



# Cheltenham Local History Society

JOURNAL 26

2010

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## From the Editor

SALLY SELF

☎ 01242 243714    ✉ [russself@aol.com](mailto:russself@aol.com)

*'Local history has two essential ingredients – people and place'<sup>1</sup>*

HOW VERY TRUE is the above quote: the CLHS Journal would not exist without both! The people are all our contributors, two of whom have won awards for their excellent articles that appeared in Journal 25, Carolyn Greet and Alec Hamilton:<sup>2</sup> but they and many others would not be writing if there was no fascinating Cheltenham to study. My grateful thanks to you all - you responded magnificently to my requests for articles and there are further articles waiting in the wings.

History can be recorded in many ways: by oral methods, - if you would prefer this method, please consider the on-going CLHS Memories Project, contact details of which are on page 31; also by reviewing primary sources and I would like to draw your attention to a display of theatre posters, starting on 17 May, to commemorate 50 years of theatre history, in the Everyman coffee bars, This theatre was formally the Opera House, referred to in John Elliot's article on the cinema, page 64.

Another area that is becoming increasingly important to historians is the opportunities offered by the web. Web sites proliferate - many excellent ones are credited in these articles - but some are of doubtful accuracy. I am interested in assembling a list of sites that members have found to be useful and accurate. If you would like to contribute, then please email me with the address and brief details of the aspects they cover.

Here follows my usual plea - if you are carrying out original research on a topic relating to any aspect of the history of Cheltenham please think about writing an article. Writing those initial words can be daunting but I am very willing to discuss and support all aspects of your proposed article, provided you approach me at an early stage. Articles for Journal 27 can be received any time from April 2010 until the **closing date** which is **10 January 2011.**

<sup>1</sup> Tiller, K, *English Local History: an Introduction*, p1, 1992) Sutton Publishing. The quote is taken out of context; Tiller was referring to all the inhabitants of a place, not just writers!

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn Greet's article, '**Every measure that may gratify the public**'; **Humphrey Ruff's Contribution to Cheltenham**', has won an award from the BALH to be presented June, 2010 in London and Alec Hamilton won the Bryan Jerrard award, 2009, for '**Samuel Whitfield Daukes, 1811-1880, Architectural Hero or 'Rogue'?**'

# A Century of Change: Cheltenham in the 1700s

JAMES HODSDON

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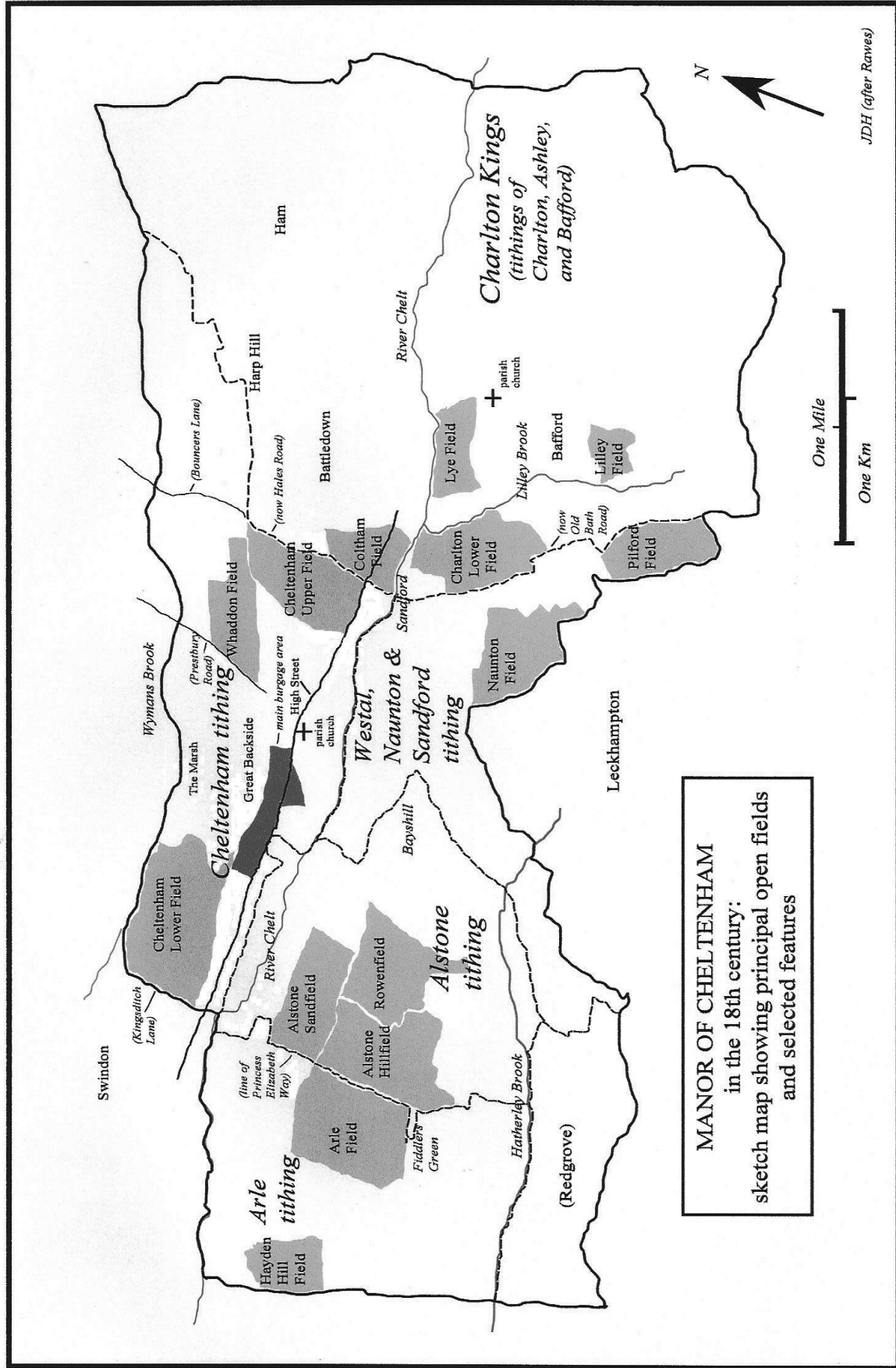
*This article describes some of the material awaiting discovery in the manor court records of Cheltenham of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the town's property transactions passed through the manor court, allowing us to see the gradual change from a small market town with an open field system, to a busy resort with development under way the whole length of the High Street and beyond. These manor records are due to be published in late 2010,<sup>1</sup> and should provide many leads for further study by local and family historians.*

## **Background**

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVES HOLD MANY MANORIAL PAPERS for Cheltenham (series D855/M), including a good run of large manuscript volumes containing the formal written record of manor courts held in the town. These were kept by the steward appointed by the lord of the manor. For some time now, I have been steadily working through the volumes from 1692, when the surviving continuous run of records begins, through to 1803 when the Cheltenham Inclosure Act was passed, and abstracting the key details for each transaction – some 4,000 in the period selected. Over this period, most properties changed hands several times, so it is possible to track the same plot or holding over time, its descent through inter-related families, and so on.

Put very simply, the manor of Cheltenham encompassed most of the parish of Cheltenham (less Redgrove at the western end) *and* all those parts of Charlton Kings not under Ashley manor. Under the manorial copyhold system, land and properties were bought and sold in the normal way, but formal ownership could only be transferred by ‘surrendering’ to the lord of the manor, who would then – on the payment of customary fees – ‘admit’ the new owner. This produced an income for the lord, and, for the copyholder, created a written public record of title, invaluable in the days before any form of central Land Registry. Inheritance of copyhold property was governed by manorial custom as the default, but in the 18<sup>th</sup> century could be varied by making suitable provisions in a will. Then as now, properties could also be used to secure loans. Many surrenders were therefore conditional, i.e. like a mortgage, becoming void when the loan was repaid.

Manorial property transactions took place in what was termed the *court baron*. Other manorial activity took place in the *court leet*, which considered matters of local administration such as repair of roads, keeping hedges and ditches in good order, and keeping the common fields under equitable management. However, the surviving record of leet activity is very thin after the early 1700s,<sup>2</sup> so most of the recently abstracted records relate to land and buildings, and their owners and neighbours.



## Places and place names

About half the area of Cheltenham manor was held under copyhold, the remainder being freehold or demesne land. The court books shed most light on the copyhold land, but we also learn about other properties as well, because in the pre-Ordnance Survey era, the accepted way of defining property was by stating its neighbours to the north, south, east or west (so-called ‘abuttals’). A sample entry from October 1708 runs:

*Thomas Stanton and his wife Hester (lately Hester Buckle) claim a piece of land called Maidenhorne (3 acres); also 1 selion [= strip] near Townsend (1 acre) having land of the rectory of Cheltenham on both sides; also parcels called Bittoms and Lypiatts (3½ acres) having land once of Walter Mason south and land once of Robert Milton west; and 2 selions of arable shooting north–south near Swindon Bridge (½ acre) having land late of Anthony Clarke east and land late of Walter Buckle west. Heriot 4s. rent 1s. 4d.*

As we still do not have a definitive map of pre-inclosure Cheltenham it is often hard to pinpoint properties even when the abuttals are given. In the example just given, the detail was evidently enough to identify the holdings to anyone who knew the town at the time, but without further research the closest a modern reader will probably get is ‘somewhere west of St Paul’s’. I hope that the data now available from the manor court records will encourage someone with mapping software skills to plot a finer-grain picture of all the fields and other holdings, which other researchers can add to.

In the 1700s the tithings were still a meaningful subdivision of Cheltenham manor, each with its own distinct character.<sup>3</sup> Cheltenham tithing (approximately, north of the Chelt up to Wymans Brook, bounded by today’s Hales Road on the east and Kingsditch Lane to the west) was dominated by the long High Street, the backside north of the High Street, and three open fields, Upper field, Whaddon field, and Lower field, each divided into multiple strips of up to an acre. Alstone tithing is dominated by the three open or common fields of Sandfield, Rowenfield and Hillfield, with a cluster of properties near the green and a finger of territory going up to Bayshill. Arle tithing included Barbridge field, Middle field and Haydon Hill field and a number of smaller closes, while Westal, Naunton and Sandford tithing (with further open fields in Naunton and Sandford but a pattern of more inclosure in Westal) accounts for the rest. Charlton Kings presents a very different picture, due to the complex interleaving of Cheltenham and Ashley manor lands, but Coltham field and Benbridge (or Benbreach) field at the west end of Charlton Kings were common fields recognisably on the same pattern as elsewhere in the manor.

In the days when Cheltenham was essentially a one-street town, names for minor lanes and other routes were not always permanent, and did not always have an agreed written form.<sup>4</sup> For example, before George III’s visit in 1788, St George’s Place was known variously as Still’s Lane and Harrell’s Lane (various members of the Still family appear in the court records, but no Harrell has yet come to light). What is now Grove Street was previously Day Lane. North Street was first Humphris Lane and then Greyhound Lane. Further from the High Street, some real puzzles remain. There was a route written variously as Bearhole, Berehole, Berhill, Burrough or Burrow Lane, which seems to have been where Whaddon field abutted Cheltenham Upper field, roughly where Prestbury Road now runs down to Pittville Gates. In local speech, there might not

have been much difference between these forms – but what is the ‘true’ version, and what might it mean? The lie of the land nearby suggests neither a hill nor a hole, and there are few reports of bears east of the Severn at this period. ‘Burrow’ might be more plausible (the location isn’t far from Conygree, which is definitely rabbit-related), but wouldn’t account for the several bear-/ber- versions. One thought is that this was a route leading to the boundary of the original borough of Cheltenham – but then so did several other routes, so why would it be singled out? More evidence is awaited. Elsewhere, there is the curious coincidence of a Hales Lane, somewhere in the middle of town, being noted in 1714, over a century before today’s Hales Road, on the boundary with Charlton Kings, was named after a Victorian surveyor of highways.

Perhaps most intriguing is the apparent rash of Hesters Ways (or similar names) all over the manor. In the 1700s we find Haysters/Heisters/Hesters Way and Haysters Hedge in Arle tithing (home of today’s Hesters Way), another Hesters Way in Westal, Naunton and Sandford tithing, and yet another Hesters Way, along with a Hesters Meer, in Charlton Kings. There must be a strong inference that we are dealing with a common noun, rather than a personal name, and it is proposed that the reference is to (seasonal) ways used by ‘haysters’ or haymakers. ‘Hayster’ isn’t recorded in dialect dictionaries for Gloucestershire but is known with this meaning in Yorkshire.

The records throw up a myriad of minor names in all parts of the manor, many of which do not feature in the fields etc. listed in A H Smith’s *Place-Names of Gloucestershire* (1964). Many of them probably went out of current use with the disruption of traditional holdings consequent upon Inclosure in 1803. As hinted above, there is still much work to be done, both to pin them all down confidently on a map, and to explain them – perhaps aided by comparison with even earlier manor records. Charlton Kings seems to be particularly rich in picturesque names. To give just a few examples of the more striking or intriguing field and close names from across the manor:

*Asp acre, Bacon combe, Bannut tree acre, Birchin Brandyards, Cuckow pen, Dirty Shard, Eelings Butts, Ellen Stubbs, Fircombe, Frogpitts, Gong furlong, Graffey Leasow, Itchlands, Kidditch (or Kittage), Laffley, Lampitts, Milkwell, Needles Butts, Niffnage, Nolthay, Perry Cundley, Rack Close, Red acre, Smock acre, Square hedge, Swinsall, Tobacco close, Wetfurzes.*

In 18<sup>th</sup> century Cheltenham, most properties were simply identified by their current owner or occupier (Mr A’s house, Widow B’s house), the commonest exception being inns. But occasionally we find a private house with a name, Gallipot Hall being perhaps the first example. This stood in Westal, somewhere near today’s Suffolk Square, and was described in a 1694 transaction as ‘lately erected by the late Edward Wright’. Why would anyone call their house after a small round pot used by apothecaries? The answer can now be revealed: Edward Wright, a later transaction shows, was a ‘doctor in physic’, therefore likely to have been well acquainted with apothecaries’ jars.<sup>5</sup>

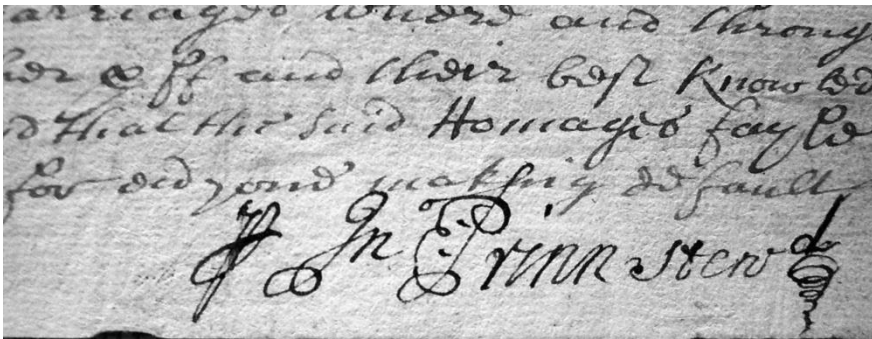
## Families

Space does not permit extensive coverage here, but it can be taken as read that the records yield a great deal of information about the descent of property from one generation to another, often giving clues as to the maiden names of wives, the married names of daughters, the existence of

cousins and other kin, the whereabouts of offspring who have left Cheltenham, dates of death, the existence of family trusts, and so on. There are many cross-links to names in the published records of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings testators<sup>6</sup>, as well as indications about other wills, presumably proved outside the county.

Among recurring names in the 18<sup>th</sup> century records are many still locally familiar today. This short lists covers those with particularly long entries in the forthcoming indexes:

Averis, Ballinger, Bannister, Bastin, Beckett, Bedwell, Benfield, Bliss, Buckle, Butt, Cherrington, Chester, Chestroe, Clark, Cooke, Cooper, Cox, Delabere, Dobbins, Ellis, Gael, Gardner, Goodrich, Gregory, Greville, Hartlebury, Higgs, Holder, Hooper, Hughes, Humphreys, Hyett, Ireland, Jones, Kear, Kemmett, Lane, Ludlow, Macock/Meacock, Mason, Meekings, Michell, Milton, Nettleship, Nicholls, Oakey, Packer, Pate(s), Pope, Prinn, Pumphrey, Roberts, Robins, Slatter, Sloper, Smith, Spencer, Stroud, Stephens, Sturmey, Surman, Timbrell, Tombs, Welch, Welsh, White, Whithorne, Williams and Wills.



Signature of John Prinn, steward of the manor courts from 1692 to 1735, extracted from D855/M12  
By permission of Gloucester Archives

## Development of the Spa

As is well-known, the future spa waters were said to have been discovered in 1716 on land belonging to William Mason. The area was mostly copyhold, so the court records help track the growth of Mason's holdings in and near Bayshill, as he steadily added to the properties settled on him and his wife-to-be, Margaret Surman of Tredington in 1696. While the Mason family was local (with Bristol connections in the Skillicornes), the developing spa town proved very attractive to other incomers. Analysis of the places of origin of parties to manorial property sales in Cheltenham shows a steady rise throughout the century of people from outside the town, outside the county, and eventually, outside the country. The first Irish connection appears in 1768, and the first Indian one in 1803. One interesting early 'developer' was Dame Frances Stapleton, who had inherited West Indies sugar money, and who bought copyhold land in the middle of Cheltenham in 1741 where she went on to build the Great House, the subject of a well-known contemporary depiction by Robins. This may perhaps have first been intended as a family home but later became a favoured boarding house and one of the town's social hubs. At the latter

end of the century, we can see Joseph Pitt's first recorded purchase of manorial land in Cheltenham in September 1793, after which he appears over 30 times in transactions up to 1803.

We can also clearly trace, house by house, the first years of the Colonnade, an intended grand row running south from the High Street in the era before the Promenade was laid out. These houses started going up in 1791-2, and were changing hands even before completion, such was the speculative interest. The manor records provide a reference to a Colonnade Company (1793), a lead for further investigation.

While many investors focused on property in the centre of town, others continued to see value in agricultural holdings: Jesus College Oxford bought around 100 acres in Alstone in 1727.

The changing nature of the town can also be seen in the descriptions and occupations listed for those buying and selling property. Early on, we have the predictably frequent maltsters, mercers, and yeomen. Then come cordwainers, tallowchandlers, and surgeons. Latterly we start meeting the more exotic: haberdashers of hats, perukemakers, silversmiths, snuffmen, excise officers, viscountesses, and many more besides. Property speculation was not confined to any particular rank of society: then as now, we also find plenty of tradesmen doing well enough to invest in property on their own account – bricklayers, plasterers, and plumbers among them.

Reverends crop up remarkably frequently in the property records. To take just one example, the piece of land called Rack Close (this included what is now the bowling green alongside Ambrose Street) was acquired by one Mary Wells, spinster, in 1788. She married the Revd Hugh Hughes Williams, and by 1802 they had begun selling the close off strip by strip as housing plots.

The manor courts sometimes record the actual purchase price or mortgage value of a property. It would take a trained economist to extract firm trends or comparative conclusions from such data (another cue for further study!) but here are a few specimen prices for Cheltenham manor in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### **1718-20**

- 1 acre of land £20
- house in High Street £100
- 3 acres in Whaddon field £85
- a close of pasture in Charlton Kings £51 11s. 6d.
- 2 acres in Cheltenham Upper field £78
- 8 acres in Bayshill £315

### **1798-99**

- 2 new houses in the High Street £1,200
- a new house in the Colonnade, used as a lodging house £300
- 9 acres arable on the north side of Cheltenham £400



11 Oct 1692

Item We doe continue an Order that noe person shall digg any sand Gravell or Morter out of the highway betwene Hollywithies shoard and Millions Croft upon the penalty of 20<sup>s</sup> for every one making default therein

*'We doe continue an Order that noe person shall digg any Sand Gravell or Morter out of the highway betwene Hollywithies shoard and Millions Croft upon the penalty of 20s for everyone making default therein'*

Sample entry from court leet of 1692, extracted from D855/M12

The highway in question is probably the western end of today's St Pauls Road, where it joins Swindon Road

*By permission of Gloucestershire Archives*

## Other activities

Although primarily property records, the manor court books shed some light on other aspects of life. Sport is represented by Football Close, immediately west of the parish church, which is referenced often from 1689 to 1803, when Joseph Pitt sold off a piece of it. Its western part was developed as part of St George's Place. The bowling alley is mentioned several times, often in connection with the establishing of a Quaker meeting house (transactions by Quakers are usually easy to identify because of their refusal on principle to swear loyalty to the lord of the manor). The celebrated theatrical entrepreneur John Boles Watson crops up as a developer from 1782 onwards. The grammar school is mentioned several times as an abutting property, and there are also intriguing references to other schoolrooms or schoolhouses. In 1755 we find 'a house in Cheltenham near the Mill Lane, formerly used as a stable and afterwards converted into a dwelling house or schoolhouse and late in the possession of Richard Benfield'. This might be the same as a property later referred to as a schoolhouse in an orchard, associated with a Richard Dawkes, schoolmaster. This too is a topic for further inquiry.

The horsepond is mentioned a few times, though never well enough to pinpoint its exact location in the High Street. The first record of a coffee house (Mr Pope's) is in 1749. For those seeking different refreshment, there are plenty of inns and pubs: *the Bull, the Bush, the Dog (or Talbot), the Dukes Head, the Eight Bells* [now Two Pigs], *the Fleece, the George, the Greyhound, the Heart, the Joyners Arms, the Kings Head, the New Inn, the Old Swan* [now the Swan], *the Pelican, the Plough, the Rose & Crown, and the Royal Oak* [now Irish Oak] – of which only three survive today, and under different names.

Speaking of the *Plough*: it features, though not by name, in a transaction of 1758, after the young Warren Hastings had successfully sued in Chancery to secure his inheritance, which included this property. The Hastings family was from Daylesford, Glos., and the Cheltenham connection appears to have been through his mother, Hester Warren. However, more work is needed to tease out the details completely.

### **The manor**

Besides being a vehicle for documenting change, the manor court system itself evolved during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the start of the period, the concept of the medieval borough in Cheltenham was still alive, operating under the aegis of the lord of the manor and hundred of Cheltenham, but by the 1720s, the last legal vestiges of the old burgage system had gone. This meant that the distinctive burgage strip properties (mostly fronting the Lower High Street in today's terms) could now be bought and sold like freehold. The lord of the manor and his steward, once at the very centre of local administration and justice, were still important but by the end of the century had become something akin to a specialist conveyancing service, with ceremonial overtones – and were to survive in this role for many decades more.

### **Conclusion**

I hope the above brief overview helps illustrate the wealth of material awaiting discovery in the manor court records. Abstracting the material for publication has taken some time, but this has given the opportunity to evolve a consistent practical format for the abbreviated records. Apart from the records themselves, the real added value will lie in the indexes – enabling the lucky searcher to home in quickly on whichever family, property, place or subject is of interest. And should the hints dropped above not be broad enough, I really do hope others will pick up some of the research leads these records offer. While the rise of the spa understandably dominates most accounts of the town in the 1700s, there was plenty of other social and economic change afoot too. In some respects we're still only scratching the surface of 18<sup>th</sup> century Cheltenham.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Record Series of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society: see [www.bgas.org.uk/record.php](http://www.bgas.org.uk/record.php)

<sup>2</sup> For a picture of Cheltenham manorial life in an earlier century, see Jill Barlow's article in CLHS **J 20**, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The best depiction of Cheltenham tithings and open fields is still that given in Barbara Rawes's pioneering article in CLHS **J 6**.

<sup>4</sup> Some of these details in this section add to what appears in J Hodsdon's *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, BGAS, 1997

<sup>5</sup> Internet searching reveals other Gallipots: a Gallipot Farm (existing by 1847) near Wickhamford, Worcs., and another near Hartfield, W. Sussex; origin of names not apparent.

<sup>6</sup> Tony Sale's *Cheltenham Probate Records 1660-1740*, BGAS, 1999 and Joan Paget & Tony Sale's *Charlton Kings Probate Records 1600-1800*, Charlton Kings Local History Society, 2003

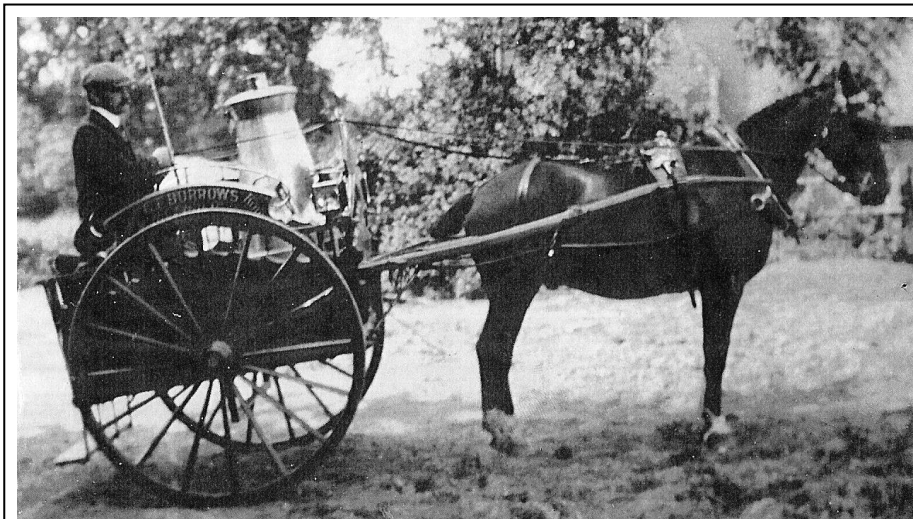
# Oakley Farm

## MARY DANIEL

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WE CAME TO OAKLEY FARM<sup>1</sup> IN 1930 when I was thirteen. It was 150 acres and adjoining it was Priors Farm whilst over the other side of the road was Whaddon Farm, so nothing but fields all around. Our landlord then was a Major Skillicorne who owned a lot of property around this area.

We had no electricity so lighting was by oil lamps. We had running water and a big boiler in the back kitchen heated by a coke fire. Coke we bought from the gas works – took our own sacks and a sackful cost half a crown, about 20 pence [12½p]. We had a pump outside the back door and a crystal clear spring in the field at the back of the house, the water being pure and lovely to drink. The ‘privy’ was a bucket with a wooden seat down the garden. Bath night was a tin bath in front of a lovely hot fire (coke or wood).



George Frederick Burrows, Mary's father with milk float and pony Tom, in the 1930s  
*Courtesy of Mary Daniel*

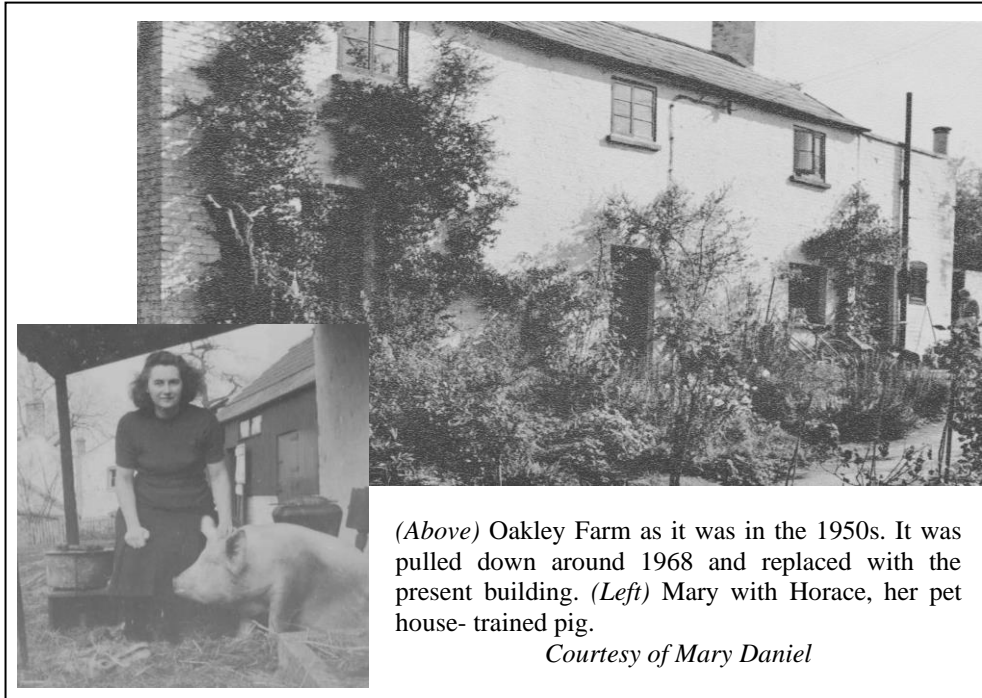
On the farm we had cattle, pigs and poultry and had a milk round, the float being drawn by a horse called Dolly. On the side of the float my father's name – G. F. Burrows - and we covered quite a large area.

Incidentally, in those days Priors Road was called Cemetery Road. Also there was a footpath which went from Harp Hill right across the fields and

along the side of the cemetery finishing up in Prestbury. At the bottom of the farm lane on the other side was a well stocked nursery garden (Bowl and Scarret<sup>2</sup>) and they had a lovely lily pond where children were allowed to skate, so it was a great attraction.

At the top of Harp Hill were the Hewletts Reservoirs, one being an underground one which supplied water to the Brewery, the pipe running under the fields. (These are still there but GCHQ had the reservoirs drained.) The caretaker would always allow visitors and would show you around. Very interesting but the underground one was very eerie and your voices echoed. Also frogs were hopping around.

When Major Skillicorne died, the government took over the farm and half the fields were used to put up single storey offices for various government departments including Ministry of Pensions and Ministry of Works. During the war American troops occupied the site and were very popular especially with the children who came up the farm lane and loved to chat to them, and had lots of sweets and goodies pushed through the security fence. The 'Yanks' obviously got as much pleasure from giving as the children did at receiving!



(Above) Oakley Farm as it was in the 1950s. It was pulled down around 1968 and replaced with the present building. (Left) Mary with Horace, her pet house-trained pig.

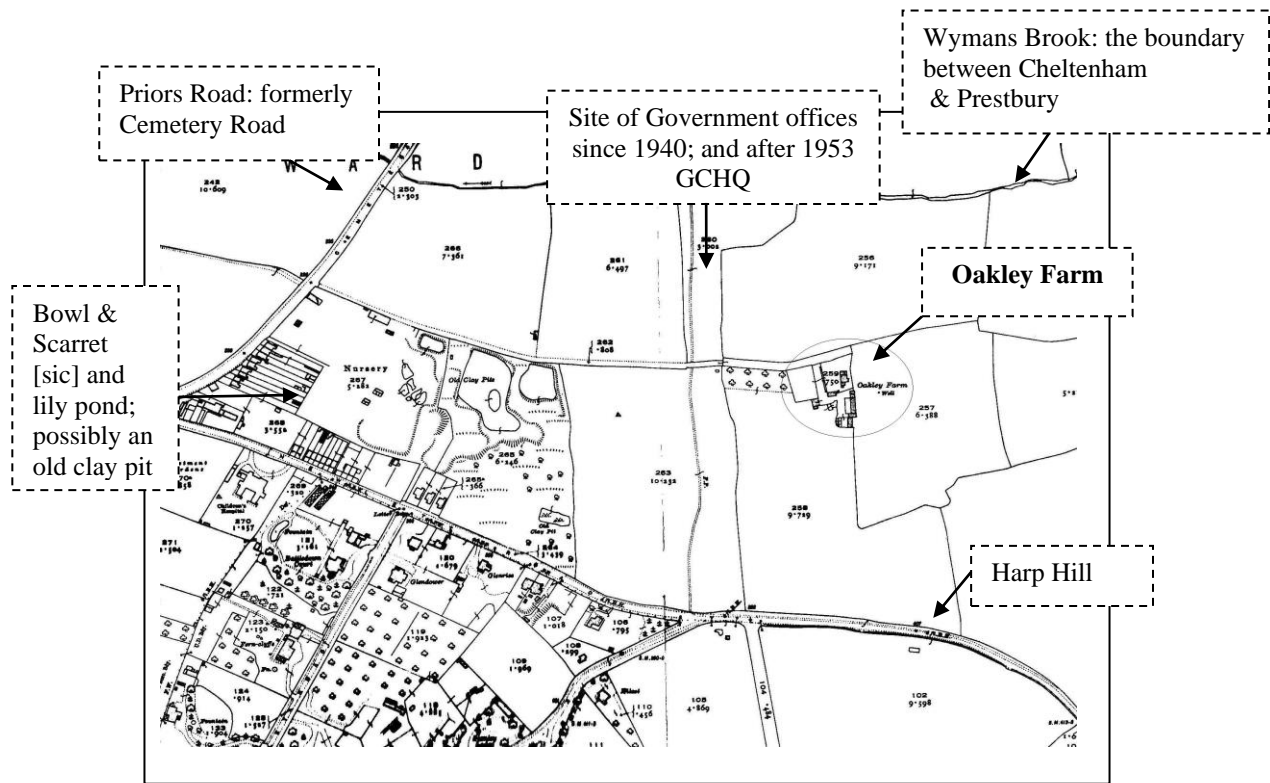
*Courtesy of Mary Daniel*

After the war the site became a teacher training college for ex-service personnel. Many of them came round the farm for milk and eggs and to talk to my pet pig, Horace, who was so tame he would come and sit in the kitchen!

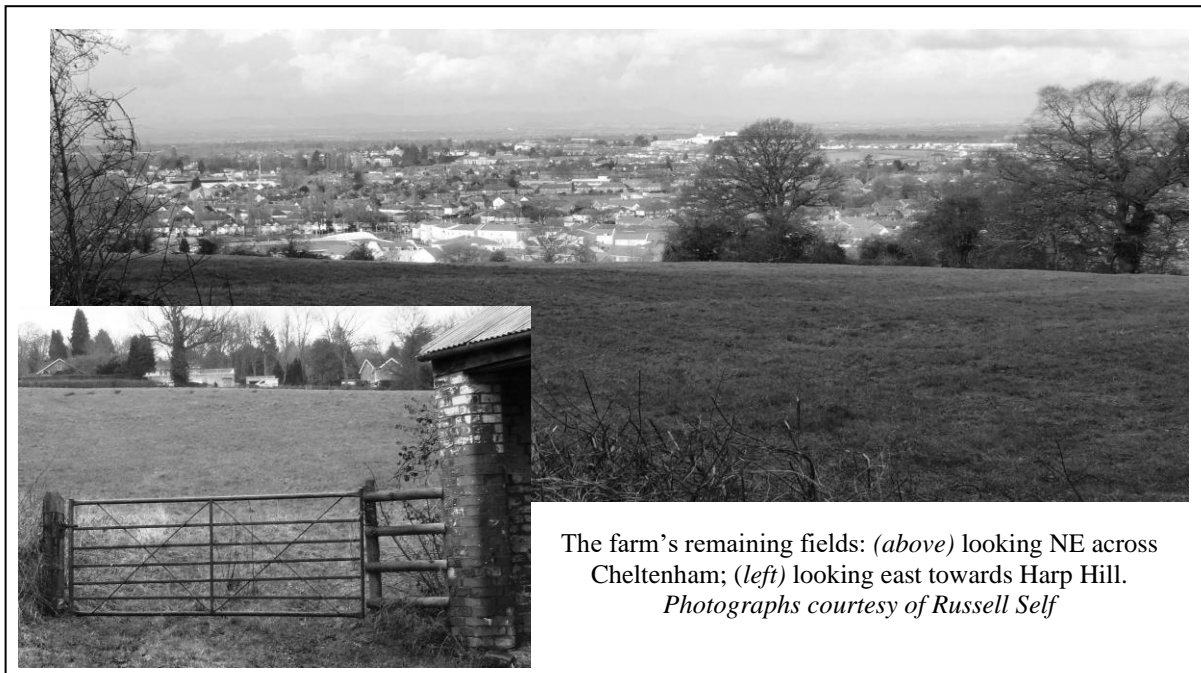
Also in those days the postman walked on his rounds and from us would go up across the fields, up Aggs Hill and right over to Whittington and Puckham, and the horse drawn dust cart came up every week. All these workmen were happy in their work and were always whistling as they went on their way.

There was *The Battledown* in Hales Road close to the corner of Hewlett Road and just inside Hewlett Road was a little cottage-cum-shop selling sweets, cigarettes and newspapers and run by the Walton family.

GCHQ Oakley, as everyone knows, has been here for a very long time now, and the bottom half of the site has now been sold for a housing estate, so the last green fields on the north side of the farm have gone, but there are still 20 acres to the south and I have happy memories of those wonderful days when the lovely fields were bordered by so many proud old oak trees and the streams which (now piped) ran down to join Wyman's Brook.



**Oakley Farm c 1930.** Oakley, situated to the NE of Cheltenham, on the lower slopes of the limestone escarpment: first recorded as *Acle* in 1160, then as *Ockely* in 1344. As a farm, Oakley has ceased to exist, except for five fields, see below. It is now the site of GCHQ, a housing development and a supermarket.  
*Map (OS 1923 Sheet 28) courtesy of CF&LHLibrary*



The farm's remaining fields: (above) looking NE across Cheltenham; (left) looking east towards Harp Hill.  
*Photographs courtesy of Russell Self*

<sup>1</sup> Derivation of Oakley, see map above. J. Hodsdon, *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, Vol 9 BGAS, 1997.  
<sup>2</sup> Mr Bowl, may well be Edwin C Bowell who lived in Alpine Cottage, now 43 Priors Road. Scarret is Skarret in contemporary advertisements.

# Railway Mania in Cheltenham: Part One

ERIC MILLER

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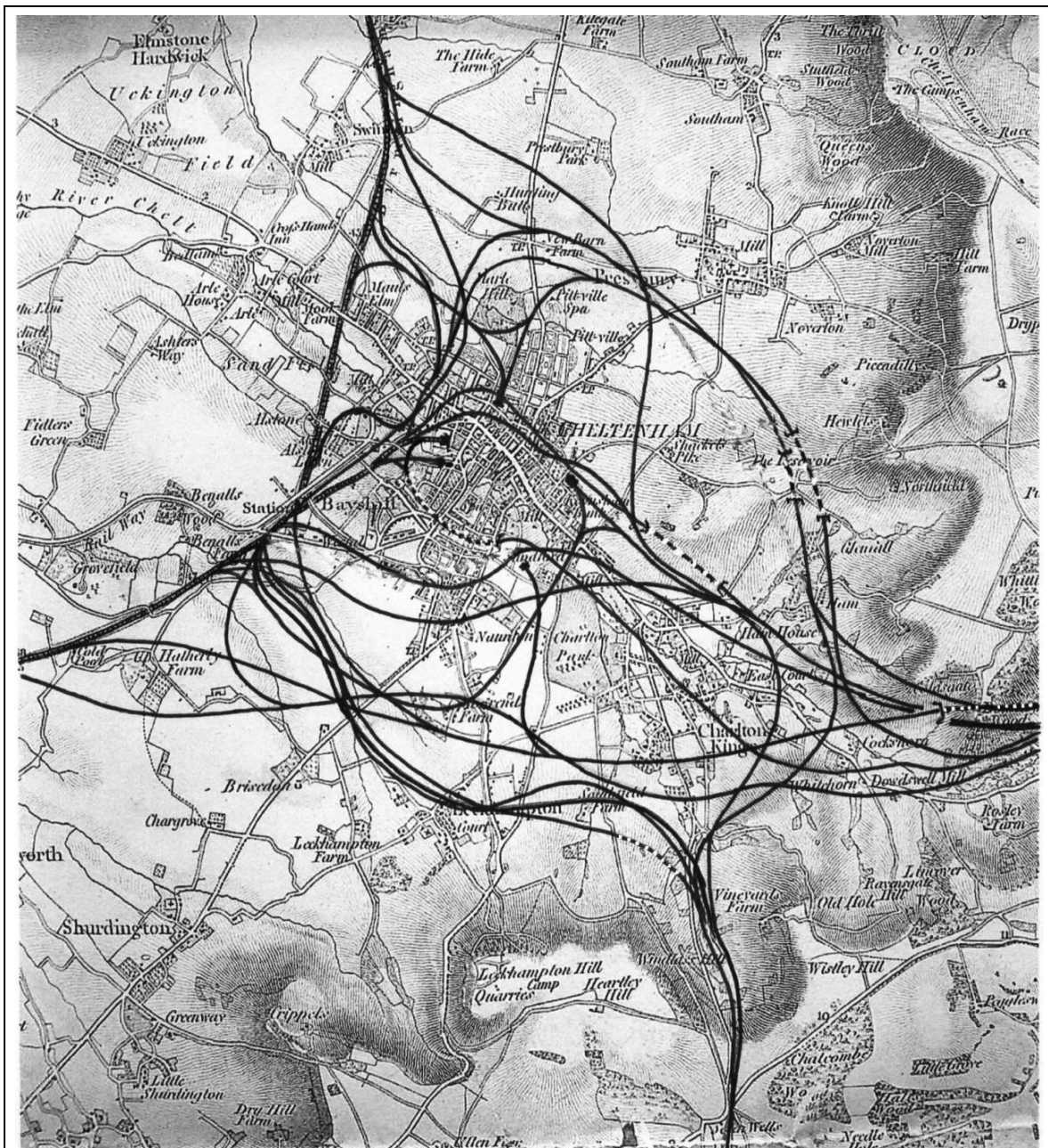
IF ALL THE RAILWAYS PROPOSED DURING 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BRITAIN had been built, then our countryside and towns would have looked quite different today, and Dr Beeching's axe would have had many more branches to chop! In 1846 alone 727 railway plans were deposited for England and Scotland, of which 270 survived to receive Royal Assent.<sup>1</sup> Cheltenham and its surroundings would not have been spared, as some twenty separate schemes affecting the town were tabled in the 1840s (the true era of 'railway mania') and in the ensuing decades, as shown on the map opposite.

All the projects envisaged a junction with the already existing Birmingham and Gloucester (Midland) Railway at some point between Brockhampton in the north and Hatherley and the Reddings in the south. Most joined immediately south of Lansdown Station and a few used the Great Western's spur from St James's Station. In some cases there would also have been a terminus or other station within the town. Three of the earliest schemes saw Cheltenham as a gateway to the south for traffic between the industrial North and Midlands and the port of Southampton. The remaining ones were concerned with establishing a direct connection between Cheltenham and Oxford, with a link to London, an aim that was not realised until 1881.

Before a Railway Bill could be introduced to Parliament, plans had to be deposited with the Clerk of the Peace for each county through which the railway would pass. Quite apart from their importance to railway history, the documents contain information of great interest to local and family historians. The plans are beautifully drawn on a scale of not less than 4 inches to a mile, and some enlargements are up to 40 inches to a mile. The 'books of reference' that accompany them reveal much about land use. They list and describe the properties affected, spanning 100 yards either side of the route (the 'limit of deviation'), together with the names of the owners, lessees and occupiers, identified by numbers which correspond to markings on the plans.

As sources, these documents invite comparison with tithe and enclosure maps and local surveys and especially the 1820 Post Office map and the Cheltenham Town Map of 1855-7. It is fortunate that so many of them are accessible in the Gloucestershire Archives; for ease of reference, Gloucestershire Archives catalogue numbers are included in the following text. The local press carried prospectuses and regular accounts of shareholders' meetings and of parliamentary proceedings. As in other matters, the *Cheltenham Examiner* (at that time tellingly sub-titled *General Railway Intelligencer*) and the *Cheltenham Looker-On* usually took vehemently opposing views, while also sniping from time to time at the *Cheltenham Chronicle*.





Proposed routes around Cheltenham 1845-1865, based on original plans, superimposed on an Ordnance Survey map current at the time.

*Map courtesy of Eric Miller*

Though some distinguished engineers including Robert Stephenson and Isambard Kingdom Brunel were in charge of the projects, many of these speculative 'paper railways' would have been impractical and costly both to build and to maintain. Despite enthusiastic local support for certain schemes, there were often strong objections by powerful landowners and others with vested interests. Chief among these were the rival railway companies such as the Great Western Railway, whose directors wanted to maintain the dominance of its broad gauge network. There were also concerns about the effect on sewerage and the supply of water.<sup>2</sup> Some projects were underfinanced and some simply failed on legal and other technicalities. As a result, few proposals survived the intensive and protracted parliamentary scrutiny. On the other hand, there was premature rejoicing in the town on two occasions when Bills did meet with success.

## The Consequences for Cheltenham

If any of the railways had been built, possible consequences might have included any one of the following:

- A grandiose Gothic terminus extending between the High Street and Swindon Road
- Stations at Duke Street, next to Dunalley Street or behind York Terrace, at St George's Road or at the General Hospital in Sandford Road
- The disturbance or destruction of residential housing, especially north of the High Street across Portland Street and Winchcombe Street and in parts of 'South Town'
- A tunnel underneath the Hewletts reservoir
- A tunnel under Bayshill and Montpellier
- A line crossing Church Road in Leckhampton and cutting the village in two
- A high embankment or viaduct descending from Ham Hill towards either Prestbury or Pittville

Passengers' prying eyes might have infringed the security of GCHQ Oakley and overlooked the Municipal Cemetery in Bouncers Lane. Further, the homes of many of the members of the Cheltenham LHS could not have been built where they are ... and the author's house in Leckhampton might have teetered on the edge of a deep cutting!

## Already existing lines

Two lines were already in existence before railway mania set in:

The Birmingham and Gloucester (Midland) Railway (Q/RUm/132/1, 132/3, 143/2), one of the earliest lines to be built, was surveyed in 1835 and completed in 1840. It was taken over by the Midland Railway in 1846 and from 1923 until nationalisation in 1948 formed part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. Its station at Lansdown, at first referred to as the 'Queen's Road Station' and now called 'Cheltenham Spa', is the only one left in the town.<sup>3</sup> It was located close to the junction of the primitive Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad and its branch leading to Leckhampton. In 1859 the Midland and Great Western Railway Companies jointly bought and disposed of the tramroad, by then rendered obsolete.

The Cheltenham and Great Western Union Railway (Q/RUm/133, 146) was a broad-gauge railway opened in stages between 1840 and 1845 to link the GWR at Swindon (Wilts) with Cheltenham via Kemble and Gloucester. The stretch between Gloucester and Cheltenham was worked jointly with the Birmingham and Gloucester, originally as a mixed-gauge line, which was converted to 'narrow' (i.e. standard) gauge in 1871. A 1½-mile spur led to a site at Jessop's Nurseries, where a station terminus (St James's) was opened as a temporary structure in 1847. Its permanent replacement was not completed until 1894, on a new site north of the Chelt. Sidings were laid where the old station had been. The station was last used in 1966, with the closure of the line.



The original plans for the railway show that the first terminal was south of the Chelt, close to St George's Road (Q/RUm/133). (An amendment dated 1841 proposed a further extension almost as far as Royal Well Place (Q/RUm/174), but that was not proceeded with.) Plans for a spur to Jessop's Nurseries had also been drawn up by the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway (Q/RUm/132/3). In addition, a separate spur, possibly intended to carry goods traffic, would have run alongside the Leckhampton branch of the tramroad (today's Queen's Road) as far as Westal Green.

Brunel had begun to oversee the Cheltenham and Great Western Union in 1835. He confessed that he 'did not feel much interested in this' but added, immodestly, 'I hold it only because they [the Great Western] cannot do without me. It's an awkward line and the estimate's too low. However, it's all in the way of business and it's a proud thing to monopolise all the West as I do.'<sup>4</sup>



Artist's impression of the original St James's Station, opened in 1847 on the Jessop's Nurseries site. Based on plans and comparisons with prevailing architectural styles.

*By Sean Bolan*

### **Proposed Lines: Manchester to Southampton and beyond**

The Manchester and Southampton Railway, 1845 (Q/RUm/210). Robert Stephenson and his partner George Bidder devised a route from Southampton Docks via Andover, Marlborough, Swindon and Cirencester. At Coberley it would have entered a 2961-yard long tunnel under the turnpike from Cirencester, emerging near Vineyards Farm and continuing alongside the Lilley Brook. Within Charlton Kings<sup>5</sup> it would have run very close to Balcarras House, past East Court, and through the grounds of Oaklands (Ashley Manor – now St Edward's School) and Coltham Field on its way to Prestbury

to join the Midland line north of Swindon Village. The company's ambition was to provide communication with France, the Mediterranean and parts of the Empire.

Manchester, Southampton and Poole Railway (Cheltenham, Salisbury, and Poole line), 1845 (Q/RUm/215). This directly competing scheme followed broadly the route from the south coast later adopted by the Midland and South Western Junction Railway. It would have impinged on Charlton Kings somewhat less in today's setting, but it would have cut across Church Road, Leckhampton. The Coberley tunnel would have been even longer, after which the line would have crossed the Cirencester turnpike and the Lilley Brook close to today's Cheltenham Park Hotel, curving westwards into a 396-yard long tunnel and passing below Southfield Farm.<sup>6</sup> It would have joined the Midland line just south of Lansdown Bridge.

This latter company's Bill was withdrawn, and on 15 July 1846 the *Examiner* reported triumphantly that a House of Commons Committee had approved the first Manchester and Southampton Bill:

'The intelligence arrived here about half-past 11 o'clock on the Wednesday night, and *the bells were immediately set ringing, and continued their merry peals throughout the day* (author's italics). Several complaints have reached us of the ringing of the bells on this occasion by night, many of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of the church having mistaken them for an alarm of fire.'

There were similar tokens of rejoicing at Southampton and other towns affected by the line, but the celebrations were premature. Though the Bill had been passed by the Commons, it was rejected six months later by the Lords. The *Examiner* hinted at 'foul play' behind the scenes by GWR directors.

Following the rejection, the Manchester and Southampton Railway Company made two amended applications in 1846 and 1847 (Q/RUm/232/1, 2 and 3 and D2025). This time the route followed the same general course as the rival company's abandoned scheme by skirting Cheltenham to the south and passing through Leckhampton. A feature of the 1846 amendment was that it included a branch making a link at Ham with another of Stephenson's lines, proposed at the same time, the London, Oxford and Cheltenham Railway (see below).

Nothing more came of any of these proposals. The *Examiner* described the Manchester and Southampton Railway as being 'well and truly *hors de combat*'. The project failed as a result of the carelessness or incompetence of the local engineers, who had made gross errors in the levels when drawing up the plans, and the company was unable to raise another application.

### **Proposed Lines: Routes to Oxford and London**

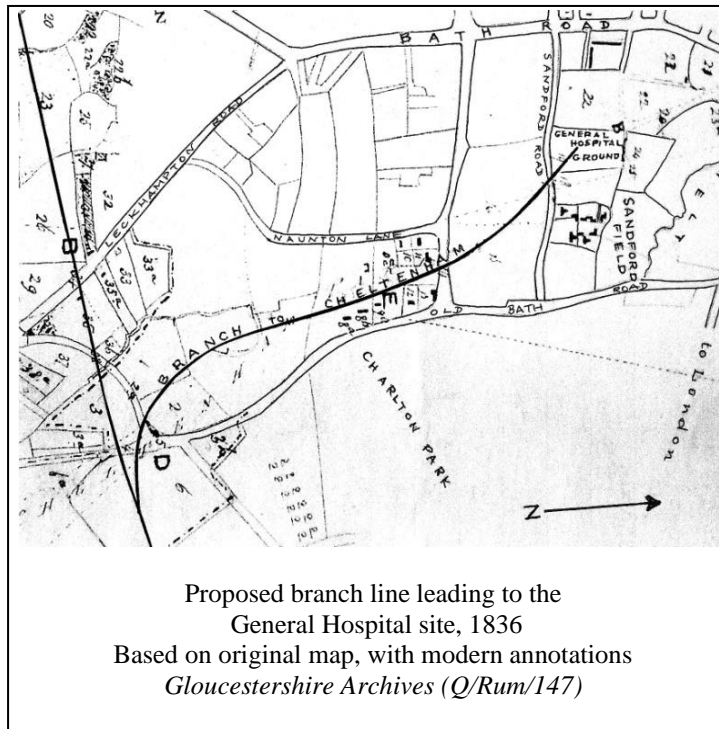
On the other hand, the demand persisted for a route eastwards to Oxford and beyond. These early attempts at creating the line are described briefly below.

#### **1836-1837**

Cheltenham, Oxford, London and Birmingham Union Railway, 1836 (Q/RUm/145). Starting from a junction with the Midland Railway south of Lansdown Station, this line would have passed through Tivoli, across Park Place, Great Norwood Street and

Bath Road at its junction with Thirlestaine Road. Old Bath Road would have had to be raised by 17 feet 6 inches near its junction with London Road. After passing through Dowdeswell Wood it would have entered a tunnel under Sandiwell Park and continued eastwards close to the Andoversford Inn. The link with Oxford would have been at Shilton, near Witney, and that with London at Marsworth (Bucks) on the London and Birmingham Railway.

Ireland, South Wales, Gloucester, Cheltenham and London Junction Railway, 1836 (Q/RUm/147)



Branches from the Great Western Union Railway near Cold Pool Farm and near Lansdown Station would have met near Leckhampton Road and continued eastwards through Bafford and Charlton Kings, tunnelling under Dowdeswell Wood at a gradient of 1 in 40. The line would have joined the Great Western Railway at Milton (Berks). The most striking feature of the scheme, however, was a branch (in reality no more than a 'twig') originating near the Old Bath Road - Charlton Lane junction and leading to

what was marked on the map as 'General Hospital Grounds'. This plan anticipated the opening of the hospital on that site in 1849

A revised version of this scheme was submitted in 1837, with the company's title amended to the Ireland, South Wales, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Worcester and London Junction Railway (Q/RUm/154). Access to and from the Midland line was planned closer to Lansdown Junction.

### 1845-1847

None of the above schemes made much headway, but in 1845 the desire for a direct route to Oxford and beyond was revived. John Goding in his *History of Cheltenham* wrote of 'great railway agitation' in the town. There were four competing schemes, as follows:

Oxford, Witney, Cheltenham and Gloucester Independent Railway, 1845 (Q/RUm/217). In this scheme, access to and from Gloucester on the main line was at a point near Hatherley. From there the route ran past the Park and under Francis, Hermitage and Exmouth Streets, Thirlestaine Road and Old Bath Road near Sandford

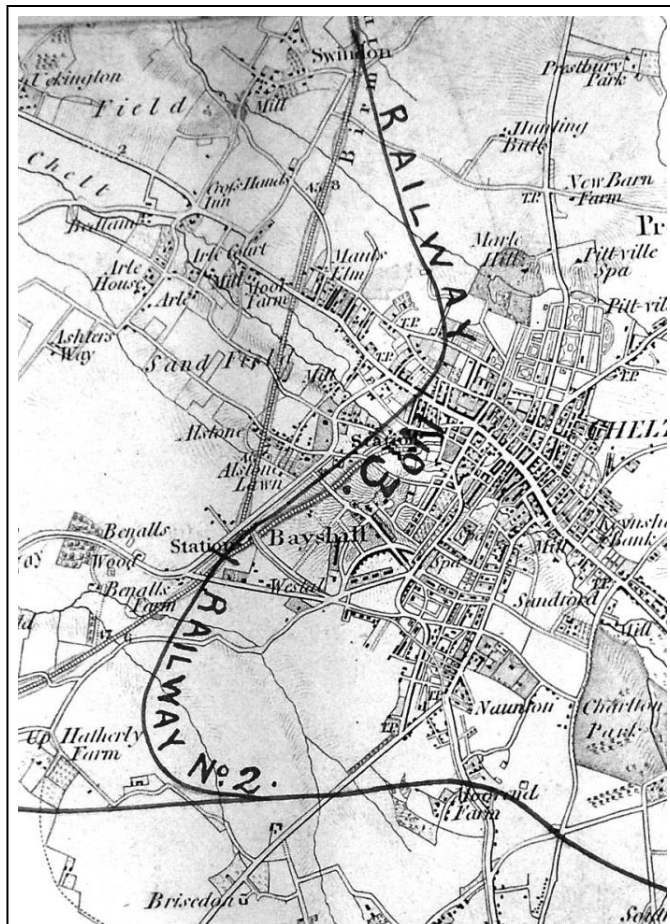
Mill. It continued to the north of the London Road, with tunnels under Ashley Manor and later beyond Dowdeswell. A separate link with the main line near Alstone would have passed through the town north of the High Street. The plans suggest that stations were to be built in the vicinity of the Market and the Old Bath Road.

Cheltenham and Oxford Railway, 1845 (Q/RUm/205). This Great Western-sponsored broad-gauge route, engineered by Brunel, would have branched from the company's line near St James's Station and continued under the High Street at its junction with Milsom Street, under Winchcombe Street, Hewlett Road, Duke Street, Coltham Lane (Hales Road), and through a 550-yard long tunnel at the foot of Battledown and another of 638 yards at Sandiwell, to the south of the road to London. At Ascott/Shipton-under-Wychwood the line was to form a junction with the proposed Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway.

Cheltenham, Oxford and London Junction Railway, 1845 (Q/RUm/202)

Branches from the Midland Railway south of Lansdown Station and near The Reddings would have joined approximately where Morrison's Supermarket is now. Immediately beyond the Shurdington Road the onward course to the east coincided with the route eventually taken when the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct was built, though the line would have joined the Oxford branch of the Great Western Railway near Didcot rather than at Swindon. The prospectus added that the railway would also form a direct route from Cheltenham to Brighton and Dover.

A separate loop would have continued to the north. After passing the Workhouse it would have curved westwards to rejoin the Birmingham line north of Swindon Village. An important feature was that a station was planned on this loop, extending from the Lower High Street to Swindon Road in the vicinity of Granville



Sketch map showing connections with the Midland Railway and passage through Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire Archives (Q/Rum/202)

Street. A design was prepared by the company's engineers Gandell and Brunton (see page 22).

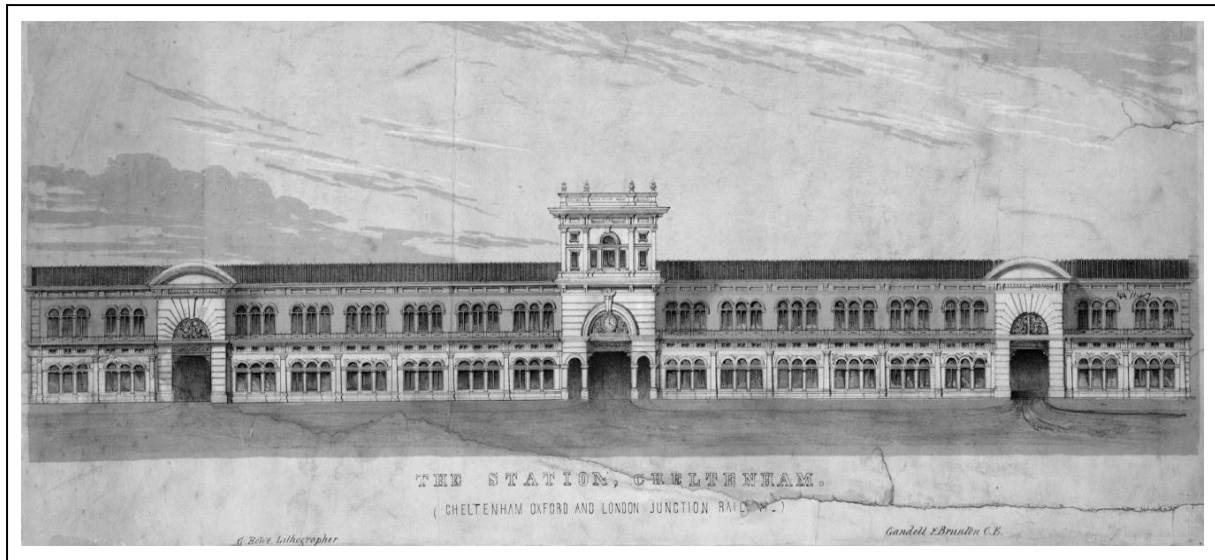
During 1846 Brunel produced a modified scheme (Q/RUm/230), passing through or under heavily built-up areas, and threatening the old General Hospital and Dispensary (Idmiston House) but avoiding the need for a tunnel below Battledown. It would have continued direct via Northleach and Witney to Oxford to link there with the Oxford and Rugby Railway.

London, Oxford and Cheltenham Railway (alias the 'Oxford Direct'), 1846 (Q/RUm/225). This scheme, overseen by Robert Stephenson and sponsored by the London and North Western Railway, proposed a junction with that railway at Tring (Bucks). The line would have approached Cheltenham via Andoversford and Dowdeswell on the north-east side of the London Road and continued through Ham (where the link with the Manchester and Southampton line had been planned earlier) and Battledown, with a tunnel at Agg's Hill, beneath the Hewletts Reservoir.<sup>7</sup>

Immediately after that the line would have crossed a field on which, in the late 20th Century, GCHQ erected two large new buildings. The route continued over the north-eastern area of what later became the Municipal Cemetery and would have descended steeply to join the Midland line north of Swindon Village. A branch originating in Prestbury would have led south through Cheltenham, passing close to the Workhouse and joining the Great Western south of St James's Station to afford access to Gloucester. Houses in Park Street, next to St Mary's Churchyard, would have been obliterated, while on the other side of the High Street a through station would have stretched as far as Swindon Road, to the east of Granville Street. It was designed by the noted architect Samuel Whitfield Daukes and was even more impressive than Gandell and Brunton's design. Had it been built, the Gothic pile would surely have been the grandest station in Gloucestershire.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Battle of the Gauges fought on Cheltenham territory**

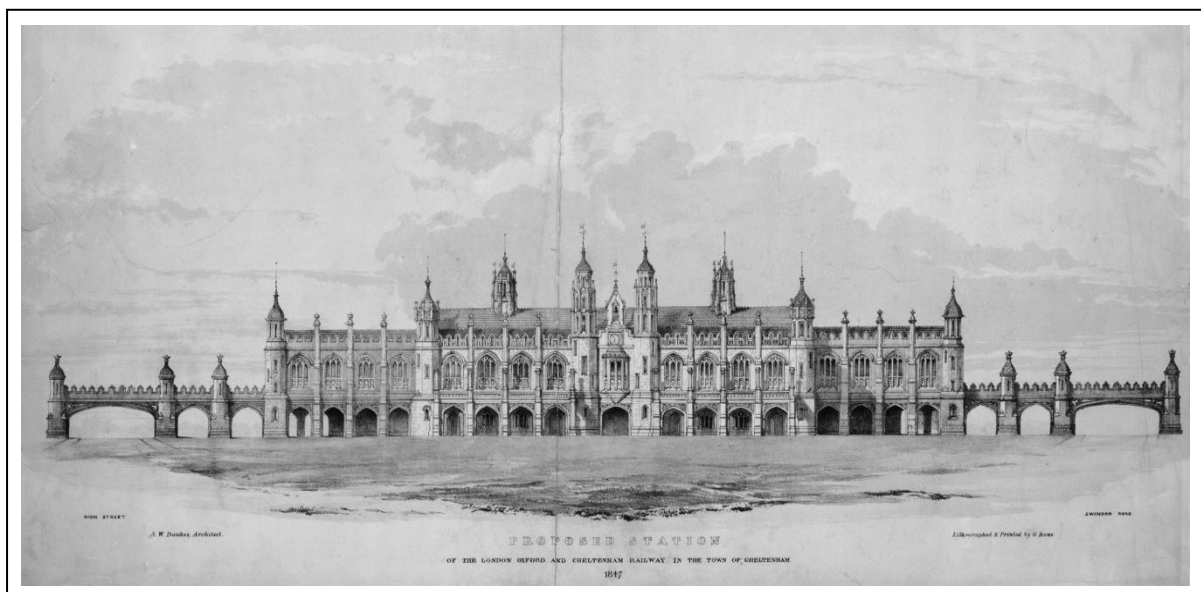
The Town Commissioners appointed a Committee on Railways to safeguard Cheltenham's interests. It first met in January 1846, amid what the *Looker-On* described as 'scenes of uproar and confusion which baffled description'. The members were unable to agree their terms of reference and promptly resigned.<sup>9</sup> However, they went on to meet regularly under the chairmanship of Dean Francis Close and later George Rowe. Brunel and Stephenson were the only real runners. The Committee was vigorously opposed to Brunel's line from the outset. That would have run in a deep cutting through 'the most fashionable parts of the town', with the attendant difficulty and danger of digging below the water level in sand beds. It would have called for several streets to be raised and involved passing close to five churches and chapels. Dean Close, moreover, fulminated against 'the bubbling, roaring, bellowing monster coming within a few yards of our Parish Church and interrupting our devotion'. By contrast, Stephenson's London, Oxford and Cheltenham Railway ran 'sufficiently far from fashionable property but [was] convenient for every part of the town', with a 'highly ornamental' terminus in the High Street and track 'borne aloft on a viaduct'.<sup>10</sup>



Rival companies' designs for a station between the Lower High Street  
and Swindon Road, near Granville Street:

(above) the Cheltenham, Oxford and London Junction Railway:  
(below) the London, Oxford and Cheltenham railway, by S W Daukes  
Lithographs by George Rowe.

*Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum*



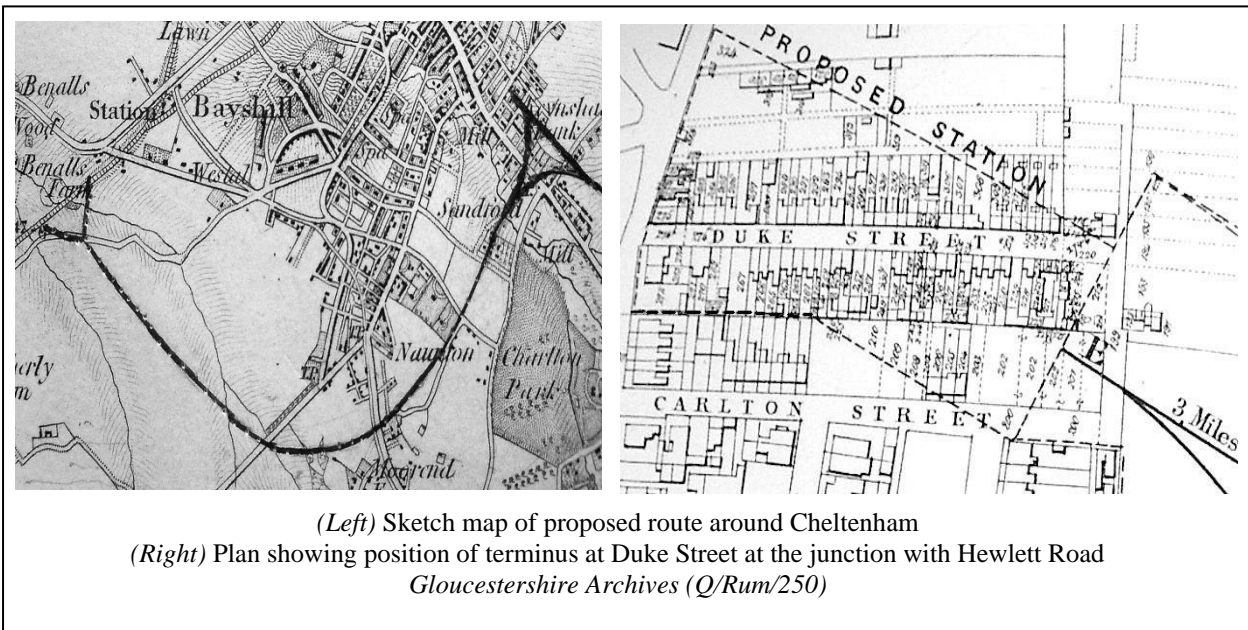
A House of Commons Committee sat throughout April and May 1847, taking evidence from many experts and interested parties. These proceedings were portrayed as the battle of the gauges fought on Cheltenham territory, and in the end – against the recommendations of the Town Committee – it was Great Western's broad-gauge Cheltenham and Oxford line that was 'affirmed in principle'. At 10 pm on the day the news of the decision was received, the bells of St Mary's, as they had done once before, rang out in celebration. On the passing of the Bill a celebratory dinner was held in the Assembly Rooms, attended by 120 'gentlemen and tradesmen'.<sup>11</sup>

The victory was a hollow one, as there was a proviso that narrow-gauge rails should be added if the Railway Commissioners so required at a subsequent date. More fundamentally, the financial climate meant that the company did not exercise its

powers. A mere three weeks after that celebration, the first General Meeting of the company had to be adjourned, there being no quorum. Two years later its affairs were being wound up with a view to the entire abandonment of the scheme,<sup>12</sup> though half-yearly meetings continued until 1852, when a new series of proposals was launched.

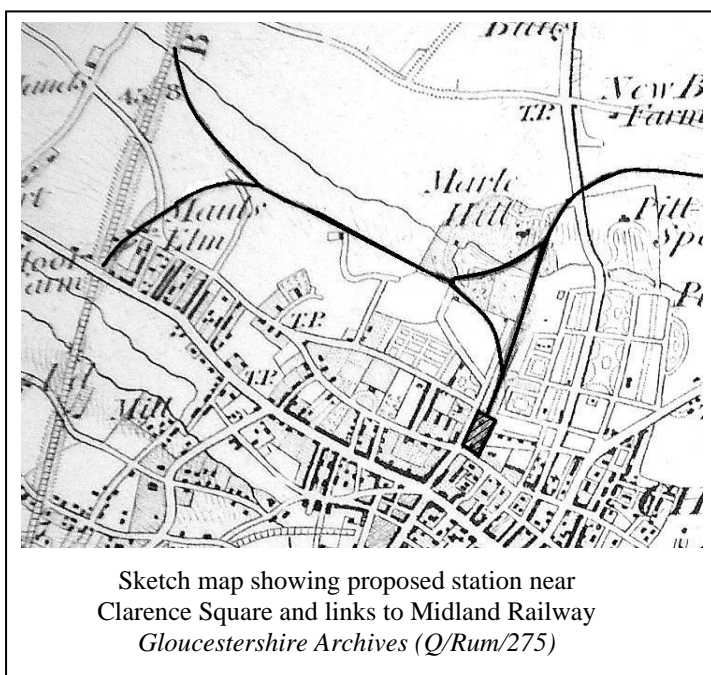
### 1850s and 1860s

#### The Cheltenham and Oxford Union Railway, 1852 (Q/RUm/250)



This route avoided most of the town, by skirting it well to the south. There would have been links with the Midland line at Hatherley and a spur terminating in a station at Duke Street. The line would have linked with the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway at Long Hanborough (Oxon).

#### Cheltenham and Northleach Railway, 1859 (Q/Rum/275)



This project was overseen by Sir Charles Fox, who was a protégé of Robert Stephenson, and in some respects his proposal echoed his master's earlier London, Oxford and Cheltenham Railway. For example, both routes passed to the north-east of Cheltenham, with a tunnel under Agg's Hill. However, Fox avoided the Hewletts Reservoir and was more ambitious in providing a new terminus for the town, with links to the Midland

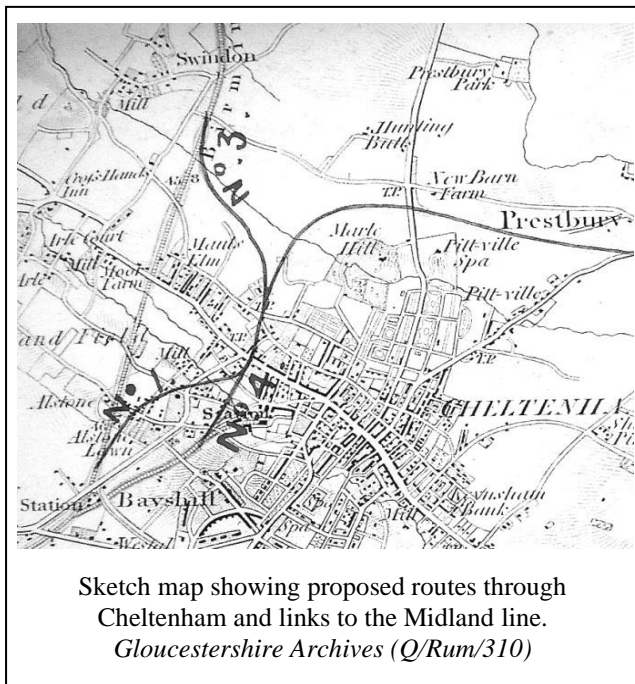


line to the north of the Tewkesbury Road. The terminus would have been situated to the west of Clarence Square, between Monson Avenue and Dunalley Street (approximately where the recently demolished Brewery HQ used to stand).

Cheltenham and Bourton-on-the-Water Railway, 1861 (Q/RUm/287). A sketch map accompanying the proposal shows its route within Cheltenham area to have been virtually identical with that taken later by the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct, which ran through Bourton.

Bourton-in-the-Water Railway (Extension to Cheltenham), 1863 (Q/RUm/307) and East Gloucestershire Railway, 1861 - 1866 (Q/RUm/293, 322 and 352). The route through Cheltenham would have alarmed residents of Bayshill and Montpellier, through which a 1474-yard-long tunnel or covered way would have run, continuing as far as the Bath Road. Beyond that, it would have passed very close to St Luke's Church and the General Hospital and then followed the course of the River Chelt, cutting through Charlton Kings between School Lane and The Hearne and crossing what is today Balcarras School playing field. Sandford Mead (at the southern end of today's Keynsham Road) was suggested as a station site similar to that proposed in 1845 for the above-mentioned Oxford, Witney, Cheltenham and Gloucester Independent Railway.

Gloucester, Cheltenham and Oxford Direct, 1863 -1864 (Q/RUm/310)



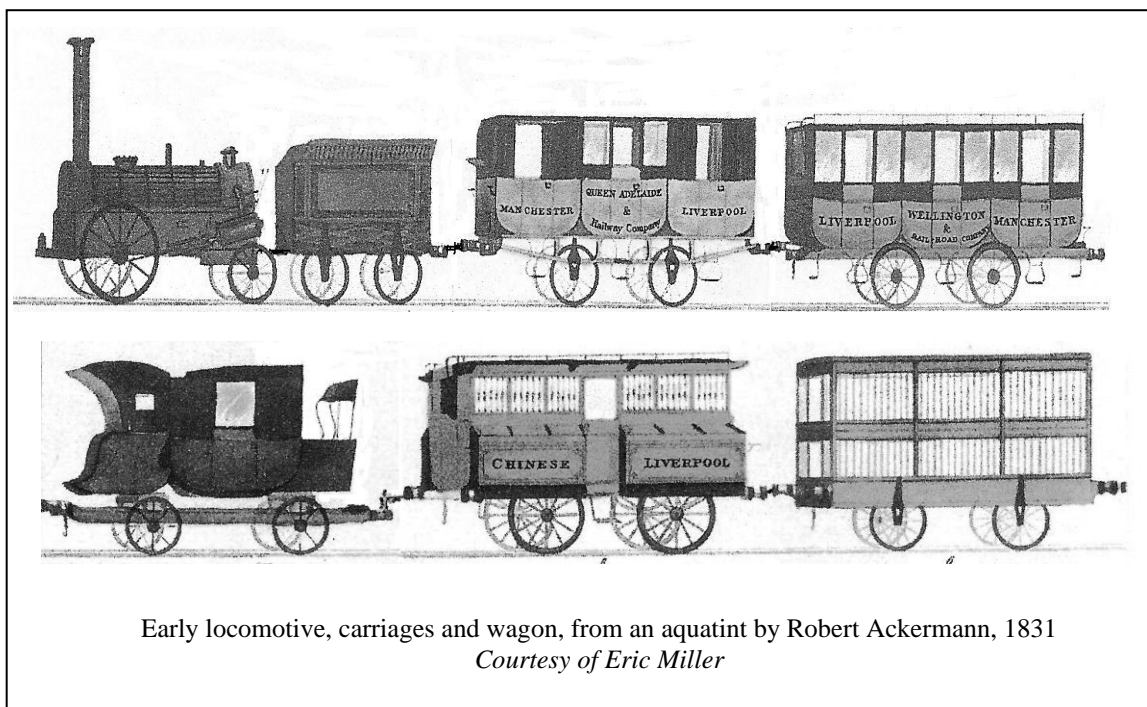
The first East Gloucestershire scheme had been approved by Parliament but was allowed to expire. Taking advantage of this, the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Oxford Direct stepped in with a proposal that took the most attractive features of that and other previous ones. It would have had a central through station near the High Street, with connections to both the Great Western and Midland lines. The line would have skirted Cheltenham to the north, as proposed by Stephenson, en route to Witney.

### **Petition against the East Gloucestershire railway**

These competing proposals provoked controversy reminiscent of the 1840s. In July 1862 a Petition to Parliament was raised against the East Gloucester Railway.<sup>13</sup> W Nash Skillicorne, with his special interest in the Bayshill Estate, protested that the



railway would run in a cutting 30 feet from the foundation of his residence, and Adolphus de Ferrieres, who had just bought a house and land at Bays Hill, made similar observations. They also preferred St James's as the main station for the town, and not one at Sandford Mead.



Early locomotive, carriages and wagon, from an aquatint by Robert Ackermann, 1831  
*Courtesy of Eric Miller*

### Lines that were actually built

The Petition achieved its aim of quashing the East Gloucestershire proposal, but Cheltenham did eventually get its link with Oxford in 1881, when the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway (BCDR) (the 'Kingham' line) (Q/RUm/390) was completed. It was operated from the outset by the Great Western, which went on to purchase it in 1897. Approaching from Andoversford, it passed through stations at Charlton Kings and Leckhampton (also known later as 'Cheltenham South') and terminated at St James's. The connection for Oxford was at Kingham on the Oxford and Worcester Railway. There was also access to the Midland Railway, by way of a junction just south of Lansdown Station. In 1891 the Midland and South Western Junction Railway (MSWJR) was opened, also using the BCDR track from Andoversford. Eventually it claimed to be a direct route from Scotland to Southampton, the French Coast and Paris. The line closed in 1962.

To complete the story, the 'Honeybourne Line' was the Great Western's alternative route from Birmingham, via Stratford-upon-Avon. It was finished in 1906 as the last stage of a branch from the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway at Honeybourne. It joined the spur to St James's and was served by a new through station at Malvern Road. A halt at the High Street was in operation between 1908 and 1917 and the Racecourse Station opened in 1912. Scheduled passenger services on the line ceased in 1960 and it closed in 1979. The new 'GWR', the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway, has re-laid track along part of the route.

## Conclusion

Cheltenham's many rejected railway schemes joined other failed ventures from the mid-19th Century. The petitioners against the East Gloucestershire Railway would have been particularly delighted at this outcome, as they considered that 'Cheltenham is a resort, not to be compared with Liverpool or a manufacturing town'. In the end Cheltenham did manage to achieve its link with Oxford as well as a route from the north to Southampton. These have proved to be short-lived, however, being torn up after less than a century's use.

Aside from this, posterity can be grateful that the railway companies' surveyors produced such detailed plans to support their bids. The documentation that has found its way into the archives is of value not just to railway historians but to anyone who is interested in the development of the area where they live. Detailed analysis of the plans and the books of reference will be the subject of a future article.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Peel, speaking in Parliament, quoted in *Examiner* 28 January 1846, and H G Lewin, *The Railway Mania and its Aftermath* p 473.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Cheltenham Borough Records CBR/A A1/1/5. Also, when the GWR sank wells nearby to supply its engines, other wells were affected as far away as Clarence Street and the High Street. *Examiner* 20 October 1847.

<sup>3</sup> An illustration, showing the Royal Train passing through Lansdown Station in 1849, was reprinted in *CLHS Journal* No 14 (1998), with commentary by the author.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Adrian Vaughan. *Isambard Kingdom Brunel*, p 57

<sup>5</sup> The effects on Charlton Kings are described in greater detail in an article in the Charlton Kings LHS *Bulletin* 55, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> The standard gauge line that was opened in 1924 to link the Leckhampton Quarries and the Great Western line at Charlton Kings station followed part of this route.

<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, none of the documentation makes any specific mention of the reservoir, which dates from 1824 and would have been in operation at the time of the survey (see D O'Connor, *Troubled Waters*, 2007). The only mention of the Cheltenham Waterworks Company in this context is as the owner of the adjacent field and watercourse. The construction of a tunnel underneath the reservoir would surely have been a worrying development, but if the company lodged an objection, that has yet to be found.

<sup>8</sup> For more on S W Daukes see A Hamilton, article in *Journal* No 25, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> *Looker-On* Jan 10 1846 p 24.

<sup>10</sup> *Looker-On* Dec 5 pp 783-4 and Special Supplement comparing the two schemes, Jan 5 1847

<sup>11</sup> *Looker-On*, June 5 and July 24 1847.

<sup>12</sup> *Examiner* July 4 1849.

<sup>13</sup> Gloucestershire Archives J14.33.

# Rodin's Sojourn at Cheltenham

ROGER BEACHAM

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FOLLOWING THE GERMAN INVASION of Belgium and France in 1914 many refugees made their way to England. Of those that found their way to Cheltenham the most distinguished was the 74 year old Auguste Rodin, regarded as the greatest sculptor of his day.

With the German army threatening Paris, Rodin and his elderly mistress Rose Beuret, joined Judith Cladel and her mother who were making their way to Cheltenham to join Judith's two sisters, Rachel and Eve. Rodin had been a close friend of the novelist Leon Cladel (1835-1892) and the friendship extended to Leon's daughters. Indeed Judith Cladel wrote widely on Rodin's work and later became his biographer. After a somewhat uncomfortable journey Rodin, Rose, Madame Cladel and Judith arrived in the town taking rooms at a small private hotel, Sussex House, in Winchcombe Street, close to Pittville Gates. It was run 'in a very lady-like style by an old friend of Rachel [Cladel's] Mrs Gandy.<sup>1</sup> Mrs Gandy gave her distinguished guest the 'best bedroom and a small sitting room.' The other lodgers were politely discreet, which Rodin greatly appreciated, and there was no publicity beyond a simple announcement in the local press of the sculptor's presence.<sup>2</sup> Neither Rodin nor Rose spoke English though Judith Cladel and her sisters were in a state of perpetual anxiety less the voluble Rose reveal the fact that she and Rodin were not legally married. However as Mrs Gandy and her lodgers spoke little French, the secret was kept.<sup>3</sup> Bernard Champigneulle has written of how 'Rodin seemed to develop a taste for the quiet predictability of this type of life à l'anglaise. Accompanied by elderly ladies, he descended punctually for breakfast, lunch and tea, preserving the silence and immobility of a statue.'<sup>4</sup> Rodin would spend fine mornings in the garden at Sussex House, pencil and notebook in hand closely examining the flowers he loved. The afternoons were devoted to walking, either on the neighbouring hills or in Pittville Park. Unable to pronounce Pittville Rodin hit upon the substitute *Petite-ville-gaie*, 'gay little town'.<sup>5</sup> On one occasion an outing was made to Tewkesbury where Rodin admired the ancient abbey and listened as parts of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* were read to him.

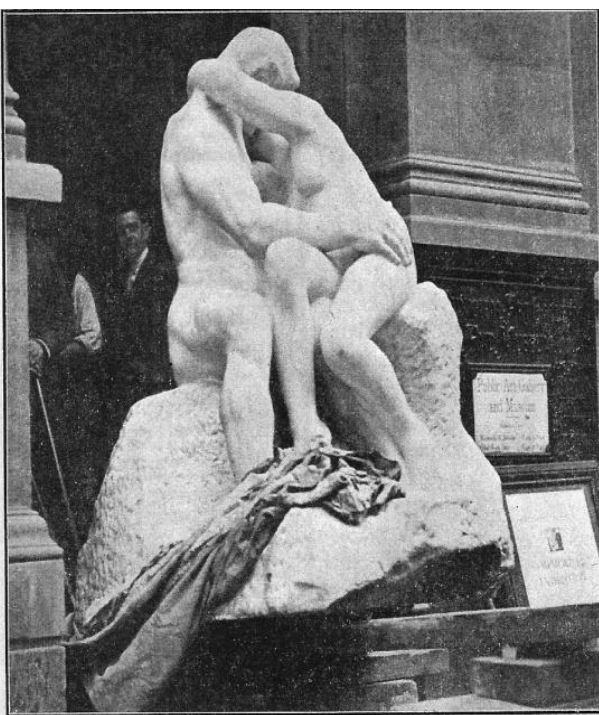
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Good and convenient situation. Bath Room  
and Garden.  
Address, Mrs. G., Sussex House, near Pitt-  
ville Gates.

*The Cheltenham Looker-On*  
31 August 1912

The war news was translated from the newspapers for the sculptor who, on learning of the destruction of the cathedral at Rheims, 'turned pale as death, and for two days was white and mute with grief.'<sup>6</sup> War bulletins were posted upon the door of the Town Hall and several times a day Rodin asked the Cladel sisters to go and see if there was any change.

The Museum in Clarence Street provided a distraction for Rodin and he paid several visits being particularly interested in the loan collection of Greek and Roman pottery and in the collection of Cotswold flint instruments.<sup>7</sup> He is also said to have 'spent much time at the Public Library, where he made many friends.'<sup>8</sup> On his visits to Clarence Street Rodin would have passed the ancient parish church of St Mary whose architecture he is said to have admired. A favourite outing was to visit a friend of Rachel Cladel's Mrs Rogerson, at her home Roadlands, London Road, Charlton Kings. Here tea would be taken in the garden where an aviary of brightly coloured birds delighted Rodin. A friend of the Rogersons, W F Prior, French master at Cheltenham College, was called upon to act as interpreter.<sup>9</sup>

There is a story that Mrs Rogerson took Rose to buy a winter coat at Cavendish House. Finding the assistants reluctant to serve the elderly French peasant, she remonstrated with them, "this is Madame Rodin, wife of the great sculptor!"<sup>10</sup> When the immediate danger to Paris had passed, Rose and Rodin returned briefly to that city before making their way to Rome where Rodin worked on a bust of Pope Benedict XV.<sup>11</sup>



**GOODBYE TO RODIN'S FAMOUS STATUE**

Moving Rodin's famous piece of statuary, "The Kiss," which has been on exhibition at Cheltenham Art Gallery for the past six years. It was taken from its pedestal on Monday, and on Tuesday was placed in the Tate Gallery in London. The statuary, which is carved out of a solid block of marble, weighs 4½ tons.  
"Cheltenham Chronicle" Photograph. Copies 1/- and 1/9.

After six years at Cheltenham Art Gallery  
*The Kiss* was moved to the Tate Gallery,  
London, at the end of February 1939  
*Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire  
Graphic, 4 March 1939*

Though both Rodin and Rose died in 1917 the memory of their visit led Daniel Herdman, Borough Librarian and Curator, to secure a loan of Rodin's *Le Baiser – The Kiss*, for the Cheltenham Museum. One of four versions of the sculpture to exist, it was commissioned in 1900 by Edward Perry Warren of Lewes, Sussex. Rodin was to be paid 20 000 francs plus 5 000 francs for the finest quality white Pentelican marble.<sup>12</sup> Warren lent *The Kiss* to be exhibited in Lewes Town Hall but the townspeople objected to its subject and the sculpture had to be draped with a sheet. Later it was moved to the coach house of Warren's home Lewes House and upon his death, was left together with the house and its contents to his secretary Harry Asa Thomas. Thomas offered *The Kiss* to any provincial gallery that could pay the costs of transport and insurance. D W

Herdman convinced the Art Gallery and Museum Committee of the desirability of having Rodin's work displayed in the town and from 1933 until its removal to the

Tate Gallery in spring 1939, *The Kiss*, was a prized and much visited exhibit in the Gallery.<sup>13</sup>

When Rodin had left Cheltenham he left behind as a souvenir a dark blue beret that he had worn here and in January 1934 this was exhibited for a short time with the sculpture.<sup>14</sup>

While Rodin's sojourn in Cheltenham is largely forgotten, today *The Kiss* is an iconic work and one of the most popular and famous exhibits in Tate Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Judith Cladel, Rodin's sojourn in Cheltenham *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 March 1933 p4. *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 12 September 1914, records the arrival at Sussex House of Made Leon Cladel, Judith, Rachel and Eve Cladel and Monsieur and Madame Auguste Rodin. Before her marriage in 1885 to Thomas Gandy, a commercial traveller, Mary Stanley, the daughter of a village grocer had run her father's business. She ran Sussex House as an hotel after her husband's death in 1891.

<sup>2</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 September 1914, p3. *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 26 September 1914, p5

<sup>3</sup> Rodin and Rose eventually married in 1917, a fact recorded by the *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 3 February 1917 p7

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Champigneulle, *Rodin*, London 1967, p266

<sup>5</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 January 1935, p4, reminiscences of Rachel Cladel.

<sup>6</sup> Judith Cladel op cit

<sup>7</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 8 April 1916, p16. Rodin and Rachel Cladel signed the Art Gallery and Museum's Visitor's Book 7 September 1914

<sup>8</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 28 November 1914, p6. The Public Library, Art Gallery and Museum was then one institution. William Jones, was the town's first librarian and curator

<sup>9</sup> William Frederick Phelps Prior, educated at Vevey and University of Zurich

<sup>10</sup> Told to me by the late Joan Prior, daughter of W. F. P. Prior

<sup>11</sup> Rodin's departure from Cheltenham recorded *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 10 October 1914, p16

<sup>12</sup> Cheltenham Art Gallery has a holograph letter dated 2 August 1906 from Rodin to Warren asking for news of its recipient and stating that the writer himself is marvellously well.

<sup>13</sup> A note in the Art Gallery file on Rodin states that on the outbreak of the Second World War *The Kiss* was returned to Cheltenham for safekeeping. A former colleague, the late Nancy Pringle, told me that the Museum cleaner insisted on scrubbing the sculpture with *Monkey Soap*.

<sup>14</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 4 January 1935, p4

## Fairs

'There are four fairs here for the disposal of all sorts of cattle, cheeses, etc on the following days, viz. the second Thursday in April, the fifth day of August, the second Thursday in September, and the third Thursday in December. Besides those, there are two statute fairs, called *Mops*, for the sole purpose of hiring male and female servants, which are in general well attended'

*The New and Improved Cheltenham Guide, c 1810*

*Courtesy of Elaine North*

# St Paul's Practising School Memorial Board: a rededication

RON PREWER

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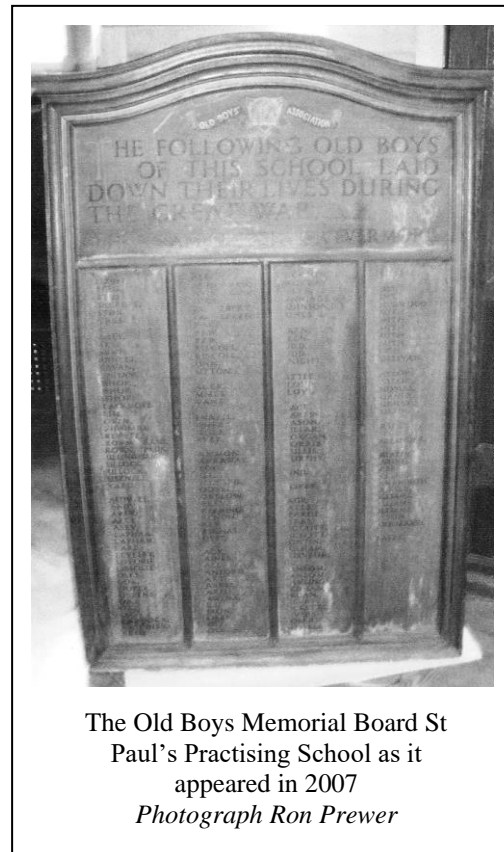
**In memory of the Old Boys of St Paul's Practising School who laid down their lives during the Great War of 1914-1918 and World War Two**

*In 2007, whilst researching my family history in the archives of St Paul's College (now the University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Campus), I was shown a memorial board which I remember was hung in Mr Deacon's classroom in the Practising School. The Board had been stored away and only found, in very poor condition, during the refurbishment of the College Chapel.<sup>1</sup>*

I WAS A PUPIL AT ST PAUL'S PRACTISING SCHOOL from 1945 to 1950. The school closed in 1951 and all the pupils and teachers were transferred to Elmfield School, Swindon Road. The Practising School had been part of St Paul's College from 1847 to 1951.

The Old Boys' Association school's memorial board had been unveiled 12 December 1926 by the Mayor of Cheltenham Alderman C H Margrett, attended by the Revd W E Beck, the Principal of the College, and it took place of honour in the school.

When the school closed in 1951 the board disappeared only to come to light when the college chapel was being refurbished: it was then taken to the college archives for safe keeping. I discovered that the name Edward Dicks was indeed that of my grandfather, army number 16161.<sup>2</sup> He had been a pupil of the school in the 1890s and later he had served during World War 1 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, and was killed at the battle of Frezenberg, Ypres. Having no known grave, he is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium.

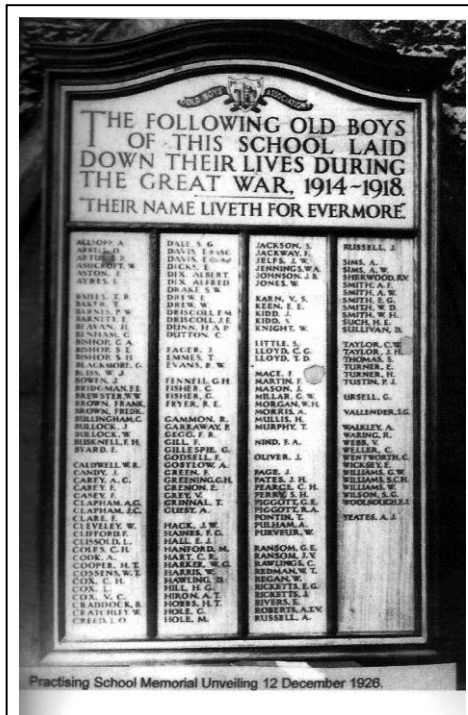


The Old Boys Memorial Board St Paul's Practising School as it appeared in 2007  
*Photograph Ron Prewer*

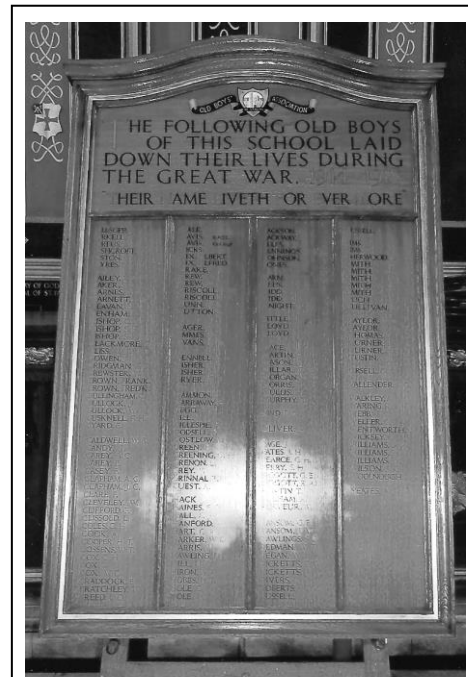
We could see that the board had been neglected, as the names were fading and there were water stains in the woodwork. The Old Boys' Association closed in 1939 at the start of World War 2, but with support from the local paper an appeal was started to contact all the old boys. There were over 40 replies, and we had our first meeting at Francis Close and reformed the Old Boys' Association in 2007. It was

agreed that we would get the board and the 168 names restored and the work was undertaken by Mike Davis and Rob West.

On 9 November 2009 I had a phone call saying that the board was completed and had been returned to the archives at Francis Close campus. There was a rededication service on 12 December, led by Lord Carey of Bristol accompanied by Revd Tamsin Merchant, University Senior Chaplain. This was accompanied by a display of photographs and memorabilia.



The unveiling of the Old Boys' Association Memorial Board 12 December 1926  
Photograph Ron Prewer



The restored Memorial Board  
November 2009  
Photograph Ron Prewer

*Editor's note: CLHS Memories Project (on going) If anyone whose name appears on the Memorial Board would like to contribute their memories of any aspect of life in Cheltenham or the changes they have seen in Cheltenham, please contact Elaine North [tel. 01452 857803 or email:elaine-north@hotmail.com]. Memories can be submitted in written format or recorded by one of our members if you prefer.*

<sup>1</sup> I should like to thank and gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ms Lorna Scott, Archivist and the University staff for bringing the memorial board to my attention. Also, a thank you to all those who made donations towards the refurbishment, but are too many to name.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Dicks appears on the Board in the second column, fourth name down.

# The Workhouse System 1834-1929: Did it Really Help the Poor?

HEATHER ATKINSON

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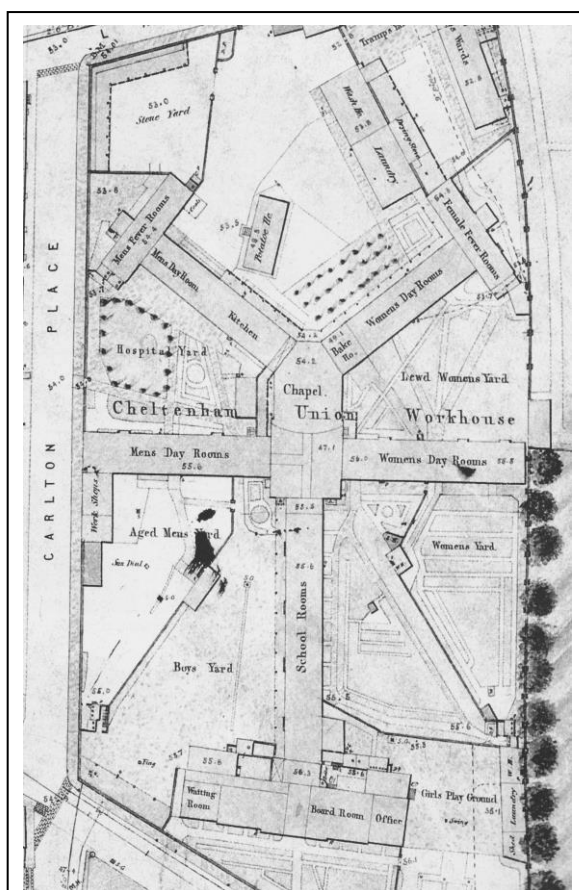
THIS ARTICLE ARGUES THAT THE WORKHOUSE SYSTEM developed following the 1834 Poor Law Amendment act did not operate in the best interests of the people it was supposed to help. The main object of the Act was to reduce the cost of the system as the old Poor Law was considered to be too costly.<sup>1</sup> The author has found that this system was even more expensive to run, and served the poor very badly.

Under the previous provision, 'out relief' was the principal means of administering help to the poor, either in money, clothing, food or fuel, to people in their own homes. The cost was borne by the parish, which raised money by a poor rate, paid by local property owners. Local magistrates supervised this system of poor relief. As early as 1650 workhouses were built to provide work for the unemployed, to prevent them being a burden on the parish, while 'poor houses' were often provided for the homeless elderly poor, supported by the parish, without any stigma attached. Additionally, charities provided for the poor, providing relief in cash or in kind. The poor were generally treated with kindness and sympathy. In Cheltenham, in 1578, Richard Pate founded an Almshouse for six elderly paupers; ('pauper' means 'a very poor person' in Latin. Latin was in common usage at that time). The old system of poor relief and charity worked reasonably well until the early 1800s, when there was mass immigration to towns from rural areas as well as from Ireland following the potato famine, and Cheltenham was no exception.

This influx caused a crisis for parishes, which were under pressure from their ratepayers not to raise the poor rate. Nationally, the government had to address the problem, and the Poor Law Amendment Act was introduced in 1834. It was to be administered by the Poor Law Board, by a locally-elected board of guardians, but still paid for by a local poor rate. Parishes were to be grouped into Unions, with a union workhouse to provide accommodation for those 'undeserving poor' seeking relief. These were able-bodied men and women who were unemployed (often considered to be work-shy), unmarried mothers and widows with or without children, people of bad character, habitual beggars and residents of less than three years standing who would not otherwise be relieved. The elderly and sick poor (regarded as the deserving poor) were still able to receive out-relief as before.

The Parish Workhouse in Cheltenham was in the Knapp, where inmates made pins and mops prior to the new legislation. This was inadequate for a union workhouse, and in 1841, Cheltenham Union Workhouse opened in Swindon Road, on land donated by Admiral Sir Tristram Ricketts, who also owned The Elms next door. The Workhouse could accommodate 220 inmates, known as 'paupers'. On admission to the Workhouse, families would be split up, as men, women and children had separate dormitories. They would only see each other in passing. Their own clothes would be parcelled up and stored, and they would be issued with ill-fitting communal





The Union Workhouse, as shown on the  
Old Town Survey 1855-1857

‘uniform’ of blue checked dresses for women and grey flannel for men. They were not allowed any personal possessions. The able-bodied were set to work, cleaning, preparing food or laundry work under strict supervision. Near to the Workhouse (where Hardwick campus now is) was a piece of land where pigs were kept and fruit and vegetables were grown, and these were tended by paupers. Female paupers looked after the workhouse children, and also looked after the sick in the Workhouse sick wards. Able-bodied men had to break stones into gravel for road building.<sup>2</sup> Even tramps and those passing through the Workhouse were expected to break three-hundredweight of stones into gravel in return for a one night stay. From 1865, there were some reforms in the Poor Law following reports of bad conditions in some workhouses. Part-time medical officers were appointed to workhouses to provide medical care for sick paupers.<sup>3</sup>

In 1871, the Local Government Board took over the work of the Poor Law Board, but the Inspectors of the old Poor Law Board tended to take up the new appointments, which did not bring about any real improvements in the system. Workhouses were still run by the master and mistress, or matron. In Cheltenham in 1871, the Master was paid £90 per annum and the Mistress £40 per annum, with board and lodging included. Records indicate a minimum of paid staff, namely a cook, a laundress, a seamstress, master tailor, a gardener, and, in 1876, a tramp master, at wages of 15-18 shillings weekly.<sup>4</sup> The able-bodied paupers provided the rest of the workforce needed to run the Workhouse.

The Workhouse diet was scientifically calculated to provide the basic minimum of nutritional requirements for all classes of inmates, with menus dictated by the Local Government Board at Whitehall. It was reliant on filling foods such as bread, potato, suet pudding and cheese. Cheaper cuts of meat, fruit or vegetables were given twice a week. Porridge, gruel and tea completed the menus. Only babies and children had milk to drink.<sup>5</sup> It was not unusual for the bolder and more hardened inmates to complain to the Local Government Board of short food rations, as a group of 17 inmates at Cheltenham did in 1876.<sup>6</sup> This diet was still better than many of the poor had at home. On 9 February 1876, the *Cheltenham Examiner* reported that the cost per head in the Workhouse fell from 4s 1d to 3s 9½d, with a consequent fall in the Poor Rate. The Poor Rate had stood at 2s in the pound between March 1875 and March 1876. The Guardians were pleased to announce that the Poor Rate could be

decreased from £10,105 per half-year to £7,639, payable in two instalments. This also reflected the fall in payments of out-relief.

Gloucestershire had been one of 11 counties singled out for criticism in 1871 for granting outdoor relief too readily. The Guardians were urged to 'apply the Workhouse Test and adhere more strictly to the provisions of the orders and regulations'.<sup>7</sup> By 1876, the Guardians reported that the payment for out-relief was £3,000 less than five years previously.<sup>8</sup>

In the author's opinion, most of the inmates of the Workhouse would have been much better served if they had been supported with out-relief. It was not just in cases of unemployment, but seasonal work, part-time or casual work, bringing in a low wage that could not support a family, which caused hardship. Illness of the breadwinner also caused short or longer-term difficulties, best helped with out-relief. Where out-relief was given, it consisted of payments of around 2s 6d per week, and often a loaf of bread as well, for widows and the elderly. Families with children were allowed 3s to 4s weekly, and three or four loaves of bread. The wives of men in the militia received little sympathy from the Board, and were only given bread. All payments were reviewed every 13 weeks. Other payments were for a set term, such as for two weeks to cover sickness of the breadwinner, or covering the cost of a confinement, or a funeral when the payment '...shall be considered as a loan, except in those cases in which the recipient can shew, by personal appearance before the Board, their inability to repay it.'<sup>9</sup>

The Workhouse was to all intents and purposes, a penal institution, and the term 'pauper' was not used as Richard Pate had used it, but in a derogatory way. These people were treated as prisoners – once inside the Workhouse it was difficult to get out to find work. Some people grew old inside the Workhouse, and too infirm to work, but still had to put up with the harsh conditions. Misdemeanours did not go unnoticed. In 1870, two paupers, Hannah Spencer and Elizabeth Merriman were found with pieces of soap and other articles concealed on their persons. They were ordered to be brought before the magistrates.<sup>10</sup>

If it cost approximately 4s a week per head to keep a person in the Workhouse, then where else would the Workhouse have found such cheap labour? If a father, mother and four children were relieved in the Workhouse, the cost would have been 24s weekly. If the father had been employed by the Union at an average wage of 16s weekly, the Union would have saved 8s weekly, and the family would have been able to live together outside, as weekly rents were approximately 5s a week for a four room house. When one considers the cost of building, equipping and maintaining the Cheltenham Union Workhouse, it was so much more than the cost of giving adequate out-relief would have been. As the strict application of the Workhouse Test meant more people having to be relieved in the Workhouse, so the costs went up. Between 1886 and 1889, the Workhouse was enlarged to accommodate 558 inmates, exclusive of The Elms, which was enlarged to hold 100 children of two years old or above. Many people in the town were affected by the Workhouse, either as a ratepayer funding it, or as a recipient of relief. Because it was locally funded, it was not anonymous – ratepayers would have knowledge of the particular recipients, and this could cause resentment, especially in times of economic downturn.<sup>11</sup>

In defence of the system, children were dealt with more compassionately, as they were not responsible for their situation. Babies born at the Workhouse had a fictitious address put on their birth certificate to disguise the fact that they were born there. There could be as many as 200 children at any one time in the Workhouse, and in Cheltenham there was not much space, so they were mostly housed and schooled at the old Parish Workhouse in the Knapp. In later years they were accommodated at The Elms. The children were taken on outings and trips to the pantomime occasionally, by benefactors in the town. However, they were not allowed personal possessions or toys. Children were often 'boarded out' with local families at a cost of 3s a week, and 10s a quarter for clothing.<sup>12</sup> The Board of Guardians also arranged indentures for apprenticeship for pauper children, and had an established emigration scheme whereby some suitable older children were sent to Canada where they could start a new life.



The Elms, originally owned by Admiral Ricketts  
*Courtesy of Geoff North*

The best thing about the workhouse system was the building of the Workhouse Infirmary, opened in 1889, providing a Men's Block and a Women's Block. The part-time Medical Officer, assisted by one or two nurses per block and a number of pauper women provided a modicum of care for the elderly and sick paupers. The Workhouse Matron oversaw the day-to-day running of the Infirmary. The Infirmary was also used by poor people from Cheltenham, who could obtain medicines from the Medical Officer, with the sanction of the Relieving Officer. In 1948 this Infirmary was incorporated into the National Health Service, as St Paul's Hospital.

The stigma of the Poor Law had a far reaching effect. By 1884, most men had obtained the right to vote, but men who were in receipt of relief from the Poor Law Guardians were disqualified until 1918.<sup>13</sup> In Cheltenham, several charitable establishments existed for the poor, such as the Female Orphan Asylum, founded by Queen Charlotte in 1806, and the Asylum for Orphan Boys, founded in 1867. Both Asylums were run on Church of England lines, but entry criteria stated that they 'should not have been relieved by the parish'.<sup>14</sup> As late as 1929, the regulations for the Sunset Home (for elderly ladies) stated that none of the potential resident's income be poor relief.<sup>15</sup>

After 1909, the introduction of the non-contributory Old Age Pension at 5s per week for those over 70, relieved the poverty of old age, and the 1911 National Insurance Act provided for loss of income for the breadwinner through sickness or unemployment. Recipients of these benefits were not disqualified from the right to vote. Benefits were paid by the state from Income Tax, not by local taxation. These two benefits removed the cause of hardship which had previously forced people into the Workhouse.

In the class-ridden society of this period, the poor were considered as ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’ and this usually dictated their treatment by the Poor Law authorities. The elderly and sick were treated with compassion, usually in their own homes, and provided for by charity and out relief. On the whole, the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act did not change this. The ‘undeserving poor’ were fairly obviously the profligate, the scroungers, layabouts, beggars and unmarried women with children, considered to have low moral standards. These are the people the author considers to be suitable inmates of the Workhouse. The mistake was to force unemployed men, usually with a family to support, to go into the Workhouse. It was wrong to split the families up and treat them as prisoners. As described above, these families could have been kept out of the Workhouse altogether, at a huge saving to the Poor Law authorities.

In 1909, the Commission on the Poor Law presented a Majority and a Minority Report on the Poor Law. Both groups wanted the system of Boards of Guardians to end. The Minority Report, led by the Fabian Society’s Beatrice Webb, wanted the break up of the Poor Law, with all the categories of people needing help assisted by separate and specialist agencies. Gradually, authority was transferred to municipal and county councils, and eventually to the state.<sup>16</sup> The 1929 Local Government Act abolished the Poor Law, although the stigma of the Workhouse system remained long afterwards.



Union Workhouse,  
Women’s  
Convalescent Ward,  
Christmas 1908  
*Cheltenham  
Chronicle &  
Gloucestershire  
Graphic* 9 January  
1909  
*Courtesy of Geoff  
North*

<sup>1</sup> N. McCord, *British History 1815-1906*, (1991) OUP, p.191

<sup>2</sup> GRO/G/CH25

<sup>3</sup> McCord, *op.cit.* p.312

<sup>4</sup> Cheltenham Borough Records; Box 25

<sup>5</sup> B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty: a Study of Town Life*, (1902) Macmillan, pp369-371

<sup>6</sup> *The Cheltenham Examiner*, 6 February, 1876

<sup>7</sup> Conditions in the Workhouse had to be ‘less eligible’. That is, more unpleasant than an unskilled labourer’s standard of living. T. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe, English History 1906-1992*, OUP, p14

<sup>8</sup> *The Cheltenham Examiner*, 16 February 1876

<sup>9</sup> PQ410. Minutes of the Board of Guardians, 9 April 1874

<sup>10</sup> GRO/G//CH/8a/14 (now Gloucestershire Archives)

<sup>11</sup> McCord, *op.cit.* p 415

<sup>12</sup> *The Cheltenham Examiner*, 9 January 1876

<sup>13</sup> M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1887-1939*, (1993) Blackwell, p.5

<sup>14</sup> Rules of the Female Orphan Asylum, P14.7, undated

<sup>15</sup> Sunset Home, revised Rules 1929 (from file of papers)

<sup>16</sup> Lloyd, *op.cit.* p.16

# Housing the Poor: Social Housing for All<sup>1</sup>

**HOUSING THE POOR: SOCIAL HOUSING FOR ALL** was the 2009 theme for the **GLOUCESTERSHIRE ANNUAL LOCAL HISTORY AFTERNOON** in October.<sup>2</sup> The CLH Society participated in this with a display (which was judged the best<sup>3</sup>) and also published a new Chronology of the same title. To celebrate this, the colour pages of this Journal provide a record of that display. Cheltenham may have an image of affluence, but this very wealth attracted those who needed social support, either permanently or temporarily. The housing that has been erected to answer this need provide some of the most noticeable areas and buildings in the town. More information on these illustrations and other aspects of social care can be found in *Housing the Poor Chronology*. See back cover for details.



HAY COTTAGE HOMES, NAUNTON PARK.

## Hay Memorial Cottage Homes

Ten, later twelve homes, were started in 1899, through the generosity of John and Marianne Hay. One of the Homes was for a resident nurse. Updated in 1970, the rent in 1976 was £11.65 a week, with £6.50 of it being paid by Cheltenham Council.



## Cheltenham's 'Garden Suburb'

St Mark's was begun in 1919 with land, valued at £10,500, purchased from Herbert Unwin. The first houses were ready by 1921 and this photograph must have been taken in the early 1920s. The children, with sturdy boots and woollen socks look as if they have been posed. A motor cycle is just visible to the right. Recently planted trees are well protected by iron tree guards.



**Catharine Ball Almshouses  
Shurdington Road**

In the 1850s, Mrs Catharine Ball was a considerable philanthropist towards 'poor, aged or infirm women, in the district of St Philip's or the parish of Cheltenham.' Any surplus, after running costs, was paid out in cash or for clothing. However, contributions could be required if the funds were insufficient. The house was improved in 1974 and is now divided into four flats.



**The Caroline Strickland  
Homes, Hales Road**

In 1911, Eliza Standish left her own money and that inherited from her sister, Caroline Strickland, for the building and maintenance of an Almshouse. The five self-contained flats, each with its own front door, were rent free, with a weekly allowance, which by 1962 was 12/6 (62½p). The six Trustees could 'select suitable persons and remove unsuitable persons.'



**Jesse Mary Chambers  
Almshouses  
Tennyson Road**

In 1922 Henry Chambers set up a Trust fund of over £12,000 in memory of his sister. Those chosen to live there had to be over 63, poor, of the Protestant faith and of good character. Originally a stipend of 5s(25p) was paid to anyone with an income of less than 15s(75p) a week. This was discontinued in 1948, and by 1985 the cost was £13 & £18 respectively for a single or double flat.



**Prefabs** were built after World War 2 to provide quality housing, cheaply and quickly. With hall, two bedrooms, separate toilet and bathroom, they offered to many a level of comfort not seen pre-war. Cheltenham still retains some fifty years after their supposed life span of 5-10 years.

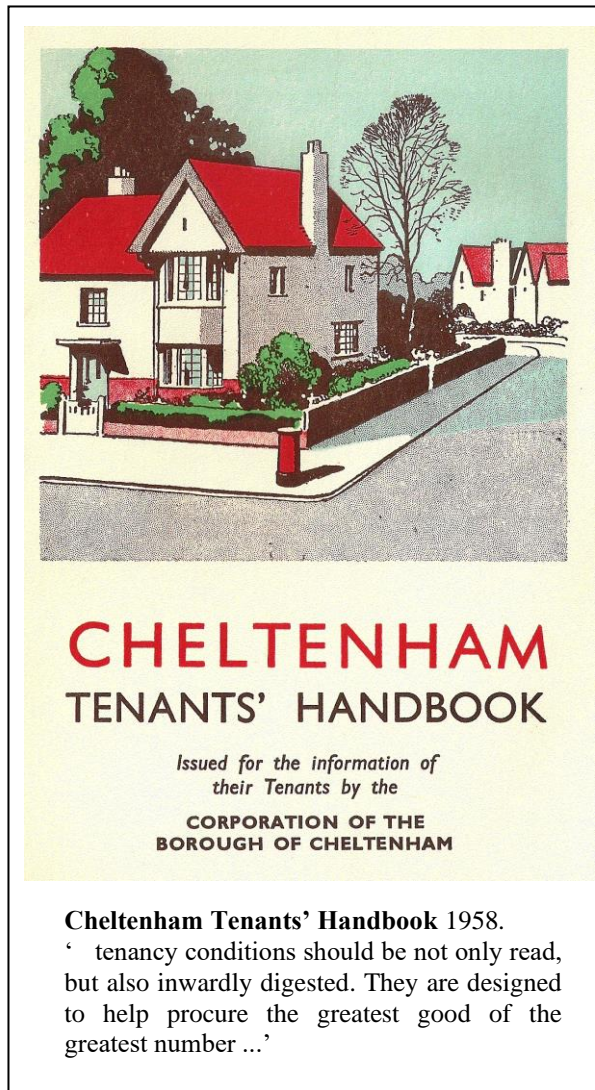


**Council flats**, also seen as the answer, in the 1950s & 1960s, to the severe house shortage have since then been slowly replaced with more traditional 2-, 3- & 4- bed roomed houses. However these regeneration plans have always been subject to cutbacks and withdrawals of grants.



The **St Peter's and St Paul's** area saw severe housing problems for many decades. Schemes for replacement began in the 1920s. These houses in **Folly Lane** were built in 1928. Their sound construction has meant they could be renovated to provide a good standard of housing; though some similar houses in the area have been demolished.





#### Plaques

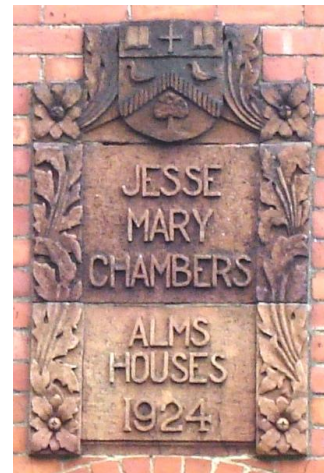
1. Pate's Almshouse, Albion Street
2. Prestbury Workhouse, closed 1835
3. Jesse Mary Chambers Alms Houses
4. Corpus Christi College badge, 'pelican in her piety', 271, High Street. Through association with Richard Pate, the College has had a long connection with Cheltenham, in the areas of social housing and education



1



2



3



4

#### Acknowledgements

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Heather Atkinson, Steven Blake, Ian Bussell, Vic Cole, Joyce Cummings, Harvey Faulkner-Aston, Mike Grindley, James Hodsdon, Mike Holtom, Jennie Ingram, Elaine North, Geoff North, Diane Richards, Sue Rowbotham, Di Ryley, Audrey Turner, Jill Waller, for their photographs and text as used in this article.

<sup>2</sup> This event is sponsored by the Local History Committee, Gloucestershire Rural County Council; <http://www.gloshistory.org.uk>

<sup>3</sup> CLHS thank Geoff & Elaine North for their dedicated work in assembling and mounting this display, which was subsequently on show at the Gloucestershire Archives during February and March 2010. Eventually the display will be archived with the CLHS Library.



# Medical Assistance to the Poor in Nineteenth Century Cheltenham

CHRISTINE SEAL

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*This paper was presented to the Midlands History Postgraduate Conference at the University of Leicester in November 2009 and I am grateful to the participants for their comments.*

THIS PAPER INVESTIGATES THE PROVISION OF MEDICAL SERVICES to the poor of Cheltenham Parish and Union, both private and under the Poor Law Act, and the part charity played in the provision of these medical services in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Cheltenham was a market town with a population in Cheltenham parish at the 1801 census of just 3,000. By 1851 Cheltenham and the surrounding villages were formed into Cheltenham Poor Law Union and the Union population had reached 44,184. There were 710 homes in 1801 but this had risen to over 6,000 homes by 1851. Cheltenham became a retirement town for civil servants, military and East India company employees, and a venue for seasonal visits to the 'Spa' for the wealthy, including King George III. At the same time the town drew in the poor from the surrounding villages. Inferior housing was built in St Paul's and St Peter's area of the town to accommodate these artisans.

## **History of medical provision**

The discussion into medicine and charity begins with the provision of medical services in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. B.G. Thomas has argued 'that the sick poor received sympathetic and humane consideration bearing in mind contemporary medical knowledge and limited facilities available at this time.'<sup>1</sup> Thomas has also argued that more local area research was needed for the picture to emerge of medical care at this time. This study will go a little way to addressing this point.

The Elizabethan Poor Law Act of 1597-8 provided for the care of 'lame, impotent, old and blind' in the parish and it was part of the overseers' duties to ensure medical treatment was provided. In 1804 Mr Thomas Freeman, a surgeon and apothecary was paid £75 per annum to attend to the poor of Cheltenham parish, and in 1806 Mr William Wood, also a surgeon and apothecary was paid £35 per annum to attend to the inmate poor, including pregnant women and setting bones.<sup>2</sup>

One area of charitable provision was the voluntary hospitals with origins back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most voluntary hospitals became general hospitals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The hospitals were run by subscription income and subscribers were able to nominate patients to receive care each year. Indeed, in most cases, patients only gained admittance if they were deemed 'a proper subject of the charity.'<sup>3</sup> For most poor the only hospital care was provided by the workhouse infirmary. Dispensaries were more involved in treating the poor than the voluntary hospitals. This was mainly an out-patient system with local doctors paying visits. A voluntary dispensary was

recorded in Cheltenham as far back as 1813 and Cheltenham Board of Guardian minutes record frequent reference to this dispensary. Wood found that some unions provided public dispensaries from the 1850s while other unions supported voluntary dispensaries from the poor rates.<sup>4</sup> Cheltenham was fortunate in having a dispensary and voluntary hospital, and additionally, a dispensary attached to the workhouse. The dispenser at the workhouse was employed by the union.

### Early years of medical provision in Cheltenham

The first provision of medical services in the town was the Dispensary in 1813. The Dispensary was initiated at a vestry meeting in 1813, organised by a committee of doctors with the financial support of residents and visitors. The aim of the establishment was to provide advice and medicine free to the sick poor of the parish of Cheltenham and the adjoining villages, attendances at their houses within the limits of the town, promoting vaccination and admitting those unfit to be taken to the county infirmary at Gloucester, as in-patients. The dispensary used temporary premises until 1822.

Year	Income	Expenditure	Patients Assisted	Casualty Ward admissions
1824	£1,133	£565	2,107	19
1825	£1,357	£782	2,999	33
1826	£1,430	£813	2,864	31
1827	£1,465	£841	3,103	42
1828	£1,489	£855	3,228	30
1830	£1,588	£854	3,621	39
1831	£1,622	£839	4,353	34
1832	£1,791	£927	4,269	39
1833	£1,685	£893	4,015	47
1834	£1,629	£948	3,952	81
1835	£1,047	£981	4,109	66

Table 1 Dispensary income, expenditure and number of patients assisted between 1824 and 1835

Source: *Gloucestershire Archives, HO3/8/1, Annual report of Cheltenham Dispensary and Casualty Wards*

Table 1 shows a breakdown of income and expenditure for the Dispensary from 1824 to 1835. Income started to fall off in the 1830s, at a time when expenditure and the number of patients assisted was increasing. The number of admissions to the casualty ward increased during the period especially in the years 1833-5. The number of patients assisted rose by 95%. Patients were required to attend at the Dispensary at 12 noon or send for medicines ordered for them at 2 or 6 o'clock and bring bottles, if necessary. Rule 18 required patients on discharge to 'leave their letters of recommendation with the apothecary at the Dispensary and to receive letters of thanks for the subscriber who recommended them which must be immediately delivered.' The rules also stated 'no persons are deemed proper objects of this charity but those who are really necessitous and require medical or surgical aid.'<sup>5</sup> A casualty ward had been added when the Dispensary moved into permanent premises at 318 High Street.

In 1831 the committee of the Dispensary was greatly concerned of subscribers giving recommendations for out-patient assistance to undeserving persons. One person turned out to be a notorious vagrant and impostor. The increasing population of the town found the thoughts of the Dispensary Committee drawn to providing a general hospital and dispensary 'on an extensive scale'.<sup>6</sup> The Dispensary was replaced by a General Hospital and Dispensary at Segrave House in 1838 in the lower High Street. A tower extension was added to the Dispensary in 1839 to provide wards for 40 patients together with operating theatres on the attic floor.<sup>7</sup>

From 1839 the Dispensary became known as Cheltenham General Hospital and Dispensary and from 1849 the Hospital was located on Sandford Fields, and has remained there to this day. Subscribers to the building fund for Cheltenham General Hospital included the Dukes of Gloucester and Cambridge, and the Duchess of Kent contributing between £21 and £25 each.<sup>8</sup> Subscribers and benefactors received annual tickets to admit patients to the hospital or provide assistance at home, according to their subscription. For a subscription of ten guineas a subscriber received six out-patient tickets but for thirty guineas subscription, 12 out patient and one in patient ticket was received. The more a subscriber paid the more out-patient and in-patient tickets were received.

According to the Medical Charities report of 1843, voluntary subscriptions were falling off and a number of dispensaries, including Cheltenham, Portsmouth, Leeds and Liverpool were in debt.<sup>9</sup>

	Population	Annual No. of patients (average 3 years)	Annual Cost of drugs	Average cost of drugs for each patient
Cheltenham	31,411	4,080	£680	3s 4d
Ipswich	24,900	200	£30	3s 0d
Wigan	51,988	2,531	£250	1s 11½d
Hertford	51,450	983	£118	2s 4¾d
Tewkesbury	5,802	413	£73	3s 6½d
Bradford	105,257	2,104	£259	2s 4½d

Table 2: Returns showing the number of patients and cost of drugs for one year in 24 dispensaries; evidence to the Select Committees

Source: Hodgkinson, R G, *The Origins of the National Health Service* (Wellcome 1967), Table 7.3, p 213

The evidence to a Select Committee in 1844 shows the number of patients and the cost of drugs in 24 dispensaries, including Cheltenham. The number of patients assisted by Cheltenham Dispensary was far higher for the population of the town compared to Wigan and Hertford. The average cost of drugs for each patient was a shilling more in Cheltenham. Has Cheltenham a more liberal approach to providing drugs to patients than the other towns sampled? The Select Committee made no reference to this in its report.

The annual meeting of Cheltenham General Hospital and Dispensary reported:

*'The dispensary pointed out, partly in consequence of the unhealthiness of the past season and the attendant prevalence of illness among the poorer classes and, partly, it was feared, through the practice of giving relief tickets to those who were not rightly entitled to them, the number of applicants prescribed for had again shown a considerable increase, the number having grown from 3,118 in 1868 to 3,508 in 1869, exclusive of about 150 small casualties which had been relieved.'*<sup>10</sup>

Of the 3,508 prescribed for, 1,176 had been visited at their own homes. The total number of visits during the year was 5,708 of which the smallest number made in any one month was 274 and the largest 525. The increase in the number of cases had led to a corresponding increase in the cost of drugs but the dispensary staff were confident that that this item would be kept as low as possible. The expenditure had been larger than in previous years but the receipts had also been larger.

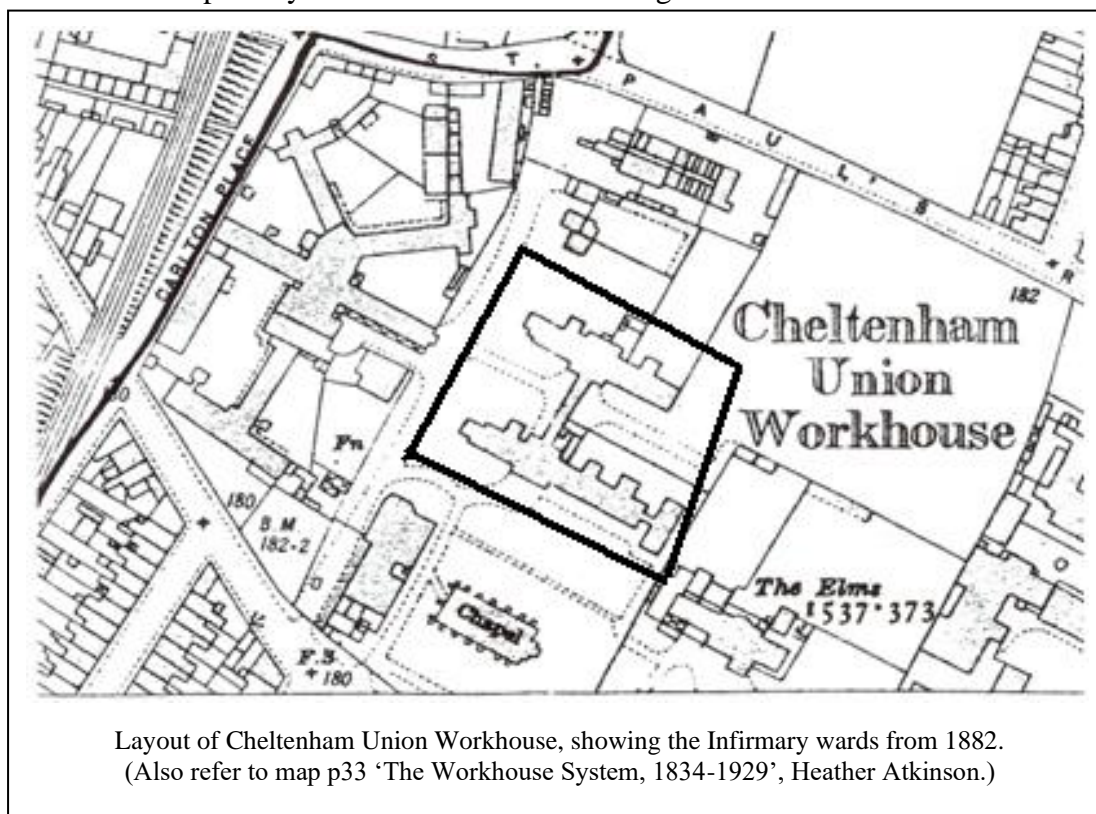
By 1911 the General Hospital reported on the year's record showing that the number of inpatients had been 1,356, an increase of 340 on the previous year. This confirmed that the Board and subscribers were fully justified in acceding to the request of the medical staff for a larger number of beds. Previously patients were refused admission, sometimes to the risk of life, owing to want of beds. Unfortunately the Board also reported that the financial position was not as good as previously. There had been a decrease in the number of subscriptions and the hospital had lost 172 subscribers through death, removal or other causes. The number of new subscribers numbered only 105, giving a net loss of 67. The Board added that a noteworthy fact was that the average cost of in-patients had fallen to £4 5s 1½d as against £5 4s 9d in 1909.<sup>11</sup>

### **Provision of medical services under the Poor Law Amendment Act.**

Consideration has been given to the provision of private and charitable medical services at the beginning of the nineteenth century but what provision for the poor was provided by the vestry and under the Poor Law Act?

The sick and mentally defective were exempted from the Poor Law Amendment Act and prohibitory order, but the provision of medical services in the unions varied throughout the country. The general Medical Order of 1842 and the Consolidated Order of 1847 provided the guidance for the establishment of a comprehensive medical system. William Farr stated to the Select Committee in 1838 'that the poor were neglected [...] the Medical Officers too few' and the poor had to travel too far to obtain medicines or the services of a doctor.<sup>12</sup> In most unions the Workhouse Infirmary was the only means of hospital treatment. Under the 1851 Act guardians could subscribe to hospital and infirmaries in their neighbourhood with the consent of the Poor Law Board, with the most serious cases going to such hospitals. There were many cases quoted in the Board of Guardians minutes of cooperation between poor law and charity, with sending paupers to hospitals or homes for orphans or paying annual subscriptions from poor law funds for those societies. For example, in Cheltenham the Guardians subscribed £5 5s in February 1881 to the Eye Hospital and in return received 20 out-patient tickets for attendance at the hospital each year.<sup>13</sup>

Cheltenham Union was formed in 1835 and used the existing poor houses in Cheltenham, Charlton Kings and Prestbury. The new Workhouse was not completed until 1841 and this contained sick and lying-in wards. It wasn't until 1884 that an infirmary was built. The pre-1835 overseer accounts and minutes record medical provision for the poor of the parish and a doctor paid to attend to the sick in the poor house. There was just one nurse plus pauper assistants in the sick wards. Cheltenham Union had a dispensary in the Workhouse from August 1866.



Layout of Cheltenham Union Workhouse, showing the Infirmary wards from 1882.  
(Also refer to map p33 'The Workhouse System, 1834-1929', Heather Atkinson.)

In the early days of the Union there were references to the Guardian minutes of sick pauper cases, particularly when something did not go right. Philip Denton died in Prestbury without receiving medical relief. His case appeared in the minutes of 2 March 1837.

*'Mr Belcher, the guardian for Prestbury stated that Denton was taken ill on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of February. On Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> a man named Shurmer went to Charlton to the Relieving Officer but did not find him. That the Relieving Officer went to the house the same afternoon, that the Overseer wrote a note to the Medical Officer about 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon for him to attend the pauper that the note was sent by W. Bates [relieving officer]. On Sunday the Overseer gave the pauper Brandy and water and a mustard plaster prescribed by W. Bubb, a medical gentleman living at Prestbury. That the pauper died on Sunday night and the medical officer did not visit the house until after one o'clock on Monday afternoon. Mr Pates stated that he saw Denton sitting by the fire on the Saturday afternoon after 4 o'clock, that he delivered the note to Mr Carey to attend Denton about 3 or 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, that Mr Carey said his wife was dangerously ill at the time and he could not leave her but that he would send Mr. Skelton, that Bates did not consider the man dangerously ill.'*<sup>14</sup>

The Guardians ordered that future applications from a pauper for medical relief should be given to the medical officer within two hours of receipt by the relieving officer. Stories of pauper cases and disagreements between the medical officer and the sick poor occur regularly. One side of the pauper story may be found in the MH 12 series of correspondence with the central board, but quite often the other side is glossed over by the guardians and not reported in the minutes. On other occasions the report may be reported in the local paper but is this a biased report, to side with the claimant against authority?

Another medical case relates to John Woolford, an able-bodied man applying for relief as his wife was sick and he had five children dependent on him. The eldest child named Harriett aged 22 lost a leg and was employed in sewing. The next named Frederick aged 19 was partially disabled by a bad thigh but able to work a little. Sarah, aged 17, is able-bodied and waits upon her mother. Ann, aged 14, is able-bodied but is out of employment. William, aged 12, is able-bodied but has no employment and was waiting for brickmaking, and finally John aged eight years. John Woolford also had a daughter aged 29 in the Cheltenham Workhouse with a bastard child. The applicant earns from 7s to 18s per week. During the last winter John's earnings were on average 14s per week. The guardians ordered that medical relief was provided for the family.<sup>15</sup>

The medical officer, Mr Fleischmann, reported in 1866 on the nursing, diet and sanitary conditions of the infirmary wards of Cheltenham Workhouse. The nursing was carried out by pauper nurses under the direction of a paid nurse. *'They are dense, ignorant, unutterable stupid, a stolid, hopeless, careless manner of performing their duties, are qualities they share almost in common.'* Mr Fleischmann confirmed that the diet was sufficient in quantity and the quality was good apart from meat.

*'The infirmary should be complete and detached from other buildings. Building is ill arranged, badly adapted for its intended purpose. There were 92 beds with average cubic feet for each bed of 423, varying from 518 to 297 cubic feet. London workhouse infirmaries averaged 555 cubic feet compared to 423 for Cheltenham.'*<sup>16</sup>

The conditions of the sick wards were picked up again in 1868 by Dr Smith, reporting on Cheltenham Workhouse. Cheltenham was one of 48 workhouses that Dr Smith reported on. Here he found that there was no separate infirmary but that the sick were nursed in sick wards for separate sexes. The sick wards contained iron bedsteads and flock beds and were managed by one paid nurse for the female wards and a male pauper acted as nurse on the male side. Infectious buildings had been built recently and the officer in charge of the vagrants took charge of these wards. Detached infectious buildings were added in the 1860s containing fever, smallpox and itch cases. The sick girls had a separate ward but the sick boys were in the adults ward. The paid nurse looked after 12 to 20 cases. Dr Smith was not happy with the nursing arrangements and stated that a paid nurse should be employed for the men's sick ward, although he did point out that the unpaid male nurse was very efficient. At Dr Smith's visit there were 335 paupers in the workhouse, including 132 on the medical officer's books, comprising 111 males and 21 females.<sup>17</sup>

The infirmary was built to the east of the Workhouse in two parallel 'pavilion' wards in 1884 with a nurses' home added after the demise of the union in 1930.



South Ward blocks, view from the West  
*National Monuments record, BB93/21811*

By 1884 the poor law inspector, Mr Long, complained that the arrangements for the sick inmates was not satisfactory, *'the sick wards being so scattered that it must be impossible for the one nurse to give the requisite attendance.'*<sup>18</sup> Nursing arrangements were looked at in 1893 with a recommendation that one trained nurse be appointed for general nursing of male and females with two probationer nurses appointed for the female ward and a probationer nurse for the male infirm. This did happen and by 1911, seven nurses were listed in the census.<sup>19</sup>

The rules for the nurses and assistants were clearly set out in 1893 including times of rising, meal times and bedtime. Each nurse was allowed:

1. Fourteen days holiday annually, on application to the guardians through the master.
2. Each nurse to be allowed two hours off every other day and three hours on alternate Sundays but both head nurses not to be absent themselves at the same time nor either infirmary to be left at any time without a nurse in charge.
3. Each nurse and probationer to report herself at the Master's office upon leaving and returning the Institution.<sup>20</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Workhouse was employing assistant Nurse Sheen specifically to look after the aged convalescents in the workhouse. The number of aged and infirm in Cheltenham Workhouse had been increasing year on year since the 1860s. This was borne out by the analysis of the 1901 and 1911 census which showed 48% of those in the workhouse were over the age of 60. Nurse Sheen earned a salary of £25 per annum with rations, uniform, laundry and apartments.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusion

This paper has considered the provision of medical services in Cheltenham from the Dispensary started in 1813 to the building of the General Hospital in 1849 and its provision of services to the residents of the town and surrounding villages. At the same time, the Poor Law Union of Cheltenham provided very basic medical services for the poor of the union with just one paid nurse to look after all the sick inmates. A new infirmary was built on the workhouse site in the 1880s enabling greater medical provision to be provided for the sick in the union. It wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century that the number of nurses in the workhouse infirmary increased.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, *The Old Poor Law and Medicine*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Gloucestershire Archives (GA), P78/1 VE 2/2.

<sup>3</sup> Kidd, *State and Society*, p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *Poverty and the Workhouse*, p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> GA, HO3/8/1, Annual Reports 1825 to 1848.

<sup>6</sup> GA, HO3/8/1, Annual Report January 1834.

<sup>7</sup> Rowbotham, *Cheltenham, a History*, pp. 98-9.

<sup>8</sup> HO3/8/1, 14 December 1838, meeting of building committee.

<sup>9</sup> Hodgkinson, *The Origins of the NHS*, p. 211.

<sup>10</sup> CE, 26 January 1870, Cheltenham Hospital and Dispensary Annual meeting.

<sup>11</sup> CE, 16 March 1911.

<sup>12</sup> Hodgkinson, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> GA, G/CH 8a/29, 8c/14.

<sup>14</sup> CE, 26 January 1870.

<sup>15</sup> GA, G/CH 8a/2, 29 March 1838.

<sup>16</sup> GA, G/CH 8a/13, 25 October 1866.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, *Provincial Workhouses*, p. 63-5.

<sup>18</sup> GA, G/CH 8a/22, 29 May 1884.

<sup>19</sup> GA, G/CH 8a/27, 30 March 1893.

<sup>20</sup> GA, G/CH 8a/27, 4 May 1893.

<sup>21</sup> RG13/2461; RG14PN15573; G/CH 8g, 26 February 1903.

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# The Members of Parliament for Cheltenham 1928-2005

MARTIN HORWOOD, MP & ANTHEA JONES

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WITH A DOUBLE INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT, not only having studied history at Oxford, but also himself being Cheltenham's MP, Martin Horwood, the nineteenth member for Cheltenham and the ninth Liberal, has studied his predecessors in this honourable position, and produced a dossier on each, not glossing over the occasional dodgy incidents in some careers.

Readers may be familiar with W.R. Williams's work, *Parliamentary History of the county of Gloucester* (1212-1898) (Hereford, 1898) giving neat biographies of the members for the county from the earliest recorded until 1898, and though less familiar, F.A. Hyett continued the series in the same format up to 1928 in an article in the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* vol. 51 (1929) pages 321-62, which can be downloaded from the Society's website, [www.bgas.org.uk](http://www.bgas.org.uk) It seemed most important to publish Martin Horwood's researches into MPs after 1928. The complete profiles of all Cheltenham's MPs since 1832 can be found at <http://www.martinhorwood.net/past MPs.html>

The date is a significant one for extending the series on Cheltenham's representatives. It marks the break after 54 years during which for no less than 39 years James Agg-Gardner, Sir James from 1916, was Cheltenham's MP. It also marks the extension of the vote to all women on the same terms as men, accounting for the marked increase in the number of electors between the election in 1928 and that in 1929.

Since 1928, the Conservatives have represented Cheltenham for 51 years, an Independent for 13 years, and the Liberal Democrats for 17 years to date. Seven men have sat for the constituency, Sir Charles Irving serving for the longest period of the seven. In these 68 years, Cheltenham constituency has expanded significantly with the extension of the Borough boundaries.

The Electorate 1928-2005					
Year	Electorate	Year	Electorate	Year	Electorate
1928	26265	1955	51491	1983	76068
1929	35993	1959	52946	1987	79234
1931	36974	1964	54120	1992	79806
1935	37428	1966	54984	1997	67977
1941	37947	1970	54120	2001	67563
1945	49282	1978	62098	2005	71510
1950	48786	1978	62727		
1951	49844	1979	64726		

The full tabulation of candidates and the votes each received, on the pattern of the two previous works mentioned, is in the Appendix, page 57.

### **1928-1950**

The thirties are identified with the Depression which started with the collapse of share prices on the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929. A National Government held power in these years, including some members from all three parties, but dominated by the Conservatives. Then from 1940 until 1945 a genuine coalition directed the war effort, but with victory in Europe in May 1945 the Labour party wished to withdraw from the coalition, and at the election, won a sweeping majority.

#### **Sir Walter Reuben Preston**

The death of Sir James Agg-Gardner in 1928 led to a by-election at which all three parties nominated a candidate. Sir Walter Preston, a wealthy industrialist and former MP for Mile End in east London, who had lost his seat to the rising Labour Party in 1923, won Cheltenham for the Conservatives, though their vote dipped below 50% for the first time since their defeat in 1910; Florence Widdowson, the first official Labour candidate for this seat - and Cheltenham's first woman candidate - polled nearly 4,000 votes, dividing the anti-Conservative vote and giving Preston a comfortable majority over the Liberal Sir John Brunner.

Educated at Bedford Grammar School, Sir Walter Preston had been an apprentice with the Great Eastern Railway and his name appears on a series of patents for the improvement of steam locomotives. By the time he became MP for Cheltenham, he had become an accomplished hunter and yachtsman and been knighted. Commerce and technology dominated his contributions to the Commons. 'I do not often worry the House for I am a poor speaker' he began one prescient speech in 1934. He went on to explain to a complacent mill-owning colleague how far behind Japanese technology the British cotton industry had fallen. He blamed the banks: 'If you go to a financier and say "will you give me money for Lancashire machinery?" he smiles at you as if you were loony.' His solution wasn't very conservative. He urged massive state intervention.

Preston increased his majority at the General Election in 1929, but nationally the Labour party won a significant number of seats, and led by Ramsay MacDonald formed a government, though in a minority in the House of Commons. For two years Ramsay MacDonald struggled with the results of the Wall Street crash. Following Labour resignations, the Conservatives joined a National Government in 1931 and Ramsay MacDonald called an election. There was no Liberal candidate in Cheltenham and Preston polled more than 81% of the vote, the highest share won by a Cheltenham MP since Craven Berkeley's first landslide victory in 1835. Across the country the National Government won an overwhelming victory.

After the resignation of Ramsay MacDonald in 1935, the Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin became prime minister, and again called an election. Preston won Cheltenham, but with a reduced majority; no Liberal stood against him, but the Labour vote went up. The strain of combining politics and commerce threatened his health and he resigned his Commons seat in 1937. He died - as perhaps he would have wanted - of a sudden heart attack on board his yacht at Cowes in 1946. Preston left

Cheltenham an apparently safe Tory seat; surely it was inconceivable that the Conservative Party would lose the subsequent by-election?

### **Daniel Leopold Lipson**

Daniel Lipson had come to Cheltenham to teach at Cheltenham College; previously he had taught at Portsmouth and Bradford Grammar Schools. Since 1892 the College had maintained a Jewish boarding house, Corinth House that allowed boys to keep to their religious observance. Lipson became housemaster in 1911 and also took over as President, Secretary and Treasurer at the struggling Cheltenham Synagogue.

After the College closed Corinth House, Lipson set up Corinth College in 1923 as a separate school. It survived until 1935. He had been elected as a county councillor in 1925 and a borough councillor in 1929, and in 1935 became Mayor of Cheltenham. When Sir Walter Preston retired, Lipson was a possible successor, but he was, possibly, unacceptable to the Conservatives on the grounds of his political stance and religion and the Tories picked Lieutenant-Colonel R Tristram Harper instead. Showing his independent streak, Lipson stood anyway: an association was formed to support him as the 'Independent Conservative' candidate and a bitter by-election campaign ensued. Lipson defeated the official Conservative candidate by just 339 votes.



Daniel Lipson, MP,  
1937-1945  
*Courtesy of Brian Torode*

In Parliament, he proved a gifted and frequent orator, making more speeches in his first year than his reticent predecessors Agg-Gardner and Preston had done in decades. He was at his most passionate in condemning Nazism, and despite his support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was prepared to support pro-Arab land regulations on the basis that 'at this time, Great Britain's interests are the interests of the Jew and the Jew has not so many friends in the world to-day that he can afford to quarrel with his best friend'.

Lipson continued to represent Cheltenham during and after the Second World War. Balfour and then Chamberlain led the National Government, until early failures in the war against Germany led to Chamberlain's resignation and the formation of a genuine coalition government by Churchill. With the war in Europe over, Labour wished to withdraw from the coalition. Churchill called an election at which Labour won a sweeping victory - a measure of the idealism generated by war-time experience, and an indictment of Conservative policies in the thirties. Standing as a National Independent, Lipson had a substantial majority, putting the official Conservative candidate, Major Hicks Beach, into third place, while Labour's vote rose significantly.

In 1950, the positions were almost perfectly reversed with Hicks Beach winning by a clear majority and Lipson in third place. It seems most likely that the violent birth of the state of Israel helped end Lipson's parliamentary career. In 1946,

Zionist terrorists had blown up the King David Hotel, killing 100 people in the British army's local headquarters. In 1947 there were reciprocal executions of Zionist terrorists and British military hostages. Anti-semitism in Britain increased and anti-Jewish riots broke out in six British cities as the situation in Palestine deteriorated. The next year, Israel was at war with its Arab neighbours. After his defeat Lipson continued an active role in Cheltenham local politics and was awarded the freedom of the borough in 1953, an honour given only to Agg-Gardner and Baron de Ferrières amongst his predecessors.

### **1950-1992**

In the next forty years, there were three Conservative MPs for Cheltenham in succession, although the complexion of the government changed several times in that period. Labour continued in power for a year after the 1950 election, but with a narrow majority in the House of Commons. At another general election the following year, the Conservatives won a working majority and remained in power until 1964. Labour was in office until 1970, then the Conservatives until 1974; at the election in February, the miners' strike brought defeat. In October the same year at a second election Labour won a convincing majority. By 1979 the pendulum had swung back to the Conservatives, and under Mrs Thatcher and then John Major they formed the government until 1992.

### **Major William Hicks Beach**

Hicks Beach was in many ways the archetypal Tory MP. Educated at Eton and Magdalene College, Cambridge, he was a Gloucestershire landowner at Witcombe Park, south of Cheltenham. His aristocratic family had already supplied a series of Gloucestershire MPs dating back to the wealthy textile merchant Sir Baptist Hicks, who became MP for Tewkesbury in 1624, and including Lord Salisbury's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who sat for Gloucestershire and West Bristol in the late nineteenth century.

Hicks Beach had become a solicitor in 1932 and later a partner in the family firm of Payne, Hicks Beach & Company. He loved hunting, fishing and farming and took up soldiering through the territorial regiment, the Gloucestershire Hussars. But when invited to stand for Cheltenham in 1945, he had no political record whatsoever. Cheltenham was not an easy prospect: the robustly Tory seat of 1937 was lost to the charismatic Independent Lipson. This, combined with the general swing against Churchill's Conservatives, meant that Hicks Beach was trounced into third place behind Labour. Time though was on his side, as Independent MPs became a rarity and the violent situation in the new state of Israel gave Lipson added complications. In 1950 Hicks Beach won spectacularly with 43% of the vote and a majority of 4,982. No Liberal stood against him in 1951, and he was comfortably re-elected, although Labour took its highest ever share of the vote. His record in Parliament was unremarkable but his majority grew larger in 1955 and larger again in 1959 when a Liberal candidate split the opposition vote. When Hicks Beach retired at the 1964 election he must have reflected on a job well done for the traditional Tory interest.

### **Douglas Dodds-Parker**

By the time Douglas Dodds-Parker became MP for Cheltenham in 1964, he had already had an eventful life. After graduating from Oxford in 1930 he entered the colonial Sudan Political Service and when war broke out his knowledge was put to good use. He became a rising star in the Special Operations Executive's daring intelligence operations, helping Emperor Haile Selassie to oust the Italians from Abyssinia, organising agents and collaborating with communist partisans in the Mediterranean to pave the way for invasion, and ending up in Eisenhower's allied headquarters in Paris. France awarded him the Croix de Guerre and the Legion d'Honneur, perhaps laying the ground for his later pro-European politics.

Dodds-Parker entered Parliament at the first attempt, defending the Tory seat of Banbury near his native Oxford against the Labour landslide of 1945. The next year he married his American wife Aileen. When the Conservatives returned to power, he initially turned down an invitation to become Churchill's Parliamentary Private Secretary but joined the government in 1953 as a junior minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices under Churchill and his successor Eden. But in 1956 Egyptian President Nassir's takeover of the Suez Canal prompted a secret deal between Israel, Britain and France to invade Egypt and capture the canal. Dodds-Parker had the job of defending Eden's doomed policy and denying collusion with Israel not only to an outraged Commons, during frequent absences of his boss, Selwyn Lloyd, but also to his many American family friends. Senior Tories noticed his obvious ambivalence and when Macmillan replaced Eden, Dodds-Parker was sacked. He quit the Commons at the next election and later penned his own account of events, bitterly titled *Political Eunuch*.

Dodds-Parker was tempted back in 1964, perhaps because Macmillan had by then been replaced as Prime Minister by Sir Alec Douglas-Home. After what he describes as a 'slight commotion that a local candidate might be more suitable', he won Cheltenham with a comfortable majority, with the Liberals - now led at national level by the charismatic radical Jo Grimond - in a relatively strong third place. Nationally the Tories lost power. Their new leader was the pro-European Edward Heath, and Dodds-Parker was soon heading delegations to the Council of Europe and European Parliament.

He made frequent interventions in Parliament, especially on European and foreign affairs, but was obviously frustrated in opposition and often railed furiously against the 'Socialists' in government. In 1966, with no Liberal competition in Cheltenham, Labour reached their highest ever share of the vote, nearly 47%. Dodds-Parker won again in 1970, but his vote had fallen and his majority was largely thanks to a Liberal again dividing the opposition vote.

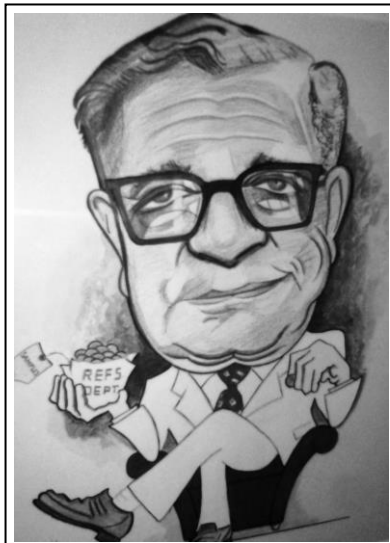
Dodds-Parker found himself at the heart of the complex entry negotiations for British membership of the European Community - bizarrely reuniting him with former communist partisans from his war days. He was knighted in 1973. He held Cheltenham in February 1974 but had already announced his decision to stand down. The Tory share of the vote fell to its lowest since Daniel Lipson held the seat; more ominously, the Liberal Freddie Rodger, a local doctor, was in second place, with his party's highest share of the vote since the 1920s. This was part of the record six

million votes cast nationwide for the party which had an energetic new leader in Jeremy Thorpe and a radical new basis in ‘community politics’ at local level.

Dodds-Parker had never returned to ministerial office. He retired when Harold Wilson called the October 1974 election. He must count as one of Cheltenham’s most distinguished if controversial MPs, a player not just in British national politics but on the international stage as well, but his successor would have to work hard at home to hold the seat.

### Charles Irving

Labour had nearly won the growing urban constituency of Cheltenham in 1966, but it was now the reviving Liberals who posed a threat to the Conservatives. The Tories played safe and chose a veteran county and borough councillor and former mayor,



Sir Charles Irving, MP  
1974-1992  
*Courtesy of Martin  
Horwood*

Charles Irving, as their candidate. He was also, usefully, a millionaire hotelier. In the event, votes nationally and locally swung back towards Labour and drifted away from Thorpe’s Liberals. Irving was elected with a big majority over an almost equally divided opposition.

Irving could not have been more different from the ambitious patrician soldier Dodds-Parker. Born in Cheltenham, Irving had lost his father at ten, leaving his actress mother as his single parent. They converted the house into the family’s first hotel. He left school at fourteen (‘I wasn’t good at school anyway’) and went to work in hotel kitchens in Bath. When war broke out, he was deemed ‘insufficiently robust’ for frontline service (perhaps a euphemism) and was relegated to the Home Guard where he famously managed to bayonet a retired lieutenant-general in the backside. His genius was for business and by the 60s he owned a string of

hotels across the country. He also found time to get involved in liberal social causes and local politics. By the time Dodds-Parker stood down, Irving had three times been Mayor of Cheltenham, and had been involved in founding the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, the Cheltenham & District (later Stonham) Housing Association and the National Victims Association, now Victim Support.

Irving’s maiden speech was an impassioned attack on capital punishment. His timing was extraordinarily brave, following just days after the IRA’s Birmingham pub bombings in which 21 people had died. The 1979 election was a foregone conclusion and Irving romped home in Cheltenham with the biggest Tory majority since 1935, beating Liberal Nigel Jones by 10,538. But Jones’ determined campaign did resolve the issue of who the challenger would be in the future, beating the Labour candidate by nearly 6,000 votes.

The ultra-liberal Irving was never going to be part of a right-wing Tory administration but he delighted Mrs Thatcher by paying for fresh flowers to be

delivered to her every day, though he opposed her when he thought right - from the banning of trade unions at Cheltenham's GCHQ intelligence base right up to the closing of coal mines in the 1990s. He followed in his predecessor, James Agg-Gardner's footsteps overseeing Commons catering, once brilliantly suggesting that historic Westminster Hall be used as a café instead of having 'people moping about looking at a few brass plates'. The house authorities demurred. A shame really – Charles Irving's teas were legendary.

While Mrs Thatcher's government plumbed depths of unpopularity, the Labour Party had moved further to the left and a right-wing group defected to found the Social Democratic Party, which soon allied with the Liberals. The new Alliance briefly commanded 50% support in the polls but the Argentine invasion of the Falklands and subsequent British victory transformed Mrs Thatcher's image and paved the way for a second landslide victory in 1983. In Cheltenham, the Liberals invited their party president, Richard Holme, to become probably the party's most heavyweight candidate since the seat's creation. With the added credibility of the new Alliance, their vote surged to more than 20,000, Labour's nearly halved and so did Irving's majority.

By 1987, Mrs Thatcher's popularity was waning and Labour's was reviving. In Cheltenham the anti-Tory vote united behind Holme and Irving's majority fell below 5000. The borough council had already fallen to the Alliance. That the parliamentary seat was still relatively safe was testament to Irving's now impregnable personal popularity in Cheltenham. But his health was failing and he stood down at the 1992 election, one of Cheltenham's best-loved MPs.

### **1992-2010**

The Conservatives under John Major continued in office for another full term, but since 1997 Labour has been the party of government. Conservatives had held the Cheltenham constituency, interrupted only by the Independent Daniel Lipson, since James Agg-Gardner's historic by-election victory in 1911. But when Irving stood down, the Liberal Democrats had been edging closer to victory in Cheltenham for 20 years and were now the dominant party in local council elections. Richard Holme had taken a shortcut to Parliament as Lord Holme of Cheltenham so both parties were looking for new candidates.

### **Nigel Jones**

After a close-fought selection contest, the LibDems chose Nigel Jones, now a councillor and proven local campaigner. Despite the vulnerability of the seat, the Tories bravely picked John Taylor, a Birmingham lawyer with no campaigning experience. In one TV interview he tactlessly described his choice of Cheltenham as 'just a box I ticked on a list'. More controversially, Taylor, the party's first black candidate for a winnable seat, was the recipient of racist remarks which were attributed to members of his own party.

Jones was the first Liberal to represent Cheltenham for more than 80 years, winning by a small majority. Media comment that Jones had won the seat because of Taylor's colour did a particular injustice both to years of Liberal campaigning and to his profoundly anti-racist politics. In his maiden speech Jones paid an unusually generous tribute to his Tory predecessor and repeated his own commitment to the restoration of trade union rights at GCHQ. He had the satisfaction of seeing this happen in 1997 and worked hard to keep GCHQ in Cheltenham when its relocation was suggested. His career had been in the fast-growing computer technology sector and he brought a rare technical expertise to Parliament. He was quickly made spokesman for his party on local government and housing, and then on science and technology. A bewildering succession of spokespersonships followed, including consumer affairs, national heritage and international development. He shared previous Cheltenham MPs' interest in food and drink and became chair of the all-party beer group. But he was also a former Cheltenham Young Liberal and deeply rooted in the radical community politics tradition of the modern Liberal Democrats.



Nigel Jones, MP, 1992-2005  
*Courtesy of Martin Horwood*

In 1997 Jones quadrupled his majority despite his opponent being a popular local Tory councillor, John Todman. He worked hard to earn the loyalty of his constituents and occasionally described his aim to become 'Mr Cheltenham'. Sadly, his second term was overshadowed by one terrible event. In January 2000, a mentally-ill constituent, Robert Ashman, attacked Jones and his assistant Andy Pennington with a samurai sword in their office. Nigel was wounded, Andy killed.

Coping with the obvious trauma, Jones returned to work and developed a growing interest in the promotion of democracy and development overseas. He was re-elected with another comfortable majority in 2001. But he suffered a series of heart attacks and late in 2004, he accepted the inevitable advice of family and doctors to stand down. He became a working Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords after the 2005 general election, the first former Cheltenham MP to be awarded a peerage since Lord Duncannon in 1937. Cheltenham remained a Liberal Democrat seat at the election, Martin Horwood's win marking the longest run of Liberal victories since the days of the Berkeleys in the 1840s.

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## Appendix

Date of election	Candidates	Party	Votes rec'd
26 September 1928	Sir Walter Reuben Preston	Conservative	10438
	Sir John F Brunner, Bt	Liberal	6678
	Miss Frances B Widdowson	Labour	3962
30 May 1929	Sir Walter Reuben Preston	Conservative	15279
	F W Rafferty	Liberal	8533
	W Piggot	Labour	4920
27 October 1931	Sir Walter Reuben Preston	Conservative	22524
	J Ramage	Labour	5263
14 November 1935	Sir Walter Reuben Preston	Conservative	18574
	Hon Mrs E Pakenham	Labour	7784
22 June 1937	Daniel Leopold Lipson	Independent Conservative	10533
	Lt Col R Tristram Harper	Conservative	10194
	C C Poole	Labour	5570
5 July 1945	Daniel Leopold Lipson	National Independent	16081
	Miss Phyllis M Warner	Labour	11095
	Maj William W Hicks Beach	Conservative	9972
23 February 1950	Maj William W Hicks Beach	Conservative	18009
	A G James	Labour	13027
	Daniel Leopold Lipson	Independent	10449
25 October 1951	Maj William W Hicks Beach	Conservative	23674
	J Finnigan	Labour	17777
26 May 1955	Maj William W Hicks Beach	Conservative	24259
	J Finnigan	Labour	16638
8 October 1959	Maj William W Hicks Beach	Conservative	21997
	Dr K G Penrose	Labour	12725
	G G Watson	Liberal	8428

15 October 1964	A Douglas Dodds-Parker	Conservative	19797
	H Gray	Labour	14557
	J A Lemkin	Liberal	7568
31 March 1966	A Douglas Dodds-Parker	Conservative	22683
	W J Wilson	Labour	19768
18 June 1970	A Douglas Dodds-Parker	Conservative	22823
	L G Godwin	Labour	14213
	Dudley G Aldridge	Liberal	8431
28 February 1974	Sir A Douglas Dodds-Parker	Conservative	21723
	Freddie C Rodger	Liberal	15811
	H Gray	Labour	12971
10 October 1974	Charles G Irving	Conservative	21691
	Freddie C Rodger	Liberal	13237
	F C Inglis	Labour	12134
3 May 1979	Charles G Irving	Conservative	25618
	Nigel D Jones	Liberal	15080
	M Reilly	Labour	9185
	R A Jacklin	National Front	342
9 June 1983	Charles G Irving	Conservative	29187
	Richard G Holme	Liberal-SDP Alliance	23669
	Ms J M James	Labour	4390
	D G Swindley	Green	479
11 June 1987	Charles G Irving	Conservative	31371
	Richard G Holme	Liberal-SDP Alliance	26475
	M N Luker	Labour	4701
9 April 1992	Nigel D Jones	Liberal Democrat	30351
	John D B Taylor	Conservative	28683
	Ms P R Tatlow	Labour	4077
	M D Rendall	Anti Federal Europe	665
	H W Brighouse	Natural Law Party	169
	M A Bruce-Smith	Independent	162
1 May 1997	Nigel D Jones	Liberal Democrat	24877
	John Todman	Conservative	18232
	Barry Leach	Labour	5100
	Mrs A Powell	The Referendum Party	1065
	Ken Hanks	Official Monster Raving Loony Party	375
	G Cook	UK Independent	302
	A Harriss	ProLife Alliance	245
	S Brighouse	Natural Law Party	107
7 June 2001	Nigel D Jones	Liberal Democrat	19970
	Rob E Garnham	Conservative	14715
	Andrew B Erlam	Labour	5041
	Keith D Bessant	Green	735
	Dancing Ken Hanks	Official Monster Raving Loony Party	513
	James B Carver	UK Independence Party	482
	Anthony J Gates	ProLife Alliance	272
	Roger J Everest	Independent	107
5 May 2005	Martin Horwood	Liberal Democrat	18122
	Vanessa Gearson	Conservative	15819
	Christopher Evans	Labour	4988
	Dr Robert Hodges	Independent	2651
	Keith Bessant	Green	908
	Timothy N Warry	UK Independence	608
	Dancing Ken Hanks	Official Monster Raving Loony Party	525

# More About the Cheltenham Horticultural Society in the 1850s

GEOFF NORTH

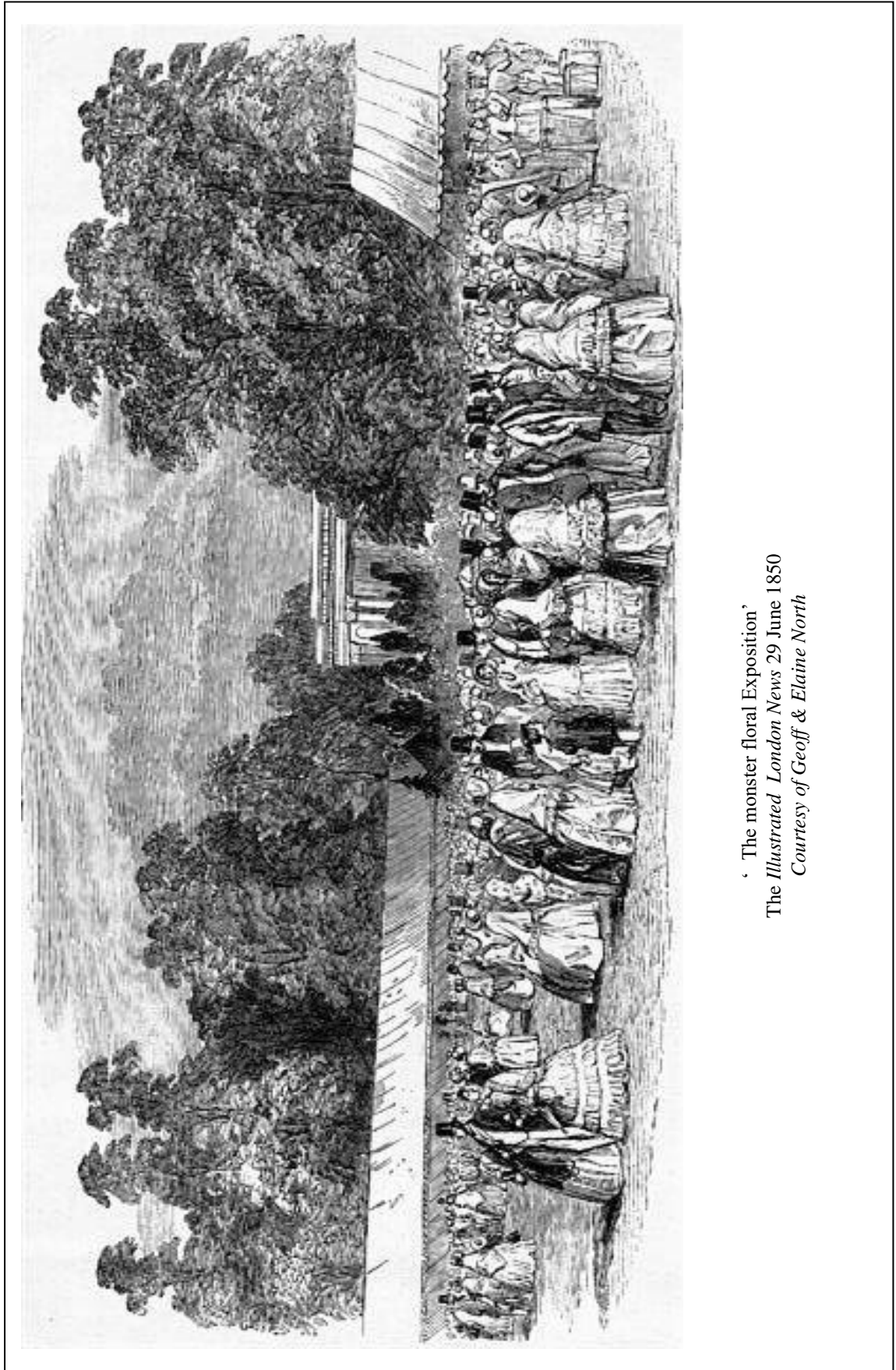
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WITH REGARD TO THE ARTICLE ‘**The Grand Exhibition of Plants of All Nations**’ – 1853 published in *Journal 24*, I am grateful to CLHS member Mike Grindley for contacting me with additional information. Mike’s late wife Isabel, known as Isa to her family and friends, had a life long interest in plants. In 1995 Isa, as Newsletter Editor for the Gloucestershire Branch of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens, wrote an article about the 1853 Exhibition in the NCCPG *Newsletter*.<sup>1</sup> The timing of her article coincided with the Council’s final preparations for the 1995 Chelsea Flower show at which, much to Isa’s delight and lasting joy, the Gloucestershire Branch of the NCCPG won a Silver Gilt. Isa’s article provides us with much local colour and detail and includes reports from *The Cheltenham Examiner* of March 1853, when plans for the Exhibition were being made, and also reports written after the event. I believe her article complements the extract from *The Illustrated London News* of 16 July 1853 and am pleased to reproduce it here in full.

## ‘**The Great Flower Show of All the Nations**’ Isabel Grindley (1995)

*‘If the then Cheltenham Horticultural Society’s bid for exhibition fame and glory had succeeded our group might have been spared a great deal of effort in having to cart our Chelsea stand all the way up to London - we might have been able to stay at home and let the world come to us! But it was not to be - even though the present Horticultural Society put on some very creditable shows.*

*The Cheltenham Examiner of Wednesday 10 March reported that it had been proposed by “Leaders of the old Horticultural Society and the promoters of the new [who] have joined hand in hand together and with the zealous assistance of their Secretary, Mr J. H. Williams and with the powerful aid and influence of Lord Fitzharding, and Mr Craven Berkeley<sup>2</sup>, [that] they have at length brought the project into such shape that it need only the requisite subscriptions from the Gentry and Tradesmen of the district to secure its successful consummation”. The idea was that this exhibition should be staged in July during the same week as the Royal Agricultural Show in the City of Gloucester in order that visitors to the Gloucester Show might take the opportunity of visiting Cheltenham also thus bringing “an immense benefit to the town”. Alas, the good citizens of Gloucester did not think there might be some mutual benefit to be gained from this and Cheltenham reported that “Our attention has been called to some very ill-natured and depreciatory remarks on the Cheltenham Show which appeared in the Gloucester papers. We have before taken occasion to express our regret at the spirit of jealousy which appears to exist on this subject”.*



'The monster floral Exposition'  
The Illustrated London News 29 June 1850  
Courtesy of Geoff & Elaine North

However, despite the ill-feeling which seemed to be brewing, the Cheltenham committee pressed on with their preparations. They had written to “over one hundred” Continental growers and invited them to show, as well as American and Colonial horticulturists, with the promise of “wonderful prizes”. It was felt vital that to ensure the success of the Show some Royal patronage should be obtained and letters flew back and forth from Royal equerries at Windsor and eventually the longed-for letters of consent were received though no promises of attendance to go with them, much to their disappointment. (In the event Albert cried off at the last minute after a half-hearted promise to drop in on his way to somewhere else. Their only consolation was that the Royal Agricultural Show didn't get him either.) They set about raising funds and it was interesting to read the lists of subscribers with the sums donated alongside: no coyness in those days! I do not think they found it any easier fundraising than we have done.

The great day arrived and “the weather at that time was good but on the day itself it rained”. Nevertheless if *The Cheltenham Examiner* of Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July is to be believed, Pittville Spa “never looked gayer or more beautiful than it did on this occasion”. The show opened at 1 o'clock and continued for some four hours and during that time it was estimated that between ten and twelve thousand people visited the Show. They weren't taking any chances with trouble-makers it seems and their security must have been as tight as present-day Chelsea: “It should be stated that the police arrangements were admirable. A cordon of mounted officers, under Mr Seys, keeping watch and ward round the entire outskirts of the gardens, and two or three of the most active constables being stationed at each of the gates”.

The paper gave a provisional list of prizewinners with the self-righteous explanation that if the press hadn't been allowed in and made notes whilst the judging was going on there would have been no list at all as the Society's secretary - Mr Williams - had lost it!

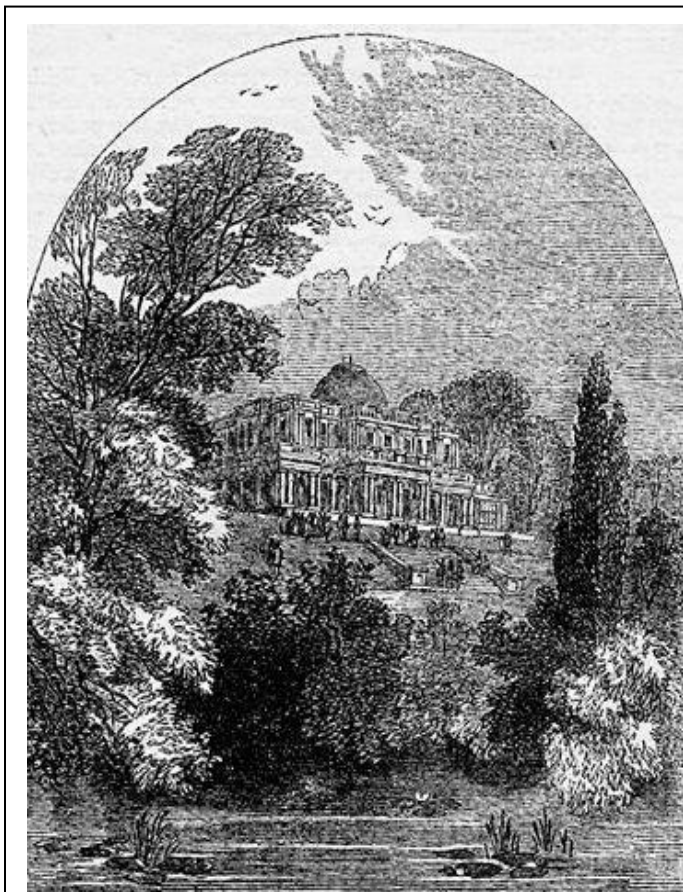
Whether there had been a huge response from the Colonies and Americas I do not know. I suspect not, the Belgians and Dutch managed to carry off some of the “wonderful prizes”. Unfortunately only one plant is actually named<sup>3</sup> - and this is interesting from the NCCPG point-of-view – the “New Plant in Flower” prize winner, namely *Nepenthes hookeriana*. (Incidentally the newspaper gave the second word a capital H.)

The reporter was far more interested in the other exhibits. In one tent “was a beautiful and novel device – an urn and balustrades formed of moss, and the sculpture traced out in dead leaves. The design stood out in relief from a frame of white canvas, the vase being filled with beautiful cut flowers, and over it was suspended a wreath of white roses. Around the base of the columns were ivy and creeping rose and the effect of the whole was heightened by a truly artistic touch on the part of the designer – a stuffed robin perched upon the green moss. This device elicited very general admiration and obtained, as it deserved to do, the premiere prize”. A real flavour of Victoriana is the description of “a monumental device, in memory of a son of Lt. Clubbly, executed entirely in hair, [which] was particularly admired”. The exhibition also provided the opportunity for tradesmen to publicise themselves with such items as “an elegant little fountain erected by Mr Gibbon,

*chemist of the High Street, which dispensed, in the course of the afternoon, some ten or twelve pounds worth of veritable Eau de Cologne”.*

*A feature of every flower show of the period, and of course the Grand Horticultural Exhibition was no exception, was the presence of a military band. The advertisements for flower shows even published in advance the programme of pieces they would be playing. On this occasion it was the 93<sup>rd</sup> Highlanders and the 1<sup>st</sup> Royals who provided the entertainment, whilst all the while “the water in the lake was enlivened by the three fountains supplied from the Company’s reservoir on the hill”.*

*After all the rapture came the calling to account and on the 20<sup>th</sup> July the Examiner reported that the Show might make a loss of anything up to £300! However, by the 24<sup>th</sup> August the paper was able to report that the “Horticultural Society instead of having to meet a deficiency of £300 as reported are enabled, notwithstanding the enormous expenses of their ‘Show of All Nations’ to close their annual accounts with a balance of nearly £100 in hand”. I suspect that the “grand show of all nations” did in fact make a thumping loss but that the Society had enough funds in hand to cover themselves. However, it must have been a rather salutary lesson as despite their hopes that, if successful, it would become an annual event, what might now be termed the “greatest flower show of all nations” is held at Chelsea!’*



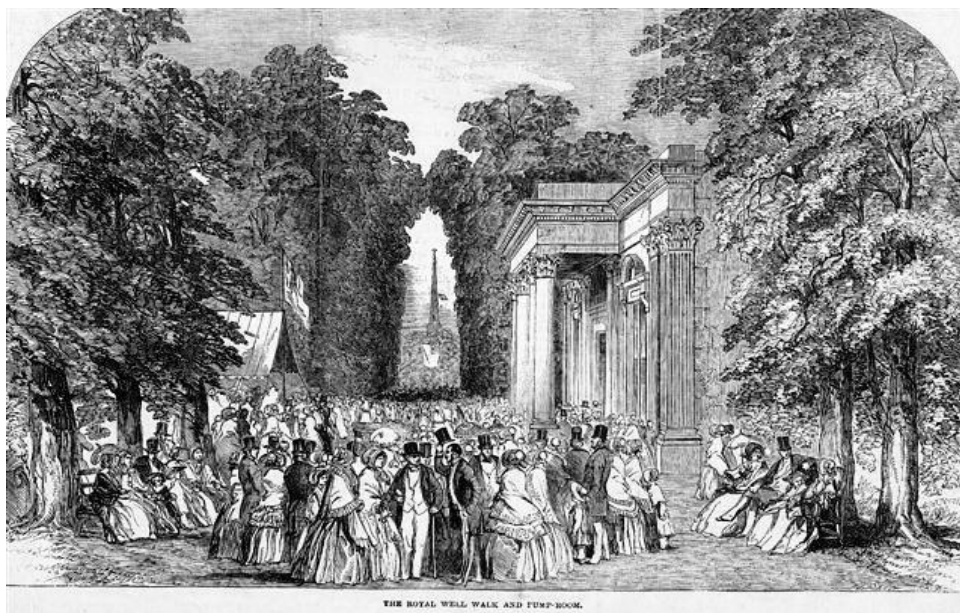
Pittville Spa  
The Illustrated London News 16 August 1856  
Courtesy of Geoff & Elaine North

Interestingly, Mike has identified one of the award winners, A E M'Donnell Esq<sup>4</sup> as *Áneas Ronald McDonnell* of Pittville House, Cheltenham and late of the Madras Civil Service. This gentleman was in fact the father of William Fraser McDonnell who as a 27-year old in the Bengal Civil Service was awarded a civilian Victoria Cross for his actions on 30 July 1857 during the retreat from Arrah in the Indian rebellion. William was educated at Cheltenham College and died 30 July 1894 at Pittville House and is buried at St Peter's churchyard Leckhampton.<sup>5</sup>

On 10 September 1850 *Áneas McDonnell* took the chair at the Annual Dinner of the Cheltenham Horticultural Society, of which he was then President. Earlier in the day

he had won a prize for his dahlias at the Floral Exhibition in the Montpellier Pump Room. He was often referred to in *The Cheltenham Looker-On* as Mr Æ McDonnell or as Mr Æ R McDonell and was always to the fore in Burns Night celebrations in Cheltenham.

I was also interested to learn that ‘The Grand Exhibition of Plants of All Nations’ in 1853 was attended by between ten and twelve thousand people. An earlier ‘Grand Horticultural Exhibition’ held 20 June 1850 was described as a ‘monster Floral Exposition’ and ‘the most brilliant display of the kind ever produced in the provinces vieing [*sic*] with the great metropolitan far-famed Chiswick Fêtes’.<sup>6</sup> This event [see illustration] took place at the ‘Old Wells’ to inaugurate the newly completed Royal Wells Music Hall and Pump Room<sup>7</sup> and, according to *The Illustrated London News*, attracted between six and seven thousand people, said to be ‘a galaxy of beauty, rank and fashion rarely equalled’. Cheltenham was obviously used to welcoming large crowds to the town for such events in the 1850s and also many distinguished guests, including royalty. Today, we regularly welcome huge numbers of visitors to the various Cheltenham Festivals and to the Racecourse. Very little has changed in many ways.



The Royal Well Walk and Pump Room  
*The Illustrated London News*  
29 June 1850

<sup>1</sup> NCCPG Newsletter, No 28 Spring/Summer, 1995

<sup>2</sup> The Hon. Craven Berkeley was Liberal MP for Cheltenham at the time of ‘The Grand Exhibition of Plants of All Nations’ in 1853, being elected as Cheltenham ‘s MP six times between 1832 and 1852. His colourful life begs further research. For example, on 15 July 1842 he is reported to have fought a duel at Osterley Park with Captain Bolero MP, the parties firing twice without effect and then leaving the ground. (*Chronology of Cheltenham 200BC-2000AD*, Stephen E Osmond, 2001)

<sup>3</sup> This reference is to the local *Examiner* newspaper report. *The Illustrated London News* 16 July 1853 carried details of the flowers within the various groups (see CLHS Journal **24** page 51 & 52)

<sup>4</sup> CLHS, Journal **24**, p51

<sup>5</sup> See CLHS, Journal **23**, pp20-35, ‘Eminent Cheltonians commemorated at Leckhampton’, by Eric Miller for more information on William Fraser McDonnell

<sup>6</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, 29 June 1850

<sup>7</sup> Rebuilt by Messrs George Rowe and Samuel Onley at a cost of between £5000 and £6000. The gardens were also entirely renovated and rearranged. (*Norman’s History of Cheltenham*, John Goding, 1863)

## Advertisements for Animated Pictures: from 1903 & 1906

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*The Gloucestershire Echo*  
30 January 1903

### VICTORIA ROOMS, CHELTENHAM.

FOR SIX NIGHTS ONLY,  
TO-NIGHT AND DURING THE WEEK.

### STUPENDOUS ATTRACTION,

FIRST VISIT OF THE  
**ST LOUIS ANIMATED PICTURES,**  
Introducing the Sensation of the Day,  
**TALKING PICTURES**

By the aid of GAUMONT'S CHRONOPHONE.

PICTURES THAT TALK!  
PICTURES THAT SING!  
PICTURES THAT LIVE!  
The Human Voice Reproduced as in Life!

See and Hear the Famous American Comedian,  
R. G. KNOWLES.

See and Hear the Great Australian Baritone,  
HAMILTON HILL.

See and Hear the Prince of Comedy,  
JOE MACK.

See and Hear the Great Pantomime Favourite,  
ERNIE MAYNE, Etc., Etc.

Magnificent Series taken with the  
PRINCE OF WALES IN INDIA.

JACK'S SWEETHEARTS.

GRANDPA AND BUTTERFLY.

THE SAILOR'S WEDDING.

TWO LITTLE WAIFS.

LIFE AND TIMES OF NELSON,  
The Hero of Trafalgar.

Over 40 Miles of Pictures Shown Nightly.

Each Evening at 8. Matinee Saturday at 3.

POPULAR PRICES—2s., 1s., and 6d.

Children Half-price to all parts.

Doors Open 7.30 Commence at 8. Early Doors  
(3d. extra) Open at 7 p.m.

The Entertainment under the Direction of  
Mr. J. Henry Iles. 1906

Advertisement  
*The Gloucestershire Echo*  
9 May 1906



# The History of the Cinema in Cheltenham

## Part Two: 1900 to 1910

JOHN ELLIOT

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AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW CENTURY, Cheltenham had a variety of entertainment on offer. At the Opera House, there was the traditional pantomime, noted in the press for its 'freedom and vulgarity'; at the Princess Hall of the Ladies' College, the elite of the town could enjoy a piano recital by Herr Moskowski or later at the same venue a lecture by Mr Dave Allen on 'South Africa and the Present War'. In the Assembly Rooms there were two Cafés Chantant in aid of the Fund for Officers' Widows and at the Winter Garden the Sunday Concerts maintained their attraction for the general public. But also by this time displays of Animated Photographs were becoming increasingly popular not only as a curiosity but as a source of information and entertainment. While it would be a few years before the emergence of fixed-site film-only shows, short programmes of films became a staple part of the bill presented at variety theatres.

The time was right. During the early years of the new century the public was eager for news about the war in South Africa and actual films provided people with an opportunity to share the privations, setbacks and successes of our troops. In March 1900 the *Looker-On* was praising Messrs Poole for the animated photographs being shown at the Assembly Rooms of the arrival of Lord Roberts in Capetown, the Lancers crossing the Tugela and the long team of oxen with Boer supplies as 'the most enlightening object lessons in War yet presented in Cheltenham'. The following year in June large audiences came to the Victoria Room to see films put on by the Animated Picture Company, recommended by *The Examiner* as 'highly interesting and instructive'. Apart from film of Sir Redvers Buller's carriage being drawn through the streets by firemen and the return of Lord Roberts and his reception at Southampton and London, the local interest was aroused by the Animated Photographs of the welcome to the Active Service Volunteers in the Winter Garden. The film of the events had been despatched to London for development and the company was congratulated for its promptness, the time taken between taking the film and receiving the complete films for presentation being less than 24 hours. The series of films included the March down the Promenade, the Parade in the Winter Garden and the Band followed by the Companies. *The Examiner* noted that 'the features of everyone who comes into focus of the lens is instantly recognisable with excellent portraits of local celebrities' and commenting that the audience was roused to a pitch of enthusiasm, concluded that 'it seemed a pity that the municipality cannot impound the films of the event and so retain a permanent record to hand down to future Cheltonians'. We cannot but agree!

Other conflicts were also recorded in Animated Photographs. Film of the Russo-Japanese War, for example, was shown in Montpellier Gardens in August 1904 and again in September 1905 at the Victoria Room by Waller Jeffs New Century Pictures when the *Looker-On* recorded that 'no show of Animated Pictures would be complete without a liberal supply of Russo-Jap War views and those dealing with the social troubles in Russia'. But genuine films of the actual fighting were rare. Taking front line scenes presented huge problems, however brave the cameraman. Early cameras were cumbersome to operate and could only film for about a minute before they needed reloading. Mostly hand-cranked they were static and required a tripod. Also cameramen were recognisable and presented easy targets for snipers. Since, however, the public wanted action this is what they got with staged battles behind the scenes or more commonly at home – more convenient and cheaper. So, for example, in *The Examiner* 12 June 1901 a review of the films shown included a reference to a highly dramatic 'rendering' of the Boxers attacking a mission station in Peking. 'Representations' of other well-known events were also shown, such as the Coronation of Edward VII and 'The Burns and Moir Glove Contest' (shown 22 February 1908) described as being 'a most realistic representation of the great fight.'



Waller Jeffs

Waller Jeffs  
 Courtesy of Cinema Theatre  
 Association Doug E Withers

As now, anything to do with the Royal family was of interest to the general public. Film of the Queen's visit to Dublin 'conveyed such a notion of Ireland's welcome to her Majesty as only those who actually witnessed the reality can have gained' (*Looker-On* June 1900). Queen Victoria's funeral was shown widely, for example, as part of Maskelyne and Cooke's Entertainment and later as part of Joseph Poole's visit to the Victoria Room in April 1901 with his Myriorama display when it was shown using his Improved Cinematograph or Mutograph system. There was also such interest in the coronation of Edward VII that the Cheltenham Corporation Entertainment Committee arranged for the public exhibition of Animated Pictures of London and local coronation processions and festivities and Mr Paul (who had been instrumental in bringing Animated Pictures to Cheltenham in 1896) was employed by the Committee and Messrs Baring (a well-known local management firm which had offices in Montpellier Chambers conveniently close to the *Looker-On* office) to take film on 26 June and to exhibit it on the following day. It was stated that the pictures will cover nearly 1500 feet of film. Unfortunately the King's illness led to the postponement of the coronation. The films were to have been shown in the Montpellier Gardens and Messrs Baring maintained the public's interest by showing pictures of events surrounding the King's illness, including film of the crowds reading the bulletin and the scenes in the street outside the Palace. Eventually the actual coronation took place and film of the Coronation Procession in which the King 'wearing his crown and graciously bowing to the cheering crowd is seen with remarkable distinctness' appeared at the Montpellier Gardens. Madame Lloyd's choir came in August 1902 and their show which was advertised as involving Diorama,

Animated Pictures and Ladies Orchestra included pictures of the Coronation celebrations. As this was part of the Corporation Entertainments Committee's performance (by arrangement with Messrs Baring Bros) attendance only cost 6d and 2d on Monday evening although chairs could be booked for 3d and 6d extra.

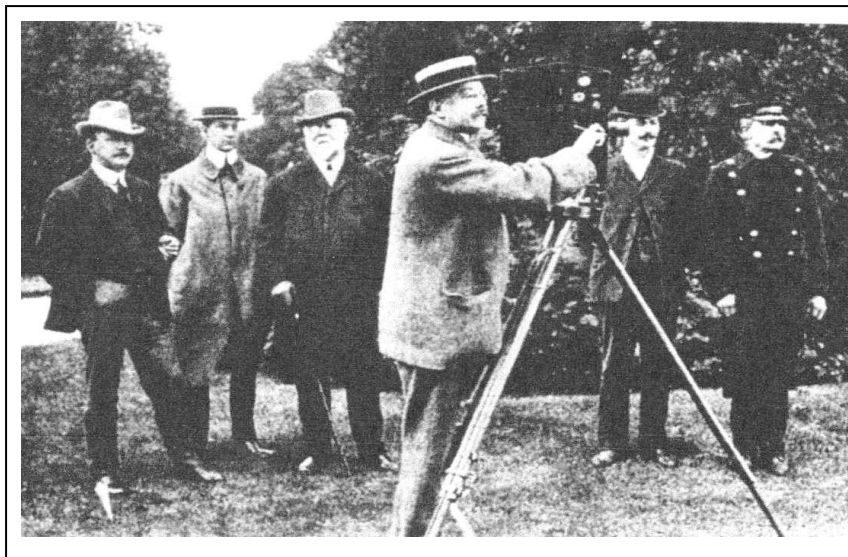
Equally popular at this time were films of the Delhi Durbar. *The Examiner* 14 February 1903 referred to the film being shown by the Corporation Entertainment Committee as the only authentic record with permission specially granted by Lord Curzon, the Governor of India. The previous week the *Looker-On* had more extravagantly commented that 'humble stay-at-homes were enabled to get a very good idea of the uniquely gorgeous ceremonies, the elephant procession [...] that constituted the glories of this great historical occasion – a piece of enterprise that should be appreciated in a town so intimately connected with India as Cheltenham'. The companies were always keen to ensure that members of the public were made aware of how expensive such films were, so the Myriograph animated pictures shown in March 1903 referred in its advertisement to 'A Splendid Series of Films Including the Very Expensive film, just added of the Return of the Colonial Secretary, the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain'. Among later royal events film of the Prince of Wales' visit to Canada was headlined as the main attraction in Waller Jeff's New Century Pictures shown in December 1908.

While Animated Photograph shows were often presented as part of the municipal entertainment, the regular visits by travelling exhibitors now frequently included film presentations as part of the attractions. One such exhibitor was Mr Charles W Poole whose Myriorama shows were a regular attraction at the Assembly Rooms but who by March 1900 was also wisely including in his shows some Animated Photographs (under various names). The following month Mr Leon Vint's Globe Choir and Scenorama appeared at the Victoria Room in which the singing of the twenty young ladies was complemented by the latest Animated Photographs. Mr Vint brought his group again the following year. Unfortunately several years later under his real name of Edward Preston he was bankrupt but was sufficiently revived to run Vint's Picturedrome in Ilkeston! Later in the decade in 1905 and again in 1907 and 1908 Mr Waller Jeffs brought his very successful New Century Pictures from the Curzon Hall in Birmingham, advertised in October 1907 as 'A Refined Programme of Unapproachable Excellence and Variety' and the 'Finest Animated Exhibition in the World'. It is interesting to note how that by 1908 Animated Pictures were becoming part of the social scene. Moody Bells, optician in the Colonnade, Cheltenham was advertising for children's parties 'Kinematograph, Conjuring and Punch and Judy'.

Although exhibitors of Animated Photographs were shown at a variety of locations such as Montpellier Gardens where there was some criticism of the smallness of the screen, the Winter Gardens, the Town Hall and the Opera House, most of the travelling exhibitors showed their films at the Victoria Room (which eventually became the Palace Cinema). These premises had been leased in 1903 to Mr Edward Shenton 'whose lesseeship of the Old Wells Theatre, Pittville Gardens and Assembly Rooms promotes expectations of a more active management of the High Street Rooms than they have known of late', (*Looker-On* 12 September 1903). He made structural improvements including a roomier amphitheatre and tip-up seats with plush covered one in the stalls.

As well as individual exhibitors, there were an increasing number of companies who came to Cheltenham with their films. They included - The Animated Picture Company (in the Victoria Room 12 June 1901 with their South Africa War films), the Columbia Animated Picture and Variety Company (who had a month's booking at the Victoria Room in March 1908), Ediscope and Barnum's Electric Pictures (who returned to the Victoria Rooms in April 1908 as 'the show with a difference - the world of movement'), Edison's Animated Pictures (June 1902), the Royal America Animated Pictures (October 1906), Britannia Electric Pictures (February 1909) and Ernest Mansell's Animated Pictures. This led to the appearance of a confusing number of names by which the systems were identified which I don't intend to confuse you with!

National sporting events were increasingly popular. The *Looker-On* of 23 June 1900 noted that the 'series of Derby pictures with Diamond Jubilee winning was quite up-to-date and the Golf series was strikingly life-like'. In the following year *The Examiner* (June 1901) recorded the showing of the struggle for the Football Cup (Association). And again in May 1909 Ernest Mansell's Animated Pictures' film of the Great Race for the Derby was enthusiastically received. Of great local interest was the inclusion in Joseph Poole's Myriorama show in March 1904 of animated pictures of the National Hunt Steeplechase of 1000 Guineas especially taken at Prestbury Park on 10 March with 'Scenes in the Paddock, the Race from Start to Finish [and]. Portraits of Celebrities'. In November 1908 the Columbia Animated Picture and Variety Company made one of its attractions a film of the Great Marathon Race.



Waller Jeffs  
with camera  
in Cannon  
Hill Park,  
Birmingham

*Courtesy of  
Cinema  
Theatre  
Association  
Doug E  
Withers*

Humorous films were, of course, staple and popular fare in all Animated Picture shows. The humour was not subtle - 'The Troubles of a Short Sighted Cyclist' (from Waller Jeff's New Century Pictures in 1907) or 'The Adventures of a Runaway Horse' or 'The Doings of an Eccentric Billiard Player' (from the Columbia Animated Picture Company in 1908) described by the *Looker-On* as 'excruciatingly funny' are some examples of what pleased Edwardian cinemagoers. Also, of course, for some time to come, films weren't always the main attraction and variety continued to be a popular ingredient. The performance in November mentioned above also gave prominence to the appearance of Vic Verney, the Whistling Entertainer. And in September 1905 the variety element included Miss La Clair in her popular picture songs and Yum Yum with a grand display of Oriental Magic and Novel Hand

Shadows, while in February 1906 *The Echo* noted that films of the Royal Tour in India and an express rushing through Devon were interspersed with songs by Miss Dora Kingsley and a Marimbaphone selection by Mr Frank Lyndon.

The companies and exhibitors were, of course well aware of oversight by both the ecclesiastical and civic authorities and were keen to demonstrate the acceptability of what they were distributing by showing and publicising films of an educational or religious nature. Waller Jeff's New Century Pictures were praised by *The Examiner* (September 1905) for their special Sunday programme of such films as 'A Visit to the Vatican', 'The Feast of Corpus Christi at Cologne' and 'Sacred Fanes and Shrines'. Later in 1907, his films were described as 'refined' and such subjects as the 'Construction of the Cape to Cairo Railway' as highly interesting and instructive. Companies were careful not to show anything of an objectionable nature. Mr Jeff's films were advertised in December 1908 as 'Pictures to Amuse; Pictures to Educate, Pictures to Make Life Worth Living' and 'Fun without Vulgarity'! In March 1908, while one of the most popular items shown in the Columbia Company's very successful visit (according to the *Looker-On*) was that depicting incidents connected with the sensational Thaw case (a murder trial in America involving the wealthy socialites of Washington) the paper noted 'the unsavoury parts of this great human tragedy being naturally suppressed'. Distributors would become increasingly aware of the Censorship Board and the influence of local attitudes. Later, in 1912, we find the Cheltenham Town Council refusing a showing of cinematograph film *From Manger to Cross* as offending religious sensibilities.

Nature films were popular (and carefully promoted as educational) and in November 1908 Messrs Baring sponsored a lecture at the Town Hall by Messrs Richard and Cherry Kearton on wild birds entitled 'Birds and the Bioscope'. It included film of Keaton 'descending a beetling cliff, his camera on his back to obtain photographs of eagles and other birds of prey' and in an earlier review it was noted that two Keartons have been engaged for several years 'in trying to silence the mechanism of a cinematograph camera sufficiently to enable them to record the life of shy birds on their nests'. Later Mr Cherry Keaton became famous as one of the earliest producers of films of African wild life. In the following year the well-known traveller and orator, W Herbert Garrison, illustrated his talk on Earthquakes with Living Pictures. In November 1908 a lecture 'In the Grip of the Arctic' by Sandon Perkins included film which 'delighted the audience with what must be the most unique series of Arctic pictures existing'.



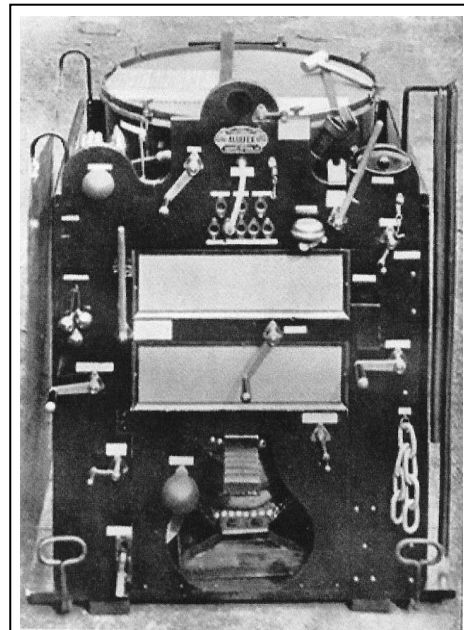
The Kearton brothers  
*Wikipedia*

Religious and charitable organisations, too, began to see the appeal of Animated Pictures. The Church Missionary Society supported a talk in October 1906 at the Town Hall by Rev E Guilford on his work in Tarn-Tara with film showing the actual operation of missionary work 'enabling the audience to witness the difficulties and prejudices missionaries have to contend with'. A lecture by Dr Grenville

Hutchinson at the Town Hall in April 1906 in aid of the Royal Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen was also supported by living pictures. In October 1905 the St John's Bazaar in the Town Hall included living pictures (scenes from Cranford) as one of the attractions. Political organisations also saw the advantage of including animated pictures in their events. So we find the Primrose League Entertainments and Habitation Meeting in March 1903 at St Paul's Mission Hall concluding with animated photographs of the Delhi Durbar.

During this decade there were several attempts at sound reproduction. One of the earliest was Walter Gibbons Phono-Bio-Tableaux. Sir Walter Gibbons, a British film showman and music hall magnate, acquired a Bioscope projector and in 1900 started to produce a series of films synchronised to phonograph cylinders, presenting famous music hall artists. These little sound films were very popular with both audiences and performers. Vesta Tilley was among the first to be heard and was an attraction at the Royal Animated Picture Company's 'Marvellous and Unique Exhibition' at the Victoria Room in June 1901. One of the most successful and widely employed systems was the Chronophone. Used primarily to make short films of musical acts, several dozen were produced by British and French Gaumont studios. Sound for the films was recorded on disc and amplified for the audience by a system of pneumatic speakers powered by a one horsepower compressor that blew air through the speakers and the sound out with it into the auditorium. The first visit of the St Louis Animated Pictures in May 1906 introduced it as 'the sensation of the day Talking Pictures, by aid of Gaumont's Chronophone – Pictures that Talk, Pictures that Sing, Pictures that Live. The Human Voice Reproduced as in Life. See and Hear famous American Comedian, R G Knowles. See and Hear the great Australian Baritone Hamilton Hill'. It also appeared in September 1907 at the Victoria Room after celebrating 400 consecutive performances at the London Hippodrome (and having been shown at Buckingham Palace). It was enthusiastically received and drew full houses to what the *Looker-On* referred to as 'capital entertainment with pictures being remarkably clear and steady with selections from opera being reproduced with effective results'. Sound effects had, of course, been deployed from the earliest days to intensify the action - horse galloping, clocks striking, rain or guns firing (and always with piano or orchestral accompaniment).

By now all kinds of contrivances were being devised for realistic noise reproduction. One of the most intriguing was the 'Alleflex' which appeared at the Victoria Room at the beginning of 1910. It was a most ingenious machine invented by a Mr A H Moorhouse for although only four feet high and three feet in width and depth, it was able to produce some fifty characteristic sounds from the howl of a storm to the twittering of birds or the bark of a dog, from the firing of a 12-inch gun to the squeak of a mouse. Its operation had been so simplified that one man was sufficient to operate it!



The Alleflex  
 Courtesy of Cinema  
 Theatre Association

Efforts were also being made to enhance the reality of what was being shown as the use of colour. Several techniques for colouring film – both manual and mechanical were being developed at this time. Hand tinting every frame, was time-consuming and expensive and only appropriate subjects were entitled to this luxury treatment – like fairy, nature or travel films (such as Columbia's Animated Pictures' coloured film of wildflowers shown in September 1909). In September 1906, the colour films introduced in the New Century Pictures show clearly impressed *The Echo* reviewer – 'the set of headdresses of all nations also deserves mention as an extremely fine adaptation of artistic portraiture and colouring to the purposes of the Biograph.' Mechanical methods were cheaper but less effective and in 1906 the patent was obtained by George Albert Smith, the Director, for Kinemacolor, a two colour process based on the Bioscope. The filming was done through a rotating wheel with red and green filters – a two-colour system which was widely used in many countries from 1908 to the 1920s.

I realise this is a very limited and cursory review of the ever-expanding world of cinema in the decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I would have liked to have given more information about the background of the various distributors and about the increasing complexity of the cinematic equipment used both for making and projecting films. I have also not devoted as much attention to the use of colour as I would have liked. I have also ignored the important safety issues that required Government intervention and regulation. So perhaps these will be covered in an Early Cinema Part 2 Supplement!

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## Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham

Compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

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Aldred, David H., *A History of Bishop's Cleeve and Woodmancote*, Amberley Publishing Ltd., Chalford, 2009. 252pp. £15.99.

Bennett, Michael, 'Jenner's Ladies: Women and Vaccination against Smallpox in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History* **93** (4) No. 312 (October 2008), pp.497-513. Includes references to Jenner's residence in Cheltenham.

Coleman, Laurent, and Watts, Martin, 'Romano-British Agriculture at the former St James's Railway Station, Cheltenham: Excavations in 2000-2001', in Neil Holbrook (ed.), *Iron Age and Romano-British Agriculture in the North Gloucestershire Severn Vale* (= Cotswold Archaeology Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Report **6**), pp.85-105.

Elder, David (ed.), *Down Cheltenham Way. An anthology of writing about Cheltenham through the ages*, The Cyder Press, University of Gloucestershire, 2009. 102pp. £5.00. Literary and other references to Cheltenham from Domesday Book to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Kinnear, Laura, and Fletcher, Christopher, *The Lediards and Whatleys of Gloucestershire. A Holst Family History*, Holst Birthplace Museum, Cheltenham, 2009. 36pp. £5.95. An account of the composer's mother's family, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.



Lockwood, Graham, *Cheltenham Music Festival at 65. A Perspective on its Themes and Variations*, privately published by the author and available from Cheltenham Festivals, 109 Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7LS. 110pp. £10.00. An account of the Festival since its inception in 1945.

Morris, Stephen, *Cheltenham*, Francis Lincoln Ltd., London, 2009. 112pp. £16.99. Modern photographs of Cheltenham, with an historical introduction based on existing published accounts.

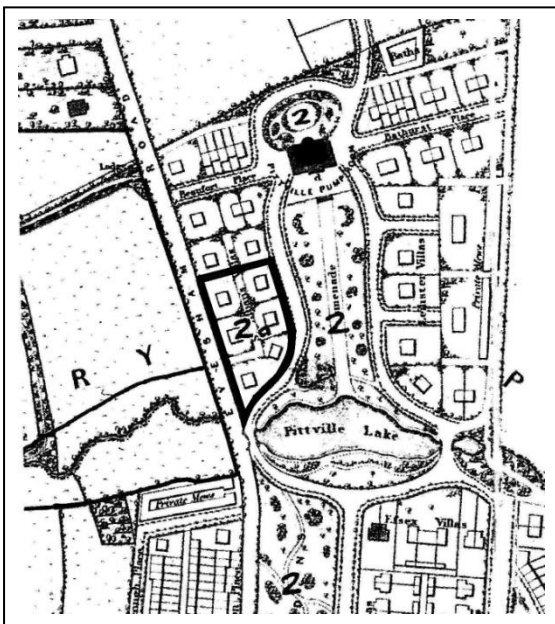
Sale, Jane (ed.), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin 55* (2009). 60pp. £3.50. A wide range of articles on Charlton Kings by a variety of authors, including Samuel Higgs Gael and Battledown Manor (David O'Connor), Langton House (Mary Southerton), 194 London Road (Jane Sale), the drinking fountain at Holy Apostles (Ann Hookey), railways around Charlton Kings (Eric Miller), Charlton Park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (David Hanks), Cheltenham Local Newspapers before 1914 (Don Sherwell), the Band of Mercy (Mary Southerton), early Cheltenham Manor Court Rolls (Jane Sale), the Protherough family (Margaret Hulbert) and Moses Bradshaw, clockmaker (Jane Sale).

Smith, Peter, and Rowbotham, Sue, *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham. Celebrating People, Places and Events*, Reardon Publishing, Cheltenham, 2009. 128pp. £7.99.

White, Phyllis, *Grovefield House near Cheltenham and Captain James Pritchit of the Warwickshire Militia*, Cheltenham Local History Society, 2009. 53pp. £6.50. Aspects of the history of the Grovefield Estate, and of the family associated with it.

Wills, Jan, and Hoyle, John (eds), 'Archaeological Review No. 32, 2007', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society 126* (2008) has short notes on archaeological evaluations and watching briefs in Charlton Kings (p.180), Cheltenham (p.180) and Prestbury (p.188).

## Errata-Journal 25



- In Journal 25, page 15 of '**The origins of Pittville Park: an Outline Chronology**' by **Steven Blake**, there is an error in the map. The area marked as 2a (land purchased by the Corporation from the mortgagees of Edwin Broom in 1892) has been shown as extending further north than was in fact the case. Its correct area is shown on this map. The wording of the text, on page 19, is correct.

- The editor would also like to apologise to Dorothy Seton-Smith for the incorrect spelling of her name on page 72.

# Gloucestershire Archives: Cheltenham Area Accessions, 2009

## JULIE COURTENAY, Collections Team Leader

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The following list covers archives received during 2009 relating to Cheltenham. We aim to make all collections in our care available for research at the Archives as soon as possible. To help researchers locate material, we add brief 'collection level' descriptions to our online catalogue within weeks of new collections arriving at the Archives. Once a collection has been fully processed we add more detailed 'item level' descriptions. However, access to uncatalogued collections may also be arranged. Please contact Gloucestershire Archives ahead of your visit to discuss this.

The short address to the online catalogue is [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives-catalogues](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives-catalogues) Gloucestershire Archives' website also contains details of the range of services, facilities, events and activities we offer for researchers and volunteers. If you would like to receive our occasional newsletters by email, you can ask to join our mailing list by contacting [archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

*Julie Courtenay, Collections Team Leader*

Gloucestershire Archives, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GL1 3DW

Tel: 01452 427772 Email enquiries: [archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Website: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives)

**Bartosch and Stokes of Cheltenham, architects:** files relating to conversion of Glenfall House, Charlton Kings, 1995-2004 (D7266, accession 11489)

**Benhall Residents' Association:** 'Benhall Residents' Association: A Fragment of Social History', by W A Gething, 1963, including summaries of minutes of meetings of the Association, (1959-1963); agenda, report and list of members for annual general meetings, 1964-1965; map of Benhall area showing locations of pubs and off-licences, and proposed new pub, nd [1960s] (D11753)

**Cheltenham Area Health Authority:** meetings papers of the Cheltenham and District Health Authority, 1990-1991; annual and final accounts, 1983-1989; annual report of the Cheltenham and District Health Authority entitled 'The Health of the Population', 1988-1989, 1989-1990; report 'Contracts for Services', 1991-1992; Gloucestershire Area Health Authority agenda and supporting papers,

1975-1982 (HA6 acc 11696 - *uncatalogued*)

**Cheltenham Art Club (later Art Society Ltd):** newsletters, 1977-2008, and other records including history of the club, details of exhibitions, committee and chairman's correspondence 1977-2008 (D11487 - *uncatalogued*)

**Cheltenham Borough Council:** programmes and related papers for Cheltenham festivals and musical events, 2008 (DC148, acc 11500 - *uncatalogued*)

**Cheltenham Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament:** records including publicity material and newsletters, papers relating to campaigns, accounts from branch shop, 1980s-2001 (D11731)

**Cheltenham Conservative Association:** minutes and accounts, 1894-1996 (D7738 acc 11670.1)

**Cheltenham Naturalists' Association:** minutes, 1861-1863; letters, 1870-1871; notes on the flora and fauna of Cheltenham, c.1862 (D11752)

**Cheltenham Natural Science Society:** minutes of Geological Section, 1911-1929 (D11754)

**Cheltenham Parish Church Boys' School:** school magazines, 1887, 1894 and 1898 (S78/12 acc 11501 and S78/3 acc 11755)

**The College of St Paul and St Mary Old Students' Association:** year books, 1970-2007 (D11567)

**Cypher family of Cheltenham:** scrapbook containing photographs, postcards and newscuttings, including photographs of family horticultural business, 1898-1920s (D11492)

**Deeds of various properties including:** 25 Imperial Square (formerly 12 Imperial Square East) 1790-1992 (D11575); former Primitive Methodist Chapel, King Street, 1935 (D11659); corner of High Street and King Street, Cheltenham, (1789)-1839 (D11846)

**Detheridge and Lyall of Cheltenham, solicitors:** deeds of various properties in Cheltenham and elsewhere (1725)-1886 (D11662 - *uncatalogued*)

**Dowtys, engineers:** box of glass lantern slides of landing gear, c.1955; photograph album commemorating jubilee fun day held at Staverton on 10 September 1977 to celebrate the firm's silver jubilee and that of Queen Elizabeth II (D8347 accs 11589 and 11804 - *uncatalogued*)

**Everyman Theatre:** administrative files for main house productions, 2002-2003; programmes for productions, 1996-2009 (D6978 acc 11502)

**J French of Cheltenham:** book of penmanship exercises written at Mrs Banbury's school, Cheltenham, 1831-32 (D11757)

**Gloucestershire County Council:** former Social Service project files including Working Party report on Cheltenham Foster Care, 1981 (K1969); traffic management files, press statement and files concerning the Golden Valley

Bypass, 1938-1969 with aerial photographs of the route, bills of quantities for road and bridge works; photographs of demolished buildings in George Street, Cheltenham (K1972) *uncatalogued*

**HMI school inspection reports for independent schools in Gloucestershire:** including Berkhamstead School, 1954; Charlton Park Convent School, 1949; Dean Close Junior School, 1954; Pate's Grammar School for Girls, 1951; Pate's Junior School, 1956 (D9511 acc 11698)

**Illman and Young Landscape Design Limited, Cheltenham:** project files for work carried out in Gloucestershire and elsewhere, c.1986-2006 (D10830, acc 11534 - *uncatalogued*)

**Naunton Park County Primary School, Leckhampton:** plan of primary and secondary school site as existing, 1980 (S78/9 acc 11720)

**Postcard album** belonging to Miss Louise Lear of Cheltenham: with some views of Cheltenham 1903-04, including 'Scene of the Winchcomb street explosion' (D11563)

**St Stephen's parish:** additional parish records including PCC minutes, 1939-2008; banns register, 1969-2005; service registers, 1979-1984, 1991-2004; papers concerning church property, appeals, finances, 1905-1999; Mothers' Union records, (1895)-2004 (P78/12 accs 11510 and 11701 - *uncatalogued*)

**Sykes Stores of Cheltenham, grocers and newsagent:** accounts, 1936-1957; photographs, c.1937-1950s showing interior and exterior of the stores and some staff members (D11593)

**Robert Tanner of Cheltenham, solicitor:** his writing book, 1811-1812 (D11756)

**YMCA:** publicity booklets and leaflets 1940s-1980s including 'Our work for the troops', Youth Training Scheme, and sports and fitness; annual reports, 1982-1988 [with gaps] (D11588 - *uncatalogued*)

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