

Wildfowling history - Market Wildfowling in Clevedon

In Clevedon, as in many coastal communities along the Severn Estuary, wildfowling was once closely tied to the local food economy as well as to sporting tradition. Older wildfowlers recall figures such as Sam Staples, a well-known local wildfowler who kept a shop on Alexander Road. As a child, Roy Rogers remembered seeing mallard hanging in the shop, birds that had been shot on the nearby moors and foreshore. These were not curiosities but part of everyday life—wildfowl taken from the estuary and wetlands entering local circulation as food, displayed in the traditional manner and sold within the community.

Staples himself represented an older generation of wildfowlers whose practices were shaped by the rhythms of the landscape. Before the Second World War, areas such as Nailsea Moor regularly flooded, and he would keep boats in particular fields to access the water and shoot duck and geese. The birds he harvested were not only for personal use but contributed to a small-scale, local trade in game that connected the estuary directly to the town.

This recollection points to a period when wildfowling in Clevedon existed at the intersection of subsistence, local commerce and tradition. Wildfowl were valued as seasonal food, and their presence in shop windows reflected a community familiar with wild game as part of its diet. Over time, changes in land use, legislation and social attitudes have altered these practices, and the commercial sale of wildfowl has largely disappeared. Yet memories of figures like Sam Staples and the sight of birds hanging in the shop endure as part of

Clevedon's wildfowling heritage, illustrating a time when the estuary's resources were more directly woven into everyday life.