



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 80

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November 2014



Photo: Terry Langhorn

EDITORIAL

To the great satisfaction of all who have watched the progress of the work over the past two years, especially those who campaigned and fund-raised for this ambitious project, the Pittville Gates are at last fully restored. Judie Hodsdon's article on p16, detailing the various stages in the process, clearly shows what a complex undertaking it has been. As all will agree, the result has been well worth waiting for.

Kath Boothman

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LECTURE PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2014-MAY 2015

Meetings start at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade

Tuesday 9th December:

David Smith—The Origins of Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire as an entity came into existence in the summer of 1007. This talk will discuss how and why this happened and the pattern of local administration which it replaced. It will also consider the role of the hundred, a smaller but older unit of local control. Finally changes to the original shire over the last millennium will be briefly summarised. (The speaker does not use visual aids as he wishes to be able to see if members of the audience remain awake!)

Tuesday 20th January 2015:

Research and Display Evening

Our annual social evening gives members an opportunity to meet informally and to show the results of their researches. As usual refreshments will be served and there will be a raffle. David Scriven would like to hear as soon as possible from any member who is willing to provide a display, large or small, of their research findings or source materials. Please contact David on 01242 524593 or e-mail david.scriven@hotmail.com. Visitors will be very welcome.

Tuesday 17th February 2015:

Adrian Barlow—Cheltenham: the Architecture of a Victorian Town

Much of what is assumed to be Regency Cheltenham belongs actually to later in the 19th and even 20th centuries. This illustrated lecture will focus on the architecture of Cheltenham as a Victorian town, although one very conscious of its Regency legacy. It will explore the different types of both public and domestic building, as well as street furniture such as pillar boxes and park pavilions. Colleges and churches are among the most prominent components of the Victorian scene, but often the smaller schools and chapels will tell one more about the neighbourhoods to which they belong. The lecture will conclude with a revaluation of John Betjeman's estimate of the town he thought 'better than Bath'.

Tuesday 17th March 2015:

Tony Roberts—New Archaeological Discoveries in Gloucestershire

Archeoscan is a small company that specialises in running archaeological digs and community geophysical surveys in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire that are open to members of the public. The talk will cover the sites that Archeoscan has excavated over the summer of 2014 and other significant discoveries made through the use of geophysics. These have included continued work

at Doynton Villa in South Gloucestershire and two Romano-British sites in the centre of the Cotswolds, at Guiting Power and Miserden, which, at the time of writing, have yet to be explored and could prove archaeologically significant. The illustrated talk will show the results of some geophysical surveys and the major findings from the excavations. There will also be an opportunity to handle some of the Roman material finds from the excavations.

Tuesday 14th April 2015 at 10.00 am for 10.30 am:

(*Note venue:* St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place)

Joanna Vials—The Indefatigable Mr Cotham: Pioneering Priest who built St Gregory's

When the spire of St Gregory's church was topped out in December 1864 much was made of its superior height, at 212ft surpassing that of St Mary's. The re-emergence of a Catholic presence in Cheltenham permitted by the reversal of penal legislation was given greater momentum from developments such as the Oxford Movement, the influx of Irish immigrants in the 1840s and the establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850. Arriving in 1852 Revd James Ambrose Cotham OSB brought together disparate enthusiasms, needs and opportunities which found expression in the ambitious building of St Gregory the Great church. This ebullient Lancastrian used his experience as a pioneer missionary and convict chaplain in Tasmania (then called Van Diemen's Land) to cajole and inspire his parishioners to move onwards and upwards.



Tuesday 21st April 2015:

John Paddock— The Civil War in the Cotswolds

The talk will commence with a brief outline of the immediate causes of the war, examining the state of Gloucestershire and its affiliations. From the outbreak of war in the Cotswolds – beginning with the attempted reading of the commission of array by Lord Chandos in Cirencester—it will then follow the progression of the war starting with the Royalist victory at Powick Bridge and the effect of the inconclusive Edgehill campaign. The supply problems experienced by the Royalists in their 'winter of discontent' 1642/43 were somewhat alleviated by the storming of Cirencester on 2nd February 1643. That year marked the Royalist high tide, but ended with the siege of Gloucester and the Newbury campaign leading directly to stalemate in the west in 1644. The Gloucester garrison under Massey was particularly active at that time. Finally the effect of the campaigns of 1645 and 1646 will be examined, looking in particular at Naseby and the battle of Stow-on-the-Wold 1646 and concluding with an overview of the social and economic effects of the war in Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds.

Tuesday 19th May 2015:

AGM followed by John Putley—Blood, Guts and a Little off the Top!

This presentation provides an entertaining look at medicine and surgery from medieval through to Tudor times, but takes little forays back and forth to Roman times and into the 19th century. The speaker, wearing authentic reproduction costume, first looks at ‘medical theory’ and the ‘scientific’ diagnosis of illness, then introduces potential treatments, starting with the varied medicines and medical recipes - many of which are from Gloucestershire and held in local collections (i.e. Gloucestershire Archives and Museum in the Park) - before moving on into the realm of surgery. Here he starts at the top and works down, using authentic props and demonstrating the various techniques for treating such things as diverse as headaches, toothworm, tonsillitis, battlefield injuries and lastly amputations.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

Meetings are held at St Philip’s and St James’ Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham at 8.00 pm. Admission £1 for visitors.

Thursday 18th December:

Louise Reynolds—Down to Bedrock: the Diaries of Eric Cordingley

Thursday 15th January 2015:

David Elder—Edward A Wilson: his Life in Cheltenham

Prestbury Local History Society

www.prestburyhistory.btck.co.uk

Meetings are held at Prestbury Women’s Institute Hall (corner of Bouncer’s Lane/Prestbury Road), starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.

Monday 24th November:

John White—Tudor Cottage

Gotherington and Area Local History Society

Meetings are held in Gotherington Village Hall, starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors are welcome, £2 per meeting.

Tuesday 25th November:

Simon Draper—The Victoria County History of Gloucestershire and Writing a Parish History

Tuesday January 27th 2015:

John Putley—Stand and Deliver: Gloucestershire Highwaymen

Tuesday 24th February 2015:

Alan Pilbeam—The Legacy of Frosts and Floods

Swindon Village Society

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £1.

Wednesday 19th November:

Angela Panrucker—Just Hanging Around (an illustrated talk on pub signs)

Charlton Kings Local History Society

www.charltonkings.org.uk

All meetings are held at the Baptist Church, Church Street, starting at 7.30 pm.

Tuesday 25th November:

David Morgan—Trams, Trains and Steam through Charlton Kings

Tuesday 27th January 2015:

Mick Kippin—Commonwealth War Graves Commission ‘triple headstones’

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

www.bgas.org.uk

Talks will be held in the Frith Building at Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors pay £1.

Wednesday 19th November:

Tim Copeland—'Time's Wonder and Crown': the Archaeology of the Cotswold Scarp

Wednesday 18th February 2015:

Professor C C Dyer—Surviving or Thriving: The World of Gloucestershire Peasants, 1200-1540

Holst Birthplace Museum

www.holstmuseum.org.uk
4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham

Friday 21st November at 7.30 pm in Christ Church Hall

The Holst Birthplace Museum and the Cotswold Astronomical Society present a unique 50-minute film showing stunning photos and amazing facts about the planets to the soundtrack of Holst's Planets Suite.

The film will be followed by a finger buffet with wine/soft drinks.

Tickets, to include refreshments, available from the Holst Birthplace Museum and the Tourist Office: £12.00 (members £10.00), family £24.00 (2 adults plus children), students £6.00.

THE PATERSON MEMORIAL LECTURE
Tuesday 2nd December 2014 at 7.30 pm
in the Harwood Hall, Christ Church, Malvern Road

Chris Wilkinson of well-known architects Wilkinson Eyre will talk about the enormous challenge of designing and constructing the £27million permanent museum that now encloses Henry VIII's flagship, Mary Rose, which was raised from the seabed off the Solent near Portsmouth in 1982.

The building has recently received a 2014 RIBA Regional Award for excellence in architecture.

Admission: £5 at the door, to include a glass of wine.

REVIEWS

Summer events and visits July–October 2014

A walk around the Lower High Street, Wednesday 2nd July at 6.00 pm (repeated on Wednesday 16th July)

This summer evening walk, led by Steven Blake, began outside The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum and went first along St George's Terrace to the little stone building that was the first Cheltenham Infant School, completed in 1830, and the almost equally modest synagogue of 1839. This was one of several places of worship we encountered, few of them (unlike the synagogue) still serving their original purpose. Some have changed denominations: the Christadelphian Hall at the top of St James' Square was once the Bethel Baptist church. The nearby



At the Winston Churchill
Memorial Gardens

Quaker Meeting House, though architecturally little changed, is now a ladies' leisure club. Heading west along the Lower High Street we soon found ourselves among much less imposing buildings, small early 19th century shops and houses separated here and there by narrow alleyways. In Grove Street, a turning to the left, Stephen pointed out a blocked gateway marked 'Friends' Burial Ground 1700'. Sadly, this Quaker cemetery is now a builder's yard. The Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens further along the High Street still has an imposing chapel with tall fluted columns at the entrance, but it is a martial arts club these days. Returning, we saw the former Cheltenham Chapel by the bowling green at the top of Ambrose Street, well maintained but also in commercial use. Stephen said that the green, which has a pleasant open aspect, once had houses along its street frontage. Across the road is Normandy House, formerly the town's first general hospital, built as a dispensary in 1813 and enlarged to take in-patients in 1839.

Going up King Street we came to the Ebenezer Methodist Chapel with its recently restored portico. It is a large building, but evidently not large enough in the religious ferment of the mid-19th century, because the even bigger Wesley Chapel in George's Street, our final port of call, was built to replace it. Thus ended a very good walk, which left one thinking that there is at least as much of historical interest at the humbler end of Cheltenham as in the grand surroundings of Lansdown or Montpellier.

Visit to Hellens and Ledbury, Wednesday 6th August

The party left by coach at 9.30 am on a fine warm morning from Royal Well and arrived about an hour later at Hellens at Much Marcle in Herefordshire, where we were regaled with coffee and biscuits before starting our guided tour in small groups. This ancient brick and stone manor house, we learned, has a history going back to the Norman Conquest, though the surviving buildings are mainly Tudor and Jacobean. It is still a family home and belongs to the Anglo-Swedish Munthe family, descendants of the author Axel Munthe who wrote *The Story of*

San Michele. They can trace their ancestry to the 14th century Walter de Helyon, who gave his name to the house. In every generation since, fortunately, someone has been wealthy enough to keep the place going. The present owner's father, Malcolm Munthe, did much restoration after World War II and was a collector of historical artefacts such as tapestries and armour, of which we saw examples in the Stone Hall, the first room we entered. We went next to the panelled dining room,



The gardens at Hellens

then to the staircase hall of 1641 with its fine carved overmantel, and the music room. Upstairs we saw the bedrooms, one called the Cordoba Room after its wall-covering of Spanish leather and another alleged to be haunted. Known as Hetty's Room, it was the virtual prison of a 16th century daughter of the house who, having eloped with a labourer and been abandoned, came back only to be shut away by her family for the rest of her life. Another room, where Mary Tudor may once have stayed, is also said to be haunted because a priest was killed there. A flight of spiral stairs took us down again to the art gallery where we had had coffee.

After a stroll around the gardens we drove on to the pretty little town of Ledbury for lunch followed by a walking tour with a local guide, again divided into groups. Starting at the 17th century Market House, we went first to the half-timbered Heritage Centre for a slide show and talk on the town's history. Ledbury was a medieval market town, once the property of the Bishop of Hereford, with many burgage plots still marked by narrow cobbled alleyways. The Heritage Centre is in one of these, Church Lane, as is another Tudor house with an upstairs room where the walls are painted with bible texts and a knot-garden floral

design. Another very old house, known as Butcher Row, has been moved from its original site and is now a little museum. The town suffered a period of poverty and decline after the Black Death but then enjoyed renewed prosperity from the late 16th century when wealthy wool families settled there. We saw some of the handsome town houses they built on the other side of the High Street on our way to the 14th century St Katherine's Hospital and the Master's House next door, where the hospital administrator lived. The latter has a fine timber roof, currently being restored. Passing the market area again, where a stream once ran to wash away the offal from slaughtered beasts, we admired the jettied houses at the top of Church Lane, passed the large church of St Michael and All Angels with its separate tower (a common feature in Herefordshire) and returned via another picturesque alley to the High Street and so to the coach for the homeward journey. Many thanks are due to David Johnson for his efficient organisation of this very enjoyable outing.



Church Lane, Ledbury

'The Effects of World War I on Gloucestershire Communities'

GLHA Local History Day

Saturday October 11th 2014

at Pate's Grammar School, Cheltenham

The formal programme began at 11.00 am with a welcome from Dr Steven Blake, who noted that this year's event was free because, as part of the 'Gloucestershire Remembers World War I' project, it had received sponsorship from various sources. He introduced the first speaker, Lieut Col Robert Dixon, Chairman of the Trustees of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, whose theme was 'Gloucestershire and the Great War'. An early lunch break followed, with another chance to look round the displays (sandwiches were served in the ante-room), after which the Brian Jerrard Award, sponsored this time by The History Press, was presented. It was won by Jan Broadway for her article 'Gloucester Gardeners 1650-1763' published in the BGAS Transactions Vol. 131, and was received on her behalf by Dr Simon Draper, Editor of the Transactions. There were only two further speakers, the fourth having had to cancel owing to illness. Sally Dickson spoke on 'Kidderminster's War: a Local History Society's Project' and Geoff North on 'Researching Gloucestershire's VAD Hospitals'. Finally, the award for the best display went to Painswick. Dr Steven Blake then closed the meeting and thanked everyone involved for their support.



Autumn lectures September-October 2014

Our autumn lecture season began on 16th September with a talk by **Tony Conder** entitled **Gloucester Docks, Then and Now**. Tony was the Curator of the British Waterways museum collections for over 25 years and also founded the Waterways Museum in Gloucester. He began by showing an early 19th century painting

in which the cathedral loomed over the great jumble of tall-masted ships in the main dock basin. The artist had romanticised the view, but the reality must have been impressive enough. Thomas Telford, visiting the docks in 1832, saw over 50 ships engaged in the importing and exporting of such commodities as timber, wool and coal. The canal did not yet



The Main Basin at Gloucester Docks, 1842

exist and navigation on the Severn was difficult, but ships could come up as far as Gloucester on the tide, helped by the Bore. Before quays were built the river was wider: he showed pictures of ships being unloaded via gangplanks on to the mud banks. Gloucester had begun to flourish as a port when Elizabeth I granted it customs rights in 1580, thus opening it to overseas traders. The advent of the canal age in the 1750s did not affect Gloucester at first, most of the early projects being small inland canals, but in 1793 the Gloucester and Berkeley ship canal scheme was launched by civil engineer Robert Mylne. It attracted plenty of support initially. Digging began at the Gloucester end, where Mylne planned the dock as a lozenge shape near the site of the now defunct prison. Money ran out, however, when only half the dock and about five miles of canal had been built, and despite various efforts it did not re-start until the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 brought a fresh labour supply in the form of ex-soldiers. It was finished in 1827, by which time it had cost a grand total of £440,000. In the meantime a tramway had been built from Cheltenham to the existing section of canal in about 1810, mainly to bring in the coal supply the town needed, and from 1812 the docks were in use for coal barges. One warehouse was built, with many more to follow. Later in the century both the Midland Railway (in 1847) and the Great Western (in 1852) built links to the docks. They soon played a much more important part in the onward shipment of goods than the old inland canal system.

Mylne's lozenge shape was never completed, but the Victoria Dock was added in 1849. The docks were very busy and provided much employment. He showed a photograph of a vast mound of 6,000 sacks of oats from Argentina that would have been unloaded by a gang of casual labourers.

Gloucester is said to be the most complete Victorian port in the country. The handsome warehouses were built in a consistent style and to a high standard. Other buildings such as ship-owners' offices also survive. The Mariners' Church, built in 1849, was a vital part of dockland life, providing not only a community centre but a variety of social services for the many hundreds of foreign sailors who might be in Gloucester at any time. More commercial activity spread down the canal to the south of the city: sawmills, for example, used imported timber to make wooden buildings and boxes for packaging. By the 1860s many steamships were in use that were too big to come right up to Gloucester, and the Sharpness docks were developed. These soon became an important destination for clipper ships from Australia and timber ships from Russia and Canada. After the First World War much trade moved to Sharpness, and the Gloucester warehouses were less used. Tony told several stories of dramatic warehouse fires, which were virtually uncontrollable in the early days when only hand pumps were available. The last one, in 1986, destroyed the Britannia warehouse, but by then the docks were being restored and property prices were up so it was rebuilt. The Llanthony warehouse is now the Waterways Museum and the Albert warehouse is converted into flats, as are many others. No longer a scene of noisy industrial activity, the docks are now a place where the Gloucester Civic Trust runs tours for visitors.

In answer to a question at the end Tony said there is now very little trade on the canal. Suitable commodities, and people to work the boats, are both hard to find. Another questioner asked about the use of sacks, and he explained that they were made to order in sack works (employing women) near the docks, using Irish jute. Later, contractors came in who offered a hire service. With the advent of bulk cargoes, loaded and unloaded by mechanical means, sacks, like barrels and boxes, largely fell out of use. Thanking the speaker, the Chairman expressed everyone's view when he said this had been a most enjoyable and interesting talk.

Our morning meeting at St Luke's on October 7th featured **Angela Panrucker** with a lively and stimulating talk entitled **The Story of Pub Signs**. She began by saying that the pub as a concept goes back only about 100 years. Before that there were ale houses, inns and taverns. Ale houses served only ale, usually made by the landlord and his wife. This was a safe low-alcohol drink for everyone (even nuns had a daily allowance) because the water was boiled. Many inns began life as an adjunct to a monastery, providing hospitality for travellers and pilgrims, but soon evolved into profit-making establishments. Taverns served wine, mainly sack and malmsey. Pub signs were brought to Britain by the Romans, who customarily displayed a bush or a bunch of grapes to indicate where new wine was available. Visual signs, either objects or images, were essential at a time when few people could read. She then showed a small selection (149!) of her

collection of pictures of pub signs. (There are 10,500 signs in the country and she has pictures of 7,500 of them.) In 1393 Richard II decreed that all landlords should display signs. Some chose to use the king's emblem, the White Hart, but competition ensured that there was soon much more variety. Signs grew larger too, some stretching right across the street and known as gallows signs because they were occasionally used as gibbets. She showed a picture of one of the few remaining ones, the Swan Inn at Stroud. Since medieval times many signs have had a religious, royal or heraldic theme. The Angel, The Star, Adam and Eve are all common, while The Cross Keys signifies St Peter. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were popular choices, and there are many examples of The Rising Sun, badge of Edward III, and The Royal Oak, commemorating the hiding place of Charles II. One of the more interesting signs introduced in the Victorian era was The Five Alls with its aspects of the British Empire: soldier, bishop, monarch, judge and John Bull. It is against the law to show a living monarch on a pub sign, but other members of the present royal family sometimes appear. As for heraldic signs, they occur in infinite variety. The Bear, emblem of the Earls of Warwick, could also signify that bear-baiting took place on the premises. The Red Lion indicated that the pub was on land owned by John of Gaunt. Many signs have guild or trade links—The Unicorn for apothecaries, The Three Tuns for brewers. The wool trade gives us The Fleece, The Woolpack and many more. Transport, from the stagecoach to the railway and even the space age, contributes a great variety. The Ship was Dickens' favourite pub, there are Penny Farthings and Chelmsford has The Space Shuttle.

She touched on many other themes—historic events, sport, the natural world and the seasons, political figures, famous women, food and drink. Sometimes a local product is featured, such as The Dorset Knob (a biscuit). Occasionally there is a pun in the design: The Evenlode shows an evenly loaded wagon. She ended with a 'countdown' of the most popular pub signs, from The White Swan at no.10 to the Red Lion at no.1. Members asked questions about the meanings of particular signs they had seen, and the speaker noted that, sad to say, many old hand-painted ones are disappearing. She urged everyone to make a point of noticing pub signs, which tell us so much about local history.

CLHS DISPLAYS IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY

1. Until Wednesday 26th November - Cheltenham's War Memorials

This display features some of the many memorials to be found in and around Cheltenham honouring the dead of WWI. It also includes an update of the project to refurbish the town's war memorial in the Promenade.

2. Friday 12th December to Tuesday 3rd February 2015 - A display on a seasonal theme.

FEATURE

A LOOK AT APPRENTICES

Proving that there is no limit to the subjects that historians can take an interest in, a while ago I received a book published by BGAS in its record series and edited by a Gloucestershire local historian (Society member Jill Barlow, MA) entitled ‘A Calendar of the Registers of Apprentices of the City of Gloucester 1700-1834’. At a time when we hear so much moaning about the lack of skills, youth unemployment and government incentives to companies to take on apprentices, I felt it would be interesting to see how youth apprenticeships operated in years past, and with particular reference to Minsterworth.

The average age of boys put forward for an apprenticeship was around 16 and they were bound to serve as apprentices for at least 7 years. The boy’s parents agreed a private arrangement with a chosen master craftsman whereby the boy would live with the master and his wife, be under their control and liable to take punishment from them. He had to promise to serve them faithfully, keep their trade secrets and not to indulge in drink, dice, fornication or matrimony. His mother and father in turn paid a premium, usually in varying units of a medieval mark (equal to two thirds of a pound, i.e. 13s 4d), or in crowns. At the end of the apprenticeship, the boy was given two suits of clothes and a sum of money, and sent out into the world to make his living. If he did well he might in time aspire to becoming a freeman of the city. Successful completion of an apprenticeship was thus one possible route to a higher status and a prosperous life. Apprenticeship registers were maintained by the Gloucester Common Council throughout the period in question, mainly for the purposes of verifying that men claiming the freedom of the city by apprenticeship were entitled to do so.



A medieval baker and his apprentice

For Minsterworth, over the hundred and thirty odd years covered by the book, around 67 apprenticeships are recorded. Inevitably most of the families involved were of yeoman or tenant farmer stock. Since in such families the eldest son

would normally have taken over from the father, the boys involved were probably second or third sons, but there is also a high incidence of boys whose fathers had deceased. Still in being today is the local Hiett Charity which in recent years has given assistance to the education of youngsters in the village. When it began in 1719, though, the object of the Charity was to provide £10 annually for apprenticing a poor boy of the parish chosen by the churchwardens. (Hiett, a London distiller, had himself once been a poor boy of this parish).

In total, the different trades into which Minsterworth boys were apprenticed numbered around twenty, ranging from blacksmiths to tailors, coopers to ‘wire drawers’. The main trades however were cordwainer (i.e. shoemaking and leather work), baker and butcher. The people who most regularly engaged in apprenticing off their sons were the Addams, Barrett, Hiett (or Hyett), Phelpes and Overthrow families. Boys belonging to the Barrett family for example were apprenticed variously as cordwainer, currier (leather worker), tailor, butcher and baker.

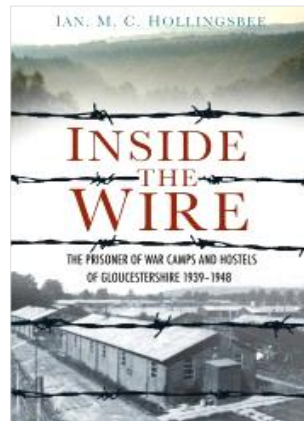
Of course, we have moved on a long way since those times and things are very different today. Even so, is there anything we might learn from how things used to be?

Terry Moore-Scott

NEW PUBLICATION

Inside the Wire **The Prisoner of War Camps and Hostels** **of Gloucestershire 1939-48** by Ian M C Hollingsbee

Stalag VIII-B, Colditz, these names are synonymous with POWs in the Second World War. But what of those prisoners in captivity on British soil? Where did they go? Gloucestershire was home to a wealth of prisoner-of-war camps and hostels, and many Italian and German prisoners spent the war years here. *Inside the Wire* explores the role of the camps, their captives and workers, together with their impact on the local community. This book draws on Ministry of Defence, Red Cross and US Army records, and is richly illustrated with original images. It also features the compelling first-hand account of Joachim Schulze, a German POW who spent the war near Tewkesbury. This comprehensive study of a fascinating but forgotten aspect of the Second World War has strong local interest—over 30 pages are devoted to Camp 263 at Leckhampton Court.



Published in paperback by The History Press at £12.99. ISBN: 9780750958462

Cheltenham Local History Day
‘Cheltenham Life 1914-1919’
Saturday 19th July 2014
 at St Matthew’s Church, Clarence Street

Over a year ago the Society’s Committee discussed the idea of hosting an Exhibition to mark the centenary of the beginning of the First World War. We decided to take as a subject life on the home front in Cheltenham, using information and photographs from local newspapers and other sources. Neela Mann, who has great expertise in organising such events, volunteered to lead this ambitious project. A sub-committee was formed and regular meetings were held at Neela’s house. She herself made most of the arrangements and contacts, while also producing many



David and Louise Scriven setting up the display

of the posters. Other team members chose topics they wanted to research and write about. Joyce Cummings chose fashions of the time; Kath Boothman chose schools; Sue Robbins chose women at work, and I chose food and rationing. David Scriven and Sue Brown dealt with the financial aspects of putting on the display, while Vic Cole undertook a lot of general research to help others. Neela had already identified resources for us to use and done a lot of work herself to ensure that the various themes were well covered. Our text and illustrations were composed on computer, then the printer enlarged each finished page to poster size and laminated it. The result was very professional and means that the posters will last well, can be shown in part or *en bloc* and are easily transported. The Exhibition, for which we hired St Matthew’s Church for the whole day on 19th July, also included contemporary displays by the Local Studies Library, The Wilson, and Geoff and Elaine North, who showed their collection of photographs and other memorabilia from the eight Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospitals in Cheltenham. There were two talks. Eric Miller gave a presentation on Leckhampton Court (a VAD Hospital during the War), and the afternoon talk, entitled ‘The Home Front Consumer’ was by Robert Opie, founder and owner of the Museum of Brands, formerly at Gloucester Docks. Both were excellent and well-received. The day itself went very well, despite the wet weather culminating in a thunderstorm during the afternoon. Many favourable comments were received.

If you missed the Exhibition, it will be on display again at the CLHS Research and Display evening in January, and parts of it are to be shown in local libraries.

Finally, Neela is planning to write a book next year as a permanent record of all our research into Cheltenham Life during the First World War.

Heather Atkinson

*SOCIETY NEWS***New Members**

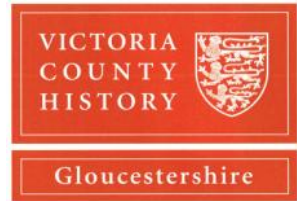
A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Mrs Josephine Atherton	Roger & Jane Woodley
Brian Karn	Sue & Dave Thomas
Robert Marks	David O'Connor
Miss Rona Goscomb	Peter & Carol Turnham
Derek & Karen Scarborough	Marion Morgan & Geraldine Heaven
Mike Lewis	Martyn & Renata Young
Charles & Julie Wright	Marion Webster
Joe & Eileen Millar	

VCH News**Victoria County History: 1275 and all that**

Members may recall that the roll of very early Cheltenham manorial records held at the Duchy of Cornwall Archives was too fragile to be produced for VCH researchers, unless essential conservation could be carried out. Cheltenham Arts Council kindly came up with a cheque to help with the costs. The bad news is that the roll turned out to be in a really bad state, and needed very specialised (=costly) attention. The good news is that the Duchy Archives have very generously agreed to shoulder most of this cost, and we hope the work (carefully ‘relaxing’ the roll, then protecting it) will be carried out over the coming months. The Latin Group will then be able to get to grips with photos of the records, which cover courts starting in 1275. To show our appreciation, please keep buying the Duchy Originals!

James Hodsdon

**Tea & Talk**

At the end of July a rather special fund-raising event, attended by twenty Society members, was held at Sally Self’s house in aid of the VCH project. Dr Stephen Blake, assisted by Ann-Rachael Harwood of The Wilson, brought along about 20 objects from the Museum’s collection that had featured in Stephen’s 2013 book *A History of Cheltenham in 100 Objects*. After a short introductory talk guests were allowed to handle these (with gloves on) and ask questions. A magnificent tea prepared by Sally was then served—sandwiches, savouries, scones with jam and cream and a large selection of cakes, all home-made—which, thanks to the fine warm weather, many of us were able to enjoy sitting in the garden. A very good time was had by all. Two more fund-raising events are planned for next year; details and booking form will be in the March Newsletter.

MORE SOCIETY NEWS

Gloucestershire Archives Cataloguing Project

The Winterbotham and Gurney (D2202) project is very nearly completed. A total of 55 out of 58 boxes have been catalogued by eight CLHS members over the last 18 months and will, in due course, be put onto the Archives online catalogue. Our next project is to catalogue the seven boxes of the Hygrove Estate archive. We have just started the first box and have already come across Sir Robert Atkins (History of Gloucestershire) and a member of the Guise family, both well known in the county. When this project is completed we hope to start work on the Ticehurst, solicitors, archive which has a lot of Cheltenham interest and may even help with the Big Red Book (VCH) Cheltenham. It comprises over 100 boxes and will keep us quiet for some time. We usually meet at the Archives on Wednesday and are always pleased to see new recruits.

If you would like to help, or would like more information, please contact Russ Self at journal.clhs@btinternet.com or telephone 01242 243714.

LOCAL NEWS

Pittville Gates

After two years' work the restoration of Pittville Gates is finally complete. The 1833 gateway was in a poor state of repair when Friends of Pittville decided to campaign for its restoration. Sufficient money (just under £290,000 in total) was raised for it to begin in November 2012. The first phase of work included replac-

ing the six Forest of Dean stone pillars, renovating the central overthrow (added to the gateway in 1897), putting back the line of railings along Prestbury Road and resurfacing the surroundings. Finally four lamps, made to the original 1833 design, were installed on the outermost pillars. Further improvement of the surroundings was achieved with planting, including a garden to commemorate the Samaritans opening their first premises here in Cheltenham fifty years ago. This garden occupies the site of what had originally been part of the garden of 1 Pittville Lawn until sold to the Borough Council in the 1960s, possibly for road widening which fortunately never happened. In July this year, a horse trough, complete with bedding plants, was moved from the Promenade to the front of the gateway to replace the one that had stood there from 1883 to sometime in the 1970s. Two information boards have been installed to inform passers-by of the history of the gateway and of Pittville more generally.



One of the original lamps

The second phase of the project included the replacement of the six opening gates which were removed in 1921 to avoid damage to vehicles (traffic passed through the gateway until it was closed in the late 1960s). The lamp in the overthrow has been hand made to match a late Victorian design.

The project has also entailed research that has unearthed more information about Robert Stokes, the architect of the Gates and the designer of many of the facades of Pittville houses built in the 1830s. Another spin-off has been the creation of a group investigating the lives of 19th century Pittville residents. (See p21.) An exhibition of their work will take place in Pittville Pump Room on 26th February 2015.

Judie Hodsdon



The new lamp

The War Memorial

The War Memorial in the Promenade, and its immediate surroundings, have suffered the ravages of time, and in June 2014, mindful of the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War Councillor John Rawson launched an initiative to restore the Memorial and its immediate surroundings.

The first stage consisted of the repaving of the area immediately around the Memorial, the renewal of the balustrades, and the installation of new LED lighting, at an estimated cost of £150,000. The work was completed, at a cost of £156,000, largely funded by the Borough Council, well in advance of the target date of Battle of Britain Sunday. It was inspected at a meeting called for interested parties on 15th September.



The second stage, the restoration of the Memorial itself, which will probably involve the re-engraving of the 1300-plus names on the Memorial, and conservation measures, has been provisionally costed at £300,000, and the Council is looking for funding from the wider community. It is hoped that all the work will be completed by August 2018.

Peter Barlow

FEATURE

THE TRIALS OF TRANSCRIBING

Pittville Spa.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

TO THE SPAS.	TO THE RIDES, DRIVES, AND WALKS.	TO THE WALKS ONLY.
For a family for the season	For a family for the season	For a family for the season
2 2 0	1 1 0	0 10 6
Two persons of the same family for do.	One person for ditto	One person for ditto
1 11 6	0 10 6	0 5 0
One person for ditto.....	A family for a month.....	A family for a month.....
1 1 0	0 10 0	0 4 0
One person for a fortnight.....	One person for ditto	One person for ditto
0 10 6	0 5 0	0 2 6
	Flys and wheel chairs.....	
	0 10 6	

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE WALKS ARE ALONE ALLOWED THE PRIVILEGE OF FREQUENTING THE PLEASURE GROUNDS.

6d REFRESHMENTS MAY BE PROCURED AT THE ROOMS.

Transcribing is a task that falls to most local historians sooner or later: information you want is in some old hand-written document and you copy it out, hoping you've read it correctly. Even if the writing is very bad you will usually be able to get the general sense and make reasonable guesses at difficult words, particularly if you're not easily put off by odd variations in spelling. But what if your document consists almost entirely of individual signatures and addresses? And what if the signatures are mostly those of strangers to Cheltenham and many of the addresses no longer exist? And what if some of the writers have terrible handwriting? This is the challenge presented by the Pittville Subscription Book. This book was the big ledger in which early 19th century visitors recorded their payments for the use of the Pittville spa facilities. The book runs from July 20th 1830, the day the Pump Room opened, to the same date in 1852: 475 pages and over 8,000 entries.

The fees paid by subscribers covered periods ranging from a fortnight to the whole season and there were three options to choose from, shown above in their simplest form (the rules became more complicated later). Admission to 'the spas' meant access to the Pump Room with its medicinal waters and social gatherings. 'Rides, drives and walks' meant the full use of the pleasure grounds on horseback, on foot or in a vehicle. 'Walks only', the cheapest option, limited the visitor to taking exercise on foot. During the season, which ran from May to September, the waters were available in the mornings, with a band playing, and the walks, rides and pleasure grounds were open all day, again with a band in attendance. Non-subscribers were admitted to the grounds for one shilling.

The Pump Room was always managed by a lessee, who paid an annual rental to Joseph Pitt and derived his income from the sale of the waters, admission fees to the gardens, and the profits of any events he organised. The first lessee was Henry Seymour, formerly Master of the Ceremonies at Teignmouth. His successor from

1841 was Charles Wickes. In 1852 (the year our book runs out), the lease was taken up by a group of ‘respectable tradespeople’, then there was a succession of lessees until Cheltenham Borough Council purchased the property in December 1890. Admission charges to the gardens were finally abolished only in 1954.

Once the book had been photographed page by page we were able to begin, transferring the information into an Excel database so that it was searchable. This proved invaluable, since it was soon apparent that many people were frequent visitors and thus signed their often mystifying names several times, much improving our chances of interpreting them correctly. People of all ranks were patrons, up to and including visiting royalty in the shape of Prince George of Cambridge (mentioned in last year’s November Newsletter). The Duke and Duchess of St Albans came, as did the Earl and Countess of Moray. There are various bishops, and army and navy officers of all ranks, including half a dozen admirals and over twenty generals – or their wives, who of course signed themselves ‘Mrs General’. There are many foreign names, which is perhaps surprising, considering that most continental countries have their own spa towns. Some however may not have been visitors: Mr Rosenhagen and his family, for example, appear to have lived at 32 The Promenade, and Mlle Tiesset was a resident teacher of French and Italian who taught at the Ladies’ College in its early days. Many others too were local residents, some of them still remembered today and thus easily identified. Mr Winterbotham the solicitor, Mr S Onley the architect and a certain Revd F Close all patronised the spa. Others are shown by their addresses to be local tradesmen: Mr Isaac Witts was not a lodger at 416 High Street (though there were many lodging houses in the High Street) but the proprietor of a butcher’s shop. Whole companies also subscribed: Messrs Debenham, Pooley and Smith of Cavendish House, for instance, often signed up for the rides, drives and walks, perhaps as a ‘perk’ for their senior managers, and perhaps also in the hope that they might rub shoulders with wealthy clients.



Merrett’s map of Pittville, 1834, showing the walks and rides. The buildings marked in white had not yet been built.

As for the rest of the clientele, very often a seemingly illegible scrawl did eventually come into focus as an ordinary name. ‘Glomtrell’, for instance, turned out, rather to our relief, to be Gwinnett. Also accepted confidently were some clearly written but strange names: you could be called Woakes in those days, or Burned or Lewty or Pilmer. And there was Mr Walter Arcedeckne, a regular but usually unreadable signatory whose name we’d never have deciphered if it had not been written out clearly just once. (It probably derives from ‘archdeacon’.) It is worth remembering that the stock of native British surnames is gradually shrinking—a few rare ones die out in each generation, probably, and of course no new ones are invented—so there may have been many names 150 years ago that are never heard of now. One day we had the bright idea that the lists of recent arrivals at the various hotels, published weekly in the *Looker-On*, might solve some of our problems. Consulting the copies in the local studies library, we did find names we recognised. There for example was Lady Page-Turner, (a popular novelist??) but there also was Mr Bland H Galland, the Misses Andesoif and Sir F Dwaris..... At this point it dawned on us that these lists, far from being authoritative, were probably compiled each week by the newspaper’s office boy—who couldn’t read the names any better than we could—from the registers in which visitors signed up for the Montpellier circulating library. Ah well.

The addresses presented some of the same problems of illegibility and unfamiliarity, stretching our local knowledge and driving us to consult Cheltenham directories and maps of the time. Relatively few of the visitors stayed at hotels, the vast majority opting instead for lodgings or seasonal rental of houses. It seems likely that many private house-owners or occupiers took in lodgers, at least during the summer season. Private residences could be rented on a long-term basis, probably furnished and with servants provided if necessary. It occurred to us that family/local historians may wish to see where their ancestors stayed during their visits to Cheltenham and we have tried to identify the modern locations of these addresses. Of around 200 individual houses named in the Subscription Book, only a few remain unidentified. Over 60 of the addresses listed were called cottages, mostly long gone – Pine Cottage, Oriel Cottage, Gordon Cottage. These were usually substantial villas, named after the fashion of the time, perhaps promoting the rural idyll as Cheltenham was still a relatively small town in the 1830s. Some of the names must have seemed the height of fashion and good taste in those days, but make us smile today, for example Maisonette, now 59 Portland Street.

The houses and streets of Cheltenham have been renamed and renumbered several times over the last 150 years, making the addresses listed by subscribers hard to find on a modern map. An additional complication is that blocks and terraces of buildings within a street had their own names and numbers – for example, Cambridge Villas, now 121-7 Promenade, or Rodney Terrace, now 15-55 Rodney Road. There was a pattern of development whereby a terrace was named after an original house in the area, and subsequently the newly evolved street took up the name – St Margaret’s (large villa), then St Margaret’s Terrace,

and finally St Margaret's Road. Many of these early terrace names are now forgotten, but many others we have been able to relate to the modern street numbers. The addresses given in the Subscription Book reflect the development of Cheltenham at that time, as new locations appear steadily over the 22 years covered. For example, the Queens Hotel (built 1837-8) first appears in August 1838, and there is no mention of Pittville Circus before June 1842 (when the subscriber is Edward Cope, who began to develop that area of Pittville in 1839.) Despite much development and rebuilding of Cheltenham since the heyday of the Pittville Spa, it is hoped that the modern visitor can at least get a flavour of the areas that provided residences for those early subscribers.

The finished transcription of the Pittville Subscription Book, together with introductory notes and images of all the original pages, will shortly be on sale as a CD, price £5.

Jill Waller and Kath Boothman

PITTVILLE HISTORY WORKS

Unlocking Pittville's Past

Thursday 26 February 2015 at Pittville Pump Room

This half-day event is being mounted by Pittville History Works, a new history group which is part of Friends of Pittville, in partnership with the Holst Birthplace Museum. The group is gathering material from censuses, directories, house deeds, photographs, personal reminiscences and other sources, and putting it onto a website (www.pittvillehistory.org) with sophisticated search capabilities. Users of the interactive website can search for detailed information about individual people or houses (including the occupants of each house in Pittville from the 1830s to the 1900s), dip into Pittville's history and analyse social trends. There is a Pittville Timeline which summarises what was happening in Pittville from 1825 onwards, a section called Pittville Lives which includes biographies, portraits and personal reminiscences, and a section called Pittville Places with information about houses, streets and places. The Popular Searches section enables users to carry out a wide range of common searches using simple drop-down menus, while the Advanced Search is designed for students or researchers who want to carry out a bespoke search of the database.

The event will run from 2.00 – 5.00 pm at the Pump Room. Steven Blake will give a brief introduction to the history of the Pittville Estate; John Simpson will introduce the History Works project and demonstrate the website; and the Holst Birthplace Museum will talk about the history of 4 Clarence Road.

Please put the date in your diary and contact us in the New Year for more details at info@pittvillehistory.org.uk

FEATURE

‘UNRULY BEHAVIOUR’ IN 17TH CENTURY CHELTENHAM

Many of us will have made the comment that the centre of Cheltenham on a Friday or Saturday night can be a rowdy place. However this behaviour is not as recent a phenomenon as we might like to think.

The research for the Victoria County History volume on Cheltenham, the ‘Big Red Book’ is now well underway. Those of us working each week at the Archives have uncovered several ‘new’ pieces of information that will be published in due course. Those working at home have, among other research, been transcribing documents from the Star Chamber and Exchequer records via images sent to us by Alex Craven, our editor for the early modern period, and this is where we have found the records of ‘unruly behaviour’.

The transcribing has brought to light an incident that occurred in 1620, concerning a Bill of Complaint brought by Giles Atkins (Attkins) of Cheltenham and Giles Robertes of Churchdown against Thomas Lawreng (or Lorwinge) the elder, Thomas Lawreng the younger and William Bicke (TNA,STAC 8/44/1). The Lawrenges had apparently tried to encroach ‘uppon parte and parcel of the Waste and Commonable grownds of and beelonginge to the Mannor and hundred of Cheltenham’ for the purpose of gaining the rights and the construction of ‘a game and warren of Conneys’. Giles Atkins felt doubly aggrieved as he had apparently been tricked into going to the rabbit warren, ‘soe stored with Conneys’, by an invitation from the said Lawrenges and William Bicke. Giles Atkins had had ‘some former experience of such plottes and practizes of Thomas the elder and Thomas the younger and William Bicke ... knoweing that they hadd often ... abused others in that kind and either greivouslie beate or wound them or else force them to give them some money [if they] refused to accompanye’ them. In spite of this knowledge Atkins and Robertes went to the rabbit warren and there the Lowrenges ‘instantlie furiouslie and barbarouslie did assawlt’ them, and ‘haveinge A Gunn chardged with powder and shott did shoote off and dischargd the said Gunn’ at them. The Atkins fled the scene but the Lawrenges and Bicke followed them shouting ‘kill him, kill him’. Further evidence brought by Atkins against the Lawrenges was that after this affray they went ‘unto A disorderlie Alehouse ... which they did commonly frequent’ and swore that Aktins was ‘but a Cheild and apt to bee cawght’ and that next time they would ‘either kill him or creeple him’. So we appear to have a case of trespass, blackmail and possible grievous bodily harm! But was Atkins really as gullible as that, given the Lawrenges’ reputation? Unfortunately, the final outcome seems not to be on record.

If anyone would be interested in joining in the research for the VCH Cheltenham please contact me at journal.clhs@btinternet.com in the first instance, and I will put you in touch with the VCH editors.

Sally Self



BOOKS FOR SALE



The Society has received a set of the BGAS RECORD SERIES in new condition, kindly donated by Mrs Gillian Lunn. Although they are not individually priced up yet, please contact Heather Atkinson (e-mail heatherbell71@hotmail.com or phone 01242 232740) if you are interested in purchasing a copy. They are a really interesting read and would make an excellent gift.

- Vol 1 Gloucestershire Transportees, ed. I Wyatt
- Vol 2 Bigland's Gloucestershire Collection (A-C); Vol 3 (D-M); Vol 5 (N-T); Vol 8 (U-Y & Indexes), ed. B Frith
- Vol 4 Registers of Freemen of Gloucester, ed. ARJ Jurica
- Vol 6 The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522, ed. RW Hoyle
- Vol 7 Tewkesbury Churchwardens' Accounts 1563-1624, ed. CJ Litzenburger
- Vol 9 An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham, ed. J Hodsdon
- Vol 10 The Cartulary of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol, ed. D Walker
- Vol 11 Original Acta of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, ed. RB Patterson
- Vol 12 Cheltenham Probate Records, ed. AJH Sale
- Vol 13 Survey of the Diocese of Gloucester 1735-1750, ed. J Fendley
- Vols 14 & 25 Gloucester Apprenticeship Records 1595-1700 & 1700-1834, ed. J Barlow
- Vol 15 Llanthony Priory Registers 1457-66, 1501-25, ed. J Rhodes
- Vols 16, 20 & 27 Gloucestershire Feet of Fines 1199-1299; 1300-1359 & 1360-1508, ed. CR Elrington
- Vols 17 & 18 Berkeley Castle Muniments (1) & (2) ed. B Wells-Furby
- Vol 19 Chancellor Parson's Notes, ed. J Fendley
- Vol 21 Gloucester Chapter Act Book 1616-1687, ed. S Eward
- Vol 22 Convictions at Petty Sessions 1781-1837, ed. I Wyatt
- Vol 23 Bristol & Gloucestershire Lay Subsidy of 1523-1527, ed. MA Faraday
- Vol 24 Cheltenham Manor Court Books 1692-1803, ed. J Hodsdon
- Vol 26 The Forest of Dean Eyre of 1634, ed. N Herbert

OTHER BOOKS - NEW OR IN 'AS NEW' CONDITION

There are still a few of Neil Parrack's New Club books available at £8.50 (new) and Brian Torode's book, *John Middleton, Victorian Provincial Architect* at £10 (new). Also available is a first edition (1979) of *Bristol, an Architectural History* by Gomme, Jenner and Little in 'as new' condition at £40. A copy of K J Beecham's *History of Cirencester* (1978) in excellent condition, is available at £25; *Back again Mr Begbie*, by Rev. Lt Col RJG Begbie OBE (ex-Cheltenham College) in 'as new' condition at £20.

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*CAN YOU HELP?***Wooden grave markers**

An enquirer is researching the WWI service of his great-uncle, John Lee Price, who was born in Herefordshire but worked in Cheltenham for many years as servant to Counsellor Willie Merrett of Ellenborough House, Oriel Terrace. He died in Salonika in 1918 and is commemorated on the Cross of Sacrifice at Cheltenham Cemetery. The enquirer has recently learned that his original wooden grave marker was one of the 90 that was shipped back to England and installed at the Cemetery when the Cross was unveiled in 1924. About 300 of these marker crosses were eventually sent across, about 22 of which are still known to exist. The enquirer would like to find out what happened to the rest. Does anyone know whether any others have been stored and preserved?

Anna Pavlova

Anna Pavlova came to Cheltenham in 1921, and an enquirer wonders whether she stayed at the Queen's Hotel. She has a scarf which her grandfather, who worked at the hotel, brought home one day saying that Anna Pavlova had left it behind when she departed.

If you can help with either of these queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail joyce@cyberwebspace.net

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward articles for inclusion in the March 2015 issue by
Monday 16th February 2015
 to the Editor : Kath Boothman, 6 Manor Park, Cheltenham GL51 3HU
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