

# THE SOUTH WEST MEETING IN BRISTOL

21 September 2024

An enthusiastic group of MLS members gathered in Bristol for the hugely enjoyed annual 'Bristol Bash'. We began with a little 'leg' – or rather 'tooth' – pulling reflecting Andrew Gill's dental difficulties (you can picture the slipping slide). **Kevin Varty** then told us about slides by Northampton photographer **Henry Cooper** that Kevin acquired from his grandson ... **Henry Cooper** (son of **Henry Cooper**). The main archive had been sold to Getty but these 200 were his personal slides, found in a coal cellar. About 50 had deteriorated beyond repair but the rest were local views and scenes of elsewhere in the UK, e.g. the Isle of Wight. Some were hand-coloured using 'oil colour, water colour and crayon'.



Henry Cooper slide, featuring ... Henry Cooper



Victoria Gardens, Bristol (c.1850)

Next **Andrew Gill** gave a stirring rendering of *Jane Conquest*. Then **John Finney** challenged us with a series of rebus puzzle slides

– eventually the audience became quite proficient at 'translating' them. Next **Jennifer and Keith Utteridge** took us round old Bristol starting with a hand-painted slide c.1850 of Victoria Square, Clifton (developed from 1820 – the 'posh' area) with surprisingly accurate buildings, even chimneys, compared to the buildings today. We saw early photographic slides of the docks and Floating Harbour (a solution to the perils of the great rise and fall of the tide), shipping in the centre of Bristol where now the river has been filled in, and the building of the tramway centre along with other landmarks in the city, some now moved or no longer there, including the mediaeval part. One slide showed huge crowds at the



Grace Darling to the rescue

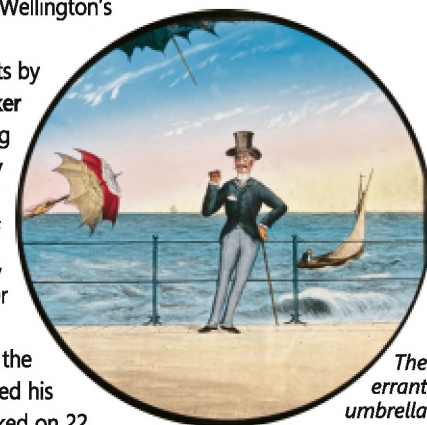
unveiling of the now-controversial statue of **Edward Colston**. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the RNLI, **Rene and Allan Marriott** brought us the story of **Grace Darling**, daughter of the keeper of Longstone lighthouse, who helped rescue five crew of the paddle-steamer *Forfarshire* off the Northumberland coast in September 1838. Grace



Graystone Bird in Castle Combe area

became the first lifeboat heroine. They followed this with a selection of sea rescue slides accompanied by a similarly themed song. **Martin Gilbert** then showed us two recent acquisitions. First was a chromatrope-effect optical toy (without required steam engine to power it) featured in the 1902 Bing catalogue and then, a highlight of the day, we had to move to the main hall as Martin produced a stunning 66-foot-long panorama of the Duke of Wellington's funeral in 1852, published in 1853 by Ackermann.

Allan Marriott showed amazing gymnastic feats by a group in Burgess Hill (c.1910). **Jeremy Brooker** projected propaganda slides promoting temperance, keeping Sunday special (neither overly successful) and banning the sale of alcohol to children (which was enacted) ... plus an advert for cycle football. **Alan Brindle** then gave us a feast of Graystone Bird slides (mainly acquired from Andrew Gill), first of rural scenes around Castle Combe, Wiltshire (c.1906) and then studio shots. **Andrew Gill** brought us the 'true' story of drunkard **Roger Groves**, *Roger's Ghost*, "who had a fright and saw the light" – or did he?



The errant umbrella

After a couple of slides reflecting the day's inclement weather (rain), Kevin Varty continued the temperance theme with *Dip Your Roll in Your Own Pot at Home* – concerning a man who literally dipped his roll in pub landlady **Bridget's** stew, leading to his reformation. One slide carried a label that it was cracked on 22 February 1910! **Alan Brindle** then picked up on the weather with the tale of the errant umbrella which took a journey of its own, causing mayhem, on a windy day near the sea. **Mary Ann Auckland** showed a random selection including a windmill, beautifully projected by **John Finney** who was our expert projectionist for the day. The Marriotts showed some recent acquisitions, most were lifeboat-related.



**Keith Utteridge** then concluded with a late **Bamforth** song set showing the superb quality they developed, no doubt influenced by their business dealings in New York. The now famous fish and chips arrived, concluding another wonderful meeting organised by the Utteridges!

