



Weston-super-Mare  
**TOWN COUNCIL**



# THE BLUE PLAQUES OF WESTON-SUPER-MARE

[www.wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/blue-plaques](http://www.wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/blue-plaques)



# About the Blue Plaques



John Crockford-Hawley

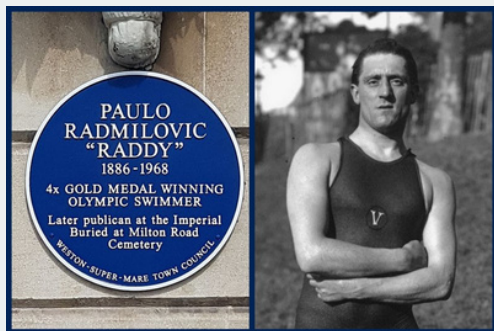
Weston-super-Mare's history is long and varied and people from the town and those who visited have left a lasting legacy.

Weston Town Council decided to put more blue plaques around the town and are joined by Weston Civic Society who also contribute half the cost.

We already have a few commemorative blue plaques around Weston highlighting Earl Alexander of Hillsborough (Churchill's wartime First Lord of the Admiralty born George Street), Capt George Fiott Day VC (Crimean hero lived Claremont Crescent) and Mary Webb (novelist lived Landeman Circus) along with different style plaques such as that commemorating Professor Sir Arthur Eddington (astrophysicist lived Walliscote Road) and Kathleen Thomas who, aged twenty-one, was the first person to swim across the channel from Penarth to Weston in a seven and a half-hour slog back in the late summer of 1927. In addition, Jill's Garden in Grove Park commemorates Jill Dando, the television presenter and journalist.

Residents were asked to vote who deserved a blue plaque via the Weston Mercury. Thirteen additional plaques were agreed upon.

# The Blue Plaques



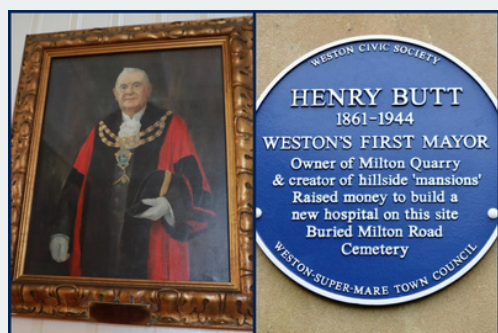
Paulo  
Radmilovic

1886-1968

Paulo Radmilovic was a Welsh water polo player and competitive swimmer. He was of Croatian and Irish descent. He won four Olympic titles in a 22 year Olympic career. In 1928, he became the first person to compete for Britain at five Olympic Games. He moved to Weston from Cardiff in 1904 and ran the Imperial Hotel for many years.

Plaque on the wall of Olea Bar & Restaurant (formerly The Imperial Hotel) South Parade BS23 1JN

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Henry Butt

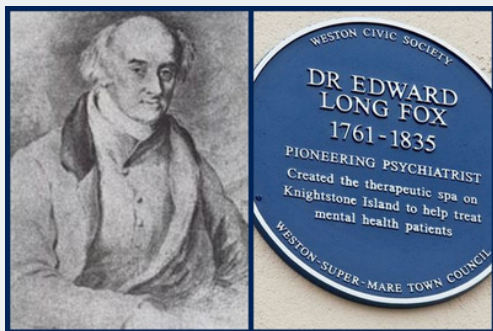
1861-1944

Born the son of a Langport coal merchant, Henry came to Weston aged 18 and subsequently became a successful entrepreneur and property developer. He was also a great benefactor who helped fund the Italian and Winter Gardens, and almost single-handedly raised £60,000 (£3.5 million today) to build a new hospital in the Boulevard. He became Weston's first mayor in 1937.

Plaque on the front wall of the old hospital on the Boulevard, now part of a residential development, aptly named Henry Butt House BS23 1NF

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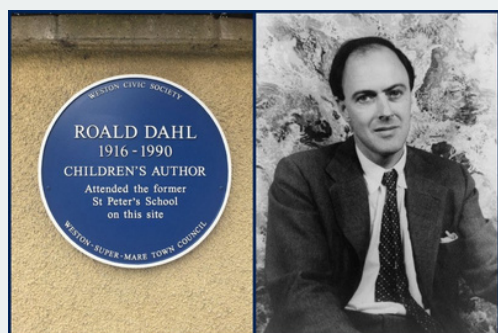
## Dr. Edward Longfox

1761-1835

Dr. Edward Longfox was a pioneering psychiatrist who established an asylum at Brislington House in Bristol. He favoured a humane approach to mental illness, believing in exercise, fresh air, and activity, rather than straight jackets and confinement. He purchased Knightstone Island in 1830 and created a therapeutic spa with a range of hot, cold, and chemical baths.

Plaque on the wall of Dr. Fox's Bath House, Knightstone Island. BS23 2AD

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## Roald Dahl

1916-1990

Roald Dahl spent four years from the age of nine at St. Peter's School, which was demolished in 1970. The site is now covered with housing. He famously described Weston as "slightly seedy" and the school as resembling a private lunatic asylum. He wrote 19 novels including "Matilda" in which the giant Headmaster and ogre Matron at Chrunchem Hall are clearly based on St. Peter's.

Plaque on the wall of 2 St. Peter's Avenue. BS23 2JU

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## Hans Price

1835-1912

Hans Price was the architect responsible for much of the development of Weston-super-Mare. He worked in the town for over 50 years and left a significant legacy of buildings, including churches, schools and numerous villas. He redesigned the Town Hall, and built the Library and the Town's current Museum.

Plaque on the former School of Science & Art, Lower Church Road, which is part of Weston College. BS23 2AG

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## Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence

1867-1954

In 1881 Emmeline Pethick left Weston for London and worked as "a sister of the people" for the West London Mission until 1895. She married Fred Lawrence in 1901 and the couple took the joint name Pethick-Lawrence. She met suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst in 1906 and became an enthusiastic member of the Suffrage Society, as did her husband. The couple were imprisoned in 1912 for conspiracy following demonstrations that involved the breaking of windows. A falling out with the Pankhursts left Emmeline and Fred ostracised from the movement, but she never stopped campaigning for electoral equality. In 1945 she became Lady Pethick-Lawrence when her husband was made a baron.

Plaque on the gate pillar next to Lewisham House, 80 Bristol Road Lower. BS23 2RS

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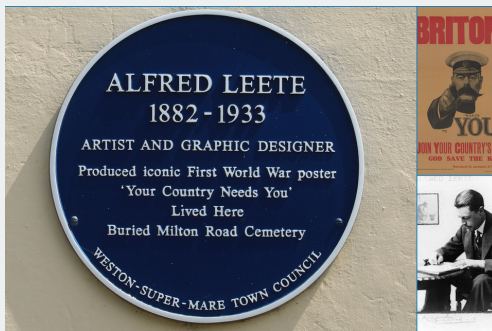
## Deborah Kerr

1921-2007

Born Deborah Jane Trimmer, she first stepped onto the stage at Weston's Knightstone Pavilion in 1937. In a glittering career in films and on TV, she went on to win six Academy Award nominations. Deborah was born in Scotland but her family moved to Elmsleigh Road in 1938 when she became a pupil at Rossholme School. Encouraged by an aunt and having studied drama and ballet she became a radio actress. She subsequently became a star of British cinema before Hollywood came calling. In 1957, Deborah Kerr was named 'the world's most famous actress' by Photoplay Magazine.

Plaque at 47 Elmsleigh Road. BS23 4JW

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## Alfred Leete

1882-1933

Leete's work is known the world over for that truly iconic poster:- Your Country Needs You. His parents moved from farming in Northamptonshire to take ownership of the Addington Hotel, now converted to flats. He studied at Kingsholme School. And moved to London in 1899. His career as a paid artist began in 1897 when the Daily Graphic accepted one of his drawings. The poster for which he is best known, the Lord Kitchener poster design, first appeared on the cover of London Opinion on 5th September 1914. He was buried in Weston's Milton Road Cemetery.

Plaque on the wall of Addington Court, Madeira Road. BS23 2EY

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## Ivy Millicent James

1879-1965

Ivy was born at 1 Atlantic Villas to an artistic family and attended the School of Science and Art in Lower Church Road. Together with her sister Maud, she began publishing Christmas cards, postcards and calendars. Their works became highly prized and are now very collectable. Ivy was a keen Suffragette and designed the banner for the Weston-super-Mare branch of the Women's Social and Political Union. Having lived in London in the 1920's, Ivy moved back to Weston when Maud died in 1930 and lived at 9 Grove Park Road for the next 35 years.

Plaque at 9 Grove Park Road. BS23 2LW

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## Worle School

This Victorian school has been here for 700 years, though for most of its life it was the barn in which the "tithe" tax (one-tenth of local farm produce) was stored for church and parochial use. The ruinous medieval barn was converted into a "National School" in 1865 by architect John Norton. National Schools were Church of England facilities established before the state became involved in education following the "Foster" Education Act. John Norton is probably best known for creating Tyntesfield near Wraxall.

Plaque on the wall of Worle Village Primary School, Church Road. BS22 9EJ

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## Professor Sir Arthur Eddington OM FRS

1882-1944

Following his father's death from typhoid in 1884, Arthur's family moved to Varzin, a house in Walliscote Road. He was educated at home and at a Weston prep school, but after winning scholarships to Manchester and Cambridge, secured work at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich followed by Directorship of the Cambridge Observatory and Fellowship of the Royal Society. Eddington's work in astrophysics was ground breaking. He was the first scientist to investigate the evolution of stars, and remains one of the greatest astronomers of all time. Plaque on the wall of 42 Walliscote Road.

BS23 1XF

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## Earl Alexander of Hillsborough KG CH PC

1885-1965

Albert Alexander was born in George Street and lived in Weston until 1921. He worked as a clerk in Somerset's education department and became a Baptist lay preacher, NALGO secretary and vice-president of Weston's Co-operative Society. In 1922 he became Co-op/Labour MP for Sheffield Hillsborough but at the outbreak of the Second World War, Churchill invited him into the coalition cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty, where he gained the reputation of being "Churchill's favourite socialist". He was thrice First Lord and subsequently, Attlee's Minister of Defence. He entered the Lords in 1950 and was created Baron Weston-super-Mare in 1963. He is the only Westonian to have been made a Knight of the Garter and Companion of Honour.

Plaque on the wall of 33 George Street BS23 3AT



## Mary Webb 1881-1927

Born Mary Gladys Meredith, she was raised in Shropshire and became famous as an early 20th-century English romantic novelist and poet whose work is set chiefly in her home county's countryside. In 1912 she married Henry Webb and they lived in Landemann Circus for two years before moving back to Shropshire, working as market gardeners. Publication of "The Golden Arrow" established her as a rising literary star but poor health and a failing marriage brought terminal decline, and she died in loneliness at St. Leonard-on-Sea. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin referred to Mary as a neglected genius in 1928, and her works became more widely appreciated.

Plaque on the wall of 8 Landemann Circus.  
BS23 2QF

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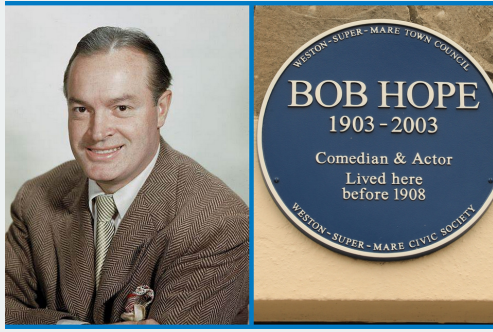


## Kathleen Thomas 1906-1967

Born in South Africa, Kathleen's family fled the Boer War to settle in South Wales. Always keen on sport she became determined to try a spectacular swim, and decided on a crossing of the Bristol Channel. She entered the water at Penarth on 5th September 1927 aged 21. Seven hours and 20 minutes later she emerged at Anchor Head. She moved to London where she taught children to swim and, as a result, was barred from competing in the 1928 Olympics as she was considered a professional. She married in 1931 and had four children. On her death her ashes were cast into the Bristol Channel.

Plaque on the sea wall at Anchor Head.

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## Bob Hope 1903-2003

Born in London, Leslie Townes Hope came from a West Country stone-masonry family. His grandfather helped build Weston's new seafront wall in 1883 and then crossed the Atlantic to join stone carvers on the Statue of Liberty. The family lived in Orchard Street and at Lindley Terrace in Southend Road before moving to Bristol. In 1907 they emigrated to America where Leslie later adopted his new name of Bob Hope. Hope's career began in Vaudeville shows and Broadway productions. His first film contract was with Educational Pictures in 1930 before being signed by Paramount Pictures. During the Korean and Vietnam Wars he spent a lot of time entertaining the troops. The Queen made him an honorary knight in 1976.

**Plaque at 20 Southend Road. BS23 4JZ**

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## John Hugh Smyth-Pigott 1792-1853

John inherited the manorial lordship of Weston-super-Mare on Christmas Day 1823. He encouraged village children to plant trees on the hillside initially to create a private game reserve but, once the trees began to mature, he opened this woodland to the public. He replaced the Medieval St. John's with a new Parish Church and greatly enlarged his residence at Grove House, most of which was destroyed during the Second World War. He also helped to begin changing Weston from a sleepy village to a town of rising middle-class pretension and expectation.

**Plaque at Grove House, Grove Park. BS23 2QJ**

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## Haile Selassie

### 1930-1974

Haile Selassie was the Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 – 1974. His lineage claimed direct descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Following his country's invasion by Mussolini's Italy in 1935, he and the rest of the Imperial family were rescued by HMS Capetown and they settled in Fairfield House, Bath for the duration of the Second World War. Haile Selassie enjoyed visiting Weston and swimming in the open-air pool (now the Tropicana). He returned home after the war, but was deposed in 1974 and died a prisoner. Today he is worshipped as God incarnate by the Rastafarian movement which has its origins in 1930's Jamaica.

Plaque on the Tropicana, Marine Parade. BS23 1BE

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## Dwight D. Eisenhower

### 1890-1969

Dwight D. Eisenhower is the only American President to have set foot in Weston. As Supreme Allied Commander Europe, he arrived in Weston and stayed one night in 1944 en-route to the D-Day landings. The Town was filled with US Servicemen with officers billeted in hotels whilst other ranks slept in tents in Ellenborough Park. Rather than pull rank, "Ike" opted to sleep in a caravan parked near the water tower in Weston Woods. Following the war, Eisenhower became Nato's first Supreme Commander, and then US President from 1953 to 1961

Plaque on the water town in Weston Woods.

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## Capt. George Fiott Day VC CB

1820-1876

After a distinguished career in the Royal Navy, poor health forced the 47-year-old Crimean War hero to retire to Weston where he settled with his wife in Claremont Crescent. His determination, courage and devotion to duty wading alone through several miles of swampy coastland to reconnoitre enemy batteries on the Arabat Spit in 1855, thereby saving many British lives, earned him the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for gallantry. He was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1875.

Plaque on the Anchor Head Hotel, Claremont Crescent. BS23 2ED



## John Lewis

1837-1928

John Lewis came from a Shepton Mallet family of bakers and milliners. Through sheer hard work and entrepreneurial zeal he rose to become one of the nation's favourite retail traders and his name.

Whilst John Lewis moved to London to begin making his fortune his sisters, were by 1861 living in High Street Weston-super-Mare where they ran a 'fancy' stationery and dress-making establishment, living 'above the shop'. A decade later they were still in High Street - at number 27.

John Lewis's business endeavours in London were beginning to reap rewards allowing his first freehold purchase to be made - a house in Weston-super-Mare for his sisters' early retirement.

Plaque on the gate pillar of 72 Bristol Rd Lower, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2PY



## Reverend William Leeves

1791-1828

The Old Thatched Cottage, in Weston-super-Mare, is the last surviving thatched house in the town. Having been built in 1791, the Grade II-listed cottage is thought to be one of the town's oldest buildings. The cottage was built by the Reverend William Leeves for use as a holiday home for him and his family. Over more than 200 years, it has seen many changes with the building surviving major storms on the seafront and four fires in its thatched roof

Plaque on The Old Thatched Cottage Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AN



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# An audio tour for the Blue Plaques is on the website:

[www.wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/blue-plaques](http://www.wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/blue-plaques)

Produced by:

Becky Walsh

Andrew James Wilson

Cllr John Crockford-Hawley for Weston Town Council

Discover the history of Weston-super-Mare at Weston Museum. Housed in a beautiful and distinctive historic building. We tell the story of the town and the surrounding area from prehistoric times to the present day.

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[www.westonmuseum.org](http://www.westonmuseum.org)



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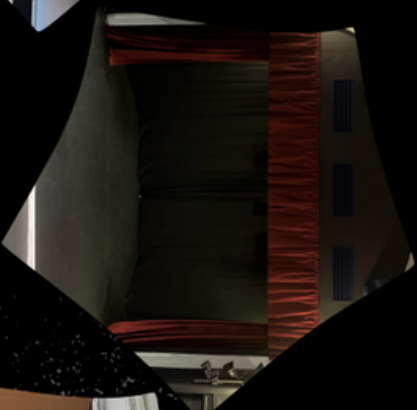


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