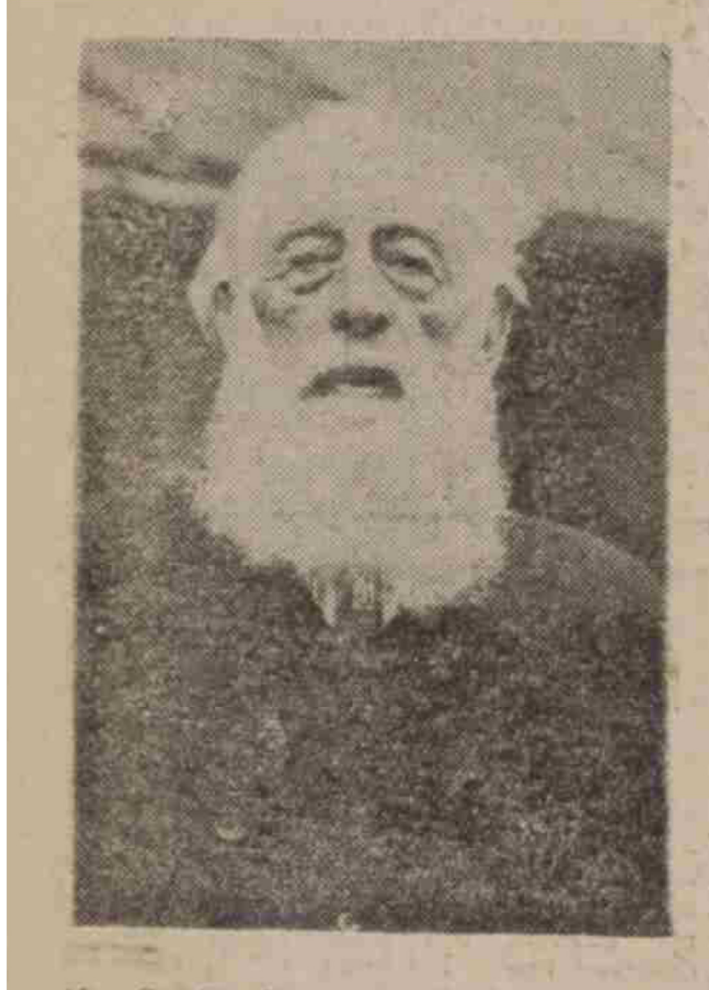


Mr Perrett:

Totterdown's Father Christmas

D.P. Lindegaard



Charles Rose Perrett – 86th Birthday



"This may seem a silly question," one of the Mums said at the Grand Opening of the playground in the Park on the 2nd April 2015, "but why is it called Perrett? Is it after somebody?"

"We always called it Perrett's Park," said another, pausing from handing out fairy cakes from a Quality Street tin.

"So did we!" a third joined in. "Was there a Mr Perrett? He must have been somebody famous, I expect."

"Or she....." mused the first Mum thoughtfully.

Such is the fleeting nature of celebrity. The conversation ended abruptly as the currently famous Mr. Don Cameron arrived and began to tinker with one of his balloons which, although tethered and grounded, was nevertheless, very impressive. A crowd gathered round as the great balloon slowly but quietly inflated and drifted silently a few feet upwards on its ropes. A cheeky child in the front row announced to the world that it was her birthday and with that was hoisted up into the balloon's basket. The balloon swayed in the breeze.

"I'm seven," the little girl said proudly. There was a brief flutter of applause and a clamouring of children who all wanted "a ride".

"Only those with a birthday today," Mr Cameron said genially, "otherwise I would have to take you all."

Nobody else was lucky.

"It was my birthday yesterday," a boy said morosely to no-one in particular.

Apart from this one disappointed lad, it was a happy scene. As well as the balloon there were swings and roundabouts and climbing frames. For those with artistic leanings there were sculptures to look at, with a pea-pod bench beautifully carved by Andy O'Neill from one of the Park's own trees, a Monterrey Cypress, felled in 2014; for the gardeners, there were plant and herb sales; for the artistically inclined, a competition had been organised for the best decorated Easter Egg: clowns and ladybirds and all manner of colourful abstracts abounded though one was suggested a suitable subject



for another time, an egg to mirror Mr Don Cameron's namesake, the then Prime Minister, who closely resembles a boiled egg. No matter. Some of the eggs which did not win were raced down the steep slopes of the Park. One egg which was not-quite-hard-boiled escaped from its fragile shell and spattered yellow yuck up the accompanying child's leg, but, game girl, rather like Felix,¹ she kept on running.

The Park, on high ground is a natural amphitheatre which affords a panoramic vista over the fair city of Bristol. You can see as far as the Clifton Suspension Bridge, Ashton Court and the City Centre. What a sight unfolds. In the summer, the Park hosts

picnics, and crowds come in cotton frocks, shorts, jeans and tee shirts. The Red Arrows thunder across the sky, trailing vaporous wisps of red, white and blue amid cheers. Fireworks explode above the bowl on Guy Fawkes' night and on New Year's Eve. In the dead of winter, though the anxious prayers of children for snow generally go unanswered, the weather-god occasionally obliges. Then the Park reverberates with whoops and hollers and the whining wheesh of toboggans (for the lucky ones), tin trays and other household implements for the others and they streak down the steep banks. As the seasons turn back to summer, the multifarious, multi-coloured balloons of Mr Cameron's annual Festival draw more crowds.

Seventy-odd years ago it was a different, more sombre, story. If there were voices at all in that grey and black time, they might be heard through the murk shouting "Get that bleedin' light out!" or the inevitable "Don't you know there's a War on?" The Park played its vital part in the War effort. There were other



¹ Artistic licence: Felix kept on walking

balloons then, Barrage Balloons, sinister dark shapes floating bulbously above the amphitheatre, protecting the city from low flights or pin-point bombing by the Luftwaffe.

Each balloon was held fast to the ground by a steel hawser, strong enough to destroy any aircraft that collided with it. The cable was itself locked into heavy metal rings set in reinforced concrete. The rings were made to last and so they did, surviving as relics of that desperate time, re-discovered during the excavations for the playground.



A Barrage Balloon.

The Park had become indispensable in an unforeseen way. Mr. Charles Rose Perrett, a real person, was in his time, certainly 'somebody famous', in his adopted city of Bristol at any rate; had he lived, he would now be 172 years old. He would have been very pleased with his efforts, especially as a patriotic Englishman. In 1902 he and his wife, Mary Ann had celebrated the Coronation, which had previously been postponed owing to the illness of the King, Edward VII, by

..... “two strings of flags suspended from a top window at their home, 126 Wells Road, a transparent portrait of the royal couple, with Chinese lanterns and umbrellas”,² as reported in the local press.

Charles originally had the idea of a park for Knowle before the First World War. On the 17th February 1914 he stated

“We do not want a large place.....we would be thankful for small mercies.”

The scheme was sadly overtaken by events and it was not until New Year’s Day 1923 that a Mr. James Ellis of 240 Bath Road wrote to the Western Daily Press suggesting that the Bristol City Councillors, namely Messrs. Keen, Wise & Perrett should try to secure land at Crowndale and Bayham Roads before it was too late and it had been snapped up for building. The letter may have been a ruse to engage the media, for it is likely to have been privately discussed round a family dinner table; Mr. Ellis, though the relationship is not stated, was Councillor Perrett’s half-brother.

Thus, that spring, Charles Perrett managed to obtain an option on ten acres, formerly part of the Greville Smythe Estate at Bayham Road and Sylvia Avenue, two thirds of which was under cultivation as allotments. Mr. Perrett stated that 18,000 people would be served by the park as a place of recreation and offered to donate £500 out of his own pocket towards the scheme. The Council considered the proposal and the cost was calculated:

Cost of 10 acres of land: £1,000
Fencing: £900
Layout: £1,000
Cost of abutting roads: £2,135
Sub Total: £5,035
Less £500 from Mr. Perrett
TOTAL: £4,535

The land was formally acquired in November 1923. Surprisingly, the costs do not appear to have spiralled out of control. In April 1925, the final total was said to be £5,100, which included a new portion of road. Mr. Perrett had provided six seats for the elderly in the Park and it was hoped that a fountain would be installed in the near future.

The Country Boy: 1843-1873

Mr. Charles Rose Perrett, the founder of the feast, had not been born rich; far from it. He came into the world in very poor circumstances in the small hamlet of Marston, near Devizes in Wiltshire, born to a single girl, Eliza Perrett, aged seventeen. Eliza lived with her widowed mother Mary and younger sister Maria, two years her junior.

² Western Daily Press, 9.7.1902

Marston even now is a very small place, boasting a post box, a phone box, a bus stop and a village green with a duck pond. Christchurch which is shared between Marston and the neighbouring hamlet of Worton was built in 1841, as a "Chapel of Ease", necessary in those God-fearing days to take the overflow of the expanding population of the nearby 'metropolis' of Potterne. Baptists and Primitive Methodists also had their own places of worship in the hamlets.

Granny Perrett's cottage was probably a dark, dank and malodorous hovel with little comfort for those who struggled to make the best of things therein. Stuffy and airless in summer, when life was lived outdoors as far as possible, it was leaky when it rained, and it was worse in winter. Charles was born in the last years of a 'mini Ice-Age'. An old inhabitant told of icy roads impassable through snow and coal unobtainable despite the nearness of the Mendip coalfield. One year, in dire circumstances with everybody near freezing, a gang of unemployed men were said to have gone to Radstock and manually dragged back a load of coal on a farmer's cart. When the villagers had no coal they burned dried cow dung or bean husks left over from the harvest. Perhaps Mary hung a cooking pot over the welcome fire to feed her family when the coal finally arrived:

*'pease pudding hot, pease pudding cold,
pease pudding in the pot nine days old'*

went the old rhyme. There would never have been enough to eat and meat was seldom on the table; even tea was a luxury to be wetted, dried and the leaves reused several times. Water had to be drawn from the communal well. Other facilities that we take for granted were non-existent. A privy, often called "the Jericho" would be shared between families. (Its little brother was of course the portable 'Jerry' or chamber pot). We know that Mary, a woman in her fifties, existed hand to mouth by 'farming work' and so did her daughters, as recorded by the census man in 1841 when he called with his book.

Baby Perrett came into the world on the 6th January 1843 and was christened at the still new Christchurch a month later. Unlike most other children of the time, (apart from the frequent Mary Anns and Sarah Janes) he stood out by having two Christian names. A middle name, if used, was generally the mother's or grandmother's surname or was included to flatter a rich relation who might thus be encouraged to leave the child something 'in the will'. The latter category could, at a pinch, apply to young Charles, as the name 'Rose' is likely to have been his father's surname. In adulthood, Charles would guard the circumstances of his birth, for a stigma attached to such a beginning until comparatively recent times.

In the small world of Marston-Worton we have to assume that everybody knew of Eliza's 'trouble' and two suspects immediately enter the frame for consideration for the role as the baby's father. They were brothers, local farmers, James and Job Rose, and though I should know better than to 'give a dog a bad name, and hang him', the younger of the two, Job, for reasons that will become clear, seems to me to be the more likely candidate, though there is not one jot of proof; the evidence is circumstantial and rests entirely on that middle name.

James and Job Rose lived with their step-mother Martha, close by Granny Perrett and her girls but in rather more comfortable circumstances; James, the elder brother, a

yeoman farmer, is listed in 1841 as the head of the household. He was in his middle thirties, some five years older than Job. Jabez and Elina Lewis aged 10 and 8, the children of the brothers' sister Jane were also part of the family, as were two resident servants, Rebecca Dolly, aged 25 and Ann Gunston, aged 20.

As a leap in the dark, I suggest that Mary Perrett and her daughters laboured at the Rose farm and that at some time in 1842, Eliza had become pregnant by one or other of the brothers, who perhaps had even, horrible thought, exercised a rustic *droit de seigneur*.

At the very least, Job Rose had 'a reputation'. In the year before Charles Rose Perrett was born Job had appeared at the Devizes Petty Sessions charged with an assault on one of his neighbours. Thomas Potter who was some twenty years Job's senior, lived at Lutsey Farm, Worton. The parties in the affair are called 'Mr Job Rose' and 'Mr Thomas Potter' in the newspaper article which is reproduced here verbatim, except that I have usually omitted these full names and titles to avoid tedious repetition. In a period hamstrung by class consciousness, the use of 'Mr.' indicates that the status of both was a cut above that of the common labourer, the ubiquitous 'ag. lab.' The piece could have come straight from a Victorian 'Penny dreadful':

'Job Rose was charged with assaulting Thomas Potter at Marston. As Potter was going into his field, he met Rose on horseback who gave him the customary salutation "*Good Morning*".

"Fine Morning," Potter replied.

"And you are a fine fellow," Rose said, sarcastically, *"and a shabby fellow too."*

Having thus departed of his good manners, he quickly parted with his temper too. He descended from his horse and having tied the animal to a tree, made up to Thomas Potter, who a few minutes before he had wished "*Good Morning*" and dealt him three or four blows about the face and head.

Job Rose said that if the magistrates knew of the circumstances which led to the blows they would deal with him leniently to which he received the reply: *"But you must not take the law into your own hands."*

"I should not have struck him at all," said Rose, *"If I did not think he would strike me again."*

"A very likely thing," retorted Thomas Potter, *"that I should strike a man double my size and weight!"*

"But who would have thought," said Rose, *"that you would have summoned me for such a trifle? The next time you serve me a dirty mean trick I will put the horse whip about your sides, if I hang for it the next morning! I only regret I didn't do it on this occasion."*

The magistrates found the case proved and Job Rose was fined 10 shillings plus costs.³

It is easy to picture the pair: Rose, burly, red-faced, blustering, and the little man, Potter, at first indignant and then reeling with shock at the onslaught. What were the extenuating circumstances to which Rose alluded?

I hazard a guess that Job was the subject of village gossip, for Charles Rose Perrett was not Eliza's first child. She was about four months pregnant when the census man called in June 1841 and the following November gave birth to a baby daughter, Lydia. Tragically, Lydia was buried on the 18th December at just four weeks old. Eliza was barely sixteen at the time. Despite my conjecture concerning Charles' birth, there is not the slightest indication to suggest that either of the Rose brothers fathered Lydia. In any case the baby died before the Parish officials could become involved in the matter and the only evidence that she ever existed at all is the record of her sad little funeral in the parish register.

It must also be said that when Charles was born in 1843, neither his mother Eliza Perrett nor either Job or James Rose (as far as I can find) appear in the list of 'Bastardy Cases' heard at Devizes Petty Sessions. If an unmarried girl became pregnant and then gave birth, she would be rigorously questioned in order to get her to reveal the identity of the father of her child. The miscreant would be sternly admonished and encouraged to marry her, even on occasions locked up whilst he made up his mind, but if he denied paternity and withstood the pressure, he could be taken before the magistrates. If the case was deemed proved, then the putative father was obliged to pay for the upkeep of the child until he or she was able to go to work. Mother and child might otherwise have fallen 'on the Parish' or as a last resort, been obliged to enter the Workhouse. Maintenance of course did not apply in the case of baby Lydia, but Charles Rose's father, whoever he was, seems to have made private arrangements with Eliza Perrett which are not recorded.

In 1844, Job Rose went to Bristol, and came back with a wife which I imagine caused as much surprise in the hamlets as it did to me, for the bride's name was Perrett. Rebecca.....Perrett!



The marriage took place at St Mary Redcliffe on the 1st May 1844 with Job Rose described as a 'farmer' the son of William Rose, likewise a farmer. The couple had established residence in Bristol at Redcliffe Street, were 'bachelor' and 'spinster' and 'of full age' which at the time was 'over 21'. They both signed their names, as did their witnesses, who were none other than the bride's parents, Isaac and Lydia Perrett. From the parents' presence we can deduce that they either welcomed their new son-in-law with

³ Devizes & Wilts Gazette 14.4.1842

open arms or held a shotgun at his head, for the birth of a baby boy, Benjamin, was registered at Devizes in the same June Quarter of 1844. A Bristol wedding smacks of subterfuge and I suspect they concocted a fiction for the benefit of nosey parkers that they had married in the big city a respectable number of months before the birth of their child.

Isaac Perrett of Worton, Rebecca's father, a yeoman farmer, was thus equal in status to Job Rose and therefore Rebecca was higher up the pecking order than Eliza Perrett. In 1845 Eliza herself was married to a farm labourer, Solomon Ellis and two year old Charles Rose came as part of the package. The two families settled down in close proximity.

In 1846 Rebecca Rose gave birth to a second son, Emanuel, and he was christened along with his elder brother Benjamin at Christchurch, Worton Marston on the 20th February 1846. Almost exactly a year later, on the 24th February 1847, a daughter, Fanny was baptised.

Settled family life did nothing to curb Job Rose's bad temper and in October 1847 he made another court appearance, even more unsavoury than the last; it was stated⁴

'that he did wantonly beat a pony with a whip at Potterne on the evening of Thursday last. At about 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening, Mr. Rose [note the continued deference] returned from the market in a pony and gig in the company of a person called Oram. They drove to the George Public House where they alighted and from some motive the whip was unmercifully displayed across the pony's back, Mr. Rose offering a wager at



the time that he would drive it up the steps leading to the house.

'The George' now 'The George & Dragon',⁵ at Potterne.

The entrance is up the steps where Job Rose forced his unfortunate pony.

⁴ Ibid, 28.10.1847

⁵ The name of the pub was changed circa 1891. Photograph by kind permission of the current landlord, Mr Ben Wallace.

'A respectable tradesman named Marshment of Potterne went for the Superintendent of Police and requested he put a stop to it. Mr. Rose was deaf to all entreaties and subsequently the whip was taken off him.' Several prosecution witnesses (unnamed) were called but apart from Marshment they 'seemed disposed to say as little as possible about the matter'.

Mr. Wittey for the defendant, called witnesses 'to prove there was no cruelty or wantonness' but the Bench disagreed and found Rose guilty. He was fined 20 shillings, plus another 20 shillings costs.

There is absolutely no doubt that Rose was a cad and a bully who held the villagers in such thrall that apart from Marshment, none would speak against him. The kindly Samuel Marshment was a baker and grocer in the High Street at Potterne and the other person involved probably 'William Oram', a cooper of Worton.

Potterne had a reputation for fights, drunkenness and general disorder. A government report in 1834 branded the people 'a very discontented and turbulent race'. A gang of rowdies were known ironically as 'The Potterne Lambs', who were characterised by 'a sort of spontaneous volition which visited itself in one direction or another and not always in accordance with good manners and decorum.' There was a tradition of 'Skimmington', the public shaming of a cuckolded man or a nagging wife. There were six pubs in the village, supporting a population of less than 1,200 and the mayhem climaxed at the 'Feast' held annually on the 19th September. One local farmer, who had "enough summonses to paper his wall" is unfortunately un-named, but we have our suspicions, don't we, children? The stocks were situated at 'the Bash' the road outside The George.



Hogarth's depiction of a Skimmington

On the 9th March 1848, a notice appeared in the Wiltshire Independent that James and Job Rose of Marston Farm, County of Wiltshire had dissolved their partnership by mutual consent but gives no more details of the falling-out between the two brothers.

In May 1849⁶ another sorry tale went to court when Job Rose brought an action against a Mr. Dowse, a cattle dealer, to reclaim the sum of £9.15s.0d which Dowse had agreed to pay him for a dairy cow. The animal was originally purchased from a farmer called Harris, by Mr. Biggs of the Royal Oak Inn for £10. Biggs soon realised that the cow was not fit, but being advised that the auction price included 'all faults and errors', it was taken off his hands as 'an act of friendship' by Job Rose for £9. Rose then immediately sold it on to Mr. Dowse and the reporter paints a pretty scene of 'the three friends' in convivial chatter on the green outside the pub whilst the deal was done. Mr Dowse agreed to pay Rose £9.15s.0d for the cow the following Tuesday. The case hinged on whether a warranty had been given that the cow was sound, Biggs allegedly telling Dowse that "she was one of the best milkers Mr. Harris had on his farm", though subsequently a man called Gilbert stated he had been employed by Harris to "tickle up" cattle for sale, and the animal in the case had long been dry and was known to be unsound. After a short deliberation the Jury decided a warranty had been given and found for the defendant Dowse. The cow by now had wasted away to practically nothing, was not much more than a skeleton and was worth less than a pound. Job Rose had lost the £9 he paid Biggs, plus five weeks of feed for the cow (though this cannot have amounted to much, given the state of the creature), plus the cost of the action.

On the 6th March 1850, Job and Rebecca Rose baptised another son, George, at Christchurch. The census of 1851 records the family as Job, aged 41, now a maltster, his wife Rebecca, 30, and their children Benjamin, 6, Fanny, and George, aged one. The little boy Emanuel is missing and reminds us again of the shocking rate of infant mortality of the time. Also in the household was Charles Lewis, Job's nephew, aged 13, and Ann Brooks, also thirteen, the family skivvy.

Job's brother James Rose never married. In 1851, he was aged 46, well-to-do, with a farm of 300 acres at Potterne where he employed twenty labourers. Another nephew and niece Catherine, 16, and Jabez Lewis, 20, were living with him as well as a servant, Sarah Burbidge.

Also in 1851, Solomon and Eliza Ellis, aged 28 and 26 respectively, were living at Marston and now had a son, Joseph Ellis, aged one. Charles Perrett who was also described 'son' was aged 8, but listed below Joseph in the household hierarchy. Eliza's sister Maria Perrett, aged 22, 'a visitor' was also in the house on census night.

On the 9th May 1853, Job Rose, 'a respectable farmer of Marston' was arrested again, this time for an assault on a policeman, Thomas Bricker of Tinhead. The affair is notable for two totally conflicting stories. Pc Bricker encountered Job a few minutes after he had left a pub, the Lamb at Tinhead. He said that Rose asked whether he was the local policeman and when he said he was, "struck me a violent blow with his fist." Rose then pushed him to the ground and beat him with a stick. After a struggle in which both men rolled around in the road, Bricker managed to get "a slip" (a handcuff) on Rose, during which Rose bit him twice on the hand. Bricker then took Rose back to the pub where he asked David Sperring, the landlord, to assist in taking the prisoner to the station at Steeple Ashton but Sperring refused. As he could not manage to do so by himself, Bricker was obliged to remove the slip whereupon Rose struck him again. Bricker told

⁶ Devizes & Wilts Gaz.10.5.1849

the court *"He said if he had a stick he would murder me. Mr Sperring called the doctor and I also sought medical advice. I could not return to my duties for several days."*⁷

The newspaper report continues, 'From the policeman's account, it would appear that Mr. Job Rose was unscathed,' to which the hack added with relish, 'Now for the other side,' from which we gather from Mr. Sperring, the landlord, that Mr. Rose had been drinking at his pub. About twenty minutes after he left, he returned with the policeman.

"He was faint. His face was covered in blood. I said to the policeman 'Brother, you have killed the man,' and he said, 'I am sorry for it.' I asked him to take off the slip and he did so when I told him the man would die. It took me several minutes to get the blood off Mr. Rose who had cuts to the head, two of which I could lay my finger in. I sent for Mr. Tucker the surgeon who at first thought the left arm was broken. The policeman was very much affected, fearful that Mr. Rose was going to die. His hands and face were bloody, but the blood was Mr Rose's. I did not see any wounds on him."

Mr. Tucker, the surgeon was then called. He described Rose's wounds as about three inches long, one on the forehead, the two others between the scalp and nose. He thought at first the man's arm was fractured, but this was not the case, though it was badly bruised and his thighs were discoloured. The surgeon stated that Bricker, the policeman, was labouring under *"a determination of blood to the brain, sometimes constitutional, sometimes through intemperance. It might have been the result of a blow."*

Mr. Arney, for the defendant said the policeman was the first assailant and was therefore responsible for what had subsequently occurred.

The case which was reported on the 7th July took seven hours. The Jury found Rose not guilty and he was formally released, though it is unlikely he had spent the previous two and a half months in custody. Was it a case of the locals closing ranks against the policeman, a newcomer? There had certainly been a violent struggle and it is obvious from previous 'form' that Job had a fierce temper and young Pc Bricker (he was only 23) was apparently unscathed in the melee. But.....Mr. Tucker had mentioned the policeman had received 'a blow'. A year later, Bricker was dead.

Job Rose continued to make news. Three weeks later⁸ there was the rather peculiar affair, a collision between a cart driven by Job's servant, a boy of fifteen and a phaeton driven by a Mr. J. Foley, a Trowbridge auctioneer, who had hired the vehicle from Edward Mandry, the licensee of the George Hotel, Trowbridge. The phaeton was smashed to pieces, the boy was drunk and Mr. Mandry sued Job Rose for damages in the sum of £9.7s 6d. Mr. Foley went to Marston to tell Job about the saga and stated that following the crash the boy had been found lying in the wagon, tipsy. Job turned to the lad and bellowed:

"DAMN thee..... I know'd there was something wrong. Thee didn't come up to the house same as usual after thee'st done. I only sent thee to Bradford with a load of malt and thee'st ought to have been home two hours before..."

⁷ *ibid.*, 7.7.1853

⁸ *ibid.*, 28.7.1853

.....and turning to Foley, said *"I hope to God, Mr. Foley, you'll send him to gaol."*

In the event, the bench found for the defendant (Job) and I imagine the youngster found himself out of employment.

More trouble was reported in May 1858⁹ when Job sold a sow to Joseph Webb for £3 which was supposedly in farrow. Rose disputed that he had given a warranty that this was the case but had merely said that in the normal course of events the sow would have a litter in about 13 weeks. Webb called witnesses to confirm that the warranty had been given. When the piglets did not arrive, Webb sold the sow for £2 to another party, but now claimed the difference of £1. His Honour found for Webb, who then put in a chit for his own and his witnesses expenses.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Rose, *"Expenses for witnesses! You do not mean to charge me that, surely?"*

His Honour: *"I do indeed."*

'whereupon Mr. Rose put his hat on his head and with an evidently suppressed feeling of extreme disgust walked out of the Court looking as if for a mere trifle he would annihilate Mr. Webb, the old sow and even Judge Smith himself.'

You cannot avoid the thought that though the various reporters are careful to describe Mr. Rose as 'a respectable farmer' or 'a respectable maltster' they had recognised that he was 'a character' and often had a bit of fun with him.

Solomon Ellis never made the news at all. In the census of 1861, he and the family were still at Marston, and Solomon was still an 'ag. lab'. He had even forgotten his age as he told the census man he was '41' and his wife Eliza, 'aged 38'. Joseph, their eldest son, was eleven years old and already out at work as a labourer on the land. There was another little brother, Henry, aged 4, 'a scholar'. Charles Perrett, who was aged eighteen and also working as an 'ag. lab' once again appears at the bottom of the family list and his description as 'wife's son' sounds dismissive. I wonder whether his step-father was embarrassed by his presence or didn't care for him much.

One reason Charles Rose Perrett gave for leaving home was his dissatisfaction with his wage of seven shillings a week and later when his political career was taking shape, his first cause was the poor wages paid to agricultural labourers. Nevertheless I think that possible family friction also contributed to his decision to leave Marston. Thus, he got up at dawn one summer morning and at half past three a.m. left the family cottage and set out on foot for Bath to seek his fortune. His dream had been to join the Police Force but when he arrived at the station he was told to his disappointment that there were 'no vacancies', so he continued on to Bristol where he was taken on by a Bedminster brewery, James & Pierce's. After this he worked for a sack hiring firm. In 1864, he was able to send for his sweetheart, Mary Ann Edwards, and they were married at Holy Trinity, St Philips, on the 4th September that year.

⁹ Ibid, 6.5.1858

When the census was taken on the 6th June 1841, Mary Ann was a babe of ten days old, at home in Enford, a village ten miles from Devizes, the child of James and Ann Edwards, who were both aged about 45. There were six older children, two boys and four girls. Mary Ann's elder brother, also called James, was about 20 and the younger, Hezekiah aged ten. In between were sisters, Elizabeth, 16, Dinah, 15, Jane, 14 and Milly aged four. By the time of the next census, ten years later, the family had fallen from hard times to destitution. Her father was described as 'formerly ag. lab. pauper', her mother merely as a 'pauper'. Mary Ann, aged nine, was the only one of the children living at home. Like almost every young girl of her class, she went 'into service' at an early age and by 1861 was working for Elizabeth Hitchcock, a landed proprietor, in an all-female household, which may have been the best she could hope for: at least she would not be prey to the unwanted attentions of resident males, a lot which befell many servant young girls. Even better, she had come to Worton where she met the young farm labourer, Charles Rose Perrett. If there were tears when he said his goodbyes, at least he kept his promise 'to write' and in due course, 'when he was on his feet' he asked her to join him in Bristol. At the time of their marriage he was living at Clarence Place and she was at Melbourne Terrace. Both signed the register with good, neat signatures witnessed by a 'C. King' and a Mr. or Miss Derrick whose first name is illegible. I expected to see a space where the name of Charles' father should appear, but it was taken by a name and occupation: 'John Perrett, labourer'. John Perrett may have been Charles' grandfather's name, but otherwise he is almost certainly fictitious: Charles would certainly not be the first to tell a little white lie to save face.

By 1871, Charles was working as a warehouseman, probably at the sack hire enterprise and living with Mary Ann at 64 Regent Street, St Philip's. Unfortunately, the marriage was, and remained, childless. If this had not been the case, Charles may not have turned his considerable energy elsewhere.

The first evidence of his social conscience appears 1873¹⁰ when he wrote to the Western Daily Press with an impassioned and well-argued letter about a subject close to his heart. *'Agricultural Labourers' Wages'*.

"Gentlemen", he wrote

"Will you allow me to offer a few remarks upon a meeting of the West Gloucestershire Chamber of Agriculture, held at the Greyhound Hotel, Broadmead on the 27th of February? In the first place, it seems to me a great part of the business was to criticise and disbelieve almost all our honoured and respected citizen, Mr. Mark Whitwill said at the meeting at the Broadmead Rooms. Now, I for one believe every word he said concerning the two men he spoke of (one at Portishead, and the other at Wick St Lawrence) not getting more than 10s per week. Mr. Wintle and the committee seem very anxious to have Mr. Whitwill's authority for mentioning the two names he did. I do not think it necessary for Mr. Wintle or Mr. Norris to trouble about these two cases, as I can point to scores or hundreds of similar cases now at the present time, not more than thirty miles from Bristol, men not getting more than ten shillings or eleven shillings per week and not getting all those privileges Mr. Norris so often alluded to. Indeed, many of them go to work, many of them milking &c at four in the morning, and work until ten at night in the summer for the wages

¹⁰ Western Daily Press 5.3.1873

above mentioned. Perhaps they get some cider and ale and a bit of bread and cheese, it may be twice a week but not a foot of land without paying for it, and then at a much higher price than the farmer pays himself. Now, these are not such men as Mr. Wintle referred to – old pensioners unable to do a day's work but strong healthy men. It's all very well for Mr. Norris to point to wages just close round Bristol where he knows that men will not work for such low wages, but it was not until last summer that the agricultural labourer was brought to see his condition. I doubt if Mr. Norris has paid many 24s per week as he stated with beer and lunch. If so, we have to thank Mr. Arch and many others of their friends such as Mr. Morley and Canon Girdlestone – the great friends of the labouring class of men. It is not any difference in my opinion, whether the evil exists in Gloucestershire, Somerset or any other shire, as long as it is in existence.”
(signed) “CHARLES PERRETT.”

Charles Perrett's Heroes:

Canon Edward Girdlestone was vicar of Halperton, Devon, 1862-1872. During his incumbency he became nationally known because of his fight for better conditions for farm workers. He addressed the British Association, wrote many letters to "The Times" as well as making personal and local representations. Eventually he organised the migration of between 400 and 500 local people to other parts of the country where better paid work was available.



Joseph Arch, 1826-1919, agricultural worker and Primitive Methodist preacher who played a key role in the "Great Awakening" of 1872 when a small band of Warwickshire labourers wrote to a local paper about their low wages and suggested they should be paid more than 2 shillings and sixpence (12½p) per day. Arch became the first President of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union and later a Member of Parliament.

Samuel Morley, 1809-86, abolitionist, educationalist, "philanthropic merchant", Liberal MP for Bristol 1868-85, here caricatured in "Punch", 1872. His statue is in Lewin's Mead.



From here on Charles aired his opinions frequently and it was not long before the local Liberal Party spotted a potential star; thus his political career began.

No doubt Mary Ann still spoke of the privations her family had endured and likewise, Charles' own memories would have been still raw. His step-father Solomon Ellis had remained an 'ag. lab' and had been recorded so in 1871, along with Charles' step-brothers, Joseph, Henry and William, all 'ag. labs'. Only the youngest, James Ellis aged 9 in 1871, was a 'scholar'; the lad would put his 'book learning' to good use, later on.

The widowed Mary Perrett, Eliza's mother, Charles' grandmother, a formidable 86, at the head of Solomon Ellis's household in 1871, died six years later aged ninety two.

Also in 1871, Job Rose, his rowdy days apparently behind him, was the village maltster. This is a specialized craft and would have been much in demand, for everybody drank beer. The production of malt involved the saturation of barley on the long floor of a malthouse where it would have to be shoveled up and frequently turned over until it began to germinate, signs of sprouting being the first stage of converting the starch into sugar. When germinated the grain would have to be roasted to stop further growth, with the longer the roast, the darker the malt: light malt for pale ale, dark for porter, ready for the yeast to turn the sugar to alcohol

Job was then aged 63 and Rebecca, 51. Only one of their offspring, their daughter Ellen, 16, was still at home. Later that year, her elder sister Fanny was married by licence at the parish church to a Mr. Thomas Lewis of Bradford on Avon. In 1880, their youngest son, George, migrated to New Zealand where he had descendants today.

Job Rose died at Worton on the 30th January 1872, 'after a long and painful illness in the 64th year of his age', as a brief newspaper obituary of 1st February states. He was buried at Christchurch and his tombstone is in the churchyard there. The stone is weathered and pitted with lichen. His name and likewise that of his widow, Rebecca, can only just be made out:





Job's bachelor brother James Rose had increased his holding to 370 acres, and in 1871 employed a considerable workforce, 12 men, 4 women and 4 boys and had his widowed sister Eliza Lewis, 76, as his housekeeper. Her son Jabez Lewis, 40, also unmarried, was a miller and a boy, Charles Biggs, 16, 'farmer's assistant', also lived in, along with Louisa Maggs, 22, a general servant and Mary Collar, 40, a dairymaid. James Rose seems to have been a good employer. The women, Louisa and Mary, unusually as the turnover of servants was generally brisk, were still with him ten years later. From time to time several of his other hands were recipients of rewards for long service, and named at county shows.



James Rose's name is commemorated on a board at Christchurch in a list of churchwardens.

James Rose died in 1882 aged 79 and is buried at Christchurch.



Charles would have been aware of these developments for he kept up to date with village affairs. His obituary which lists his acts of benevolence states that 'he had six cottages in his native county of Wiltshire and the occupants were all people whom he had known since he was a boy.'

His stepfather, Solomon Ellis died in 1904 and Eliza Ellis, his mother, in 1906. Charles would surely have attended his mother's if not both funerals. In 1916 he is known to have been staying at End Farm, Marston and on the 11th August 1823 the Western Daily Press records that he gave £85 for 'the painting of the Wesleyan Chapel, the Primitive Methodist Chapel and Christchurch' at Marston/Worton in memory of his mother. (I assume this was for painting & decorating rather than for works of art!)

In the same month he sent the gift of a silver mounted umbrella to Mr. T.K. Chapman, the village postman who had recently retired after 38 years serving the villages of Potterne, Worton, Marston & Bulkington. Charles expressed his thanks to Mr Chapman and said he remembered him well.

The gravestone of Isaac & Susanna Perrett (who were Rebecca Rose's parents) at the churchyard in Marston Worton. There are many Perretts in the vicinity and without a great deal more research it has not been possible to state Isaac's relationship to Charles Rose Perrett or his mother and grandmother.



The churchyard at Marston Worton

The Bristol Philanthropist, 1873-1925

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
Gandhi

In 1881, 'Charles R. Perrett' aged 38, was living with Mary Ann at Marston House, Stanley Hill, Bedminster. One cannot help but believe that Charles took pleasure in naming his house, for though he and Mary Ann were going up in the world, it kept their feet on the ground. Charles was now a 'Foreman Manager', and they had a servant, a young girl of 16, Eva Frape. At first glance it is a little surprising that Mary Ann had a job, as a 'shop woman'. Though the Victorians would not have understood the concept of a woman being 'bored at home', I suspect this was the case for Mary Ann had probably given up any idea of motherhood and now Charles' political career was underway he may often have been otherwise engaged.

He had joined the Liberal Party, the YMCA and a Friendly Society, 'The Ancient Order of Foresters' and remained a keen member of these organisations for the rest of his life. He was made an Honorary Member of Totterdown Men's Adult School and also later joined the Bristol Moonrakers, a gathering of native Wiltshiremen, becoming Chairman in 1925. His name appears frequently in the local press in the 1880s and 90s, attending and taking part in the activities of these organisations, often in various offices, prize-givings and the proposing and seconding of motions. From this time the signature 'C.R. Perrett' is to be seen at the foot of the many letters he sent to the local press with '126 Wells Road' appended, the address where he and Mary Ann lived from before 1891 until their respective deaths. As well as political campaigns, such as increased wages for the labouring poor and better roads, he championed individuals like an elderly Bedminster schoolmistress, a Miss Clarke, who had been deprived of superannuation by the Board of Guardians of the Union Workhouse.

By 1891 'CRP' had become a white collar worker in the insurance industry, first with 'the Pru', the Prudential Assurance Company and then with the Sun Fire Assurance Co. He was still an agent of the latter company at the time of his death. He had recently been elected to Bedminster Parish Council.

It will not be a surprise that he did not confine himself to parochial affairs and in April 1900 he took up the cause of the welfare of our armed forces fighting in South Africa and for



their wives and children. His letter to the Western Daily Press is headed: 'Soldiers and Sailors Fund.'

"Sir: - I was pleased to see a suggestion made at the conference of Poor Law Guardians that all boards should petition Parliament at once to make provision from national sources for the wives and families of soldiers and sailors on active service, and also to make certain provision for those killed or disabled during this or other wars. Supposing the Government added £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 to the war expenditures we should never miss it. I think it would be a great shame to us as a great and wealthy nation to let our brave men go and fight for our country, justice, and freedom and then let them want. I think after the great hardships that many of our brave soldiers are undergoing in South Africa to uphold the flag of freedom for all we ought to do our very best for them and theirs. Hoping the war will soon be over and that the flag of justice and freedom for all will soon be planted at Pretoria forever.

"Yours faithfully

"C.R. Perrett, 126 Wells Road, Totterdown, April 12th, 1900."

A month later he wrote again concerning 'The Relief of Mafeking':

"Sir: I hear that there is a fund to be raised to help those that have been shut up in Mafeking since October 11th 1899 to take a trip to the sea to help them in some way. Will you please receive 21 shillings as a special thank offering for the relief of Mafeking, good little Baden-Powell and all that have helped him in the noble defence."

Mr. C.R. Perrett had stumbled on a new calling, that of philanthropist. At the time it was fashionable for the press to publish the names of those who donated to worthy causes, along with the sum of money involved. Though some people preferred to remain anonymous, this was not Charles' way and thus the name C.R. Perrett is often to be found in these newspaper lists, a fact which might suggest to some, a trace of vanity. Ahead of his time, he certainly seems to have instinctively understood the value of P.R.

By 1901, the servant had departed and had not been replaced. Mary Ann, aged fifty nine, was no longer in paid work. On only a few occasions she is recorded as being with him when he was out and about most nights at his clubs and societies, all recorded in the local press. He stood for Bristol City Council twice in 1906 and 1907 when seats became vacant but was defeated both times. He continued to shower the editor of the Western Daily Press with his opinions. Even on holiday. In 1910, away with his wife in Portishead, he wrote from 19 Adelaide Terrace on the subject of 'Free Trade' supported by the Liberals, but a cause he would later abandon when concerned about 'cheap foreign goods coming in the country'.¹¹

By 1911, Elsie Ellis, the eighteen year old daughter of Charles' younger half- brother James Ellis came to join them at 126 Wells Road and was living there, working as a dressmaker, when the census was taken that year. Her father James had fulfilled

¹¹ WDP 27.6.1927

Charles' own original ambition of becoming a Police Constable and had been stationed at Whiteparish in 1901 and at Calne in 1911. In retirement, he came to Bristol to live.

The 1911 census of the 2nd April was the first that householders had been required to fill out themselves. The form was then collected by an official who I feel sure Charles quizzed about his wages. He was soon writing about the iniquity of the high salaries with increments paid to Council Officials, especially as these came out of the rates. His letter to 'the Press' of 11th April was the first of many. Whenever a rise for clerks was mooted he could be relied on to argue that "they already had a good living". It was a subject that became a hobby horse and a theme to which he would return again and again.

In January 1913 the National Insurance Act was passed which allowed a grant to each new baby. The first to benefit in Bristol was a child called Walter Coles, of 10 Devonport Street, Bedminster. There was a touching ceremony in which Walter received thirty shillings plus a silver cup engraved with his name to denote the special event. 'Mr. C. R. Perrett, an ardent Liberal and admirer of the Act' attended and announced his own award of one guinea, divided into two parts to go to the first claimants of the new maternity benefit. Mrs. William Cashman of 8 Paradise Cottages, New Cut received 13 shillings. A beaming Mr. Perrett said he had met both mother and child, "a lovely little girl." The recipient of the remaining 8 shillings would be announced later.

On the 4th September 1914 Charles and Mary Ann celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Totterdown YMCA attended by 300 guests mostly from religious and political circles. Charles was praised for his philanthropic work and received an illuminated address. The happy couple also received 'a handsome inkpot' and 'a cushion' along with several bouquets one of which was presented by Elsie Ellis. Despite the date, which fell so soon after the declaration of war, the occasion does not appear to have been as sombre as might have been expected, but of course, the company did not know the terrible carnage that was coming.

One would have expected Charles to be among those banging the drum encouraging young men to join up, but he is unusually silent until April 1915 when the Lord Mayor of Bristol opened a fund on behalf of Belgium which had been overrun by the Germans causing much outrage. Charles drummed up support, stating:

"The distress of Belgium among the civil population is great; the humiliation cannot be blotted out; and remembering the peace and security we are enjoying greatly through the sacrifice of gallant Belgium it should constrain many to send to the Lord Mayor's fund as an act of gratitude."

Mrs. C.R. Perrett contributed 2 guineas to the fund and CRP himself, £3 guineas.

In July 1915, Elsie Ellis was married to Jonathan William Hunt of Totterdown at the now demolished Wycliffe Congregational Church which once stood at the junction of St

Luke's Crescent and Windsor Terrace. The early rush to join the colours had almost dried up and the prospect of conscription exercised the minds of many young men; perhaps Elsie's bridegroom was no exception. The event was reported on the 13th July, Elsie being described as 'the only daughter of Mr. & Mrs. James Ellis of 240 Bath Road, late of Derry Hill and Brinkworth and niece of Mr. & Mrs. C.R. Perrett of 126 Wells Road. The bride wore a gown of cream silk trimmed with fine lace and knots of pearls with a Brussels lace veil sprigged with orange blossom, carried a bouquet of white flowers and wore a gold wristwatch, a present from the groom. She was given away by her father, formerly a Police Officer of the Wiltshire Constabulary and attended by four bridesmaids, two sisters of the groom (in pink) and two friends (in white). Mr. Harry Hunt, the bridegroom's brother was best man. The honeymoon was to be spent in Bournemouth. [Elsie's] going-away costume was in electric blue with a white hat trimmed with ostrich feathers and a matching boa.'

On the 24th November, Mr Perrett was holding forth with advice for the conduct of the war on the Home Front, advocating the keeping of poultry and pigs, hoping that working men would give the matter a free trial. *"When I was a boy,"* he said, *"almost every cottager kept a pig or fowls."* He believed that *"the Sanitary Authorities have been a little too particular as to where they should be kept."* As for allotments, he hoped that landowners would not be slow in renting their lands for this purpose; the large production of food by his local allotment holders was particularly praiseworthy, but building plots left vacant *"should be similarly rented out for the short term during this terrible War."* (He was probably not much of a gardener! The war might well have been over before such sites were cleared of stone and rubble, let alone the soil prepared for cultivation. And as to the pigs, I would like to speculate that he suggested to Mary Ann that they should keep one in the back garden at 126 Wells Road; and the nature of her reply.)

Sadly, on the 10th March 1916, Mary Ann died 'after nearly 52 years of happy married life, the dearly beloved wife of C.R. Perrett in her 75th year. No flowers by request.' (I suspect 'the request' which always strikes me as a little sad when it accompanies such notices, was CRP's rather than his wife's. It would be repeated for his own funeral.) A few days later he thanked the large number of friends for their expressions of sympathy. Mary Ann's will was proved on the 15th April; she left £1,218. 2s.5d. It is quite a surprise that she had so much money of her own.

By the 22nd March Charles was back at his desk, once again commending local allotment holders for their diligence, but contemptuous of "shirkers" who allowed weeds and seeds to blow over the well-kept plots of others and berating local landowners who had not answered his plea for more land to be freed up. Plans were in hand to purchase building land for the purpose though somebody may have told him about soil preparation and he offered to start the ball rolling with a ten pound donation to the Allotment Committee towards clearance. He looked forward to *"our good and fine men returning home when this awful war is over."*

During the next few months he attended at least five funerals of the great and the good (his name appearing among the list of mourners), went to his usual functions, also reported, but was clearly fairly bored. He was incensed by 'food waste'. He had seen a child with a piece of bread and butter, eat half and throw the rest into the gutter, which he made the subject of one of his letters to the Western Daily Press. He stated that the Council should print a leaflet addressed to mothers which he offered to deliver to every household in Bristol. He even tried to sell 126 Wells Road, 'one of the best houses in Knowle'. Nothing came of either scheme. Then, out of the blue came relief and an ambition fulfilled after a decade of hope. In November 1917 he was co-opted on to the Bristol City Council when the seat for the Somerset Ward became vacant.

At the time there were two thousand homes in the City with two or three families living in each which were unfit for human habitation. Many were condemned but demolition could not take place because the destitute residents were unable to find alternative accommodation. Such conditions contributed to the increase in consumption and infant mortality. CRP's maiden interjection in the debate was unexpectedly tart: he said *"Bad tenants sometimes in a few months make a dwelling uninhabitable."*

He was soon regularly speaking in the Chamber and returned to the subject of increases in the wages of public officials. The plan to raise the salary of the Chief Constable from £800 to £1000 per annum was *"deplorable"* he stated, especially in view of the sacrifices others had made, sometimes with their lives. And he went back to his old refrains, pigs and allotments. 'Councillor Perrett is a man who happily practices what he preaches,' said the Western Daily Press leader on the 20th April 1918, 'he has got the pigs and the allotment holders are to feed them, so no waste there.....' This was part of a general debate concerning the decline in the countrywide stock of pigs. (Remember that the Council would not have known how much longer the war would go on and had to plan for the long term. Food stocks in general were low everywhere.) Mr. Perrett proposed a motion to stop the slaughter of pigs fit for breeding purposes. This caused uproar with the Docks Committee who obtained revenue from exporters. He also brought to the Sanitary Committee's attention the fact that householders in his ward did not separate food scraps from general waste of debris and ashes. In this matter at least, Councillor Perrett, clearly in his element, was years ahead of his time, and would certainly have approved of recycling and the present variety of bins, though there was occasional levity in the Chamber over the pigs.

The Armistice was signed on the 11th November amid great rejoicing apart from those who had lost loved ones even up to the last minutes before the guns were silenced. Instead of joining in the celebrations, Mr. Perrett decided to write to his friend the editor of the Western Daily Press with a gripe. During the war, the country had been ruled by a Coalition Government headed by Lloyd George who had now called a General Election. What a waste of time and money, opined Mr. Perrett, stating that the Prime Minister should have been given a mandate to carry on. *"As an old worker in the Liberal Party for 55 years in Bristol I have decided not to do any canvassing at the election,"* he said. So there. In the event Lloyd George remained Prime Minister of another Liberal-

led Coalition. The Labour Party greatly increased its vote but with only a few more seats whilst losing several of its big guns. This was the first General Election whereby all men aged 21 and over were able to vote as well as women aged over 30. Mr. Perrett had strong opinions on this matter. Meanwhile, he was still cross the next year in February 1919, concerning the Council's proposed celebrations for the Peace:

*"I trust dear old Bristol is not going to make a mistake and spend a lot of money in firing and feasting just for a few days. We want something more lasting. I would like to suggest that we build or purchase (as we can do much cheaper) some homes in different parts of Bristol, put them in good repair and tender them as almshouses rent free to old people say 50 and upwards who have but a small income such as Old Age Pensioners, then there are disabled soldiers and sailors or the widows of our men. I have done my bit in this direction for some years and should like to be able to do more as it gives me the greatest pleasure. I sometimes wonder if people with plenty of money do not like spending it during their life; it must be from want of thought."*¹²

We can only blink in disbelief that less than a century ago people of fifty teetered on the brink of old age.

In reply, a Mr. Sam Hassall refers both to Mr. Perrett's letter and another by a person hiding behind a pseudonym, 'Experience' who bemoaned the difficulty in obtaining a servant, women having left domestic service during the war for better paid work in the factories. *"I remember a time,"* she wrote, nostalgically, *"when it was an easy matter to get a girl of some little experience, 17 years of age, for about £5 per annum and they seemed just as happy and contented as they are now."*¹³

Mr. Hassell said: *"Mr. Perrett hoped that in the coming Peace Celebrations, 'dear old Bristol' (cheap old Bristol would be better) will not be behind (as if it always is) and would set a pattern to the other cities in the building and buying of some homes to be converted into almshouses 'as a shelter for old couples of fifty' (rent free) in which I assume they may end their days in comfort and sweet meditation in being the happy parents of a girl of seventeen who is happy and contented in serving some person of the 'Experience' stamp at £5 per annum. Something was mooted about boosting Bristol. For heaven's sake, don't."*¹⁴

(Sam Hassell was a brewery cellarman with a wife and two young daughters, of fifteen and eleven, so the employment of girls was a personal concern. The Hassells lived – where else? – but Stanley Hill, Totterdown, an address we shall encounter again.)

By March, CRP was back with the pigs *"every new household should have a pigsty at the end of the garden"*, he opined and with the Council's building plans. The lowest rental proposed was 7 shillings and 5 pence. How poor people such as Old Age Pensioners were expected to pay such a sum he did not know. Many of the poor living in slums were paying 3 shillings or 3s 6d. The Council should buy military huts to ease the housing shortage.¹⁵

¹² WDP 25.2.1919

¹³ Ibid 27.2.1919

¹⁴ Ibid 27.2.1919

¹⁵ Ibid 12.3.1919

Mr. Perrett, elected as Councillor in the next local elections, continued bombarding the Western Daily Press with letters and carried on with his hectic social round, attending numerous functions, many 'Old Folks Treats' and funerals in particular. In view of his involvement with 'a Park for Knowle' it seems surprising that he opposed the purchase of 5 acres at Ashton Court for £1,800 "*for playgrounds*" he sniffed, on the grounds of the cost, "*what about the poor ratepayers who footed the bill?*"¹⁶ and became a regular Jeremiah bemoaning the fact that the Council had not purchased this land '40 or 50 years ago' apparently on his advice, when it would have come cheaper, as if they could do anything about it in hindsight. More wrong-headed though was his account straight from a holiday, spent "*rambling in Devon*"¹⁷ where he said he had "*spotted between five and fifty trees in each field*" which he thought should be felled and turned into cash which would give employment to the masses and save coal.

The Benefactor

Throughout his long life Mr. Perrett made regular gifts to worthy causes, both to organisations and individuals, of mostly small sums, but occasionally something more substantial: the following are some of his donations which are not otherwise mentioned in the text.

1.12.1909: Distress in Bristol, 1 guinea (£1.05p)

13.8.1914: the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund, £1

13.5.1914: British Red Cross, 1 guinea

Donations started in earnest after the death of Mary Ann in March 1916.

15.7.1916. The Lord Mayor's appeal for £3000 to equip Bristol Volunteer Regiment: 2 guineas

14.9.1916: Fund for the bereaved 6 children of Inspector Harrison of the Bristol Fire Brigade killed whilst attending to his duty in Old Market Street, 10.6d. (2nd donation)

30.11.1916: Appeal for Christmas boxes for men of the Gloucester Regiment in trenches and sailors of HMS "Bristol" (a good pipe, tobacco & cigarette papers), 10 shillings

23.10.1917: "Comforts for the troops", 1 guinea

15.12.1917: Lord Mayor's fund for the wounded, 1 guinea

18.8.1921: "35,000,000 starving in Russia". CRP suggested the Lord Mayor organise a public subscription.

12.10.1921: Fund in aid of six railway platelayers killed at Stapleton Road Station, £1

¹⁶ Ibid 12.11.1919

¹⁷ Ibid 9.9.1919

16.2.1922: Russian famine appeal. £1

3.3.1922: Fund in aid of "an unfortunate hawker, married with four children under seven, whose pony was drowned in the Cut", 5 shillings.

January 1923: "Well done Mr. Perrett" was the headline. CRP had pledged £50 to help the stricken French town of Bethune if nine others would do the same. The initial response had been slow but now all nine promises had come in and Mr. P. handed in his cheque for £50 at the Western Daily Press offices.

5.2.1923: Children of the unemployed, £1

23.4.1923: "a splendid reception at the "Foresters" who thanked him for his donation of £500.

1.11.1923. Suggested building chalets for the homeless; some houses in Bristol in deplorable condition families living in one room with wife & children. Said he would give £50 if 7 others would do the same to build two chalets as an experiment.

14.11.1923: Children's Christmas Dinner Fund

2.12.1923: Stated he would give £2 each to the churches & chapels in his ward for the benefit of the aged poor in their parishes. "Mr. Perrett's sympathies are as worthy as they are practical" said the Western Daily Press.

21.4.1924: Annual donation to the "Foresters" to benefit aged persons, £10

23.8.1924: thanks Mr. P. for funding the redecorating of the YMCA.

23.8.1924: To Mr. A. Cornish whose smallholding was destroyed by fire, 2 guineas

9.1.1929: To miners' Distress Fund – to mark his 86th birthday, 5 guineas.

Perrett's Homes

As can be seen by the above list, Mr. Perrett's schemes for helping the unfortunate were many and varied, but among his favourite concerns were the spending of rate-payers money and the Bristol housing situation in general, but specifically the sufferings of deserving old people.

Clearly he and Mary Ann never forgot the privations of their parents and grandparents and in 1913 they initiated the charity that was to become "Perrett's Homes".

In a letter of March 1914 he managed to include three issues at a stroke, housing, wages and drunkenness. He thought the houses costing £300 which the Council was currently building were far too dear and suggested six-room dwellings for the working class, costing £150 each which could be rented at 5 shillings a week. Though he agreed with

another correspondent that men should be paid higher wages to cope with higher rents, he stated:

*"There are plenty of men getting upwards of 30 shillings [a week] living in courts who could well afford 5 shillings rent. What we want is to get these people out of such places and away from the many public houses. I hope the Corporation will never build more homes in flats but in rows."*¹⁸

(The 'courts' were overcrowded slums in poor areas where many families, several people to a room, lived in abject squalor. Had Councils taken on board his prescient suggestion to build in rows rather than flats, we might have been spared those concrete monstrosities, the high rises, which were allegedly the solution to the housing problem after the Second World War.)

On the 8th July 1916, he wrote: *"Mr. Asquith said in the Commons he did not see where the money was coming from to give old folk another shilling or two per week. Must old people starve in a country as rich as England? We are spending £5m a day on the war, surely we can spend £6-£7m for a year; then I hope the war will be over. I trust people will not let the matter rest and before winter comes old people will get more than 5 shillings a week."*

He followed up on the 24th August with *"I am pleased Mr. Asquith is going to do something for the Old Age Pensioners who have only 5 shillings to pay rent and live. It must be starvation for them now that things are so very dear. I know of many who, were it not for private help, would have starved last winter."*

(This letter dated 22nd August shows he was 'visiting home' staying at 'End Farm, Marston, Devizes, Wiltshire.' This farm had been formerly occupied by a Mr. Henry Maggs who died in 1912. Henry like Charles had risen in life, from a farm labourer to a farmer. The only apparent connection is that fifteen year old Elizabeth Ellis was a servant at End Farm in 1891. Elizabeth was the daughter of William Ellis, who was lodging with Solomon and Eliza in 1881. He may have been Solomon's brother.)

By the 28th September 1916, Perrett's Homes were in full swing. The Western Daily Press reported in a major article:

'PERRETT'S HOMES: AN INTERESTING TOTTERDOWN PHILANTHROPY'

'At the Totterdown YMCA last evening there was an interesting gathering. The philanthropic schemes of Mr. C.R. Perrett are numerous and one of the most practical of these are his almshouses at Stanley Hill, known locally as Perrett's Homes. Three years ago, Mr. & Mrs. Perrett initiated the scheme with three houses where old age pensioners or deserving poor, irrespective of religious views could live free of rent or taxes. Recently five houses were added by Mr. Perrett, housing 12 people in all, and under the scheme the tenants of four of the eight houses pay a reduced rental to the donor towards the cost of the upkeep of the other four. The total rental of the eight houses is £114 per annum. The whole of the property has been transferred to the Bristol Charity

¹⁸ Ibid 23.3.1914

Trustees but Mr Perrett reserves the right to select his tenants. He collects the rent of the houses and maintains the whole scheme and upon his decease the houses will go to the Charity Trustees to be carried on for the benefit of the poor of Bristol.

'Last night's function took the form of a social and reunion for the tenants and their friends but it also afforded the opportunity for the three Councillors of the Somerset Ward, Mr. Frank Moore¹⁹, Mr. C.T. Enright and the Rev George Jarman, to express the district's appreciation of Mr Perrett's philanthropy. Mr. Perrett, acknowledging the remarks of these three and other prominent Knowle residents said his main object was to give a lead to people that he hoped would be followed when it was seen how successful his scheme was. There would be an especial opportunity for this after the war. He paid a tribute to his tenants, some of whom he had known for forty years. In view of Mr. Perrett's life-long interest in the Bristol & District Friendly Societies' Council of which he has been a delegate, representatives of that Society were present.'

The interest in Mr Perrett's Homes on occasions extended to his residents, so that a death might be reported as on the 3rd July 1926:

'One of the first inmates of Councillor Perrett's Homes which are situated at Stanley Hill, Knowle has just passed away. These homes in which eight old people reside are managed personally by Mr Perrett who started them 13 years ago. Each inmate lives rent free and receives 2 shillings 'pocket-money' weekly. It is interesting to note that previous to the decease of this inmate the ages of the eight totalled 575 years. Mr Perrett will continue in his present capacity as long as he is able when the Homes will be handed over to the Bristol Charity Trustees.'

On the 26th April 1928 the death was reported of another inmate, Mrs. Elizabeth Cook, 'well known as Nurse Cook'. Mr. Perrett himself attended her funeral. And on the 19th December 1929, 'Mrs K.E. Clymer, an aged inmate has just passed away. For seven years Mrs Clymer enjoyed the hospitality of 40 Stanley Hill, Totterdown. Many [people] thank Councillor Perrett for his good work.' (Mrs Clymer's initials were incorrectly reversed in the newspaper report for she was Mrs Elizabeth Kelland Clymer, born c1849 at Tiverton. In 1911 she was a widow living at 12 Arno's Street, Totterdown. At the time of her death she was eighty one.) The funeral took place at Bushy Park Methodist Church.

On the 30th December 1929 the newspaper headline is 'A REAL FATHER CHRISTMAS'.

'Our old friend Mr. C.R. Perrett has for the past 20 years kept a list of needy people he has known at one time or another and each year as the season of good cheer comes round they are remembered. The eldest is in her 100th year and others are aged 94, 92, 87, 86, 85, downward. The old folk at Mr. Perrett's almshouses at Knowle each received a silver coin, a plum pudding, a portion of turkey and ham and a bottle of port between them to toast their good friend's health. Christmas cheer is not often celebrated in this

¹⁹ Alderman Frank Moore would become one of Mr P.'s executors.

old fashioned and generous way and it must give Mr. Perrett great satisfaction to be able to do this in his lifetime.'

'Perrett House in Redcross Street is the successor to the Perrett Homes. After CRP's death the charity was managed by Bristol Charities but 'it was not possible to maintain



the original properties at Stanley Hill and Totterdown from the rental income; the premises were sold in the 1930s and the tenants transferred to Trinity Almshouse. A former almshouse in Cumberland Road was subsequently procured, named Perrett's Almshouse and used to house five tenants. Again due to the cost of maintenance, the almshouse was closed and demolished in 1969. The proceeds

of the sale of Stanley Hill and Cumberland Road were used to build the sheltered housing in Redcross Street, called Perrett House with a further eight flats added in 1987 called Redcross Mews situated to the rear of Perrett House. Currently all the accommodation is taken and no new applications are being considered.'

Intermission: The Reactionary, ca1912-1930

*Nonsense precipitates like running lead
That slipped through cracks and zig-zags in his head.*
Alexander Pope

No man is a hero to his valet (it is said) and likewise the biographer may uncover a few unpalatable truths about his subject. Mr. Perrett was evidently much loved in Bristol, particularly at the end of his life for his 'good works' and it comes like a slap across the face to record a less attractive side to his character. My previous whispered suggestion that he was somewhat vain is as nothing compared with his ideas concerning the status and place of women.

Votes for Women.

He first aired his reactionary views in public (as far as I can tell) in a letter to the Western Daily Press on the 6th November 1912 concerning women's suffrage.

"Sir. After the election in the Somerset Ward last Friday, I am more than ever satisfied that 18 out of 20 of the women in the Register do not want the Vote and would much rather they had not got it. I have had 37 years' experience in this ward and I have always found it is the greatest trouble in the world to get them to the poll. I flatter myself that I can do a good deal with the widows and spinsters in this district but on this point I have utterly failed and have almost made up my mind not to try any more. But what I want to

say is that I hope the Members of the House of Commons will refuse to give the women any more votes. It will be one of the greatest mistakes if they do."

The County Council Act of 1888 had allowed eligible women to vote in local and county elections, hence CRP referring to 'any more votes'. In fairness, Mr. Perrett's views were shared by many others, no less a personage than Winston Churchill as well as the female ninnies of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage who locally held a meeting at the Adult School at St Anne's, which was reported by the Western Daily Press on the 17th April 1914. Among the eight women on the platform was a Miss Perrett, who was, as far as I am aware, no relation. A Miss Stuart gave the address:

"If women were given the vote they would have a grave responsibility placed upon them. It was not simply a question of going to a polling booth but it meant that the person who had the vote was eligible to sit in Parliament. If women were to have the vote on the same grounds as men, women would be in a permanent majority of 1,500,000. In times of emotional crises it was quite likely that men would be out-voted with the result that the country would be committed to foolish policies[.....]It had been said that if women had the vote they would be able to raise their wages but although the farm labourers had had the vote for many years they had not been able to raise their wages."

'The Resolution was passed that the granting of the Parliamentary franchise to women would be detrimental to the best interests of the country.'

In due course, Miss Stuart would, alas, have plenty of time and evidence to reflect on a permanent female majority.

The Women's Suffrage campaign was suspended at the outbreak of war though lobbying quietly continued. The Representation of the People Act, 1918 gave the vote to all men over 21 and in a typically British fudge, to women over 30 provided they met the minimum property qualifications. Fearful that there might even be women MPs, a sitting member Sir C. Henry, moved for the age limit of thirty *"as he was afraid that flappers might get elected to Parliament."*

The women's campaign for parity with men continued. On the 4th March 1924, Charles Perrett was at it again:

"Sir. I should like, as a life-long Liberal to protest against the giving of the vote to women at 21 years of age. Thirty as at present is quite early enough. Very few understand or know what they are voting for. Only fancy, adding 5 or 6 million more women to the list, including about one million servants, factory girls and others, outvoting the males and adding much more to our local rates. I do hope people will make a strong protest against the Bill being passed. It is another part of the Socialist programme and we must stop it at once."

A young woman replied the following day but sadly did not have courage enough to sign her name:

"Sir. It is somewhat surprising that a man of the stature of Mr. Perrett should hold such prejudiced views. Apparently Mr. Perrett thinks that his sex holds the monopoly of

intelligence and good judgement but I can assure him that many women who are at present too young to vote are extremely interested in the political situation and are quite capable of voting sensibly without any assistance from brothers or male friends. Are there no men who 'do not understand what they are voting for'?[.....] Mr. Perrett need not be afraid. Votes for Women will not ruin the country. Instead of inveigling against this proposition, what seems sadly lacking is a judgement on the large proportion of men who do not think it worthwhile to record their votes either at Parliamentary or Local Elections." (signed) "Twenty Two."

In April 1927 CRP presided at a bazaar held at the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, at Wick Road, Brislington, where he mounted his hobby horse, and is quoted as saying 'he had a great respect for the ladies but looked with disfavour on granting votes for women of 21 years of age. He was convinced this was a step in the wrong direction and was doing all he could to stop it. He had found only three people out of hundreds he had discussed the matter with who agreed with the proposal.'²⁰

The bazaar was an almost entirely female affair, but to their shame, none of the women had the spirit to disagree with him.

In 1928, women were granted the vote on the same terms as men, that is, over the age of twenty one. Game, set and match.....

Women Police

.....but in the meantime Mr. Perrett had aired another chauvinistic prejudice as well as developing a secondary career as a 'stand-up':

On the 11th February 1920, in Council, he moved that the number of 'Women Police' should be reduced. 'Many people said' (it is interesting how often he used this phrase) 'that money was being wasted in this section of the Police Force. If Women Police were being considered they should be of more mature years. The Bristol Police women were a laughing stock (laughter). The twelve women police cost £1,574 and were a waste of money. They paraded the streets and did very little. One of their uses was taking the Lord Mayor to church and he agreed with that. (More laughter)'

On the 16th August he unleashed a tirade by letter protesting over the fact that the twelve policewomen were to become an integral part of the Bristol force. He said they were paid £2 per week, rising to £3 and advocated a stand by ratepayers against the Home Office, the Departments of Education, Health and other government offices against the imposition of this 'Bolshevism'.

On the 5th December the policewomen were praised in Council for their preventative work, for their assistance to the women of the City by whose request they had largely been appointed and for their invaluable help when making enquiries on behalf of the magistrates. It was proposed that they should be paid 42 shillings after a year's service and 55 shillings after 15 years, plus 7 shillings for a dress allowance in lieu of uniform if they needed to be in plain clothes, 2 shillings a week boot allowance and 4s 6d towards

²⁰ WDP 30.4.1927

rent. Mr. Perrett opposed the motion and moved an amendment that no more women should be appointed. The Town Clerk said that since there was no proposal to appoint any more women, the amendment was out of order. The motion was carried with 'a few opposing votes'. Mr. Perrett had plenty of support from other misogynists including a Frank Miller to whom the policewomen were "*a costly burlesque*". "*Sack the lot!*" he cried (23.1.1920) and J.W. Ward of the Cedars, Downend (18.8.1921) who objected to the appointment of a lone WPC at Staple Hill Police Station.

By 1922, the naysayers got the upper hand. A Mr. Shortt, MP said in the House that 'Police Constables' wives could do the work of Women Police,' and legislation, a drive for public economy led by Sir Eric Geddes, known as "The Geddes' Axe" was soon due to fall on the policewomen. Mr. Perrett dashed off a letter on 24th March 1922 that he was "*Glad to see that the Home Secretary held out no hope for the deputation who waited on him from Bristol.*" On the 30th March 1922 his wish was granted when the Women Police were duly disbanded. The Dean of Bristol organised lady volunteers for night patrols in November, emphasising they gave their services free and were not paid out of the rates, which had the opposite effect of reinforcing the need for a professional service. In January 1923 Chief Superintendent Sharpe of the Bristol Police used his retirement statement to praise the work the policewomen had done. By July the disbandment was overturned and a small force of six policewomen was recruited to serve in Bristol. Mr. Perrett and his allies were all but dead in the water. Mr. Perrett refused to drown.

On the 19th April 1924 he wrote "*I sincerely hope the Watch Committee is not about to increase the Police Force as the City is clear of drunkenness, etc. The Police and Education are costing us a good deal more than they should. It is suggested by the Home Office that more Women Police should be employed. I say they ought to be reduced. In Bristol we have twelve, costing us several thousands a year. At least eight ought to be discharged. Some 3 or 4 may be of use in stations in private clothes but those parading the streets are of no earthly use, only an eyesore to people. I have taken the trouble to walk behind them to see for myself if they are doing any good. The Force is a waste of Ratepayers' money. We could also do without 10 of the 16 mounted police. Trusting that others will take the matter up.*"

His remarks on 22nd October 1925, were outrageous and even more offensive:

"It is not the place for women to patrol the lanes and streets. If we want more police let us employ men. I suggest that they train for domestic work or as a housekeeper to a single man with a view to marriage. There are plenty of good homes, wages and outings for them. It is a general complaint now that it is not possible to get a servant. The girls all want day work so that they can go to the pictures and run the streets. I am sorry to say this but facts are stubborn things. I hope our Watch Committee will be firm and not employ any more women police."

It is fair to say that the employment of women in the Police Force was a controversy which aroused great passion on both sides of an argument which now seems wholly improbable. Had I not read the reams of correspondence I would not have believed it possible. On the 1st April 1927, CRP found an ally in the Chief Constable of Cardiff who declined to employ policewomen and he was quick to jump on the bandwagon:

"If he can do without them where there is so much shipping and sailors surely we can do without them here? If more police are needed let them be men. I have watched the women many times and have never seen them do any good yet. They are a waste of money."

CRP had evidently never considered domestic or other violence against women and children as a crime and his letter clearly envisaged brawny policewomen in the Cardiff docks taking on the sailors. The times he 'watched' their activities is unfortunately, rather creepy.

In a gentle letter of the 14th November Major Ruth Gill of the Salvation Army wrote in support of the Women Police. *"They are simply splendid, especially working with women and girls."*

On the 23rd February 1929 CRP gleefully spotted a tiny paragraph concerning three charges brought before the London Metropolitan Court against 'girls' for soliciting. The evidence given by women constables was stated to be thin and the cases were dismissed. He immediately took up his pen and his letter short and to the point appeared on the 25th February:

"Sir. I trust that the Watch Committee and Chief Constable will read, mark, learn and inwardly digest a recent matter. If we want more police let us have men."

Elsewhere in respect of the above case he had stated that *"women police had no responsibility"*, a statement that was taken up on the 26th February 1929 by Lilian Storey Barker of 18 Cranbrook Road:

"Sir. It would be interesting to know what Mr. Perrett means by his statement that 'women police have no responsibility'. While they cannot take the place of the male police and do not desire to do so. It has been established beyond dispute that both are equally necessary in civic life. The recent evidence before the Home Office Committee has proved their worth and Lord Cushendun went so far as to say at the 1928 League of Nations Association that 'the employment of women police in Britain has been most valuable. The citizens of Bristol are very proud of the policewomen they already have and the issue can be left quite safely with the watch committee who know their value.'"

CRP replied next day, assuming his adversary was a spinster:

"Miss P. Barker does not seem to understand when I say women police have no responsibility. They are single women living at home as a rule with father and mother paying the rates and keeping a married man with a family out of a job. Miss Barker says that the people of Bristol are proud of them but I contend that 18 out of 20 would say they are not wanted. What I wanted to the public to know was that 3 cases brought before the Court in London last week were dismissed."

Mrs. Lilian Storey Barker wrote again, reported the 2nd March:

"Mr. Perrett is quite right when he said I did not understand when he said that women police had no responsibilities for it never occurred to me that there was anyone left alive, man or woman, who really believed the doctrine he advances. We met and refuted these

arguments more than 20 years ago when we were in the struggle for enfranchisement of women and time is too short to go back to the dark ages. My only object was to defend the work of women police. May I ask however since when has it been the rule to appoint officials, men or women, because they pay rates? Are police men all married? Is Mr. Perrett willing to keep all his single female relations? If not, what are they to do, for even single women must work to live and many keep the home going for father, mother or younger sisters?

"Is a plebiscite of citizens usually taken before the police are appointed? Or for the value of their work? Does the Court always convict on the evidence of male police and dismiss that of the women? Has Mr. Perrett patrolled the streets of any large town since or during the war? It ought to be an enlightening experience. Happily most Civic Authorities (Bristol included) realise the great need for tact and help of women police who prevent many a youth from getting into court thus saving them from worse things and incidentally saving the Rates. The work of a police woman does not supersede the man's. It is to supplement rather – both are equally needed but not necessarily to do the same type of work. Surely it is time we met modern conditions of life by sympathetic revision of the old system. I am content to leave the issue with the Chief Constable and the Watch Committee."

(Mrs. Storey Barker, was a formidable character, and at home on the public platform. She was the wife of Mr. A.G. Barker, the President of the Western Temperance League. Her son, Bernard Storey, became Town Clerk of Norwich.)

Female Council Clerks

In 1923, CRP began complaining about the female clerks employed by the Council most of whom had been taken on during the war and were now understandably reluctant to return to donning a cap and frilly apron for the likes of 'Experience' who had written so despondently about the lack of domestic staff back in 1919.

On the 25th July 1924, Mr. Perrett wrote *"I would like to suggest a public meeting to protest against the extravagant payment of salaries to female clerks (Docks & Electric) over 40 of whom are getting from £100 up to £240 per year. Paid holidays and sickness: £4.12s.3d, £4.10s, £3.16s.11d & £3.9s 2d. Most of them taken on during and since the war, with a large number since 1920. Many of them should be reduced by £1 per week or let them get something else to do and engage men with families who would do it for much less. We shall never reduce unemployment unless we employ more males and fewer females. I trust next week's Council meeting will refuse to pass this waste of ratepayers' money, increasing the rates by about 4d in the pound."*

This information had been part of confidential discussions in the Council and Mr. Perrett was reprimanded at the meeting of 30th July 1924. Sir John Swaish said

"Mr. Perrett has written a letter and I must say it is to be deprecated that members of the Council having received confidential communications should discuss such matters in the public press...thus seeking to prejudice discussions..... Mr. Perrett argues that many of the salaries of females should be reduced by £1 or that they should be asked to get something else to do. Mr. Perrett takes us back to the old times when the position and the just rights of women were not the same as they are today. In the past a lot of objectionable things

could be called to mind as at Cradley Heath where women worked at heavy chain-making and scarcely got enough to hold body and soul together, or of women's pay as matchbox or shirt makers. I am sorry that Mr. Perrett has written as he did."

Alderman Dyer interjected appealing to the Chairman *"not to be too hard on an old man"*.

Sir John said he did not wish to be unkind or unfair but Mr. Perrett had said *"Let them get something else to do"* but finding employment was not so easily done.

On the 9th March 1926, at a public meeting in Totterdown Mr. Perrett boasted that he was called 'Geddes' in Council, in another reference to the government economy drive. He wished to protest that one of the 100 female clerks whose salary was £5 a week was to be recommended for an increase of £40 per annum when there were workless men in the City. He also objected to the proposed purchase of Blaise Castle estate *"there are plenty of more important things"*.

Several days later, on the 16th March, he again spoke out against 'lady clerks', many of whom, he said *"could do without the money. The Council should show sympathy for unemployed working men."*

On the 31st March, the Council Salaries Committee recommended an increase in pay for Miss N. Dermott Harding, BA. This was the woman that a few weeks before CRP had singled out as receiving £5 a week. Far from being a clerk, Miss Harding was engaged in the highly specialised work of cataloguing, indexing, treating, repairing and preserving the historical records of Bristol. The proposed increase was of £40 bringing her salary from £260 to £300 per annum. The documents on which she worked were stated to be beyond price. Two years before she had been offered a temporary post but another two years at least would be required for her to complete the work. Mr. Perrett of course opposed the motion: *"This was another one of the scores of female clerks employed by the Corporation getting £2 up to £5 per week, single women appointed during and after the war. There were hundreds of men well educated and capable of filling the berths who had wives and families to maintain who would be glad to earn £2-£3. The salary proposed to this woman was six times he had when he was first married."* (laughter)

The motion was carried despite Mr. Perrett's objection. Miss Harding's job eventually became permanent and she was appointed City Archivist, a position she held until 1933 when she left to take a similar post in Kent. Many tributes were paid to her invaluable work. She was succeeded by another woman, Miss Elizabeth Ralph, who remained in the post for many years until her retirement in 1972.

The Park Opens

We have heard how Mr. Perrett obtained an option on the piece of land which became known as "Perrett" or "Perrett's Park" in 1923. There had long been a demand for a park in the Knowle -Totterdown area and the Council, spurred on by Mr. Perrett's donation of £500, thus providing a cheaper option, swiftly put matters in hand, despite the fact that not everybody was happy. The hundred allotment holders for instance who had to be turfed off their plots, though the Council stated they would not be 'interfered with' until

1926. (Some of the allotments are still there.) Herewith a sample of the complaints, before and after:

“Mr. Perrett’s Park faces north and gets the aroma from the Marsh.”

“The piece of land now known as Perrett Park should never have been purchased however cheaply it was obtained.”

“And what about the slope?”

“A perfect White Elephant!”

“A fiasco!”

“Was any ballot held before the land was acquired?”

“Unsuitable! What we want is flat ground suitable for old people to walk on!”

“It is small, inadequate for the wants of the area, and very steep: *two* steep sides.”

“Unsuitable for children to play on.”

Then there were the complaints about youths hanging about the Park and - horrors - gambling! Pc Willis kept watch and in April 1926, captured Stanley Albert Hughes aged eighteen, after a chase. Stan was arrested and taken to court for playing Banker with eight or nine other lads. He took the rap, saying cheekily “*It was my cards!*” (laughter). He was fined five bob.

Even among members of the Council ironic references were being made to Knowle’s ‘Free’ Park. Nevertheless the Park was well under way by 1925 and was stated to be ‘very popular’ and ‘a wonderful new herbaceous border [was] being planted.’ The Council officially adopted the name ‘Perrett’s Park’ in July 1927.²¹

In November 1929 Mr. Perrett announced his intention of donating a fountain for the Park to commemorate his 88th birthday on the following 8th January. He probably meant his 87th year. On the 12th April 1930, the Fountain was switched on.

‘MR PERRETT’S GIFT TO KNOWLE’

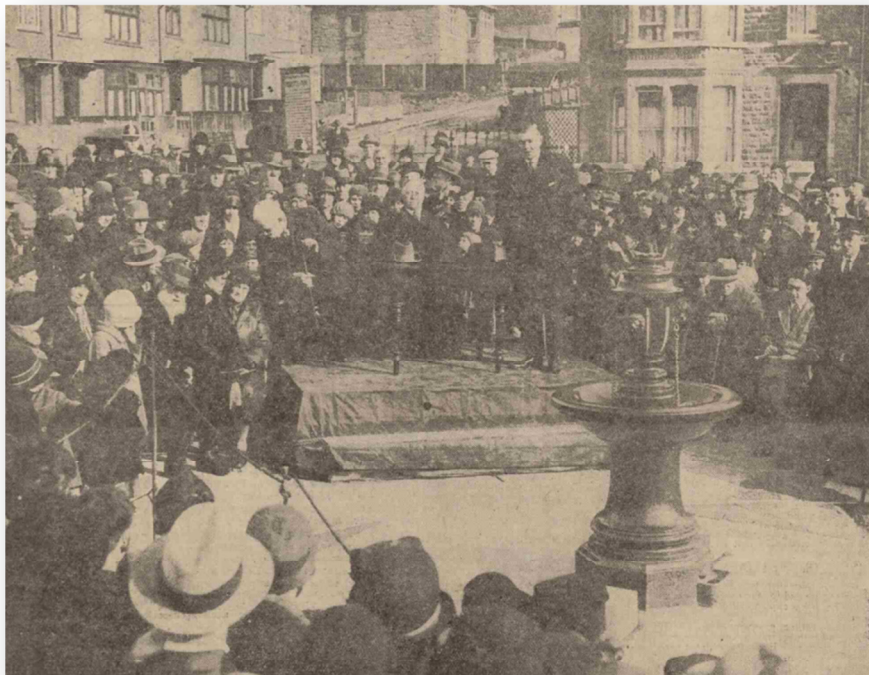
‘Fountain in red granite erected in Park’

“The water of the handsome red granite fountain in Perrett Park, Knowle was turned on this Saturday in an interesting little ceremony. The fountain was the gift of Mr. C.R. Perrett the donor of the park which was opened about three years ago. During the last few months the new walk on the upper part of the ground has been laid out by the district surveyor Mr. W.L. F. Palmer acting under the city engineer and there are now recessed seats and a rockery planted with shrubs and plants. The fountain was to have

²¹ WDP 8.7.1927

been started by Sir William Howell Davies but in his unavoidable absence the task was performed by Ald. Frank Moore. Prior to the ceremony selections of music were provided by the Kingswood Evangel Mission Prize Band and there was a large gathering of residents of the district. Mr. E.A. Wilshire who presided said the City had always possessed a number of men & women who had devoted their lives to the well-being of their fellow citizens. It was fortunate that Bristol possessed such men as Cllr. Perrett who desired to leave his city the better for having lived in it. Of such men we were all very proud. (Applause) Ald. Frank Moore added his thanks to Mr. Perrett for the provision of the fountain and he did not know that there was any more suitable way to perpetuate his memory than in a supply of water that all might drink. It was the best of drinks. Not only the present generation but future generations would be grateful to Mr. Perrett. All wished him improved health and many more years in which to see the park develop and large numbers of people enjoy it. He concluded with declaring the fountain "Open".

"The water was then turned on and Mr. Perrett was invited to take the first drink of water. He took a cup and wished all *"Good Health"*. Alderman C.P. Billing proposed a vote of thanks saying there was no man more respected. He congratulated the residents having the park and fountain and said there was nothing like pure water. He said he had once heard a man say there was nothing like it provided it was taken in the proper spirit (laughter) Ald. Dowling said the fountain was more evidence of the generosity of Mr. Perrett's heart. Mr. T.J. Wise said it had been an honour to be associated with Mr. Perrett in representing the ward. There was more applause and 'For he's a jolly good fellow'



was sung. 'Mr. C.R. Perrett, replying, said it was a great pleasure for him to take part in that ceremony. He had been looking forward to placing a fountain there for some time so that the children could drink when they wished.



'He proceeded to express thanks to Mr. Wilshire for presiding, to Mr. Palmer for the way in which he had arranged the foundation of the fountain, and to the band for their selection of music.'

Sadly, it was CRP's last public appearance.

The Police Band (it would be nice to think it included a policewoman!) often played in the Park throughout the 1930s and up to the outbreak of war in 1939: this is a selection of their programme for the 4th October 1930:

Marche Triumphale, Father Rhine. LINCKE

Overture, Poet & Peasant. SUPPE

Blue Danube. STRAUSS

Faust (Selection) GOUNOD

Ballet Suite, Egyptien. LUIGINI

Finlandia. SIBELIUS

Londonderry Air; Shepherd's Hey. Arranged GRAINGER

Bitter Sweet (selection) COWARD

Entry of the Gods into Valhalla. WAGNER

Morceau, Husarenritt, SPINDLER

And finally, the City of Bristol Police March, 'Feast Song'.

Those were the days.

A Mr. Hussey of Haverstock Road who attended the concert in 1932 said he enjoyed it, but felt the sound could be better dispersed and also though he was in the front row he was unable to see all the performers. Mr. T. Jennings complained that he had waited for a public convenience in the area for 20-30 years, a facility which had apparently been in Councillor's Perrett in-tray since 1923. A little boy, Harry Shepherd, aged 9, broke his leg whilst playing football in the Park in 1933, a good attempt considering the much talked about 'slope'. Park users would have liked a bowling green but it would have been difficult to comply with such a scheme, again due to the infamous 'slope'. In June 1936, Mr. H. Jones of Sylvia Avenue wrote to the Planning Committee on behalf of other residents expressing thanks for beauty of the park, the condition in which it was kept by the gardeners, (there was a wonderful display of flowers) and the Ranger.

But.....bad times were just around the corner. In October 1939, Perrett Park had one of the first above-ground air-raid shelters in Bristol, sited on the terrace above a rose bed which provoked the inevitable complaints. ('ridiculous!') The Planning Committee apologised saying the matter had been left to junior officers who had wanted to get a move on owing to the emergency. In 1941 an extra entrance was required for speedier access to the shelter. The Park was then given over to the Barrage Balloons but owing to war time security none of this appeared in the press and there is nothing else at all about the Park during the six years of war.

We were exhorted: "*Careless talk costs lives,*" one of many wartime slogans.

After the war the Park played host to the austerity 'Holidays at Home' campaign, with concert parties and dancing displays arranged. All of which, like the band concerts, with the advent of television, gradually fizzled out.

Finale: A Grand Old Man.

Back in the 1920s, Councillor Perrett was still busy with his hectic round of social engagements, numerous funerals, memorial services and bazaars. His birthday party at the YMCA became an annual event.

He was always good for copy and his friends at the Western Daily Press headlined on 6th January 1923:

'The happiest man in Bristol is Councillor Perrett celebrating his birthday today.'

Next day the occasion was reported:

'Mr. C.R. Perrett, Birthday Party. Congratulations of the Lord Mayor and Others.'

'Councillor C.R. Perrett gave another large birthday party at the Totterdown YMCA Hall last night and was cordially congratulated by numerous guests celebrating his 83rd year "We wish you many happy returns of your birthday. God Bless You" was the motto in large letters hanging on the wall of the decorated hall. About 250 tenants and friends enjoyed tea, with more coming to the musical entertainment which followed. A large number of apologies for absence included Sir Thomas Inskip, the Recorder and Colonel Woodcock, MP; good wishes came by telegraph from Sir William & Lady Howell-Davies and Mr. Beddoe Rees MP who declined the invitation owing to illness.'

A few days later Mr. Perrett was part of a civic deputation to the Cathedral for Assize Sunday and took the chair at a meeting of the Bushy Park Glee Club and it was still only the 22nd January. There is no doubting the energy which belied his age.

In 1925 the fund he had suggested in aid of the small French town of Bethune, not far from Arras, came to fruition. The place had been virtually flattened in 1918. The citizens of Bristol provided eight 'artisans' houses' to accommodate sixteen families to assist with the rebuilding. On 20th March 1925 a Bristol delegation of civic dignitaries set off on a week's visit to the town.

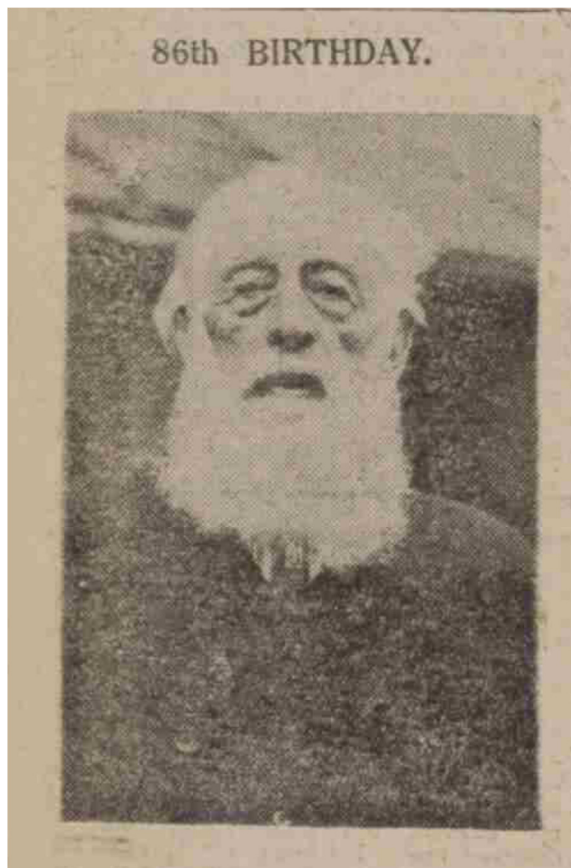
Some of those pictured were Sir George Davies, Col. Woodcock MP, Mr. C.R. Perrett, (behind, 3rd left) Sir Ernest Cook, Lady Cook, Mrs. F.O. Wills, the Sheriff (Mr. F.O. Wills) The Lady Mayoress, Dr. Paul Bush, CMG, and the Lord Mayor, Mr. E. Brookhouse Richards. (The formidable looking Lady Mayoress, in ankle length fur, is evidently dressed for the South Pole!)

The Bristol deputation leaving Victoria Station for Bethune.²²



²² WDP 25.3.1925

In September 1927²³ Mr. Perrett was adopted as 'Citizen' candidate for the Somerset Ward on Bristol City Council on which he had already served 10 years. He listed his achievements during that decade which included the fixed bridge²⁴ at Sandy Park Road, the procurement of St Anne's Park for the citizens of Brislington and the land from Sylvia Avenue & Crowndale Road to be kept as an open space and not built on "*No prettier view in Bristol*," he said. One of his 'failures' was the Council's purchase of Blaise



Castle (!) which had gone ahead despite his opposition. "*A waste of ratepayers' money*," he railed, "*what was wrong with the Downs which can be easily reached by tramcar?*" He was duly elected. On the 10th of the month he praised the work of 'Women Liberals' at a meeting at Angers Road, presumably none of them in favour of equal franchise and in December took 4th place as 'The Spirit of Christmas' at a Men only paper dress competition at the YMCA at which he was presented with a silver-topped walking stick, 'at the age of 83 he appears as active as ever.' First, second and third places were taken by Harold Slater, as 'Baby', Alec Brown, 'Golliwog' and Cyril Thorne, 'Skeleton'. It was a different era.²⁵

There were signs however that CRP was slowing down. He was unable to attend the annual gathering of Wiltshiremen on their outing to Stourhead and apparently setting his affairs in order advertised several houses in Knowle for sale, one with six bedrooms.²⁶ On the 8th May 1928 when chairing the Rating Committee at the Council House he was taken ill. On the 10th May the newspaper reported, incorrectly, that he was 'better', and from then on took the extraordinary step of issuing daily bulletins: on the 11th of the month he was 'making satisfactory progress towards recovery'; on the 12th 'there is a slight improvement. He is of course, still confined to bed.' On the 14th June, 'his many friends will be pleased to know Mr C.R. Perrett is progressing. He desires to thank all who have made inquiries.'

He had evidently fully recovered by 5th January 1929 when his 86th birthday photograph appeared in the paper.

23. WDP 1.10.1927

24. Any suggestions what this "fixed bridge" was? I only know of the railway bridge;

25 WDP 17.12.1927

²⁶ Ibid 19.6. & 16.11.1927

He was stated to be 'generally' in good health and his reappearance at the usual round of functions confirms this. However, none of us lives for ever and undoubtedly his recent serious illness prompted him to make his will on 29th May 1929.

He had no children and few close relatives, an exception being his niece Elsie Hunt, nee Ellis, who had once shared his house. It might have been expected that she would have been the main beneficiary. Instead she was left 'the large armchair in the breakfast room; the over-mantle in the front parlour; an iron safe; a photograph of himself and his late wife plus £100'. Her husband Jonathan to whom Mr. P. had obviously lent money was 'forgiven all monies and interest' he owed. His great nephew, Bernard Charles Hunt, the son of Elsie and Jonathan, was to have a property at 19 New Wells Rd, Totterdown, when he reached the age of twenty one. If he should die before he reached this milestone, then the same property was to go to his younger brother, Ronald William when he in turn reached twenty one. If both died before reaching their majority then the property was to revert to the residual estate.

A cousin, Charles Coleman, of Grubham's Farm, All Saints, Axminster was to receive £50. (Charles, born in Worton in 1863, a coachman by trade, was the son of Mr Perrett's aunt Sarah by her marriage to Stephen Coleman)

Albert Henry Ellis, a nephew, (the son of Mr Perrett's half-brother Henry) of 52, Queen Street, Blaenavon, South Wales was also to receive £50. (In 1911 Albert was a married man, a colliery labourer, working underground, living with his 'brother-in-law,' James Stinchcombe at Blaenavon.)

Sarah Ellen Couzens, a niece of Mr Perrett's late wife, of 1 Stratton Villas, Chippenham, also £50. (In the event of her decease then this money was to go first to her son Reginald, then to her husband, Francis Arthur Couzens.)

To Emily Susannah Ellis, the wife of Mr Perrett's half-brother, James Ellis: £100.

To Mary Perrett, of 12 Southfield Rd, Radstock, (no relationship specified): £10.

A long list of friends, all of Knowle or elsewhere in Bristol unless otherwise stated, were to receive small sums of money, usually between £20, £25 or £50 each:

Frank Moore, Ellen Jane Moore, the wife of Frank, and their daughter Elfrida; Hilda Rosener, of Western Australia; Fred Rosener of West Norwood; James Cross Pope; Thomas Henry Pearce; John Green; Julia Belling; Eaton Clarke; Charles Keen Lewis; Bessie Ward of Cardiff; Lily Westland McColl of Barry, South Wales, (£100); Rev George Jarman; A.M. Maggs, widow; William & Emma Louise Sainsbury (£25 between them); Edwin Eyres; Mrs Nellie Davidge, Bicester; Mrs Samuel Eastment of West Lavington; Mrs Wiltshire, Fittleton Field Farm, Enford, £10.

The following work people were also mentioned with small bequests:

William Smith, 'old workman', 32 Mount Pleasant, Bedminster: £25;
William Henry Hooper, 'old workman' 134 Whitehorse Lane, Bedminster: £10;
Emily Francis Elsie Osborne, 'nurse', Rose Cottage, West St., Bedminster: £25;

Emily Witcombe, mother of the above Emily, of the same address: £25;
Rose Amelia Goldstein, 'housekeeper' £100, plus wages owing to her;
Maurice Goldstein, husband of Rose, £20 (If both were still in his service at the time of his death.)
Maud Treble, wife of William John, 199 Wells Rd, £100, plus any wages owing to her, if nursing him at the time of his death.

To each tenant renting a house, four weeks rent; to each tenant at Perrett Homes, 39 & 41 Stanley Hill, and 19 Firfield Street, £2; to each inmate of Almshouses, at 40 & 44 Stanley Hill, who are over 60 'at the time of my decease', £5.

Emma Rose of 40 Stanley Hill, 'in addition to any amount forthcoming to her as an inmate of an almshouse, £20'. (I cannot identify any relationship between Emma and the other members of the Rose family mentioned elsewhere. I wonder if Mr. Perrett simply perceived she might be a relative because of her name.)

There then follows a long list of charitable donations to 'good causes':

Bristol Children's Hospital: £100
Salvation Army, Bristol Branch, £100
YMCA, £100
Bristol Dispensary: £100
Muller's Orphanage: £100
Baptist Chapel, Wells Road, (books & music for the choir): £50
Bristol Band of Hope: £25
United Methodist Church, Totterdown: £25
Mission Hall, Summers Hill: £50
Wycliffe Congregational Chapel: £50
Wesleyan Chapel, Bushey Park: £50
United Methodists, Harrowdene Road: £50
Brotherhood & Sisterhood, Wick Road, St Anne's, £50
Ancient Order of Foresters (Bristol District): £50 (for members in distress)
Dr Barnardo's, Stepney: £100
National Children's Home: £50
Holy Nativity Church, Knowle: £50
Gospel Hall, Cambridge Street: £25
Wesleyan Chapel, Wells Rd: £25
St Martin's Church, Knowle: £25
Roman Catholic Church: St Gerard Majella, £25
Enford Parish Church, Pewsey, Wiltshire: £25
Baptist Chapel, Enford: £25
Primitive Methodist Church, Chisenbury, Wiltshire: £25
Baptist Chapel, Netheravon, Wiltshire: £25
Congregational Chapel, Broadwalk, Knowle: £25
Congregational Chapel, West Street, Bedminster: £25
Court Perseverances, Ancient Order of Foresters, St James Square, Bristol: £50 (not for personnel but for recipients in need)

Residual Legatees: Bristol General Hospital, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol HQ, Salvation Army, Muller's Orphanage.

Mr. Perrett was back in seemingly fine fettle by the time of the Lord Mayor's Garden Party in July 1929 when he was feted along with two other aged citizens, the Messrs Henry & George Riseley, their 'ages totalling 250 years!' the newspaper eulogised. Mr P. 'went on the zoo carnival and on the roundabouts.....these three veterans are an inspiration to middle-aged folk and to men everywhere, keeping their end up.'²⁷

On 26th March 1930 Mr. Perrett was in the Chair of the Rating Committee and spoke about empty homes. On 12th April he was at the Park, his last public appearance for the turning on of the fountain. A month later he was suddenly taken ill and died on the 13th May 1930. A long obituary notice appeared in the Western Daily Press the next day, of which the following is an abridged version:

'CITY LOSES GENEROUS GIVER'

'Death of Mr. Charles Rose Perrett'

'TOTTERDOWN G.O.M.'

'The death occurred at his residence 126 Wells Road, Knowle, yesterday of Mr Charles Rose Perrett at the age of 87 years. He had been in failing health for some time but had been seriously ill for less than one month. On April 12th last he was present at a ceremony in Perrett's Park, Knowle, where a fountain given by him was used for the first time. That was the last public function he attended.

'Bristol is the poorer by the death of such a man as Mr Perrett as he was an outstanding example of the patriotic, devoted and generous citizen.

'Starting life in a humble way, by thrift and carefulness, he accumulated fairly substantial means from which he gave generously to local institutions.

'For old and deserving people he provided eight houses in Stanley Hill and in addition to living rent free, the old people received a cash gift each week.

'He also had six cottages in his native county of Wiltshire and the occupants were all people whom he had known since he was a boy. For personal private charity it is probable that Mr Perrett had no equal in Bristol.

'Amongst his many kindly acts was the gift of £500 towards the cost of providing a recreation ground at Knowle and the park will always be associated with him as it is named Perrett's Park.

'It was in this park that he had built a marble drinking fountain, the water of which was turned on at the ceremony on April 12th with Mr Perrett drinking the first cup.'

²⁷ WDP 5.7.1929

Large crowds attended the funeral at Wells Road Baptist Church on 18th May:



Rev W. Harry Davies the Pastor, in a lengthy address, said that the number of mourners signified the real sense loss everyone felt. Mr. Perrett, who was a Christian, carried out the injunction of the Apostle Paul 'Labour that ye may have whereof to give to him that hath need'. Hymns 'Jesu lover of my Soul' and 'For all the Saints' were sung. The principal mourners were Ald. Frank Moore, Mr. H.G. Robbins, Mr. C. Coleman, cousin, Mrs. Ellis, sister-in-law, [the widow of James], Mrs Hunt, niece, [nee Elsie Ellis], Mr. & Mrs. Couzens, nephew & niece, Mr. Reg Couzens, Miss Holford, Mrs. & Miss Maggs, (Marston) Mr. & Mrs. Stockwell (Semington). These were followed by The Lord Mayor, Sheriff and Town Clerk of Bristol, Ald. Sir W. Howell-Davies and Lady Howell-Davies, a great many more aldermen and members of the City Council, representatives of churches and chapels, Deacons, Rangers, Grand Masters and members of the Foresters, Oddfellows, Rechabites, Shepherds, Druids, Patriots, United Wiltshiremen, Hearts of Oak, Liberal politicians and dozens more, all named.

The end of the report carries a disclaimer. It had been stated at the funeral that Mr. Perrett gave six almshouses in Wiltshire. This was 'incorrect due to a misunderstanding. It appears these were cottages, investments to pay for the Stanley Hill almshouses.'

Mr. Perrett presumably outlived all of his half-siblings. His few relatives, the Couzens family, Mrs. Maggs, Mrs. Ellis and Charles Coleman had been named in the will. One wonders if their expectations were realised by the actuality. Of the Hunts it is noticeable that only Elsie Hunt attended the funeral which suggests there might have been a rift between Mr. Perrett and his closest family. Jonathan Hunt had been friendly enough with CRP in 1923, when they had jointly nominated Beddoe Rees as MP for Bristol South but he was not at the funeral. On 3rd May 1930, just days before his death, a codicil to the will revoked Elsie's legacy of the over mantle and the iron safe, (probably not too much of a loss) but also deprived her of the £100, which he gave instead as an additional bequest to the YMCA. The boys, Bernard and Ronald Hunt lost the house, getting instead £100 each. Just a few weeks later in June, Jonathan Hunt, of 220 Wells Road, was made bankrupt for £2,137.4s.0d when his electrical engineering business failed 'due to the coal strike and ill health.' Charity perhaps once had begun at home when Mr. Perrett had lent him cash at the start of the enterprise for which he was now 'forgiven all debts' but not further extended. Maud Treble, the nurse, reaped the benefit: her legacy was upgraded from £100 to £200.

Mr. Perrett's will was proved on the 13th May 1931 with a fortune amounting to £8706. 16s. 7d gross. He left his executors, Frank Moore, 'Land Agent of Knowle' and Herbert George Robbins of Redland, the Secretary of an un-named Friendly Society £100 each for their services. (And they must have earned every penny of it.)

It seems astonishing that Mr. Perrett's illegitimacy was never 'outed'. At the time such a 'disgraceful' origin was something to be hidden in much the same way as homosexuality had to be until a few years ago. Mr. Perrett concealed the circumstances of his birth successfully. That nothing was revealed in so many newspaper columns devoted to him perhaps confirms the universal respect in which he was held, but also shows that he was a gambler, for far greater stakes than ever young Stan Hughes played for in the Park. He was also a determined self-publicist, whose life of 'good works' gained its own momentum especially as he grew older and he became a 'treasure'. He was a reactionary who didn't give a damn what people thought of his views, yet a benefactor who basked in the headlights of the adulation he received in spades from his fellow citizens. It was a life lived on a public platform. What a help a few private recollections would have been in this enterprise. With it all, just out of reach is the shadow which is Mary Ann. If only we had her version too.

There is one small post script which bears telling: A by-election was held at the beginning of June in respect of Councillor Perrett's vacant seat on the City Council. Out of 13,995 persons eligible to vote, only 4,349 bothered. The young woman calling herself 'Twenty two' had drawn the matter of apathy to CRP's attention on the 5th March 1924: *"Councillor Perrett need not be afraid. Votes for Women will not ruin the country.....what seems sadly lacking is a judgement on the large proportion of men who do not think it worthwhile to record their votes either at Parliamentary or Local Elections."*

To this can now be added an equal number of women for whose rights the likes of 'Twenty two' fought so hard. But then, Mr. P. suspected all along that the women would be no more enthusiastic than the men: *".....it is the greatest trouble in the world to get them to the poll...."*



.....he had written in 1912 when they were eligible to vote in Council elections. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun.

The opening of the new playground at the Park, 2015



OLD AGE PENSIONERS, their ages ranging from 95 years to 68, who have spent many pleasant hours this Summer in Perrett's Park, Knowle, Bristol, mustered in strength yesterday afternoon. Two veterans of the district Alderman F. Clothier, a former Lord Mayor, and Mr Tom Barrow, a former councillor for the Knowle Ward, now making steady progress following a long illness, went along to meet the Old Boys—many of them their personal friends. The gathering was arranged by Mr Jack Bird, park patrol, and Mr Doyle, ranger, who thought the fellowship of the pensioners, meeting in the park from time to time in groups of two or three, would be deepened by an occasional "get-together."

This first rally led to many reminiscences of the "good old days," and finished up with an impromptu sing-song. It is hoped there will be opportunities for the pensioners to keep in touch with other during the winter months.

Yesterday's company included: Messrs J. H. Walton (95), 42, Knowle Road; P. Hutchings (87), 50, Bayham Road; F. S. Horlick (86), 23, Brecknock Road; R. H. Rippon (86), 13, Brecknock Road; V. Haist (84), 47, Brecknock Road; A. E. Bale (80), 119, Sylvia Avenue; H. G. Pickett (78), 57, Hawthorn Street; W. G. Harvey (78), 2, Bayham Road; A. Gunney (77), 10, Stoneleigh Road; W. Salter (77), 54, Fitzgerald Road; J. Crease (77), 35, St. Luke's Road; C. W. Swindlehurst (75), 6, Stephen's Crescent; I. Davis (74), 19, Haverstock Road; A. E. Torrington (74), 16, Beckington Road; T. Haine (74), 17, Angers Road; B. J. Gover (72), 66, Stephen's Crescent; H. Moore (68), 24, Brecknock Road; and W. J. Yeo (68), 51, Brecknock Road.

Old gents enjoying Perrett's Park in the 1930s.



The Grand Opening of the Playground in 2015

(with thanks to South Bristol Voice)



Mr & Mrs Perrett's 'Gothic' Gravestone at Arno's Vale Cemetery.