



Scratches on the Face of Time

The newsletter of the Clarence Bicknell Association
N°1 - Autumn 2014

Clarence Bicknell 2018 Centenary Research

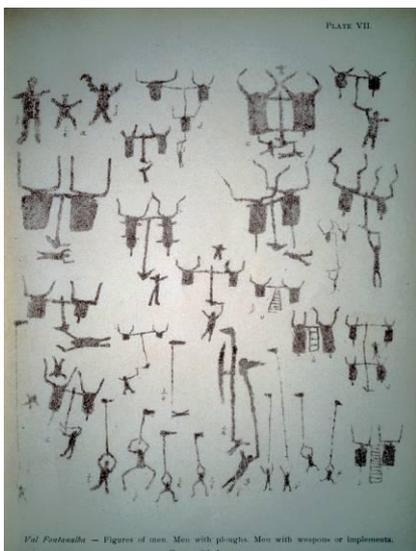
We are very pleased to announce that 18 institutions in 6 countries of Europe received on 23 September 2014 an invitation to participate in the Clarence Bicknell 2018 Centenary Research Project. The drivers of the project are the University of Nottingham (who have agreed to act as lead in the application to the European Union for funding under Horizon 2020), Genoa University, The International Institute of Ligurian Studies (Museo Bicknell in Bordighera) and the Conseil Général des Alpes Maritimes (Musée des Merveilles in Tende).

We anticipate that the research will be multi-



disciplinary because interest has been expressed by archaeologists, botanists, horticulturalists, taxonomists, curators of botanic gardens, herbarium curator, historians, historical geographers, earth scientists, environmentalists, artists and Esperantists. No limitations are imposed on the subjects selected for this project as long as they respond to the demands of the EU Horizon 2020 programme and are linked by the works of Clarence Bicknell. Expressions of interest have been requested for the end of October 2014 with detailed proposals and budgets by the end of December. The proposals will be pulled together into an application to the EU in early 2015.

It is our intention that this new research could form a key part of the Clarence Bicknell 2018 Centenary exhibitions, conferences, books and television coverage. The Clarence Bicknell Association is not a partner in the academic research but is giving support in the coordination of the partners in various countries and in the longer-term societal impact, i.e. the dissemination of all these activities in the years leading up to 2015. Funding from other cultural sources is being sought so we would be grateful for any advice and contact details of funding sources you might be able to send us.



Pl. Fontanella - Figures of men. Men with ploughs. Men with weapons or implements. (From the Vallée des Merveilles)

Why is Clarence Bicknell a topic for research?

Clarence Bicknell (1842–1918) was a man of letters, an artist, author, traveller, botanist, archaeologist, pastor, humanist and Esperantist. The particular circumstances of his life meant his talent and achievements went unnoticed. Luckily a mass of his fine and varied work safely survives – vivid, colourful and lively. So there is a “freshness” about his work, and the rather singular life in which he made it. His activities across three countries of Europe and the chance to promote and exhibit Clarence Bicknell in several other countries provide a European dimension today.

The value of Clarence Bicknell’s pioneering work in several different disciplines is increasingly appreciated by experts – in particular his recording, cataloguing and publication of the prehistoric rock engravings of the Vallée des Merveilles, his drawings of the flowering plants of the Riviera, his creation of the Museo Bicknell in Bordighera, and his contribution to the idealist universal language Esperanto. Bicknell made his data and images available to other scholars and left over 30,000 of them to Genoa University, to his Museo Bicknell in Bordighera and to others so that they would be available to future generations, a gesture which was rare for researchers 100 years ago.



Do you know other researchers or institutions who would like to participate in the Clarence Bicknell 2018 Research Project? Please e-mail Marcus Bicknell now at info@clarencebicknell.com

NEWS - Seminars and association meeting in May 2014, Bordighera and Tende

On Friday 16th May, at the Musée des Merveilles in Tende and on Saturday 17th May, at the Museo Bicknell in Bordighera, Seminar, Valerie Browne Lester made a presentation on “Clarence Bicknell and his cousin Phiz, illustrator of Charles Dickens, the Bicknells and the Brownes”. Valerie is Phiz’s great-granddaughter and a member of the association’s committee.

We also announced the Europe-wide project to commemorate the 2018 centenary of Clarence Bicknell’s death (see lead article). The second date, in Bordighera, also featured the founding general meeting of the Clarence Bicknell Association and election of officers.

NEWS - Sentier Bicknell: un chemin retrouvé

Marcus Bicknell, le 30 juillet 2014.

Nous voyons dans le Nice Matin du 27 Juillet qu'un groupe de bénévoles a dégagé le Sentier Bicknell. Bon travail! Nous remercions Nathalie Magnardi au Musée des Merveilles pour avoir aidé à coordonner les efforts et les leaders du groupe Paul Servel, Alain Simon et Philippe Strebler.

Vous aimeriez lire l'agenda (carnet de jour) que Margaret Berry a écrit dans lequel elle décrit Clarence en train de quitter la Casa Fontanalba au levé du soleil et monter dans les montagne, sur ce même sentier, puis Margaret et son mari Edward qui suivent un peu plus tard. L'original en anglais est au site web clarencerbicknell.com >téléchargements ou >downloads.



Un pensiero senza nessun valore specifico, forse una speranza o un'illusione. Grazie alla pazienza del dottor Littardi i volontari hanno altresì appreso informazioni sulla vita dei ficus, splendidi esemplari le cui radici possono raggiungere anche i 500 metri. E i rami, lanciando i loro strali, permettono il propagarsi della pianta che così si riproduce in esemplari in grado di vivere anche se la genitrice muore, conservando lo stesso DNA dell'antenata. Un mondo misterioso quello vegetale, ricco di soluzioni per la sopravvivenza, patrimonio del nostro territorio in cui molti esemplari, tra cui il ficus e le stesse palme, si sono acclimatate e riprodotte come se fossero autoctone.

Ci sarà ancora bisogno di altre giornate dedicate a quell'incantevole giardino; il sogno ambito è recuperarlo e renderlo un luogo per letture e momenti di relax. I volontari, Amici veri del Bicknell, troveranno nuovamente energie e tempo per dedicarli. Così come ha ricordato un fedelissimo, Franco Zoccoli, "Chi se travaia ben, cume intu paradisu...". E il Museo Bicknell è un piccolo eden, aperto a tutti.



NEWS - Bordighera: i ringraziamenti di Daniela Gandolfi dopo due giornate di Cittadinanza Attiva

Dopo due giornate di Cittadinanza Attiva, compresa quella di sabato 9 agosto 2014 presso il Museo Bicknell, a cui hanno partecipato circa dieci volontari, il giardino prospiciente al Museo ha cambiato aspetto. La signora Gulsham Antivalle ha incaricato due giardinieri che curano il suo garden e quello del Belvedere, di dedicarsi per tre ore alla potatura della essenze che allietano il giardino, dando un grande contributo al lavoro degli intervenuti.

La dottoressa Daniela Gandolfi, responsabile del Museo ha ringraziato pubblicamente l'operato dei volontari rimarcando ancora una volta l'importanza e le potenzialità che il Bicknell ha per la città di Bordighera. Purtroppo la giornata ha segnato anche un nefasto intervento che conferma quello che è il genocidio delle palme di in tutto il territorio nazionale; presente il dottor Claudio Littardi, Presidente del Centro Studi e Ricerche per le Palme di Sanremo, con alcuni operai, hanno provveduto alla pulizia delle palme.

In realtà due delle tre palme erano infestate dal punteruolo rosso e sono state completamente sfrondate, in parte tagliati i tronchi e distrutti con il trituratore le parti contaminate. Un momento molto triste al quale abbiamo assistito così come si assiste alla fine di un sogno. Incredibilmente la palma che confonde le fronde con quelle del ficus macrophylla è rimasta indenne dall'invasione del terribile coleottero ed è stata semplicemente disinfettata. Parlando con gli esperti botanici di è dedotto che probabilmente le essenze che i fiori e le foglie del ficus, avvolgendo la palma, disturbano gli insetti e le larve, coprendo probabilmente i ferormoni che li attirano.

RESEARCH - Clarence letters to Abbot Antonio Carestia 1903

Written by Marcus Bicknell on 09 September 2013.

We had not been aware of extensive collections of Clarence Bicknell's outgoing letters, so the emails to us from Giuseppe Sitzia in Grignasco in the Italian Alps have been most welcome. He has unearthed in the Calderini Museum of Varallo seven letters from Clarence Bicknell to the Abbot and botanist Antonio Carestia 1825-1908 (Image, right) in Riva Valdobbia in Valsesia. The letters are mostly about the exchange of botanical samples; both men were very excited about the rare species which could be found in the Alps. Clarence wrote these letters in Italian; his winter home in Bordighera and his summer house in Val Casterino were both in Italy at the time, so his Italian was probably quite good. His hand-writing is a bit scrawly, so the transcripts are missing a word here and there. But they do shed some light on the habit at the time of collecting samples in the wild (frowned on today) and his friendship with another ardent collector.

You can download a pdf of the letters in [Italian](#) or in rough [English](#)



RESEARCH - Margaret Berry diary

Written by Marcus Bicknell on 23 May 2014.

I have transcribed Margaret Berry's diary of her first trip to Clarence's Casa Fontanalba. In fact she and Edward her



husband were the first visitors. It is very useful to researchers because it gives detail of not only her daily life but also of Clarence Bicknell and his helper in the mountains, Luigi Pollini. Here is a sample from the diary, much of which is fascinating in its detail: "The uncle and Luigi went off at 6.30 to Lago Verde to do some rubbings of the rock inscriptions, and Edward and I, regardless of the threatening weather and faithfully trusting in the uncle's assertion that it never rains till after midday, started about 7.30 for Pian Tendasco to search for fritillaries. The uncle had found some about a fortnight ago and had shown us his dried specimens but we were most anxious to find some ourselves." The photo above, taken in about 1914 on the terrace of the Casa Fontanalba, shows Clarence left, Edward Berry standing, and Margaret Berry to his right with a cane in her hand. The transcript is at clarencebicknell.com >Downloads.

Clarence at the 1907 Esperanto meeting in Cambridge

Marcus's cousin Valerie Lester, who joined us in May in Bordighera, Tende, Nice, Castellaras, London Walworth and Stoke-upon-Tern Shropshire, is actively researching Clarence Bicknell for a new biography. She recently got hold of a book called *The Life of Zamenhof* which is about the creator of Esperanto. There are only two photos in it, but one of them (below) contains Clarence Bicknell who was active with group creating and promoting the values of the "universal language". Clarence is in the second row from the back, fourth from the right, wearing a pale waistcoat. He has had a haircut and his beard has been trimmed. Zamenhof is sitting in the first row of chairs, sixth from the left. The event was the Lingva Komitato (the Language Committee of the Esperanto movement) held in

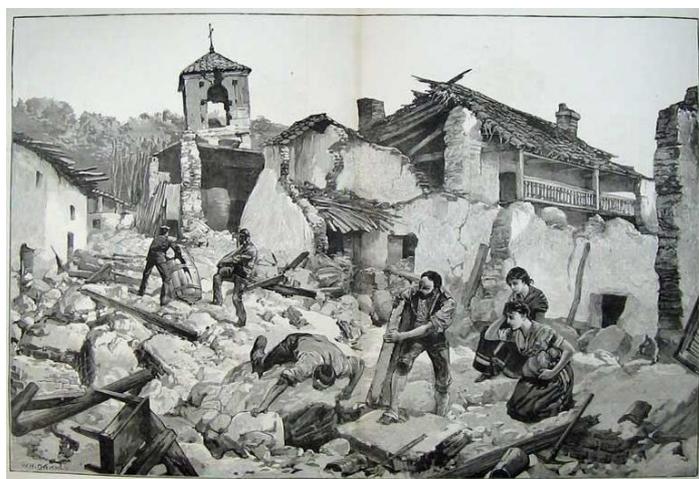


Cambridge, England, in 1907. This image is the only evidence of any visit by Clarence back to the UK since he had settled in Bordighera about 30 years earlier.

COMMENT - Clarence and the earthquake of 1887

Helen Blanc-Francard writes...

The construction of all the pleasure palaces and the growth of urban development along the French and Italian Riviera were all the more astonishing and risky because it had been known for centuries that the Southern Alpine region was sitting on an active earthquake zone - indeed one of the most active seismic areas in Western Europe countries. In the morning of the 23rd February 1887 and ten years after arriving in Bordighera, Clarence too was reminded that, just below the surface of the ground, one of the great uncontrollable forces of nature was just lying dormant. A force that could change his world for ever: devastate the landscapes he knew so well, cover and melt the rocks he was studying, scatter his archives, in short, destroy his life's work. You can find other web links at www.clarencebicknell.com >Contact > News & Views



In the chronology of Clarence's life, on the web site, 1887 carries the remark "Severe earthquake in Italy; Clarence helps poorer residents in and around Bordighera." This image from the Illustrated London News shows the extent of the damage in places, which is titled "Searching the rubble in Diano Marina, about 30 miles further east of the epicentre than Bordighera, after the Riviera earthquake of 1887."

RESEARCH - "Riviera Nature Notes" by Comerford Casey

Written by Marcus Bicknell on 13 June 2014.

I have recently been able to acquire a second edition of the book by Comerford Casey called "Nature Notes on Riviera" (1903) thanks to the recommendation by Dr Robert Hearn of Genoa University. In the index, there is the reference "Bicknell, C., often cited". So I scanned through the book and found 10 references, any of which might be useful to a researcher...

Page 93 – Euphorbias

"Mr C. Bicknell has given me the following note about the distribution of this characteristic plant. "I don't think that *E. dendroides* likes such a modern formation as the tertiary sandstones and marls of the Bordighera district. It flourishes on the older rocks. There is a little of it in the Roya valley near Ventimiglia on the conglomerate, but only a little: thence eastward it does not reappear till Alassio."

Page 94 – Euphorbias

Casey quotes from C Bicknell's "Flora of Bordighera"
Page 142 – Poisonous plants

"The veteran naturalist Bruyat told me that he had often found these [Deilephila Nerii] larvae on the Oleander bushes in town; I have not been so fortunate. Mr. Bicknell says that quantities of them may be collected in the Nervia valley."

Page 200 – Wayside Weeds

"Mr. C. Bicknell informs me that in Italy the popular name Richetta is applied to Eruca sativa Lamk.

Page 203– Wayside Weeds

"Mr. Bicknell ("Flora of Bordighera") confirms my statement the O. cernua is naturalised here." (and following two sentences)

Page 211 – The Judgement of Paris

No mention of Clarence but some text on Saxifrage Florulenta, "a mythical plant" which Clarence and others prized highly.

Page 219 – The Judgement of Paris

"Although Orchis provincialis is rare near Nice, it is given by Mr. Bicknell as very abundant under the chestnuts in certain districts of the Italian Riviera."

Page 239 – Dry Fruits

"Mr. Bicknell informs me that these rosaries [sold at the corner of the Place Massena] are made of Trapa verbanensis, a species known only in the Lago Maggiore, opposite Arona, in the bay of Angera."

Don't miss the effects of the Tarantula bite on Page 365.

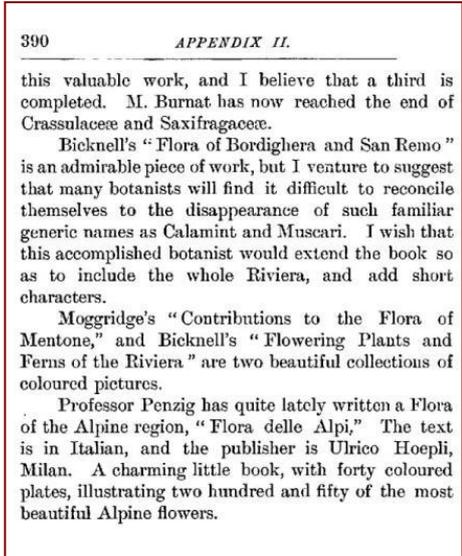
Page 390 – Appendix II – Books Useful for the Study of the Flora

"Bicknell's "Flora of Bordighera and San Remo" is an admirable piece of work, but I venture to suggest that many botanists will find it difficult to reconcile themselves to the disappearance of such familiar generic names as Calamint and Muscari. I wish that this accomplished botanist would extend the book so as to include the whole Riviera, and add short characters.

"Moggridge's "Contributions to the Flora of Mentone" and Bicknell's "Flowering Plants and Ferns of the Riviera" are two beautiful collections of coloured pictures."

Page 391 – Appendix III: Sights worth seeing

"Bordighera: Mr. Bicknell's Botanical Pictures, Herbarium, Riviera Fossils, and Drawings of Rock Engravings."



NEWS – The Clarence Bicknell Association - Who we are

We are a group of academics, researchers, archaeologists and art-lovers linked by a respect for Clarence's life achievements and output. Our not-for-profit activities are designed to bring Clarence to the attention of a wider public, initially in France, Italy and the U.K. and later Europe-wide. This web site and the Clarence Bicknell Association are the first steps in a process which should culminate in Europe-wide exhibitions, one or more books and TV documentaries in 2018, the centenary of his death. The committee of the Clarence Bicknell Association was elected at the first General Meeting of the association on 17th May 2014 in the Museo Bicknell in Bordighera, Italy...

Chairman	Marcus Bicknell	Clarence relation, researcher, member of the board of SES in Luxembourg and of other companies in media and technology. Student of all things Clarence and webmaster of this site. Based northwest of London in the UK.
Vice-Chairman	Graham Avery	Senior Member of St. Antony's College, Oxford University, and Honorary Director-General of the European Commission. His interests include archaeology, mountain-walking, botany, researching and writing on those topics. Based in Oxford in the UK.
Treasurer	seeking candidate	Marcus Bicknell has assumed this function temporarily.
Secretary	Susie Bicknell	Writer, researcher. Based northwest of London, UK.
Member	Christopher Chippindale	Archaeologist, writer, researcher. Based in Cambridge in the UK.
Member	Valerie Browne Lester	Clarence relation, writer, researcher. Based near Boston USA
Member	Maria Pia Luly-Jones	Nature artist who exhibits and runs art painting course in the Museo Bicknell, based in Bordighera in Italy
Member	Helen Blanc-Francard	Writer, researcher, garden expert. Based north of Paris in France.

You can read [complete biographies](#) of these association officers, complete with photos, in the second half of the minutes. Others expertise that we lack (partly), and where we would be grateful for offers of help are a) international art exhibition budgeting, logistics and management, b) writing of applications for EU funding, c) cultural TV documentary programme producers in various European countries.

The Clarence Bicknell Association is seeking a treasurer to check the accounts from time to time and prepare a short financial statement once a year. No meetings or travelling are obligatory.

Your point of contact is Marcus Bicknell, Chairman, Homefarm Orchard, Threehouseholds, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4LP. Phone +44 1494 872751 mobile +44 7748 111444 email info@clarencebicknell.com, skype mbicknell and on Facebook. Please contact us with your suggestions and expectations. Since there is growing interest in Clarence Bicknell in the United Kingdom, France and Italy, activities will be promoted and conducted in several countries, and as far as possible in English, French and Italian. However, the scope of the initiative is not limited to these countries, and participation is invited on a worldwide basis. Your participation in the Association is invited (see [membership application form](#) and [payment methods](#) on this web site).



This newsletter is edited by Susie and Marcus Bicknell - info@clarencebicknell.com