturday 23rd August

MIDLAND HOTEL TOUR



Members don hard hats and fluorescent jackets in preparation for a tour of the Midland Hotel on the Saturday following the AGM. Only the ground floor was accessible as workmen were busy on the other floors

We had been looking forward for some time to seeing the progress inside the hotel. Waiting in the Portakabin for the two previous parties to complete their tours (shortage of hats and day-glo coats) we spent the time admiring the rows of workers' boots and speculating about the eclectic mix of crockery. Eventually, we wended our way to the front door, clutching hard hats on top of woolly ones in the stiff breeze. If the hotel is over-subscribed as much as the Friends' tours, Urban Splash will be well pleased.

The outside looked much smarter, with its glittering coat and clean seahorses, though inside, the ground floor was clearly still a work in progress. We could see how it had been modified for more efficient use of space, and the windows were in. Not without problems we were told, but if they keep out the wind and rain in this position we shall be ordering some for our own house. We were not able to see the bedrooms because weekend working was in full swing upstairs, but looking up the stairwell the Eric Gill/Dennis Tegetmeier roundel was resplendent with the colour restored.

To the left of the entrance the Gill bas-relief was at its best, standing out amongst the plaster dust, looking as if it had never been moved. Around the corner a helpful workman moved his trolley to reveal Ann's favourite part of the building – the Eric Gill map with the Midland at the centre of the universe. We were delighted it had been restored and moved successfully. It displays so many other places that mean a lot to us, such as Barrow, Furness Abbey and Cartmel, as well as the more conventional Lake District haunts.

Matt explained about the plans for all day service in the circular bar, with direct access from the sea front, and we tried to imagine how the dining room would look as the new conservatory was taking shape. It is only four months until we hope to be enjoying a meal there on the Friends' weekend. We can't wait to enjoy the building as it was intended – without having to wear hard hats and day-glo coats – and because we know how much work has been put in by so many people to make it happen, we shall appreciate it all the more.

Ann and John Hutton

A CONTINENTAL INFLUENCE ?

Wandering around the Modernism exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2006 my eye was drawn to a black and white photograph of a building which looked vaguely familiar. At first I thought it was the Midland Hotel but on closer inspection it turned out to be part of a hostel in the town of Breslau (now Wroclaw, Poland) designed by the German architect Hans Scharoun and dating from 1929, four years before the Midland Hotel was opened. Like the Midland, Scharoun's hostel was three storeys tall, built on a gentle curve and had a distinct nautical appearance. It led me to wonder if Oliver Hill had encountered it on one of his continental excursions or perhaps seen it in an architectural journal. Whilst Hill's design for the Midland was noticeably influenced by its seaside location, ship imagery was a recurring stylistic feature of several of Scharoun's buildings – probably the result of a childhood spent in the busy Baltic seaport of Bremerhaven.

Hans Scharoun was born on September 20th 1893 and showed an interest in architecture from an early age, going on to study the subject at the Technical University of Berlin. After serving in the First World War he set up an architectural practice in Breslau and also taught at the town's Academy for Arts and Crafts. During the 1920s he entered and won many competitions but few of his buildings were actually realised. It was not until 1927 that his luck changed when he was able to complete a number of projects connected with mass housing in Stuttgart and Berlin, projects which reflected his life-long commitment to socialist ideals.

In 1929 Scharoun won international recognition at the Deutscher Werkbund exhibition in Breslau for an ingeniously designed hostel for single persons and childless couples. His building was divided into two residential wings – the longer and straighter one containing one-person flats, the shorter and curved one (resembling the Midland Hotel) containing two-person flats, those on the first and second floors opening out onto balconies. In between the two wings was a communal area with a large hall. The three structural parts were curved against each other to create an almost S-shaped figure, forming two opposite concave areas which were used as an open-air restaurant and cosy yard.

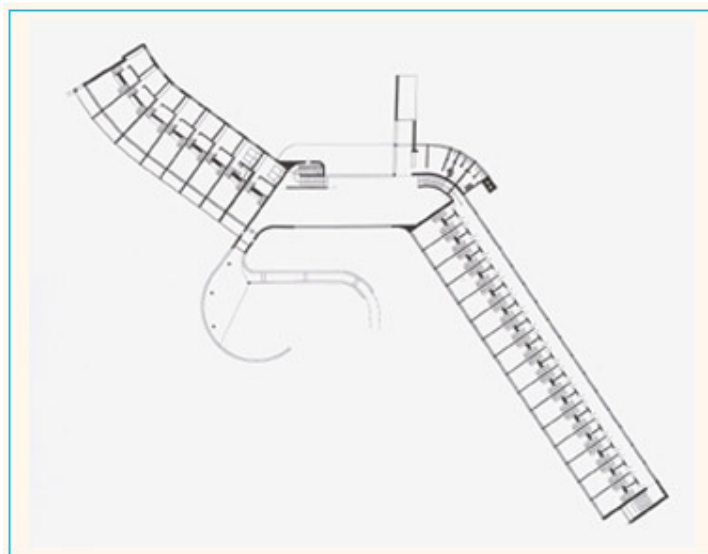
Scharoun followed his hostel with a housing estate in Berlin and a remarkable private house for the pasta manufacturer Fritz Schminke in Lobau, which was described by one critic as 'one of the most subtle creations of architecture of our era.' By the mid-1930s, economic recession and the rise to power of the Nazis brought Scharoun's successful work period to an end. Considered too radical for the new regime, which favoured a more conservative approach to architecture, Scharoun spent much of his time on small-scale, single family housing schemes. Unlike many of his contemporaries he remained in Germany during the Second World War and in 1946 was appointed to the post of City Architect of Berlin with overall responsibility for the reconstruction of the bomb-damaged city. Unfortunately, the division of Berlin by the Allies meant his plans for the city were unable to be carried through.

In the post-war period Scharoun worked on a number of important projects, including the building for which he became best known – the Concert Hall for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, completed in 1963. However, from a personal point of view, he was particularly pleased to have been chosen to build the German Maritime Museum in Bremerhaven, the starting place of his dreams to become an architect. Sadly, he did not live to see its completion, dying on November 25th 1972 at the age of 79.

Barry Guise



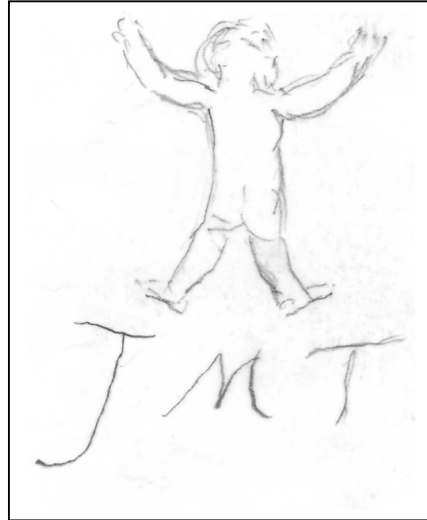
Part of Hans Scharoun's 1929 hostel, now a hotel



Ground plan of the whole building

DENIS TEGETMEIER (9th June 1895 - 6th March 1987)

During recent restoration work on the wall map of North West England in the Midland Hotel, a drawing of a curious child-like figure with upraised arms was discovered in the space just below the depiction of the hotel. The initials J M T were also found. Although never part of the completed design, the figure gave rise to some speculation. Who or what was it? Who did it? The answers are purely conjectural, based on a few salient facts. The map was designed by Eric Gill but its painting was largely left to his son-in-law, Denis Tegetmeier, who worked on the project during the summer and autumn of 1933. A probable visitor at that time would have been Petra (Gill's daughter and Tegetmeier's wife), accompanied by her first child, Judith Mary (J M T ?). What could be more natural than a doting father drawing a little sketch to amuse the toddler or, that like workmen from time immemorial, he should leave a little personal memento hidden under work in progress.



Despite his skill as an artist and craftsman, Denis Tegetmeier has, like his little drawing, often been overlooked. His own self-effacing, reserved demeanour and the wide variety of his work have undoubtedly contributed to this, as well as his close association with Gill.

He was born and brought up in Hampstead, the grandson of the Victorian naturalist William Bernhardt Tegetmeier. After schooldays spent at Haberdashers' Aske's (where he won an art prize), he was apprenticed to an advertising agency in 1912 but left, disenchanted with the occupation. At the beginning of World War 1, he joined the 11th Hussars (Cherry Pickers) as a private but, soon afterwards, took a commission with the Royal Field Artillery and spent the rest of the war in France "always stuck on that bloody mud patch across the Channel".

After demobilisation, his ex-serviceman's grant enabled him to attend London's Central School of Arts and Crafts to "learn how to draw from life" and he spent the years 1919-1922 living with other impecunious students in Soho. Towards the end of his time at the School, he met Eric Gill and worked for him, cutting and painting lettering on the War Memorial in New College, Oxford. He also made contact with David Jones, a Welsh poet and painter, whose work he admired and whose ideas were a lasting influence. [Tegetmeier always insisted that, despite his close relationship with Gill, he was never a 'pupil' but always a 'workman' and was little affected by Gill's artistic ideas although deeply impressed by his craftsmanship and philosophy.]

The 1920s was a time for Denis to develop and clarify his own ideas. After his acceptance into the Roman Catholic church in 1922, he declined Gill's invitation to join the Ditchling Community, preferring to stay in London, making only periodic visits to Ditchling to "get the hang of engraving". As a freelance cartoonist, he contributed to periodicals such as *GK's Weekly*, *The New English Weekly*, *Time and Tide*, *The Catholic Herald* and *Tribune* while continuing his lettering work on churches and memorials, often with Gill. He also visited Gill's short-lived community at Capel-y-ffin in the Black Mountains of Wales, where he painted a mural on the workshop walls, depicting the development of lettering techniques. Between jobs, he was able to travel in Europe

with a “cosmopolitan kind of feller”, a Sicilian who spoke “about three languages and a bit of English”, make visits to his brother’s farm and take a lengthy religious retreat.

In 1928 when Gill had returned to England and established himself at Pigotts, an old farm near High Wycombe, Denis joined the ‘loosely-unified’ group there and met Laurie Cribb (Gill’s chief assistant) with whom he was to work closely for many years to come. On marrying Gill’s second daughter, Petra, in January 1930, Denis took over one of the barns as his workshop, where he designed inscriptions for sculptures and memorials and, in the period up until World War 2, drew, engraved and etched illustrations for many books including his own satirical cartoons such as *The Seven Deadly Virtues*, works by Gill such as *Morals and Money* and classics such as *Piers Plowman*, *Sterne’s Sentimental Journey* and works by Fielding and Johnson. Another speciality was the design and engraving of bookplates, which he continued for friends and family for the rest of his life. From Pigotts, he travelled to Morecambe to help Gill with the completion of his work for Oliver Hill in the Midland Hotel in 1933, where he painted the map in the Children’s Room and the ceiling medallion above the staircase.



Doctor Johnson: 1929 etching for 'The Vanity of Human Wishes'

Following Gill’s death in 1940, Denis went into partnership with Laurie Cribb at Pigotts. He found the work, looked after the business and designed stone engravings in sympathy with Cribb’s lettering technique, continuing for twenty years until Cribb moved to Wales in 1960. Denis, Petra and their family stayed on at Pigotts until 1962, by which time the death of Gill’s wife, Mary, and “lack of finance and whatnot” forced its closure. The Tegetmeiers moved to Wardour, Wiltshire, where Denis was able to relax a little and find artistic expression in painting, sometimes in watercolours but mainly in oils on gesso. After a final move to Bradford-on-Avon, Denis Tegetmeier finally died there at the age of 91, survived by his wife and six children.



Bookplate for John P. Monaghan

‘It is a special kind of artist who depicts what men say ... Tegetmeier’s drawings are things, not imitations of things ... There are diversities of gifts.’

(Eric Gill in *Typography* , Spring 1938)

Lesley Guise

MEMORIES OF A MIDLAND RECEPTIONIST

As a child I visited Morecambe on many occasions as my grand parents moved to Heysham in 1965. Every holiday we got to go on the trampolines down by the Battery Hotel, played Crazy Golf, lost pennies in the arcades and walked along the piers. My grandma discovered the best way to keep us entertained and quiet was to walk us for miles, so we used to walk past the Midland Hotel frequently. I always thought it was a magical, mysterious place, especially as I knew the 'Miss Great Britain' competitions took place at the back of the hotel and the illuminations were switched on from there. I imagined it was full of famous people and it probably was at certain times of the year. I never imagined ever going inside the hotel. As a child it never occurred to me that ordinary folk could go into such a place!

Years later, I trained as a hotel receptionist and applied for a job at the Midland and got it. My mother, sister and myself celebrated with a knickerbocker glory bought from Brucciani's. Do they still serve knickerbocker glories there or was it a 70s thing? From memory it was a large glass filled with jelly, fruit and cream and you ate it with a long spoon.

I settled in to life as a receptionist and lived in one of the staff rooms on the second floor over the Seahorse Bar. I thought life as a receptionist was just the bees knees. During my time there I met the Miss Great Britain judges who stayed in the hotel overnight. Pop groups appearing in the area also stayed with us so I always tried to obtain their autographs. The head waiter got me Eric Morecambe's autograph on a Midland menu card. Shame I cut the menu down to fit in my autograph book! I asked Billy Connolly, who stayed one night with us, to sign my book as he was checking out and he replied "Most certainly not, how dare you ask me". He turned and walked away. I thought to myself "How rude, I don't think much of him". Billy then turned round, walked back towards me with a big grin and said "Where d'ya want me to sign hen?" From that day onwards I was a fan of his and still am. Comedians Jim Bowen and Mike Reid were also frequent visitors to the hotel.

On quiet nights in the winter, when we had very few guests, I just used to love putting on a long dress and floating down the spiral staircase thinking I was a famous movie star or model. I've never seen such a wonderful staircase before or since. Many a bride had her photograph taken on that bottom step with her family on the steps behind her. I longed for the day that I would be able to do that, but it never happened.

One day, whilst tidying out a cupboard in Reception, I found a brochure for a hotel in Aviemore and decided that, as I liked snow, I'd see if I could get a job up there. I got the job and off to Aviemore I went. However, I will always have great memories of the Midland Hotel.

I was delighted to see the inside of the Midland on BBC TV's 'Coast' a few months ago. It was lovely to see the corridors that arched round as I'd forgotten how wonderful they were too. I now live in London and when visiting Morecambe last year was delighted to see for myself the rebuilding of the Midland. I'm so glad it wasn't flattened like the Super Swimming Stadium as you know you've arrived in Morecambe as soon as you see the Midland. I do regret living so far away and not being able to visit Morecambe as much as I would like. It holds so many fond memories for me as it was part of my childhood.

Sue Turner

This photograph and text appeared in the 1937 edition of *Holidays by LMS*. The railway company's 468 page Official Illustrated Guide (price 6d.) provided 'descriptive information of places of holiday interest...at the principal places in England and Wales.' Scotland had its own separate guidebook.

L M S HOTEL SERVICE IN ENGLAND AND WALES



THE L M S HOTEL AT MORECAMBE

THE L M S Hotels form the largest group in Europe under single control. There are thirty of them, and they are to be found in nearly every district of Britain, and in Ireland.

For travellers arriving at either Euston or St. Pancras, the Euston Hotel will be found most convenient. It has but recently undergone a thorough scheme of modernisation, and is now a very delightful hotel for either a short visit or a lengthy stay. All the bedrooms are equipped with running hot and cold water, radiators, Post Office telephones, and modern lighting; the corridors on the ground floor are panelled in choice Empire woods, and the Reception and Enquiry Offices, Dining Room and American Bar have all been re-designed.

To the holiday-maker, the L M S Hotel Service makes a decided appeal.

At Morecambe, the Midland Hotel—the most modern Seaside Hotel in Britain—was opened in 1933, and embodies the very latest features of up-to-date hotel construction. Both public rooms and bedrooms are designed to admit a maximum amount of air and sunshine. The Empire Café, overlooking the new Corporation Swimming Pool, and the Sun Loggia, are amenities that add to the numerous attractions at Morecambe.

A MUSICAL INTERLUDE AT THE MIDLAND

I started my university course at St. Martin's College, Lancaster in 1996. Together with a group of friends I began exploring the surrounding area and in late 1997 came across Morecambe. We found Frontier Land, the cinema and probably a few pubs (just to keep up the good name of students!). We then stumbled across the Midland Hotel and decided to go in for afternoon tea. I have always been passionate about the *Art Deco* period, a love instilled in me from a young age by my parents. We thought the Midland Hotel wonderful, if a little worse for wear. The views over Morecambe Bay from the conservatory at the back were breathtaking and the décor was magnificent though in need of some attention.

Myself and a friend, Phil, noticed that there was a lovely grand piano sat idling away in a corner and a plan began to formulate. I play the piano and collect old sheet music from the 1920s to the 1960s. Phil is a wonderful singer who was studying Performing Arts at the time. So on our return to Lancaster we wrote a letter to the Midland Hotel asking if we could go in on Sundays and play music of the era for the patrons. The letter of acceptance came back and for about six months we entertained Sunday afternoon onlookers with renditions of songs such as 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square' and 'We'll Gather Lilacs'. It was a lovely time and a privilege to be able to play such beautiful songs in such beautiful surroundings. Unfortunately, growing pressure of work meant we eventually had to stop visiting the hotel.

I left Lancaster in 2000 and returned to my home town of Barnsley. I haven't been back to Morecambe for a long while but my parents visited a few years ago and told me that the Midland was being renovated. I was so pleased to hear that it was going to be restored to its former glory and can't wait to see the finished article. It is a credit to all involved that we are able to preserve this building, and the memories it invokes, for the generations to come.

Julie Butcher



The original Strohmenger piano for the Midland Hotel was personally chosen by Oliver Hill who asked for its case to be designed and coloured to harmonise with the decorative scheme of the hotel.

THE BERESFORD HOTEL, GLASGOW

Like the Midland Hotel in Morecambe, the Beresford Hotel on Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow was built in the 1930s. However, at seven storeys high plus entresol, it is a considerably larger structure. Occupying a steeply sloping site, the Beresford was the tallest building erected in the city between the two world wars and was considered to be the most outstanding of all the hotels built in Scotland during the Thirties. Its façade is ten bays wide with two prominent towers of semi-circular bay windows rising the full height of the building and beyond the roofline before being capped by flagpoles. The scarlet and black fins that run up between the towers help to reduce the bulk of the building, as do the fluted pilasters at the corners of the elevation to Sauchiehall Street. Stylistically, it falls somewhere between *Art Deco* and *Moderne*.



The Beresford Hotel on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street in the 1930s

The hotel's architect, W. Beresford Inglis, who had studied at the Glasgow School of Art, wrote that he was 'determined to introduce the colours and lines of the cinema' for the Beresford, a not surprising ambition as by then he had acquired considerable experience in designing cinemas. In fact, he was the architect, promoter and owner of six of them including the Boulevard, Knightswood, Glasgow, which he sold to raise capital for the Beresford. He told its buyer, George Singleton, that he could no longer stand the pressures of running a cinema – but then appointed himself managing director of the newly formed hotel company! A short time later he was heard complaining that he had thought running cinemas was bad, but this was much, much worse.

The Beresford cost the then enormous sum of £180,435 plus a further £13,000 for the furnishings. It was completed in the record time of ten months (as was the Midland) thanks to work planning, electric hoists and an ingenious system of piping concrete

from the ground to the floors under construction. The hotel opened just in time for the Empire Exhibition which ran in Bellahouston Park, Glasgow from May to October 1938. Not only did Beresford Inglis raise the capital and set up the client and operating company – Glasgow Hotels Ltd – but, apparently, also had the building named after him. However, a local contact pointed out to me that Beresford was his mother's maiden name so perhaps it was a gesture of filial affection rather than self-promotion. As well as the Beresford Hotel and a number of cinemas, he also designed private houses, pubs, a school and several restaurants including the famous Rogano's which is still very popular today.

The Marquis of Douglas opened the Beresford on Thursday 28th April 1938. Hugh D. Marshall, who had hotel experience in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Cheltenham Spa, England, was appointed Resident Manager. The Chef de Cuisine, Charles Friebe, had been Head Chef at the Regent Palace Hotel, London with previous experience at the Waldorf Astoria and at Claridges. The Beresford was proud of its international credentials, claiming that 'guests from abroad will not have that unpleasant feeling of 'being a stranger within the gates' because at the Beresford many of the staff are multi-lingual, speaking French, German, Spanish, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish.'

The original colour scheme and furnishings of the public rooms and the bedrooms are fully described in the Souvenir Brochure produced for the opening event. The walls of the entrance vestibule were rose pink textured in Marb-l-cote (shades of the Midland!) and speckled with white and gold. The fluted arch was textured and painted in the colours of the rainbow; the skirting and seat were in walnut. The lounge on the first floor is described as 'a place to linger in, with its big settees and its soft artistic lighting...the walls are in orange, the columns bronze and part of the ceiling is in apple green.' There were 126 double bedrooms and 74 single bedrooms. On each floor the bedroom doors were a different colour – red, green, wine, turquoise and so on, apparently as an aid to room recognition for guests unfamiliar with the hotel. Each double room had twin beds, hot and cold water, central heating, a writing table and a telephone. The bathroom, however, was shared between the occupants of four bedrooms. Carpets were blue with an irregular black line; skirting and door facings were navy blue; walls were papered horizontally in a rough, speckled orange shade; ceilings were sunshine yellow. The Beith furniture was natural oak with black handles. Curtains and bedspreads were rich cream with designs in blue, black and orange; quilts were in powder blue. Drab the Beresford was not!

The hotel's 300-seater restaurant claimed to provide a very fast service, its kitchens having been planned only a few feet away. Despite this proximity, no cooking odours would have been noticeable as the powerful suction installation and canopies led them directly out of the building. The specimen breakfast menu provided with the brochure is very extensive with multiple choices for each course, starting with fruit juices and then fruit itself such as Honeydew melon or maybe stewed figs or prunes. After that the guest could sample the cereals, from porridge through to Cornflakes, Shredded Wheat, Rice Crispies or Grape Nuts. Next the fish course where the choice was between grilled kippers, fried fillet of sole or Findon haddock. Still hungry? Try grilled bacon or eggs before progressing to the meats – Scotch brawn, York ham, ox-tongue or sausage. To finish, perhaps some breakfast rolls and assorted jams with an accompanying cup of Maxwell House coffee or Cona coffee at an extra sixpence. As they said 'Breakfast is Breakfast at the Beresford'. After all this effort the exhausted guest would no doubt have welcomed the high-speed elevators to assist in his or her journey back to their room.

Other meals could be taken elsewhere in the hotel. On the Beresford's roof 'one can have high tea above the dust and din of the streets' – although it may have had its

own source of noise as the dog kennels were also located there. From the roof, on clear days, guests could enjoy magnificent views towards Ben Lomond or the Renfrew Hills or observe Tait's Tower 'looming up on the hill' at Bellahouston Park. Anyone who had taken snapshots or cine-film could then retire to 'the dark room for amateur photographers and cine-camera enthusiasts' and develop the results. The brochure also hoped, optimistically as it turned out, that 'if the summer suns are kindly there will be sun-bathing.' In the event, the summer suns of 1938 were anything but kindly and that season in Glasgow was marked by abnormally heavy rainfall, to the detriment of sunbathers and amateur photographers on the roof of the Beresford and to the finances of the Empire Exhibition.

Despite its stylish presence, jazzy colour schemes, up to date technology, experienced staff and international attitude the Beresford never did establish itself as a successful top echelon hotel. It never had time. Overtaken by events, it was requisitioned as a troop billet during the Second World War (echoes of the Midland). In the utility years that followed, the demand for hotel accommodation in Glasgow plummeted whilst staffing costs and other overheads rose alarmingly. W. Beresford Inglis sold his hotel to two Glasgow businessmen who promptly leased parts of it to ICI Ardseer Division for office use whilst the remaining space was taken by the Coal Board. In 1963 Strathclyde University bought the building for £430,000 for conversion into residential accommodation. It re-opened as the Baird Hall of Residence with 332 student bed spaces in October 1964 and, for over 15 years, during summer vacations, also operated as a touring centre for Saga holidays whose clients, according to the university authorities, drank their way through 5000 bottles of wine during the 1987 season. Was it stored, one wonders, in the same cellars which the Beresford once proudly boasted 'contain a most careful selection of choice wines and matured spirits'?

Gradually, Strathclyde University constructed purpose-built student residences closer to the university campus and in 2003 Baird Hall was sold to Beresford Developments who commissioned 3D Architects to convert the Grade B listed building into 112 apartments with 13,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. In the process the original colour scheme was reinstated and a stylish foyer was created evoking memories of the elegance of the 1930s. In 2007 one of the apartments with a lounge and one double bedroom was available for rent as self-catering accommodation at around £70 per night. Because it is so different the Beresford manages to hold its own in the company of some very prestigious neighbours. Just a short walk from its front door are Charles Rennie Mackintosh's masterpiece, the Glasgow School of Art, and Alexander 'Greek' Thompson's gorgeous Grecian Buildings.

Seventy years after it was built the Beresford still offers very stylish accommodation at a key location in the city.

Mike Stone

Continuing the theme of food...

A SECOND SLICE OF CAFÉ SOCIETY

Last year I wrote about impressions of Brucciani's ice cream parlour and the coming of the milk bar to 1930s Morecambe (*Seahorse* 16, May 2007), but where else might people have eaten out in the town and what sort of thing might they have been eating or drinking?

There was certainly plenty of choice as to where to eat. The *Lancaster, Morecambe and Suburban Directory* of 1934 lists 45 cafes in Morecambe which rises to 64 if you include ones in Heysham. The majority, as might be expected, lay along Marine Road and included two branches of Brucciani's (one in the West End, now Jose's Tapas Bar, still with its rear window depicting gazelles) and the other on Marine Road Central (further east than Brucciani's present location) with both the Carleton Restaurant and Stock's Crescent Cafe nearby (the original shop front to The Crescent is still to be seen at the entrance to Queen Street). Albert Road boasted five cafes (the Albert, Cabin, Empire, Savoy and Smith's) followed by Queen Street with three (Bottomley's, Brockey's and Marin). Several were tucked away in the West End such as the Bijou on Lancashire Street, the Brighton on West Street and The Creamery on Alexandra Road. The Figure 8 Fairground had two (the Verandah and one at Douglas Jordan's Skittle Alley) and others were to be found in Regent Part and Happy Mount Park. As well as the Bruccianis, the name of another Italian family, the Obertellis, features among the cafe proprietors with J. Obertelli at The Astoria and P. Obertelli at the Savoy Hotel, both on Marine Road.

Another Obertelli, this time S., is to be found as proprietor of The Gordon Fish Saloon on Springfield Street. This was one of the 25 fish & chip shops, all required to be discreetly located away from Marine Road. Atkinsons fish & chip shop is still to be found in its original Albert Road premises.

The hungry diner of 1934 might also have tried one of the 34 hotels, inns, etc (including the recently opened Midland Hotel or the Refreshment Bar at the Promenade Station) or one of the 30 private and commercial hotels.

Eating out had become increasingly popular during the first half of the twentieth century. Inevitably, the trend was most noticeable in London where successive waves of new eating houses largely replaced the plain Victorian and Edwardian, male-oriented chophouses. Lyons Corner Houses appeared from 1909, sandwich bars from the 1920s and milk bars from the 1930s. Here was lighter fare in surroundings aimed more towards female customers. Sandy's All British Sandwich Bars advertised 60 varieties of sandwich every day with 'no shellfish, no tinned food, no foreign produce, no tips, no waiting'. Later, the Black and White Milk Bars offered up to 25 sorts of soup at fourpence a bowl with oyster crackers. Thomas Burke was able to comment: 'To young people today, a London without popular restaurants to which almost anyone can go for any sort of meal is almost inconceivable, yet 50 years ago (London) had very few, if any, of that sort'.

But what might have actually been served to you on your plate? The closest that surviving advertising for Morecambe's hotels and eating establishments gets to mentioning food is the use of general terms like 'high class' and 'excellent cuisine'. For something more specific we need to see actual menus though these, by their nature, are ephemeral and few survive.

One interesting exception is the menu for the opening of the Midland Hotel itself on 12th July 1933. This lists Iced melon or Morecambe shrimps; Cold soup; Cold boiled salmon with green herb sauce; Roast saddle of lamb with new potatoes, green peas and mint

sauce; Strawberries with liqueur or ice cream and coffee. This sounds somewhat understated fare for such a special summer lunch though the wine list which included a Chablis Premiere, Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1918 and a Grand Champagne 1896 suggests that the lunch may indeed have been more special than it appears as a bare list of courses (the vintages were of their best – a bottle of 1896 Grand Champagne would today be priced at over £1,700).

By way of comparison, my one shilling copy of *Mrs Beeton's Cookery Book* (date unknown but certainly post 1896) includes a summer lunch menu listing Cold salmon with tartar sauce and cucumber; Roast chicken with potatoes and green peas; Cold lamb and salad; Cold raspberry and currant tart with custard; Maraschino jelly; Strawberries and cream; Cheese and biscuits, etc.

Both the Midland menu and Mrs Beeton are in a couple of senses quite modern, reflecting seasonally available food and food that could mostly have been sourced locally. The dishes are also essentially English in character and listed in English on the menu (only in her more elaborate dinner menus for 'ordinary middle-class households' does Mrs Beeton offer the names of the dishes in both English and French). The Midland's wine list does look deliberately overseas but no further than France.

Another lunch menu, this time from the Canadian Pacific ship *Montclare* sailing in the Mediterranean in 1938, is much more elaborate and, while solidly rooted in traditional English fare, there are clear continental intrusions in name if not substance. As with the other menus though, there were thin pickings for vegetarians. After a Plateau of Hors d'Oeuvres Variees (Bismarck Herrings, Cucumber Remoulade, Sour Gherkins, Chipped Beef Parisienne, Salad Bretonne and Assorted Sausages), anyone still hungry could choose from Minestrone Soup, Fillet of Cod Mornay, Nouilles with Parmesan Cheese, Chicken Livers with Savoury Rice, Parsnips with Cream Sauce and Mashed Potatoes.



Diners, Liner-style, 1936

*Detail from a menu cover
by A. K. Macdonald for
Cunard White Star, used for
the Farewell Dinner on board
the
RMS Lancastria, Thursday 16th
July.*

The Grill offered Mutton Chop, Peas and French Fried Potatoes while the Cold Buffet had Fresh Potted Herrings, Prime Roast Beef, Pressed Corned Pork, Galantine of Chicken, Jellied Ox Tongue, Leicester Brawn, Melton Mowbray Pie, Pressed Spiced Beef and Roast Lamb with Mint Sauce. Salads of Lettuce, Tomato, Beetroot, Radishes, Spring Onions and Watercress were accompanied by French Dressing or Mayonnaise. The lunch could be rounded off with Apricot Pie, Strawberry Ice Cream, Crackers, Cheese, Coffee and Tea.

Those eating at home saw changes too as nutrition improved. A national diet dominated by meat and fish at the start of the century (Mrs Beeton's dinner menus could include a choice of fish and several meat dishes including multiple chickens or ducklings) saw a trend towards more dairy products, cereal and fruit though also a rise in the consumption of fats and sugar. There was a trend too away from fresh produce with the rise of tinned and packet foods. New foods included baked beans, self-raising flour, jelly, custard powder, margarine, breakfast cereals and, in 1939, instant coffee.

Recipe books reflected these changes. Early twentieth century ones might still have included such solid fare as sheep's head soup, game rissoles or fig pudding. The *Daily Mail Cookery Book* of 1927 by contrast featured steamed fish, mousses, casseroles and some more clearly foreign dishes such as risotto. Few cooks admitted to using recipe books. Instead, most recipes were handed down or taken from newspapers or magazines so these new recipes were perhaps more aspirational than actual at the time. There were also regional differences and delays in the regions following London trends. A sample of the dishes reportedly eaten by Bolton mill workers in 1930 seems to hark back to the fare at the start of the century rather than the lighter fare appearing in London. Breakfast for them might have consisted of Jam sandwiches and tea, dinners – Potato or Meat and Potato pie, Lancashire hotpot or Potato hash with potatoes, carrots, peas and dripping and dumplings, Slow-cooked spare ribs with cabbage, Ham shank soup with peas, lentils and barley, tea – Rock salmon with chips, Bread and flour cakes and as treats – Vanillas or fruit pie.

The gas cooker rose to replace coal-fired ranges. Electric cookers also were beginning to appear alongside other electric kitchen appliances such as refrigerators which first appeared in 1927. These devices were regularly advertised and promoted locally. In 1939, for instance, the Gas Showroom on Morecambe Street advertised at least twice in *The Visitor* under headlines such as 'Gas is easier to cook with' or 'Quite the Latest! And built to last a lifetime'. Demonstrations were a popular form of promotion such as that of an Aga to cook a full meal at H.T. Walker's premises on Devonshire Road. The most lavish presentations that year seem to have been by the appropriately named Miss Cook, a *Creda* demonstrator at the Corporation Electricity Showrooms on Queen Street. There, sometimes twice daily over several consecutive days, Miss Cook would produce whole meals or selected dishes such as Roast pork, Girdle scones, Stuffed plaice, Biscuits and Apricot sponge. 'Easy on the Eye. Easy on the Wife' was the way electric cooking was billed in the advertisements.

Other electrical goods were also being promoted. There were washing machine demonstrations and, at Pye Motors in Lancaster, special refrigeration weeks. These seem to have involved commercial equipment mostly such as *Kelvinator* auto electric refrigerators, ice cream machines and mini milk bars though there were also household domestic cabinets. Ice cream demonstrations could also be arranged by appointment.

1936 even saw the first TV chef when a programme entitled *A Party Dish* by X. Marcel Boulestin or *Famous Cook at Work* was recorded by the BBC.

Peter Wade