



Life seems to pass a little more slowly in Budleigh Salterton today, indeed the town is often tagged by the locals as remaining in a 1950's time warp. The High Street pictured above is a glorious mix of small business. One shop specialises only in teddy bears, both old and new, and another acts an art gallery and high quality trinket shop. Traditional Devon clotted cream teas and good old fish and chips are available from a number of faintly 'staid' establishments. Several greengrocers, butchers and bakers still trade in a town where there's no supermarket. The main street being so narrow that traffic only crawls through the town even on a quiet day.



Pictured Above:
Views to the west

In an 1870 Gazetteer, Budleigh Salterton was described as having *"a great reputation for the purity and healthiness of its air, and many of its inhabitants took up their residence in it 10, 20, and 30 years ago, not expecting to live as many months."* Well after a stroll through the town you could be forgiven for thinking some of them were still alive today!

Only a few years earlier in 1857 a little bit of local colour was recorded when William Mutter and Charles Blackmore were committed to the Devon County Gaol for safe custody on a charge of illegally landing 45 tubs of brandy under the cliffs between Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton.

From even earlier writing in 1260, Geoffrey Legat, a prior, recorded the customs of the manor. The tenants agreed that the prior had the right to every porpoise caught in the Otter estuary, and he paid, for each one, twelve pence and a loaf of white bread to every sailor, and two to the master of the fishing boat.

More recently, in 1941 at nearby Lympstone, the Royal Marine Camp was training 800 Royal Marines a month for war service. During this period a second camp at Dalditch in Budleigh Salterton was home to the Royal Marines Infantry Training Centre (RMITC), which was responsible for the second phase of training. Records for 1946 show that 3,000 officers and men were living in 74 wooden huts at Lympstone, with an average 1,000 recruits under training at any one time. Sometime after the war, Dalditch was closed and Lympstone renamed, the Infantry Training Centre.

The only visit I've ever made to the camp was in the late 1960's when towns in the region were being selected for the 'It's a Knockout' TV programme. I'm still quite proud of myself for surviving the assault course and being selected for the team!



Other childhood memories centre on the railway, (my grandparents had a house backing onto the platform above) I believe we actually took a train from Budleigh to Weston-Super-Mare for one holiday in the 50's. Sadly, Dr. Beeching had his way in 1967 and the line was closed.

Budleigh still makes the news though. Only last month, a Royal Marine and a Sherpa reached the summit of Everest in the run-up to the 50th anniversary of its first ascent. Marine warrant officer Dave Pearce and Chhring Dorje were part of a Royal Navy team - the first in the navy to organise an Everest expedition - tackling the mountain via the difficult North Ridge. Speaking from the summit, Warrant Officer Pearce, 39, from Budleigh Salterton, Devon, said: "This is great for the team, it's been a hoofing team effort."

Budleigh Salterton to me is still part of the real England, a quiet genteel sort of place, lacking in many of the things that we can't seem to live without today but retaining those traditions, like Saturday football and Sunday cricket, that make it home.

