

Looking Back

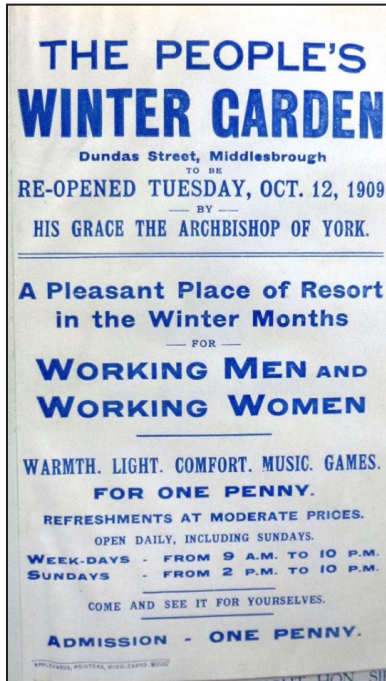
with Chris Lloyd



ECHO MEMORIES
More than just
a supplement

Darlington's Covered Market could soon feature a "winter garden"

Wintering in the warm



IN THE GARDENS: A 1909 poster advertising the Winter Gardens, far left. Main picture: The Middlesbrough working men - and a couple of their children - relaxing in the gardens in their flat caps, and Lady Florence Bell

Pictures courtesy of Newcastle university and Teesside Archives

THE PEOPLE'S WINTER GARDEN
Dundas Street, Middlesbrough
RE-OPENED TUESDAY, OCT. 12, 1909
BY HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.
A Pleasant Place of Resort in the Winter Months
FOR WORKING MEN AND WORKING WOMEN
WARMTH. LIGHT. COMFORT. MUSIC. GAMES.
FOR ONE PENNY.
REFRESHMENTS AT MODERATE PRICES.
OPEN DAILY, INCLUDING SUNDAYS.
WEEK-DAYS - FROM 9 A.M. TO 10 P.M.
SUNDAYS - FROM 2 P.M. TO 10 P.M.
COME AND SEE IT FOR YOURSELVES.
ADMISSION - ONE PENNY.



aims by providing an "attractive place of resort to the working classes of Middlesbrough, at a charge of a penny for admission", to draw upon Lady Bell's description of the venue in the first annual report held in Middlesbrough Reference Library.

Opened on October 24, 1907, the Winter Garden provided games, reading, refreshments and music. With its glass ceilings and good lighting, it was in stark contrast to many of the cramped, dull slum houses that many ironworkers called home.

In its first season, from October 1907 to May 1908, there were 146,122 admissions to the People's Palace. The annual report for that first season said: "On cold raw mornings people frequently come in to read

the papers and sit by the fire as soon as the doors are open. We have, in addition to the hot water radiators all round the building, an open fire place, which is much appreciated and always surrounded. In the middle of the building are a number of tile-topped tables on which games can be played...The games available are cards, ludo, dominoes, draughts and chess."

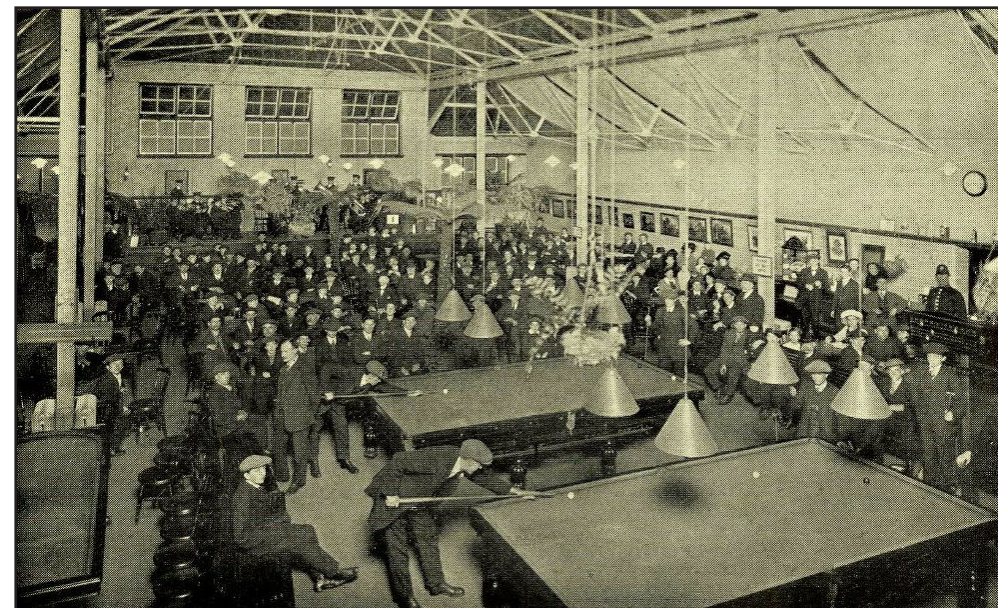
In the first year entertainment was provided by a range of performers including Dorman's Silver, North Ormsby and Cleveland Steelworkers bands, as well as a harmonic orchestra and gramophone concerts. Plants and greenery were placed throughout the venue and brought "much pleasure to the people", with bird cages containing singing canaries a later addition.



BREAK FOR BILLIARDS: Working men enjoying the Winter Gardens at the time of its opening.

AIRY ROOM: The dining room beneath the hanging baskets at the Winter Gardens.

Pictures courtesy of Teesside Archives



If you have anything to add to today's Echo Memories:

Write: **Chris Lloyd, The Northern Echo, Priestgate, Darlington, DL1 1NF**
Email: **chris.lloyd@nne.co.uk** Call: **01325-505062** Tweet: **@echo.chrislloyd**
Comment: on the **Echo Memories** blog on the Echo website

FACTS FROM THE PAST

The 1868-70 restoration of St Mary's Church in Barnard Castle discovered that the 14th Century tower was too dangerous to allow the bells to be rung

#echomems

- but it wouldn't be the first in the area, says Dr Tosh Warwick



IN THE HEADLINES: The Northern Echo reported on October 25, 1907, how Lady Bell's Winter Garden had been opened the day before. It said it would be "a place of counter-attraction to the public-house". In her opening speech, reported the Echo, Lady Bell had said that "more resorts were needed for the working man in his leisure". He couldn't wander the streets aimlessly. "What do the streets of Middlesbrough look like on a wet day?" she asked. "The streets are full of slush and the sky, I verily believe, is full of slush, too." To escape the slush, he often ended up in the pub. She didn't seem to blame the working man for falling to temptation, because the Echo reported that she said: "She did not think the working man, working eight hours a day, was fitted to spend all his leisure hours in improving himself, and in that she included the working man's wife as well." Lady Bell concluded: "I hope she will come here with him, and his children too, if he does not bring too many."

One of the notable features was Bell's ban on those ill of alcohol and gambling.

Police and staff would monitor gambling and betting at the venue with those breaking the rules asked to "discontinue their attendance at the Winter Garden", while warning placards against the practice were on display.

On the refreshment front, tea, coffee, cocoa and Oxo were among the offerings as well as a number of "temperance drinks".

The institution went on to play an important role at times of turmoil. During the 1912 coal strike, the Winter Garden provided shelter and 5,811 free meals for those rendered almost destitute by the dispute.

After the outbreak of the First World War, the Winter Garden admitted 200 Belgian refugees for free

along with over 200 wounded soldiers from Hemlington Hospital. The women attendees also hosted war knitting parties on Tuesday afternoons with articles sent to charities like the Romanian Red Cross. This knitting continued after the war to help a Baby Welfare Centre.

The Winter Garden was subject to praise from many quarters. It was held up as an exemplar of leisure provision in newspapers across the country and hailed as a "pleasant place of resort" by The British Journal of Inebriety.

Leading national figures such as Herbert Samuel MP, Sir Edward Grey and the Archbishop of York were among those who praised Lady Bell's work and performed the ceremonial opening of the Winter Garden for new seasons.

The economic difficulties of the



GOING GREEN: An artist's impressions, unveiled last week, of how Darlington's Victorian Covered Market could look if a "winter garden", or temperate garden, is added with a mezzanine level overlooking the market place



interwar years, the rise of new entertainment and the death of Lady Bell in 1930 all posed challenges for the venue in the lead up to the Second World War.

The decaying venue was eventually felled to make way for the Dundas Arcade shopping centre as Middlesbrough looked to reinvent itself as a commercial and retail town.

There has, however, been renewed interest in the Winter Garden in recent years and a new blue plaque has been installed as part of the interactive Tees Transporter Trail, while other projects are currently planned for celebrating this often overlooked part of Middlesbrough's heritage.

Dr Tosh Warwick is a research associate at Manchester Metropolitan University



BLUE PLAQUE: The Dundas Street shopping centre now occupies the site of the Winter Garden

A REMARKABLE case was unfolding at Mount Pleasant, near Stanley Crook 150 years ago this month.

The Bishop Auckland bailiff, John Pigg, called at the Cavanaghs' house to collect goods belonging to William Cavanagh to pay off a debt and was attacked by two women. "Sarah Cavanagh got hold of him and bit his arms and hands until blood flowed profusely, while Mary, her sister, struck him several times violently with a poker and rescued some goods after they had been taken away by his men," said the Darlington & Stockton Times.

The women were fined £2 each, but as they couldn't pay were sent to the Durham House of Correction for two months hard labour.

The following week, the D&S Times reported that without the two women, Mr Cavanagh had been unable to cope and had moved in a new housekeeper. She had noticed an unpleasant smell coming from under a shakedown bed and, upon investigation, had found the body of a female baby wrapped in an apron.

Police said that a mark around the baby's neck matched the strings of the apron.

Neighbours said they had noticed that the sister Mary had once been "in the family way".

"If this be so," said the D&S with its eyes popping with wonderment, "the women's decisive resistance of the bailiff and rescuing the goods can easily be accounted for."

The following week, the D&S reported an inquest in Crook police station into the baby's death had returned a verdict of 'wilful murder, and that Mary Ann O'Brien, alias Cavanagh, would be appearing on this charge at the Durham Assizes in the summer.