

# Cheltenham Local History Society Journal

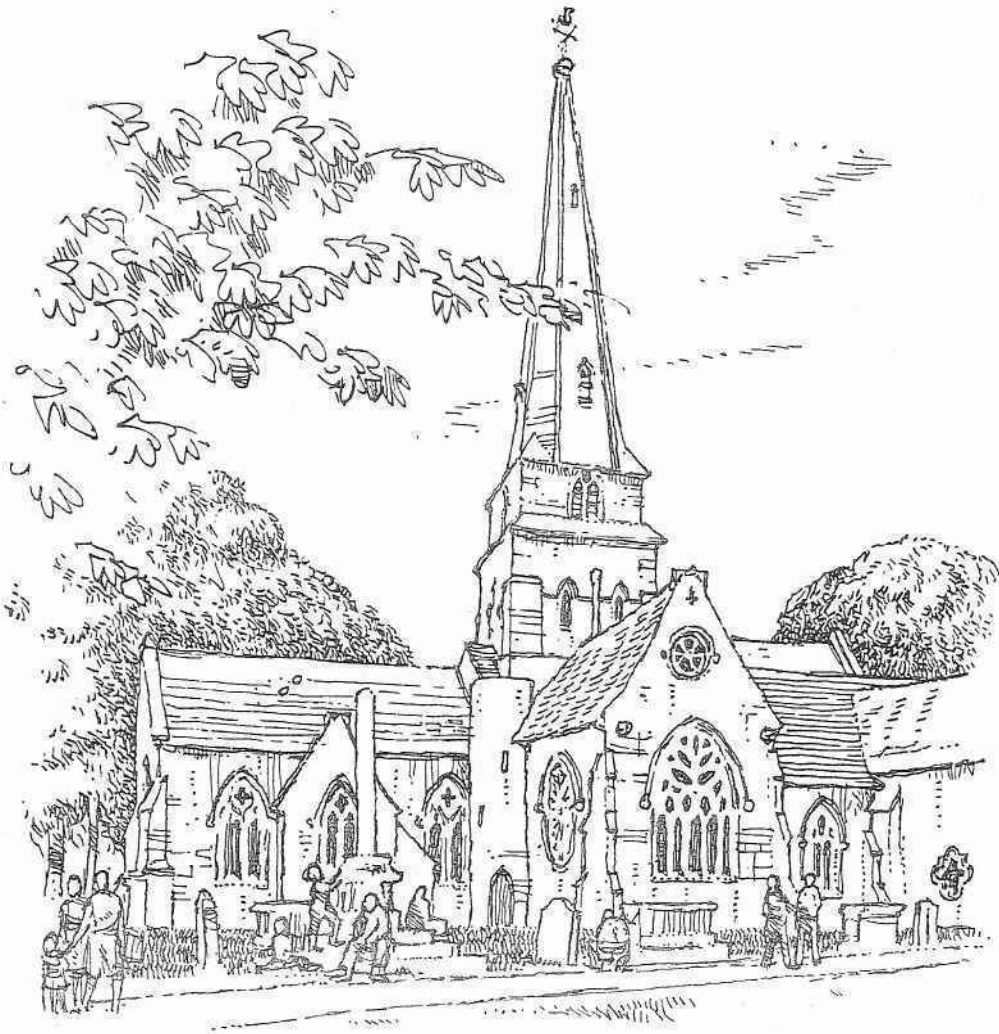
## NUMBER FOUR 1986

### Contents

Cover Illustration: The H.A. Prothero case of the All Saints Church organ; from an original drawing by Aylwin Sampson. Roy Williamson discusses the history of this and Cheltenham's other pipe organs on pages 7-10.

		<u>Page</u>
The lands of the Withington Poor Charity	Barbara Rawes	1
Squire Delabere and the Inclosure of Prestbury	Beryl Elliott	3
The Pipe Organ in Cheltenham	Roy Williamson	7
Arle House: Home of the Welch Family 1806-1945	Phyllis White	11
Gunmaking in Cheltenham since 1815: an outline chronology	Chris Howell	24
Retailing at Montpellier, 1831-1871	Ian McLean	28
Parachuting in Cheltenham, 1837-1838	Barbara Sobey	33
Liszt in Cheltenham, 1840	Lowinger Maddison	37
The proposed enlargement of Cheltenham Parish Church, 1841	Alan Munden	41
Beer, Breakfast and Bribery: electoral corruption in Cheltenham during the elections of 1847 and 1848	Adrian Courtenay	45
A short history of Thirlestaine Hall	Steven Blake	52
Artwork by Aylwin Sampson		

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Cheltenham Parish Church (St Marys),  
the proposed enlargement of which in  
1841 is discussed by Alan Munden on  
pages 41-45.

## *The lands of the Withington Poor Charity*

The Arle and Alstone Inclosure map of 1832 (1) shows two pieces of land marked 'Withington Poor'. Research into the Withington Poor Charity has produced an account of transactions in copyhold land at the Cheltenham Manor Court at the end of the 17th century.

Atkyns (1712), p. 846 tells us that 'John Rich gave 100 l. to the poor of the parish of Withington in 1679. Dr. Osborn [sic] gave 100 l. to the same use. Both sums have been laid out in the Purchase of lands in Charlton Kings. There is remaining 30 l. in stock for the Poor'. As will be shown, this statement was not true by 1712. John Rich, who died in 1677, was a member of a family long connected with the parish of Withington and Dr. William Osbourne had been Rector until his death in 1646 (2). He was succeeded by Gilbert Osbourne, a prebendary of Gloucester Cathedral. The money left by Dr. Osbourne was used to buy copyhold land in Charlton Kings; that given by John Rich appears to have been used less wisely.

A memorandum in the Withington Poor Charity Accounts Book (3) in Gilbert Osbourne's hand, dated 7th April 1648, reads 'Those two closes Newland and Cosyth in Charlton Kings were purchased for the poor people of Withington and then let out for an whole yeare to end at the Lady night for the sum of five pounds, which was received by me'. On the same date an entry in the Cheltenham Manor Court Book shows the Rector and charity trustees of Withington taking up the copyhold of 'two closes of meadow or pasture with appurtenances called Newland Copsyth containing by estimation five acres lying in Charlton Kings which Robert Gale and Frances, his wife, surrendered into the lord's hands, for the use of Gilbert Osbourne, Christopher Gardiner, Richard Lawrence and their heirs' (4).

Norden's Survey of the Manor of Cheltenham in 1617 (5) mentions these two fields among seven inclosures belonging to Nicholas Wells, totalling 17 acres. 'Copsyche' (the spelling is variable) was either pasture or arable land at that time. There are two elements in the name. 'Sich' or 'sitch' means meadow land beside a stream. The first element, 'Cop', probably refers to an early owner, John Copping, who was a base tenant in Charlton tything at the end of the 15th century (6). Otherwise this element may relate to a copse situated on the land; we have evidence that it provided 'woodfold'. The name 'Newland' suggests land enclosed from the waste at an earlier period.

The rents obtained for the Charlton Kings inclosures are itemised in the Withington Poor Book. For example:

'1658 Rec. myselfe with Thomas Longford of the widdow Mason, halfe a yeares rent for the ground belonging to the poore at Charlton - 02:00:00.  
Rec. by Thomas Longford wood fold of the grounds - 03:00:00. 1659 Rec. by Tho. Longford from John Collett for the Winter Pastuare of the aforesaid - 00:13:04'.

Timber was sold out of Copsich in 1676 and on other later occasions.

The money received in rent was used to bind out as apprentices the sons and daughters of poor families in Withington. For example, on 23 May 1661 Richard Berry, son of Richard Berry of Foxcote, became apprentice to Thomas Clevely of Cheltenham, a carpenter, who received the sum of £3 10s. 0d. and on 30 October 1663 Sarah, the daughter of Thomas Smith, was bound to George Whitring of Cubberley, husbandman, with whom was given £2. Sarah was presumably a maid servant.

The fields at Charlton Kings remained in the possession of the Withington Charity until 1690, when they were sold and other copyhold land, this time in Arle, was purchased. There appears to have been some financial trouble due to unwise investment of John Rich's legacy and the trustees decided that land was a safer investment. The Charity Book records that £50 of the purchase price was wanting because half of the legacy had been lost by the 'failure of the packers to whom it had been let out upon bond'. The 'packers' are presumably members of the Cheltenham family of that name. The rent for 'Copswich' for the years 1687 and 1688, amounting to £9, was covered by a bond from Daniel Gibbing and was also lost.

The accounts of the sale and new purchase, with all dues and expenses, are to be found in the Charity Book. The following is quoted in full as it gives an insight into the costs of a transaction in copyhold land in the Cheltenham Manor Court at this date:

'Imps paid to George Sturmy and William Roberts the sum of ninety and two pounds by John Gilman Rector of the parish of Withington being money deposited in his hands formerly given by John Rich Esq for the use of the said parish in part, and part raised out of the rents of Copswich and the interest of 50£ of Mr. Riches gift saved to the parish when the other 50£ given by him was lost by the packers to whom it was let out ---- 092:00:00.

It. paid to the sd: George Sturmy and William Roberts the sum of one hundred and seven pounds being money received by the parish from William Blake of Charlton for Copswich and Newland - - 107:00:00. It. paid to Mrs. Pates vid. for the surrender of her right to the now purchased lands aforesaid - - - - 000:10:00. It. paid to the said George Sturmy and William Roberts more for the now purchased lands aforesaid - - - - 021:00:00. It. upon account of expenses at the sale and purchase and to the bailiff of the court for writings etc - - - - 000:18:06.'

The sum of the last three items, £22 8s6d. was 'taken and borrowed out of the parish stock designed for other uses than that of the lands and from Rev. Gilman's own pocket'.

Other expenses recorded are:

'To the steward for admission and to the cryer - - - - £0.7s.6d

'To the Lord Bayliff for the fine and heriot - - - - £1.2s.0d'

The transaction is recorded in the Cheltenham Court Book on 27 October 1690 (7). John Gilman, Rector of Withington, William Looker, Simon Longford, Robert Whithorne, Samuel Longford and Edward Lawrence were admitted as tenants to two closes of meadow or pasture called Coverbreach and High Croft Fidlers in the tything of Arle for a yearly rent of £3 0s.9½d. The land had belonged formerly to John Pates and was surrendered by his widow.

In the 42 years between the purchase and resale of the Charlton Kings lands their value had increased by £7; about £100 being spent in 1648 and £107 received in 1690.

The fields in Arle were rented out in the first instance to Thomas Ashmead (for £4 5s.0d.) and to Thomas Gregory (for £4 9s.3½d.) Coverbreach was probably no. 278 on the Arle and Alstone Inclosure map. It lies on the north side of the Hatherley Brook and is now beneath the Benhall estate. Again the name has two



elements. Breach means land newly broken and implies a late development of the parish's land. 'Cover' in this case can be equated with 'culfer', a dove. High Croft Fidlers lies within the 'square' of roads shown on O.S. maps before the recent development at Fiddlers Green. It lies in the north-east quadrant not far from where medieval pottery was found during development, which may have come from Fidler's 'Croft'.

Apart from some difficulties in obtaining prompt payment of rent there is little of interest to note until 1857 when the final entry for rents of the Arle lands was made in the Withington Poor account. The land was taken over and administered by the Charity Commissioners and finally sold by them in 1862, when the expenses of the valuation amounted to £2 2s.0d.

BARBARA RAWES

#### Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Mr D. Smith, the County Archivist, for permission to quote from the documents listed below which are held in the Gloucestershire Record Office.

#### Notes:

1. G.R.O. P78/SD1.
2. I have been unable to trace the wills of either of these gentlemen.
3. G.R.O. P374/CH1.
4. G.R.O. D855/M11, opposite 26.
5. G.R.O. D855/M7.
6. G.R.O. D855/M68. See M. Paget, 'A Rental of Cheltenham Manor about 1450; the Charlton Section', Charlton Kings Local Hist. Soc. Bull. 15, 10-18.
7. G.R.O. D855/M37, 162.

#### Bibliography

R. Atkyns, The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire (1712).  
Charity Commissioners Inquiry 21, 127-8 (1829).  
John Field, English Field Names - A Dictionary (1972).

## *Squire Delabere and the Inclosure of Prestbury*

William Baghott Delabere was born in 1690 as plain William Baghott - a favourable enough start in life, for the Baghotts had long been important people in Prestbury and by this time were patrons of the living, and popularly regarded as lords of the manor (1). More prestige and wealth came to him from his mother's family; she had been Anne Delabere, and when her brother Kennard died in 1734 William inherited the Delabere property and added that surname to his own. He seems generally to have been known as Baghott Delabere, but appears on a 1751 seating plan of St Mary's church as 'Squire Delabere' (2).

In 1732, two years before this rise in his fortunes, an event of more far-reaching importance for Prestbury took place - the Inclosure of the village's

open fields and common land. What was 'Squire' Baghott's role in this? A good deal about the man and something about the implementation of the Prestbury Inclosures can be inferred from some of his account books which have survived. There is a large general account book covering both personal and business transactions, for the years 1730-46 (3) and also a printed diary for 1730, entitled 'Rider's British Merlin', which has handwritten notes against some of the calendar pages, and several spare pages at front and back crammed with farming accounts (4). The details below have been obtained from the general account book unless otherwise indicated.

The immediate impression conveyed by the accounts is of a busy and practical landowner, concerned with every aspect of his estates and household from tithes and rents to coal and baker's bills, and attempting to keep track of even the smallest outgoings:

'Paid to my wife a Guinea and Silver abt. 7s 6d -----£1 8s 6d'

He was first and foremost a farmer, keeping meticulous lists of stock bought and sold, sums received for wool and grain, or paid out for wages. Against the July page of the diary he wrote a careful analysis of haymaking costs:

'Memd. I began my Haymaking this year 22 June and ended 27 July wch. is 5 weeks. And out of that but 20 working days amongst the Hay. I paid to my Haymakers £5-6-2½ besides broken days and afternoons of plowmen and other servants. I cut 45 days Math (5) 25 of wch. was mowed by Walker and Lane my Oxman and Carter for the residue I paid £1-14-0 so that I am out of pocket cutting and makeing my Hay-----£7 0 2½  
 To old R. Knight over abt. ----- 16 8  
 £7 16 10½

So if I had 1½ Tuns of Hay to one day's Math which amts. to 67½ Tuns it comes to 2s 3 3/4d per Tun for the Cutting and Makeing'.

There is no suggestion of meanness: he paid bills for his widowed mother, laid out considerable sums in repairing and improving his own and tenants' houses, and provided his family with the luxuries of the day; red and white wine, Bohea tea at 9s. a pound, double refined sugar at £3 for 3/4 hundred-weight - also stamps, writing paper and newspapers:

'How's man for Glour. Journales ----- £0 2s 6d'

In the later years he was able to live in some style; there was 'Rattafiah', Port and Canary wine for his cellar, buckskin breeches for himself, and Blue Stuff Damask for waistcoats for his two young sons (11s.0d. for the two). He owned a chaise, bought a repeating clock, and ordered a full set of glasses from Bristol:

'One dozen wine Glasses, 4 large table beerglasses, 4 strong beerglasses, One doz. Water Glasses, One Doz. Sullibub Glasses'.

But however affluent he became, the farming accounts continued to be kept in the same careful detail.

His great passion, it seems, was horses. He often paid from £10 to £15 for a horse (a pair of oxen for ploughing cost eleven guineas) and recorded their

distinguishing marks and names - Grasshopper, Dinger, Chimney Sweeper, Cotswold Lady. Some of them at least he used for racing; he sold Cotswold Lady for the high price of £26 5s. 0d., 'and a Note of hand for £10.10s.0d. more out of the first plate or price she shall win.' Did he hunt? One would suppose so, and there is one payment in October 1741 for 'charges in getting me 5 Beagles out of Oxfordshire late Mr. Trotmans.'

From the outset, he was always devising new business schemes, though they were not always successful. In 1730 he set up a dairy, bought 'dairy Wares' and a milking pail and noted in the diary arrangements for hiring and boarding a dairy maid; for a year or two he recorded receipts from the sale of cheese. Around 1738 he was selling bricks made on his land; 46,000 were sold in that year at a price of about 1s. 3d. per hundred.

Such a man was bound to be attracted by the possibilities for more efficient farming offered by 'Inclosureing' the old common fields with their small scattered strip holdings and re-dividing the land into compact 'allotments' proportional to the number of strips and common rights previously held by each individual.

The Act of Parliament covering the Prestbury Inclosures was passed in 1730 (6); it affected some 700 acres of the old arable fields and meadowland in the valley, and also some 600 acres of former common grazing on the hill top. The Inclosure Award (7) listing the individual allotments is dated two years later. William Baghott himself was to receive the largest allotment: 100 acres on the hill and over 140 acres in various parts of the common fields. Of the other parties, his brother, Thomas Baghott, got a total of about 160 acres, Lord Craven (the true lord of the manor, see note 1) about 110 acres, the Rev. Francis Welles (the vicar) and Mr Christopher Capel about 70 acres each. No other allotment exceeded 50 acres and most were much smaller, down to amounts of less than an acre.

It seems very probable that Baghott was a prime mover in getting the Prestbury Inclosure Act through Parliament, though there is no direct evidence on this point. He certainly was closely involved in raising the necessary capital. In May 1731 he recorded:

'Recd. of my Mother Stephens a note of my hand for £12 10s I owed to her towards charge of Act of Parliamt. for Inclosureing Prestbury Common'.

This sum was only a fraction of the total cost, and almost certainly not the whole of Baghott's own contribution. Over the next three years he noted the receipt of money for this purpose from various other parties; prompt payment of accounts, large or small, seems to have been the exception in Prestbury society at this period. It appears that they contributed a sum roughly proportional to the acreage of land credited to them in the Inclosure Award:

Mr Capell	paid at least	£31	0s. 0d;	he would have about	67	acres
Mr Akerman	" "	"	£17 7s. 0d;	" " "	43	"
Thos. Waller	" "	"	£13 0s. 3½d;	" " "	36	"
R Hooper Senr	" "	"	£ 5 10s. 0d;	" " "	20	"
Robt. Fisher	" "	"	£ 4 5s. 0d;	" " "	11	"

The correspondence is not exact, but this is not surprising as the figures are probably not a complete record even for the individuals named, and other factors such as quality of land may have played a part. Overall though, it

can be seen that at least £70 was paid in respect of about 177 acres, and it can fairly be deduced that the total cost of legislation for the 1300 acres inclosed was probably a few hundred pounds.

Once the Bill was passed, Baghott lost no time in getting his portion of common land into shape. In July 1732 he paid 'Jos. Merchant... for Brestplowing and Burning 40 acres of land upon P. Hill £32 2 0d'. It must have been particularly heavy work, and attracted a considerably higher payment than ordinary ploughing - in March 1741 a certain Philip But was paid only six shillings for ploughing an unspecified acreage. The following year there is a payment of six Guineas to 'Thos. Price Carpenter for make and hanging 6 Gates and Posts etc. on the Hill'. The land acquired in the old cultivated fields also received attention over the next few years; in October 1733 Baghott paid two men to dig out a pond '30 foot Square and 4 foot Deep below the bottom of the furrow in Deadfurlong' (8) and a third workman lined it with pitch. In the same area he had 'Stockpopler' (trees) planted at Deadfurlong Barn in 1739; two years later he seems to have renewed the buildings there as he paid for 'Noging (9) my Barne and Stable at Deadfurlong'.

The Inclosure Award defines the duty of the new proprietors to fence their lands and to make and maintain 'the Mounds on the West Side and North End of each individual allotment'. That such mounds were an alternative or additional way of defining boundaries is confirmed by a reference to 'the new Mound or Fence' in a 1733 land transfer document (10) relating to a plot off Swindon Lane. Here was another source of expense; there are payments for hauling stone for the 'outer mounds' of Prestbury Hill (4s. 6d); to a mason for 'walling the North end of my Hill Inclosure' (£13 15s.0d), and also for about 7000 'Quick' at 5s. per thousand, which may perhaps have been quickthorn for hedges in the low-lying fields.

In the years immediately following Inclosure, William Baghott bought or sold several plots of land. Some of these transactions involved other comparatively prosperous land-owners, and were probably a matter of consolidating a block of land, or selling-off an isolated field, but there are at least two cases where Baghott bought small hilltop holdings of one acre or so from lesser men. From these people Inclosure had taken away the inherited right to pasture a beast or two on the common, giving in return a tiny isolated field, together with the obligation to fence or wall it; not surprisingly, some were glad to sell out. For the squire on the other hand Inclosure meant a substantial increase in productive land, and good-sized fields where he could try out new farming methods. Even so, it was no easy take-over of assets; he had devoted time, energy and money to the enterprise and would continue to do so for some years to come.

BERYL ELLIOTT

Notes:

1. The Baghott estate derived from lands given to Lanthony Priory in the 12th century; Sir Robert Atkyns in his Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire (1712) states that 'this estate was reputed a manor'. The original manor of Prestbury however was that centred on the old deerpark of the bishops of Hereford, and owned at this date by Lord Craven.
2. G.R.O. P254 CW4/1.
3. G.R.O. D1637 E1.



4. G.R.O. D1637 E2.
5. Math = mowing; cf. aftermath, originally a second crop of grass.
6. V.C.H. Glos. 8, 67.
7. G.R.O. P254a SDI.
8. From references in the Inclosure Award, Deadfurlong appears to have been in the south-west of the parish, possibly in the general area occupied today by Cleavelands Avenue.
9. Nogging = brick filling between timbers.
10. G.R.O. D184/T75.

## *The pipe organ in Cheltenham*

As a musical instrument, the organ has been known to man since the 3rd century BC and has been identified in this country since the 8th century at least. It took, however, another 1000 years before an organ appeared in Cheltenham; being an instrument used predominantly in Christian worship, it is no surprise to learn that the town's first known organ resided in the Parish Church. In his work on St Mary's, Sawyer tells us that the Rev. Fowler erected an organ at the church's west end in 1791 on the understanding that he appoint the organist and that the latter receive at least £30 per annum (1). Some eleven organs were built in Cheltenham during the 50 year period 1790-1840; of these, probably only two could be said to be of complete design and adequate size. The eleven, with year of erection and name of builder, are:-

Parish Church (St Mary)	1791	unknown
	1811	John Gray
Cheltenham Chapel	1809	Henry Cephas Lincoln
North Place Chapel	pre-1825	unknown
Holy Trinity	pre-1826	Hale & Binfield
St John	1829	John Gray
St James	1831	John Gray
Masonic Temple	1832	unknown
St Paul	1832	John Gray
Christ Church	1839	William Hill
Wesley Chapel, St Georges Street	1840	John Smith

Of the above, only the Masonic Temple organ remains in virtually original condition. It is a delightful chamber organ of four stops which has been well maintained and little altered; it is devoutly to be hoped that the owners appreciate the instrument's historical significance as Cheltenham's oldest surviving organ and maintain it accordingly.

The other ten organs listed above have disappeared or have been broken up; the pipes of a few have been used in subsequent rebuilds. For instance, the Parish Church 1811 organ, after alteration and enlargement, was finally sold to a congregation somewhere in S. Wales in 1881 (2); the 1840 Wesley chapel organ was taken in part exchange by the builder who erected a new instrument in 1902 (3); it is likely that the 1829 St John organ was razed along with the church itself in the 1960s. Investigating the fate of these organs is a fascinating pastime which can result in pleasure when an organ (or bits of it) are found to be still in use - or sadness at the destruction of a historic instrument. I give an example of each:

- a. Cheltenham Chapel: when the Presbyterians took over the building in 1858,



the organ probably fell into disuse because of their religious objections to such instruments; the organ was finally removed during the first quarter of 1863. In April/May 1863 the Methodists of Ebenezer, King Street bought from a Cheltenham musical instrument dealer named Ward an organ standing in a local hall. Conclusive proof that this was the Cheltenham Chapel organ is lacking but the time coincidence seems significant. The latter organ remained at Ebenezer until its closure in 1934 when the building was purchased by S.G. Godwin of Swindon Road. Once again an essential link is missing, but Evan Rigby of Stroud recounts that the Ebenezer organ was subsequently found dismantled in a builder's yard in Cheltenham. Some of its pipes, which are early 19th century in origin, were rescued and are today part of Mr Rigby's house organ (4).

b. St James: when erected in 1831, the Gray organ was easily the largest and most complete in Cheltenham having 3 manuals and Pedal; it cost £666 and was paid for over five years. Rebuilt in 1879 and again in 1899, it retained both its position on the west gallery and the majority of its original pipework. In 1930 the organ was moved to the north-east corner of the church. After the church's closure as a place of worship in 1972, there were unsuccessful efforts to find the organ a new home but no offer to remove it and store it as a whole was made. Unfortunately the parish authorities saw fit to allow some Cheltenham College boys to help themselves to various parts of the organ on condition that they dismantled the instrument completely so that unwanted parts could be easily collected by local scrap dealers. Thus was destroyed what can be described as Cheltenham's most notable organ of the first half of the 19th century (5).

A review of Cheltenham's organ history would be incomplete without reference to the various organ builders who set up business in the town. They merit an article to themselves but it is appropriate to single out two builders from the six so far identified who plied their trade from the early 1820s to 1950. The two are Henry Williams and the firm of A.J. Price & Sons.

Williams had been a foreman with John Gray of London before setting up on his own in Cheltenham in 1853; he worked widely in Gloucestershire, but only rarely in neighbouring counties. He built at least 20 new organs before his death in about 1881; a few survive, including just one in Cheltenham at North Place Chapel. Two other of the surviving organs now have homes respectively in Leeds and Finchley. Henry's son William continued the business until at least 1902 but seems to have restricted his activities to organ maintenance. The only known new organ to be erected by William Williams was supplied in 1883 to Great Rollright parish church, Oxon (6), and may be the one now standing in Great Tew parish church.

A.J. Price established his organ building business here in 1878 and, like Williams, operated mostly within the county. His output of new organs seems to have been surprisingly limited given that the firm was in being until 1950. Holy Trinity, Cheltenham houses one of his more notable organs and there are a couple of unaltered small instruments in nearby village churches. Regrettably, no ledgers or records from either the Williams or Price firms have survived, so the full extent of their operations will probably never be known.

The chances of an organ remaining in original condition for more than, say, 100 years are still slim despite a more sympathetic approach these days to things historic. The organ in particular has experienced other dangers, viz.

trendy organists wanting the latest refinements and church/chapel authorities with money to spend. From about 1880 to 1950 most organists were conditioned to the idea that the organ should be able to reproduce the sounds of an orchestra; the fact that the organ is an instrument in its own right and built on long-established and well tried principles had been largely forgotten. Nevertheless, several reputable national builders continued to produce throughout the period sound musical instruments which deserve to be retained in as near original condition as possible. Cheltenham now possesses a variety of pipe organs, some good, some bad, many of indifferent quality, a few of historic value. In conclusion, I list below those dating from before 1900 (7):

All Saints: built in 1887 by one of the foremost builders of the day, William Hill. It was much altered and enlarged in 1953 and has lost several of the original stops. Of particular note are the two cases which are easily the finest in Cheltenham; the one facing the north aisle was designed by Hill, the one facing the choir by H.A. Prothero.

Bethesda Methodist: erected in 1897 by local builder A.J. Price, this 2 manual organ is a mixture of contemporary and older pipes and mechanism.

Christ Church: built in 1897 by Hunter, a reputable London builder. The organ had 37 speaking stops and 3 manuals until 1957 when it was much enlarged. Further piecemeal changes have since been made and, like All Saints, the organ has lost its original character as a consequence. Some two thirds of the 1895 pipework is still present including a small number of pipes from the 1839 organ.

Countess of Huntingdon (North Place) Chapel: built in 1865 by the Cheltenham builder Henry Williams. It is now the only Williams organ left in the town and is fortunately still in original condition. Its tonal character is typical of that part of the 19th century, i.e. the second quarter, when Williams learned his trade as an organ builder.

Highbury Congregational: this organ was a rebuild (in 1933, the date of the present chapel) of the 33 stop instrument erected by Hunter in the former chapel (Winchcombe Street) in 1894. The present instrument is significantly smaller; it is also tonally and visually a shadow of the 1894 organ.

Holy Trinity: a 32 stop 3 manual organ was built here by Price in 1896. Although it was modernised in 1955 it retains all its original stops bar one. It is of special significance because of its builder being Cheltenham based and because it is probably Price's largest remaining instrument.

Masonic Temple: erected in 1832, probably secondhand. As noted earlier this is Cheltenham's oldest organ.

St. Aidan: originally built in 1892 by the Bristol firm of W.G.Vowles for Tytherington parish church, this organ has undergone some stop changes since its installation here in 1959. It is a small 2 manual instrument.

St. Andrew's Congregational: built by the famous Father Willis in 1886, this organ has suffered only one stop change in its 100 year existence. A 2 manual of only 14 stops.

St Luke: built in 1884 by the Sheffield firm of Brindley and Foster, this

instrument is a good example of a well-built Victorian organ. It has undergone only minor changes.

St Mark: one of the many organs built in this county by John Nicholson, the respected Worcester builder. It dates from 1872 and has retained most of its original stops but other changes and additions have robbed it of any special significance.

St Mary (Parish Church): another John Nicholson organ, this one slightly larger than St Mark's and dating from 1882. Here is a perfect example of how not to site an organ, built as it is at roof level in the south transept instead of an open situation, such as the west end. Most of the original stops remain but major changes in 1970 have deprived it of real historical interest.

St Mary, Prestbury: built in 1871 by the notable London firm of J.W. Walker. It is a small 2 manual organ.

St Matthew: another Father Willis organ, part of which dates from 1866, the remainder from 1879 (the year the church was erected). It has 39 speaking stops and 3 manuals and retains all but a few of its original pipes. The Pedal section was enlarged in 1974 and one other stop change made. It remains a quality instrument of historical significance.

St Paul: an average sized 3 manual organ which has grown out of earlier instruments. It may still contain some Gray pipes dating from the 1830s but little historical character remains.

SS Philip & James: here, as in Christ Church, Hunter built a 3 manual organ in 1895 but with fewer stops - 31 compared with 37. Unlike Christ Church, this organ remains in its original state and is a good example of conservative Victorian organ building.

St Stephen: built by Alfred Monk, a London builder, in 1884 as a 3 manual instrument but with one manual devoid of stops until Norman & Beard rebuilt the organ in 1912. Of the organ's present 32 speaking stops, 21 are of 19th-century vintage.

Unitarian Chapel: the chapel acquired this small organ in 1844 and there is unsubstantiated evidence that it had previously stood in a Wesleyan chapel in Gloucester. If this is so, then it dates from about the first quarter of the last century. It has been altered over the years but the majority of the pipes making up its 5 stops are probably original.

ROY WILLIAMSON

Notes:

1. J. Sawyer, Cheltenham Parish Church (1903), 111.
2. Gloucester Journal, 16 July 1881.
3. Messrs Nicholson & Co., Worcester, ledger entry for July 1902.
4. Cheltenham Examiner, 21 Jan. 1863: G.R.O. D3418/2/6/1.
5. St. James' parish records.
6. Gloucester Journal 20 Nov. 1883.
7. Information drawn from copies of the Cheltenham Examiner, organ builders' records, parish and chapel records held both locally and in the G.R.O., documents held in the Cheltenham Reference Library.



## *Arle House: home of the Welch family, 1806 to 1945*

Arle House was built c. 1806 by John Gregory Welch, for his own occupation, 'at Very Great Expense' according to sale particulars of some 50 years later. It was demolished c. 1960 by Cheltenham Borough Council, who had purchased it in September 1945, together with stables, lodge-house, four cottages and other buildings, plus 13,677 acres of land, for £6000.

Sale particulars drawn up by Messrs. Rushworth and Jarvis of London in August 1854, described Arle House as:

'a substantial, handsome and commodious family mansion with offices, stabling, pleasure grounds, gardens, conservatory, vinery, orchard and meadow land, situate about a mile from the town of Cheltenham, forming a suitable abode for a FAMILY OF THE HIGHEST RESPECTABILITY desirous of combining the enjoyment of the Society, and numerous attractions and advantages of this fashionable Watering Place, with the seclusion of a Country Residence. A handsome Square Edifice, stuccoed in imitation of stone, The South Front is decorated by a Projecting Portico, standing upon a Flight of Steps, surmounted by a Verandah, and forming the Principal Entrance to the House. The interior is well planned, simple, but chaste in design, the Principal Apartments well proportioned and lofty'. (1)

From these particulars, and the illustration of the house on the estate map which accompanies them (Fig. 1) a good description of the house may be gained. The house was three storeys high. The principal floor had a paved hall, with folding entrance doors, a drawing room, a dining room, a library, a study or gentleman's morning room, and a children's school room. On the middle floor were four bedchambers, a dressing room, and a spacious landing, with a door to a secondary staircase. On the upper floor were four more rooms suitable for family bed chambers and nurseries, a spacious landing and two servants' sleeping rooms, approached by a secondary staircase. Below stairs, the domestic apartments consisted of a servants' hall, a store room or butler's pantry, a kitchen and a scullery. In the basement were a butler's pantry, china pantry, larder, and extensive dry cellaring for wine, beer and coals.

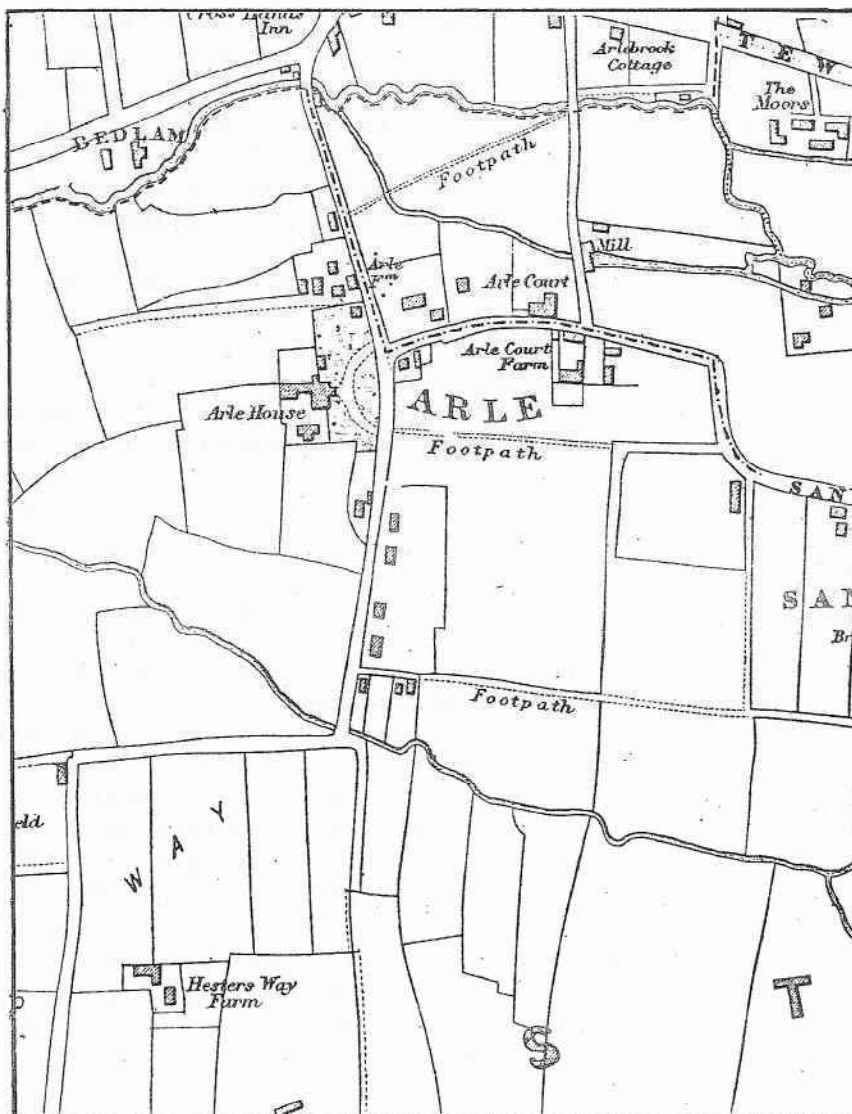
Outside, connected to the house by a covered way was a summer kitchen, a large wash-house fitted also as a brewery and bakehouse, with wood stores adjoining, over which were a laundry and laundry maid's bedroom, and a yard with coal and ash pens, a large rainwater cistern and servants' privies. The Carriage and Stable Yard was removed from the house, and contained two four-stall stables, a coach-house, and two harness rooms, over which was an extensive range of lofts, suitable for conversion to a coachman's dwelling or groom's sleeping rooms. At the rear of the stabling was a piggery, a pony shed, and a small flower garden at the south end, with a shed.

The mansion and offices were supplied with spring water, and had a walled kitchen garden, planted with fruit trees, in which there was a stove and tool house, a melon ground and a vine-house and conservatory. At the back of the

house was a large orchard, and at the front a lawn with a broad carriage drive, at the entrance to which stood a small lodge-house which accommodated the gardener and his family. The whole of the premises was enclosed by a lofty brick wall.

George Asser White Welch was the occupier of the house, and in addition to the sale of same, part of the estate was also included in Lot 1 - an enclosure of 13 acres, 2 roods and 27 perches, a cottage and two brick-built tenements, with gardens, all in a ring fence.

Lot 2 - adjoining Lot 1, was a dairy farm known as 'Gregory's' or 'Home Farm', comprising a brick-built dwelling house, containing, on the upper floors, ten rooms, and on the ground floor, two sitting rooms, kitchen, wash house, dairy, pantry and cellaring. Adjoining were a mill room and cyder store, with a granary and lumber room over. In the grounds were a dovecot, orchards, and various outbuildings, including piggeries, fowl houses, barns, stables and cattle yards. Two brick-built cottages, each containing four rooms, with gardens, were also included, together with land totalling approximately 130 acres.



Arle House and its surroundings, from Bacon's 1885 Plan of Cheltenham; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Library.



The name of this property was later changed to Arle Farm, and it is still known as that today. The house is in the occupation of a Mr. J.H. Street, who for some years ran a riding school from the premises, but within the last decade the land has been purchased by Cheltenham Borough Council, and much has been built upon, by the Council and some private developers, the whole being known collectively as 'Arle Farm'. In addition to Arle Farm, Hester's Way Farm was also offered for sale in 1854. This was acquired by Cheltenham Borough Council c.1950, and is now known as the 'Hester's Way Estate'.

In its comparatively short existence of some 156 years, Arle House was home to several generations of the Welch family, but it was the Gregory family who had farmed the land in Arle and Alstone, both as copy- and free-holders for centuries, and entries for their baptisms, marriages and deaths are to be found in the registers of the parish church of St Mary's, Cheltenham, from earliest times (2). Priests were first ordered to keep such records in 1538, and this task was carried out more conscientiously by some than others. The Cheltenham registers begin in 1588, and on the very first page of same there is recorded the marriage of Richard Gregorie and Agnes Higgess. The following year, 1589, there are two more Gregorie marriages - Jone (Joan) Gregorie to John Carpenter, and Robert Gregorie to Mawd (Maud) Kempe - so it is reasonably safe to assume from this evidence, that the Gregorys had been well established in the area for some time.

Even earlier evidence of their presence is the will of John Gregory of Arle, Husbandman, made on 3 February 1573 (3). John, who died at Arle in the following year, 1574, desired to be buried in the churchyard of Cheltenham, and left to the parish church 3s.4d. To the poor of Cheltenham he left 20s, to John Yevans, the curate, 2s.8d., to Henri Hurste the clerk 2s., and to John Nychols the bellman, 2s. John Gregory does not mention a wife, but to his sister Margaret he left '20 sheepe worthe 3s.4d. a peece', a cow worth 26s.8d. plus £6 13s.4d. of 'good money'. The same is bequeathed to his sister Ales (Alice), but it may be that she was young and unmarried, as he decreed that she should receive the sume of 13s.4d. yearly, until the money be paid, and should she die before this was paid, it should not be paid to her husband, nor to any other. To his father he left his best bullock, one cow, and ten sheep, and to his brother William, one mare. To Elinor Foxe, his sister, he left a black colt, and to Yedeth (or Judith) Foxe, his goddaughter, one heifer. To his sister Johan (Joan) he left 'my term of years more which I have on the Close which I took of Richard Clarke and Thomas Matthews.'

What makes this an even more interesting document is the fact that John Gregory mentions the names of many of his contemporaries: 'Edward Packer oweth unto me 40s., Thomas Packer oweth me a certain sum of money as is mentioned in a bill from his hand'. Ales and Robert Milton, who are mentioned in Thomas Packer's own will as 'of the howse by the mill' (at Arle); Thomas Sturme; Thomas Higgs; and of course the Grevilles. John Gregory left 'To Yedeth the daughter of Mrs Greville one ewe with her lambs worth 6s.' (4). Robert Bycke and Robert Milton were the executors of John Gregory's will, and 'for their paines I give unto them 3s. 4d. a peece'. John Yevens the curate and Henri Hurste the clerk were the witnesses, so most probably the latter was also the scribe.

#### The Gregory/Welch Connection

On 3 September 1748, John Gregory of Arle, Bachelor, 'aged 35 years and

upwards', applied for a Licence to marry Mary Butt of Chalford, Spinster, 'aged 34 years and upwards'. The place of the marriage was given as Bishops Cleeve. Mary Butt was the daughter of William Butt of Bisley, where she was baptised on 17 June 1713. John Gregory was most probably the son of John Gregory, baptised at St Mary's Cheltenham, on 21 July 1712. William Butt was a member of the family of the same name who had been prosperous cloth manufacturers in the Stroud Valley for centuries, but with the decline of the industry, many of them, in an effort to preserve the fortunes they had made, began to invest their money in land and property. Branches of the Butts were already established as yeomen and husbandmen at such places as Norton and Standish.

In spite of Bishops Cleeve being the stated place for the marriage, in actual fact it took place in the church of St John the Baptist, Elmore, on the River Severn, though why this rather obscure place was chosen for the ceremony in preference to Bishops Cleeve, Bisley or even Cheltenham is something of a mystery:

'John Gregory, Gent, of the parish of Cheltenham and Mary Butt of Chalford in the parish of Bisley were married by licence September 27 1748' (5)

The marriage settlement of Mary Butt, dated 15 September 1748, is especially interesting (6). William Butt paid John Gregory £800 in cash - no mean sum in the mid-18th century, which suggests that this was an arranged marriage, particularly as both bride and groom were of a rather more mature age than is usual for a first marriage. In case Mary should survive her husband, William Butt insisted on some provision for her maintenance in widowhood, and John Gregory conveyed to Mary Butt, as his intended wife, 'All those parcels of Meadow or Pasture ground lying or being in Arle'. These included fields by the name of Barbridge, Irelands, Arle Meadow and two roods in the east end of 'a certain meadow called Kingsmead', names which still made up the acreage of the 20th-century Arle Farm. It also confirms that 'Gregory's' or 'Home Farm' was the home of the family for centuries, and that in spite of their marriage at Elmore, John and Mary Gregory made their home in Arle. In view of this the baptism at St. Mary's, Cheltenham on 2 May 1751 of 'Mary the daughter of John Gregory' must be that of their daughter and only child, whose marriage, some 22 years later would unite the Gregory and Welch families.

On 28 June 1751 an entry in the register of St Mary's Cheltenham reads: 'Martha the wife of John Gregory buried', which presumably refers to Mary Gregory (nee Butt), who, it would appear, had died as a result of giving birth to her daughter.

John Gregory of Arle was buried at Cheltenham on 6 June 1782, and on 15 June that year Mary Welch appeared in person before the Manor Court of Cheltenham, held at the Lamb Inn (7). As daughter and heir of John Gregory, late of Arle, a Customary Tenant of the Manor, she claimed 'all Messuages, Lands, Tenements, Heriditaments whatsoever, of which the late John Gregory died seized'. On payment of a fine of £5 13s.6d., the Deputy Steward, Thomas Markham, granted the property to Mary Welch, the rent of which was, yearly, £2.16s.9d. 'to be paid at the days usual by equal portions' - the fine being double the yearly rent.

Mary Gregory had been the wife of Walter Welch of Brimpsfield for nearly ten years when her father died. Walter Welch had applied for a Licence to marry her on 2 November 1773, and the marriage had taken place at St Mary's, Cheltenham 23 November 1773. Walter Welch was in court that day with his wife, and after she had been granted the tenancy of the Manor of Arle, she surrendered same, and it was then granted to her and Walter, and after their decease to the use of their children, John Gregory Welch and Mary Butt Welch and their heirs.

John Gregory Welch (1775-1874)

Born 16 February 1775, baptised 5 June 1775 at St Mary's, Cheltenham, John Gregory was the eldest child of Walter and Mary Welch, named, not after his father as was the usual custom, but after his maternal grandmother. A sister, Mary Butt - named after her maternal grandmother - was baptised on 25 April 1777. Other children followed - a William and two Sophias - but all died soon after birth, and Mary Welch herself was buried at Cheltenham on 9 December 1782.

In 1790 Walter Welch, widower, married Ann White, spinster, at St Mary's, Cheltenham, by licence. Ann was the daughter of John White Esq., a yeoman of Alstone, in the parish of Cheltenham, and this marriage united the two families of White and Welch. Meanwhile, Thomas White Esq. (baptised 10 April 1751, the son of John White, churchwarden and his wife Ann Wills, the daughter and heiress of Francis Wills, Yeoman of Alstone) married on 11 June 1773, at St Mary's, Cheltenham, by Licence, Frances Asser Drew, the sole surviving child of Elizabeth Asser Davies of North Shoebury and Southchurch in Essex and Thomas Drew, of Dartmouth Street, London S.W.1, Lieut-Col. of the 1st. Regiment of Essex Militia. Frances Asser Drew was the great-granddaughter of George Asser of Southchurch Hall, Essex, who had purchased the manors of North Shoebury and Southchurch in 1722, which had passed down through the female line to Frances Asser Drew (8).

The only surviving child of the marriage of Frances Asser Drew and Thomas White was their daughter, also Frances Asser, born in Prestbury, (she said later she believed it was in November 1780) and baptised at St Mary's, Cheltenham, on 10 January 1781, and so once again the Essex estates descended to a female - an event which was, later, to be extremely fortunate. With the marriage of John Gregory Welch to Frances Asser White, the connection between the Gregorys, the Whites, the Assers, and the Welchs was firmly cemented.

Although John Gregory Welch gave his place of residence as Dursley, the ceremony took place at St Mary's, Cheltenham, and the entry in the Bishops' Transcripts (9) reads:

'John Gregory Welch of Dursley in the County of Gloucester Bachelor and Frances Asser White of the parish of Cheltenham Spinster were married in this Church By Licence this 28th day of September in the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Seven by me: Benjamin Capel Hemming, Off. Minister.

Both John Gregory Welch and Frances Asser White signed their names.

Wit: Thomas Packer Butt  
Mary Butt Welch



The couple were to have thirteen children in all, and Frances began by presenting her husband with three sons in a row, all baptised at St James the Great, Dursley. The following four children were baptised at Staverton, the next three at St Mary's, Cheltenham, two more at Staverton, and the last, a daughter, Harriett, back at Cheltenham in 1822. Not all survived to adulthood - but by way of commemoration of the uniting of these Arle and Alstone families, their eldest son, and all subsequent eldest sons bore the name of George Asser White Welch.



Arle House, from the 1854 estate particulars; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire Record Office.

John Gregory Welch first appears at Dursley in a 'List of Inhabitants' in 1796 (10) when he would have been just 21 years of age. His education seems to have been by private tutor, and there is no record of him ever attending a university, but there is reason to think that he may have been articled to a solicitor at Dursley, although there is no documentation to confirm this. In 1800, three years after his marriage to Frances Asser White, the couple were living in some style at Dursley, for in the Land Tax for that year he was paying a General Tax amounting to £9 4s. per annum, for a house with 23 windows, the rent of which is shown as £16. In addition, 10s.8d. was levied on other inhabited houses, and duty on one male servant was £1 10s. He was not liable to tax on a carriage with wheels, or carts, but he is shown as owning one cavalry horse, and paying duty on horses for riding or driving a carriage, with 4 or 2 wheels, at £1 4s. He also paid 4s.0d. for one dog (11).

By 1804 John Gregory Welch's name had disappeared from the Dursley list of inhabitants and his name is recorded in the Land Tax returns for Staverton, where he was living in what appears to be slightly more modest accommodation than before, as the tenant of one Joseph Pearce, who as owner of the property was paying the Land Tax of £4 4s.3d. per annum, for same (12). It must have been about this time that the possibility of building his own house became a reality to John Gregory Welch. With a steady income from the Essex estates, together with that from land in Arle and Alstone, he must have viewed the prospect with considerable enthusiasm, particularly with his ever increasing family. Regretfully no building records have survived, but Arle House is said to have been built c. 1806, at a cost of £16,000, possibly an exaggerated sum, but the one claimed as correct by the auctioneer when describing the house at the sale in 1854, when, it is particularly interesting to note, the house, 13 acres of land, and Gregory's farm, with house, and 130 acres of land, were all 'knocked down' for the sum of £12,440.

It is difficult to pin-point with accuracy exactly when John Gregory Welch and his family actually moved into the newly-built Arle House, and it is equally difficult to decide exactly when he was forced to leave it. In 1837 he was residing in France, described as 'Outlawed' and indebted to William Hayward Cox for the sum of £700, together with arrears of interest, from 1 June 1833. The Rev. W.H. Cox had commenced proceedings against him in the Queens Bench - Easter term 1837, and the case was pending (13). Sadly, the Rev. Hayward Cox (14) was only one of John Gregory Welch's creditors - a list compiled on 22 April 1837 showed him to have debts totalling almost £10,000, and owing money to various banks, private persons, tradesmen, and even the wages of two of his servants, male and female, which amounted to a sum equal to more than one year of domestic wages at that time. Obviously he was obliged to leave the country to avoid his creditors and/or prison.

It would appear that John Gregory Welch was, if nothing else, declared a bankrupt, and in May 1838 some creditors, mostly the tradesmen and those owed lesser sums of money, accepted part-payment of the debts - 10s. in the £ - to be paid out of money raised by a family arrangement, with consent of their five children. The remaining debts - being the much larger amounts - were to be repaid at the rate of £500 per annum, out of the 'divers freehold lands and tenements in the County of Essex, of large annual value'. Interest of £5 per cent per annum was to be computed after the death of John Gregory Welch in case Frances Asser his wife should survive him. Mary Gardiner, Jane Agg Gardner, William Pitt and James Agg Gardner Esq., seem to have been the guarantors to the arrangement.

Included in the 'family arrangement' was, obviously, Arle House, as John Gregory's Welch's eldest son George A.W. Welch and his family were in occupation, whilst John Gregory, his wife Frances and their daughters were living in Slate House, Tenby, South Wales. In a letter from there (15) to his Solicitors, Messrs. Newmans of Cheltenham, dated 5 February 1839, John Gregory wrote:

'As my pocket is getting very low and I have several payments to make for coal etc. in the course of the next few days I shall feel obliged if you will favour me with a remittance the first opportunity...'

He goes on to say that he had hopes of seeing you 'ere this' but because he has been suffering with rheumatism and gout he had not been out of the house



for six weeks, and 'it will be sometime before I am equal to undertake the journey':

'I am told this is one of the worst places in the world for persons in the winter who are subject to rheumatism etc. it being so damp. I certainly shall not remain here another winter. I think of going to Ilfracombe in Devonshire as the expense will be trifling as there are Steam Packets from this to Swansea and from thence to Ilfracombe, which will make a wonderful difference as we shall be able to take all our luggage with us with very little expense'.

Apparently there had been some discussion as to the possibility of raising the rents of some of his tenants, and he remarked:

'I am certain he (a Mr. Hall) could get at least £500 as the tenants he proposed raising are not the only persons who could afford to pay more...'

and he ends his letter:

'I am sorry to say Mrs Welch and two of my daughters are great invalids and are attended by a medical gentleman of this place. When you next see my son John tell him I shall be glad to hear from him.'

In another letter, dated 16 April 1839, John Gregory Welch begins:

'I shall feel obliged by your remitting me some cash at your earliest convenience, as I owe my landlord a quarters rent and several other persons in the town I wish to settle with...'

He goes on to refer to the Railroad Company and hopes they are satisfied and have paid the purchase money, and adds that he supposes they will pay rent for the land up to the time of purchase, as if not 'I shall be minus so much out of my half year's rent.' He also mentions that he accepted 3 Bills drawn by Ridler, but he has not the slightest recollection of the amount of each bill, or when they will become payable, and he hopes that 'you (Newman) have been able to make better terms with the firm and the money is now paid and the bills destroyed'. This letter concludes:

'Mrs. Welch and my daughters beg to be remembered to you and begs me to say that they are looking forward with pleasure for the time to arrive when their money will become payable...'

His unmarried sons, Walter and John, seem also to have inherited their parents' lack of financial sensibility. In another letter, John Gregory Welch says:

'I am not at all surprised that Walter cannot manage to live within his Present Income at a place like Cheltenham, altho' it is nearly as cheap there as here (Tenby) except in Fish and Poultry. I will thank you to let him have twenty pounds to pay his bills and caution him to be as economical as possible. At the same time I will thank you to remit John a Five Pound Note in addition to his present allowance as it will not do to let him have more at one time or I know what the consequence would be...'

The letter ends with a rather intriguing sentence:

'I shall hope to hear from you by return of post to say how I am to act in the event of my not being able to see our Clergyman before the month is expired...'

In 1830 John Gregory junior was working as, or with, a solicitor at Broadway in Worcestershire. He married, at Dursley, on 5 January 1830, Anne Bloxsome, the daughter of Edward Bloxsome a Dursley solicitor, but by 1831, when their daughter Georgina Anne was baptised, John Gregory and Anne had separated. Mrs Gregory was, apparently, living with a 'man of property' and the future of Georgina their daughter was the subject of several letters written by various solicitors.

In April 1838 John Gregory junior was living at 21 Manchester Walk, Cheltenham, and Messrs. Buckmaster of New Burlington Street, London, were requesting payment of an account for £20 3s.6d. - and later 'respectfully persisting' as the account had been outstanding since 1832/3.

In August 1839 it seems that John Gregory senior's health had improved and he was planning a trip to Arle, but, as usual, he was financially embarrassed. He addressed another request to his solicitors in Cheltenham:

Thursday 25th Augt. 1839

Dear Sir,

At present it is my intention of leaving this for Arle on Saturday next by packet provided you will furnish me with the means of doing so - There are several little bills I wish to settle in the Town before I start - therefore will feel obliged by your remitting me 30 or 40 £ by return of post. As I hope to see you in a few days I shall not say more at present,

And remain Dear Sirs

Yours truly,

J.G. Welch

If you should happen to see John or Walter have the goodness to mention to them not to be surprised if they should see me at Arle this day week -

Much later, but still at Tenby, on 6 November 1839, after his return from Arle, he wrote again to Messrs. Newman's telling them that he had had a letter from Walter saying he and John had not received the money as promised, and instructing them to pay it 'out of the £35 which was the sum I received when I sold the pianoforte to Mr Gwinnett'. He added:

'I am of the opinion that my son Walter could live as cheaply in Cheltenham as any other place, if he lived a different life to what he does now.'

The visit to Arle would seem to be confirmed by his next instructions to Newmans:

'Ask George if the greenhouse has been painted? I gave directions to Mead (the Plumber) before I left Cheltenham to set about it as

soon as possible. Also the floorcloth on top of the verandah in the front of Arle House, or woodwork will be injured. Floorcloth is to be painted with two coats.'

From this it would seem that, in spite of his exile, John Gregory Welch continued to take an interest in the house which he had built, but sadly he seems never to have lived in it again as the owner. In the Cheltenham Annuaires of 1843-5 a John Gregory Welch is shown living at 7 Clarence Square and in 1846 at nearby Southend House, in Prestbury Road. Presumably this was then the family home as the Cheltenham Free Press carried the announcement of the death of Louisa Maria there on 31 August 1845, aged 32 years, and, two years later, that of John Gregory, second son of John Gregory Welch, after a lingering illness, on 8 January 1847, aged 47 years.



Southend House, Prestbury Road

At the time of the 1851 Census, John Gregory and Frances Welch were living at 1 York Place, Bath Road, together with their four unmarried daughters - Caroline (aged 42), Elizabeth (aged 34), Emma Matilda (aged 32), and Harriett (aged 28). There were also four female servants. Frances was registered blind. Just over a year later Frances died there, and the Cheltenham Looker-On recorded her death on 22 May 1852:

'Died May 18 at 1, York Place, Bath Road, Frances Asser, wife of John Gregory Welch, Esq. in her 72nd year.'

Less than two years later, the Looker-On of 14 January 1854 recorded the death of her husband:

'Died January 12th at 1, York Place, Cheltenham John Gregory Welch Esq., late of Arle House, a Magistrate of the County of Gloucester, in his 79th year, severely and deeply regretted by his family and friends.'

THE GREGORY/WELCH CONNECTION

John Gregory

John Gregory  
Gent. of Arle  
Bap.  
Bur 8 June  
1782

= Mary Butt  
of Chalford.  
dau. of William Butt of Bisley  
Bap. 17 June 1713  
M. 27 Sep 1748 (Lic.) Elmore  
Bur.

William Welch  
of Brimpsfield  
D. 6 Oct 1748  
aged 72 yrs.  
Yeoman

= Margaret Biggs  
dau. of Walter & Priscilla  
D. 27 Dec. 1749  
Aged 77 yrs.

Mary Gregory =  
Bap 2 May 1751  
M. 23 Nov 1773  
(Lic)  
D. 9 Dec 1782

Walter Welch =  
Bap. 3 Oct 1748  
Bur. 1 Apr 1808  
Aged 60 yrs.

= Ann White  
dau. of John White Esq. of Alstone.  
M. 28 Oct 1790 (Lic)

William  
Bap. 14 Sep  
1791  
D. same day

William  
Bap. 20  
Sep 1793

Richard

John Gregory Welch  
Born 16 Feb 1775  
Bapt 5 Jun 1775  
Cheltenham  
Died 12 Jan 1854  
Aged 79 years  
1, York Place,  
Bath Road,  
Cheltenham.

= Frances Asser White  
Dau. & heiress of  
Thomas White Esq.,  
of Alstone, Chelt.  
Bapt. 10 Jan 1781  
Cheltenham  
Marr 28 Sep 1797  
Died 18 May 1852  
Aged 72 years  
1, York Place,  
Cheltenham.

Mary Butt  
Bap. 25 Apr  
1777  
Mar 11 Feb  
1811  
D. 14 Nov 1874  
Aged 98 yrs.

= William Farmer  
Esq.  
of Swindon, Wilts.

William  
Bur 26  
Dec 1777

Sophia  
Bap.  
14 Sep  
1779  
Bur  
1 Nov  
1781

Sophia  
Bap. 1  
Apr.  
1782

George Asser White  
Born 13 Jan 1800  
Bapt 21 Feb 1800  
Dursley  
Died 8 Feb 1874  
Aged 74 years  
Arle House.

John Gregory  
Born  
Bapt 21 Sep 1801  
Dursley  
Died 8 Jan 1847  
Aged 45 years.  
South End House,  
Cheltenham.

Walter  
Born 4 Dec 1802  
Bapt 12 Feb 1803  
Dursley  
Died 5 Mar 1863  
Aged 60 years  
Stanway Cottage,  
Prestbury, Chelt.

Frances Ann  
Born  
Bapt 17 Aug. 1804  
Staverton  
Died 31 May 1825  
Aged 21 years  
Arle House.

Thomas White  
Born 24 Feb 1806  
Bapt 20 Apr 1806  
Staverton  
Died 7 Apr 1891  
Aged 85 years  
St. Mark's,  
Cheltenham.

Charles Augustus  
Born 28 Mar 1807  
Bapt 2 Aug 1814  
Staverton  
Died 22 Oct 1823  
Aged 16 years  
Arle House.

Caroline Mary  
Born 16 Mar 1809  
Bapt 2 Aug 1814  
Staverton  
Died 1 Jan 1892  
Aged 82 years  
14 Royal Cres.,  
Cheltenham.

Henry  
Born 3 Sep 1810  
Bapt 13 Aug 1815  
Cheltenham  
Died 1 Mar 1820  
Aged 10 years  
Arle House.

Harriett  
Born 27 Oct 1822  
Bapt 3 Feb 1823  
Cheltenham  
Died 16 Sep 1854  
Aged 32 years  
14 Royal Crescent,  
Cheltenham.

Emma Matilda  
Born 15 Jan 1819  
Bapt 22 Nov 1819  
Staverton  
Died 31 Dec 1888  
Aged 69 years  
14 Royal Cres.,  
Cheltenham.

Elizabeth Gregory  
Born 2 Aug 1816  
Bapt 22 Nov 1819  
Staverton  
Died 3 Jan 1895  
Aged 79 years  
14 Royal Cres.,  
Cheltenham.

Henrietta  
Born 3 Mar 1815  
Bapt 13 Aug 1815  
Cheltenham  
Died 1 Aug 1822  
Aged 7 years  
Arle House.

Louisa Maria  
Born 7 Mar 1813  
Bapt 13 Aug 1815  
Cheltenham  
Died 31 Aug 1845  
Aged 32 years  
South End House,  
Cheltenham.



In his will, dated 2 November 1853, John Gregory Welch asks 'to be buried in my vault in Cheltenham Church in which others of my family have been buried' and directed that his funeral should be 'plain and attended with as little expense as maybe.' He left £10 each to his son George, to buy a mourning ring, and to his sister, Mary Butt Farmer. All his other goods, chattels and personal estate was to be shared between his sons Walter and Thomas White, 'George my eldest son having been well provided for', and by his four remaining daughters (16).

Harriett, the youngest of John Gregory and Frances Welch's thirteen children, died on 11 September 1854, and her remaining three sisters went to live at 14 Royal Crescent, where Emma Matilda died in 1888, aged 69; Caroline Mary in 1892, aged 82; and Elizabeth Gregory Welch in 1895, aged 79. Their brother Walter died at Stanway Cottage, Prestbury in 1863, and his obituary describes him as 'late Lieutenant 20th Regiment'. Thomas White Welch died at Mersham Villa, St Marks on 7 April 1891, aged 85. George Asser White Welch, John Gregory Welch's eldest son, died at Arle House on 8 February 1874.

Arle House was still in the possession and occupation of the descendants of John Gregory Welch as late as June 1944, when the last George Asser White Welch died there, unmarried. In July of that year Mrs Anne Manooch Denne (nee Welch), his sister, also died, leaving only Miss Kate Brace Welch, and Mrs Margaret Eleanor Clissold (nee Welch), who were living together at 'Chadnor', Douro Road, Cheltenham. At the end of July Arle House was offered by them for sale to the Cheltenham Borough Council. It was considered suitable for a maternity home, and the Gloucestershire County Council, who were also interested, waived their claim, although in urgent need of accommodation. It was eventually agreed that Arle House should be purchased for housing purposes and made available as a maternity home, and on 6 September 1945 Cheltenham Borough Council purchased it, together with the stables, lodge-house, four cottages and other buildings, plus 13,677 acres of land, for £6000. There is no evidence to show that Arle House ever became a maternity home, and local people recall that it stood empty for a very long time. At some date it was converted into flats for the employees of Cheltenham Borough Council, who were moved into the newly-built houses on the Hesters Way estates as they became available. Arle House was demolished c.1960. On 12 January 1961, Gloucestershire County Council acquired part of the garden of Arle House, together with the lodge-house and land in total of 1.7 acres, paying the Cheltenham Borough Council £5500 for it. A home for the elderly was erected on the site and named 'Arle House'.

Mrs Margaret Eleanor Clissold (nee Welch) died on 23 December 1956, and Miss Kate Brace Welch on 30 January 1965. Between them, the two sisters left more than £60,000 to the Rector and Churchwardens of Cheltenham Parish Church, and Miss Welch requested, without imposing any legal obligations, that the money be used for the maintenance and the fabric of the church.

PHYLLIS WHITE

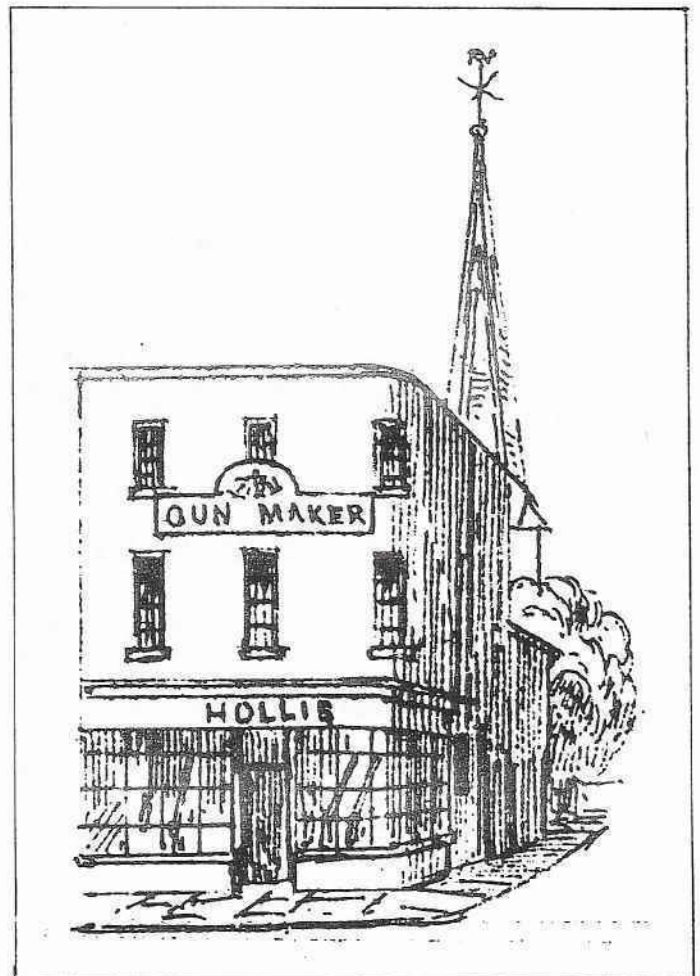
Notes:

Except where otherwise indicated the information herewithin has been extracted from the Welch Family Papers deposited in the Gloucestershire Record Office by McIlquham & Co. (D1518; 4 Boxes) and Ticehurst Wyatt & Co. (D2025; Box 78).



1. Sale Particulars, Rushworth & Jarvis 15 August 1854.
2. Cheltenham Parish Register - G.R.O. P78/1 IN 1/1-2.
3. G.R.O. Wills 1574/91.
4. M. Paget, 'The Grevil Pedigree', Charlton Kings Loc. Hist. Soc. Bull. 8, 17.  
Mrs. Greville was the widow of Francis Greville (d.1556) who was the son of Robert Greville and Margaret, daughter of John de Arle. As her second husband Mrs. Greville married Robert Milton c.1562. Edith was baptised 1555 and married Thomas Cunysbye 1584.
5. G.R.O., Parish Register of Elmore (P136 IN 1/1).
6. G.R.O., D1518 Box 3.
7. G.R.O. D855 M17 Cheltenham Manor Court Records.
8. Benton, Philip. History of the Rochford Hundred Vol. 3 (1886 & 1888).  
(Revised by R.A. Baker, Rochford Hist. Soc. 1981).
9. Cheltenham Bishops Transcripts G.R.O. V1/58.
10. Gloucester City Library - RF. 115.50 (18).
11. G.R.O. - Q/Rel Berkeley Hundred. Land Tax - Dursley.
12. G.R.O. - Q/Rel Deerhurst Hundred. Land Tax - Staverton.
13. G.R.O. D2025 Box 78.
14. In the church of St Lawrence, Swindon Village, there is a brass plaque to the memory of the Rev. William Hayward Cox. B.D. of Bishops Cleeve. He was rector of Eaton Bishop and Prebendary of Hereford (d.2 May 1871).
15. G.R.O. D2025 Box 78.
16. P.R.O. Prob 11/2195.

William Hollis' premises in Cheltenham High Street, from Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide (1845); reproduced by courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums.



## *Gunmaking in Cheltenham since 1815: an outline chronology*

Whilst not comparable in scale to that of Birmingham, the Cheltenham gunmaking trade produced high quality firearms suitable for the sportsmen of the town and surrounding country. However, any research into the activities of gunmakers is limited by the amount of information that can be extracted from trade directories, census enumerators' books and contemporary newspaper reports and advertisements (1). Entries in trade directories, being paid for by the individual, may only include the more wealthy and progressive tradesmen and may be prone to exaggeration. Another problem is one of terminology; towards the end of the 18th century the term 'smith' became derogatory and the terms 'gunmaker' and 'gun manufacturer' came into fashion. However, the 'gunmaker' was often just a tradesman who ordered the components from various craftsmen and then sub-contracted the order to fabricators who would assemble the firearm before the gunmaker's name was stamped on the gun prior to sale. The gun trade was often insufficient to provide a full time vocation and tradesmen often had a secondary occupation, such as farming, as well as stocking in their shops a wide range of sporting equipment other than guns (see Figs 1 and 2). This sometimes led to individuals being classified under various different occupations in census returns. What follows is a chronology of gunmaking in Cheltenham, as extensive as the primary sources will allow, but by no means fully comprehensive.

The CHELTENHAM GUN MANUFACTORY  
ESTABLISHED 1815:

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C. McLOUGHLIN,  
**Gun, Rifle & Pistol**  
MANUFACTURER,  
89, HIGH STREET, CHELTENHAM.

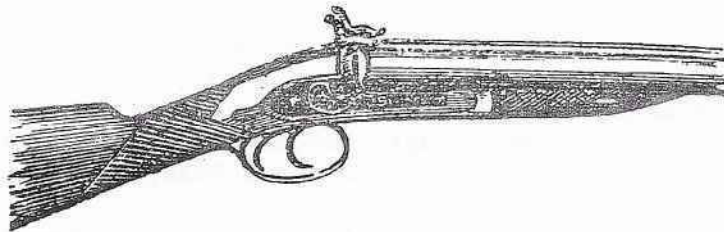
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FISHING TACKLE, &c,  
*Every description of Sporting Ammunition.*

Fig. 1: An Advertisement for Charles McLoughlin, from the 1880-1 Cheltenham Post Office Directory; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Library.



- 1815 Claimed date of establishment of the 'Cheltenham Gun Manufactory' (see Fig.1; probably William Hollis' premises).
- 1825 Earliest mention of a Cheltenham gunmaker, in Bettison's Guide to Cheltenham:- William Hollis, 347 High Street.



87, HIGH STREET, CHELTENHAM.

**E. & G. GREEN,**

MANUFACTURER OF CENTRAL FIRE, SELF-COCKING, SNAP-ACTION, AND EVERY DESCRIPTION OF  
**BREECH AND MUZZLE-LOADING GUNS,  
 RIFLES AND PISTOLS,**

*Which for simplicity and strength of construction, durability, handsome finish, good pattern and penetration in shooting, will be found unsurpassed by any other Maker.*

Pin Double-Barrel Breech Loaders, £7 to £25.

Central Fire ditto, £8, £10, £12, £16, £20, £25 and £30. The highest priced are unequalled for Materials, Workmanship and Design; the lower priced ones have good sound locks and barrels fitted, but are of plainer finish. The shooting of all guaranteed.

RIFLES built upon the most approved principles, shot and accurately sighted, prices £10, £15, £20, £25, £35.

SMALL BORE, low trajectory, single, Central Fire Rifles, sighted up to 500 yards, £3 10s., £4 10s., £5 10s.

REVOLVERS (5 to 20 shot) of every shape and size, made on the English, American, French, Italian and German principles, from 15s. to £6.

Handy Breech Loading Pistols 6 shot suitable for House Protection £2, £1 10s. 6 shot Central Fire for land or sea service, £2 10s., £3 10s., £4 10s.

10 shot £4 10s.; small size suitable for Travelling, £2, £2 10s.

GREENS IMPROVED EXTRACTING PISTOL £4 10s. WITH CASE. All kinds of Cartridges, Cartridge Cases, Implements, Ammunition, and Sportsman's Requisites kept in stock.

Bad-shooting Guns properly regulated and made to shoot well. Muzzle-loaders converted to Breech Loaders, and Pin guns altered to Central Fire.

A large assortment of best Sheffield TABLE, POCKET, and SPORTSMEN' Cutlery always on sale at unusually low prices.

Fig. 2: An advertisement for Edwinson C. Green, from the 1870-1 Royal Cheltenham Directory; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Library.



- 1826 William Hollis declared bankrupt (Cheltenham Journal 26 June 1826).
- 1830 Three gunmakers listed in Pigot's Gloucestershire Directory:-  
William Hollis, 407 High Street.  
Alexander Butler, 166 High Street.  
William Smart, 104 Albion Street.
- 1838-1847 One gunmaker listed in Cheltenham Annuaire: William Hollis, 346 High Street.
- 1841 Four gunmakers listed in Cheltenham Census:-  
William Hollis, 346 High Street; aged 43.  
Samuel Matthews, Fairview; aged 33.  
John Smart, Admiral Buildings, Winchcombe Street; aged 25.  
David North, Brunswick House, 139 Bath Road; aged 35.
- 1848-1857 William Hollis listed at 89 High Street (Cheltenham Annuaire; New Cheltenham Directory).
- 1851 Three gunmakers listed in Cheltenham Census:-  
William Hollis, 89 High Street; aged 52.  
Samuel Matthews, 17 Gloucester Place; aged 43.  
David North, Brunswick House, 139 Bath Road: aged 44.  
Hollis is listed as employing three men for gunmaking and owning five acres of land on which two labourers are employed.
- 1858-1888 Charles McLoughlin takes over from William Hollis at 89 High Street (Cheltenham Annuaire, Royal Cheltenham Directory; Cheltenham and Gloucester Directory).
- 1861 Charles McLoughlin is listed in the Cheltenham Census, aged 43, born in Ireland and employing two men.
- 1867 William Hollis dies on 22 March aged 69, and is buried at Badgeworth.
- 1870-1893 Edwinson Charles Green is listed at 87 High Street (Cheltenham Annuaire; Royal Cheltenham Directory; Cheltenham and Gloucester Directory). Green is also listed as having a premises at 4 Northgate Street, Gloucester (Smart's Gloucester Directory).
- 1871 Edwinson Charles Green is listed in the Cheltenham Census as aged 32, born in Tewkesbury, and employing one man and one boy.  
Charles McLoughlin's son, Charles junior, aged 19, is listed as working for his father.
- 1871-1873 David North, 4 Albert Cottages, is listed as a gunmaker in the Royal Cheltenham Directory.
- 1875-1876 James Wilson, 2 Bath Road, is listed as a gunmaker in the Royal Cheltenham Directory.
- 1889-1903 Charles McLoughlin is joined in business by his sons; probably Charles junior (aged 37 in 1889) and Encas (?), aged 19 in 1889. Continues to trade at 89 High Street (Cheltenham Annuaire).

- 1894 Edwinson Charles Green is joined in business by his son, probably Charles junior, aged 25 in 1894. The firm continues trading under the name Edwinson Green and Son until 1921 and as Edwinson Green and Sons until 1983, moving to 99 High Street in 1957, 77 High Street in 1961 and 55 High Street in 1963 (Cheltenham Annuaire; Royal Cheltenham Directory).
- 1905 Charles McLoughlin and Sons are replaced at 89 High Street by Cole and Sons (Cheltenham Annuaire).
- 1906 No mention of Cole and Sons in directories after this date.

William Hollis (1798-1867)

One of the most interesting Cheltenham gunmakers was William Sydney Hollis, born in Birmingham in 1798, and almost certainly part of a large family gun-making concern in that city. As well as producing high quality firearms, several of which are held in Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, Hollis was also a leading figure in the public life of Cheltenham and the local political scene. At one time or another he was a member of the local Board of Highways the Board of Guardians and the Board of Commissioners. A Unitarian, ardent temperance supporter and member of the Liberal Party for most of his life, Hollis was above all devoted to the Radical movement which had developed in Cheltenham by the start of the 19th century (2). Hollis was a frequent speaker at Mechanics Institute meetings, held in the old Presbyterian Chapel in Albion Street, and his lectures, which became increasingly political in content, helped to generate an Artisan Radicalism in the town. Described by an opponent in 1842 as ... 'politically an honest man, utterly devoid of the spirit of faction' (3), Hollis was concerned with the rifts that had developed between the working class Chartist movement, in which he was a leading local activist, and the predominantly middle class Radical organisations such as the Anti-Corn Law League, as well as the different factions which existed under the Chartist banner. After his retirement in 1858 at the age of 60, ill health forced him to play a less active role in local politics, although he continued to make contributions to newspapers such as the Radical Cheltenham Free Press and the Cheltenham Examiner. After his death on 22 March 1867, at the age of 69, an obituary in the Cheltenham Examiner, 27 March 1867, observed that 'Even now when he has retired from business several years, there are few names better known in this neighbourhood than his. By his death the Liberal Party has lost another of its staunchest members and one of the most uncompromising advocates of its principles'.

CHRIS HOWELL

Notes:

1. Problems in researching gunmakers are identified in De Wit Bailey and Douglas A. Nie, English Gunmakers (Arms and Armour Press, 1978) which provides a useful index of Birmingham and provincial gunmakers.
2. Details of Hollis' involvement with the Radical movement in Cheltenham have been taken from O. Ashton, Radicalism and Chartism in Gloucestershire 1832-1847 (unpublished PhD thesis, Univ. of Birmingham 1980).
3. Cheltenham Free Press, 10 Dec. 1842.

## Retailing at Montpellier, 1831 to 1871

This article is an attempt to outline early developments in retailing at Montpellier, as revealed by trade directories, newspapers and census returns. It is not intended to describe the building of the premises, since that has already been done (1). Principally, the area comprises Queens Circus, Montpellier Avenue, Montpellier Arcade, Montpellier Street and Montpellier Promenade (also known as Montpellier Walk). Of special interest are the last two streets, since they form two terraces, back to back.

Although the beginning of Montpellier's development as a shopping area dates from 1831-2, with the opening of Montpellier Avenue, the absence of trade directories for the years 1831-6 and the non-availability of local newspapers for 1832-4, make any assessment of the early years of retail activity difficult, and it is in the fashionable newspaper, the Cheltenham Looker-On, that the first mention of tradesmen is made. On 2 May 1835, the Looker-On noted that 'The only alteration which has been made in the pump room during the winter recess, is the conversion of one of the conservatories into a fancy sale room'. In the same issue, the re-opening of J. Abrahams' opticians was mentioned, the premises 'adjoining the rotunda'.

Even once annual trade directories are available, their quality and reliability are somewhat sketchy, since retailers were often only included if they paid a sum of money to the author. The records are, therefore, incomplete. One of the most reliable sources is the Cheltenham Annuaire, published from 1837 onwards. In that year a Mr Wakeman was listed at Montpellier Arcade. He owned a 'medical and chemical repertory' (sic) with another branch at 387 High Street (Fig 1). Also included in the 1837 Annuaire was Mr Richard Russell, selling 'rich fancy goods' at 7 Montpellier Avenue. Both the above tradesmen were included in the advertisement section of the 1837 Annuaire; however, in 1838 the Annuaire published its first listing of tradespeople. Seven shops were listed in the Arcade, plus one in Montpellier Avenue, namely:

Mrs Bick	Upholsterer	Montpellier Arcade
T. Bowen	Butcher	Montpellier Arcade
W. Harris	Greengrocer	Montpellier Arcade
J. Vaile	Auctioneer	Montpellier Arcade
J. W. Wakeman	Chemist	Montpellier Arcade
R. Slader	Cabinetmaker	14 Montpellier Arcade
Miss Wingrove	Milliner	13 Montpellier Arcade
J. Stroud	Ladies Shoes	Montpellier Avenue
Mrs Stroud	Milliner	Montpellier Avenue

The Looker-On of 5 May 1838 adds that E. S. Elliott had succeeded Mr J. W. Wakeman and had become an agent for Schweppes. Also mentioned was Mrs Langdon, a widow, selling millinery, dresses and 'fancy works'. The 1839 Annuaire listed fourteen tradespeople - eight in Montpellier Avenue and six in Montpellier Arcade. There was also the library, owned by Henry Davies, a printer and bookseller.

Montpellier Walk and Montpellier Street were not yet listed. In 1839, the Looker-On noted, on 23 June, Mr J. Abraham, 'adjoining the rotunda', selling 'photogenic paper'. Queens Circus is first mentioned in the trades section of the 1841 Annuaire, when the above noted J. Abraham, an optician, and J. & R.



Foster, confectioners, were both listed at number one. Nineteen trades were now listed in the area - ten in Montpellier Avenue and seven in the Arcade, plus the two at Queens Circus.

It was during this decade and the next that trade really began to flourish at Montpellier. By 1843 there were seven more trades listed at Queens Circus, and 25 in the whole area. Not all the shops had numbers; often only the street name was shown. This was the case in the 1842 Annuaire, when Montpellier Walk was first mentioned. The first two traders in the directory were C.Hale (music seller) and P.Caffieri & Sons (wine merchants). However, Goerge Rowe's Guide of 1845 suggests that other shops were present before this date. It states that 'adjoining the pump room and continuing a little way down, are some shops devoted to the sale of fancy articles. The uppermost is Mr Davies' Montpellier Library' (2). In the 1844 Annuaire five traders, none with shop numbers, are listed for Montpellier Walk. They were P.Caffieri, C.Hale, H.Davies (all previously mentioned), H.Karo (fancy bazaar) and A.Salomon (ladies shoe warehouse). Also in 1844, Montpellier Street is mentioned for the first time - Mr Brasier (grocer) and B.Abbott (grocer) being listed. It should be added, as is stated in The Royal Cheltenham and County Directory of 1872 that 'Many of the houses [of Montpellier Street] are but the backs of Montpellier Walk' (3) and so are only listed once.



Queens Circus

One of the most substantial listings of trade occurs in the 1847 Annuaire. Forty-two shops are mentioned, some joint-owned and some traders owning more than one shop. The complete breakdown of professions is as follows:-

Silk Mercers (4)	W.Hall (5 Queens Circus); G.Hacker (6 Queens Circus); J.Isaacs (6 Queens Circus); Crux & Chillcott (1 Montpellier Avenue)
Grocers (3)	G.Jull (2 Queens Circus), D.MacPatterson (1&2 Montpellier Avenue); W.Matthews (2 Montpellier Street)

Tailors (3)	R.Gee (5 & 9 Montpellier Street); R.Bray (6 Montpellier Avenue); Mills Bros. (Montpellier Street)
Staymakers (3)	S.Lander (8 Montpellier Walk); S.Hollister (6 Montpellier Avenue); S.Elliott (9 Montpellier Avenue)
Chemists (2)	J.Pearson (3 Queens Circus); F.Fletcher (10 & 11 Montpellier Arcade)
Hosiery/Glovers (2)	B.Turnbull (3 Montpellier Walk); White & Co. (8 Montpellier Avenue)
Cobblers (2)	R.Draper (1 Montpellier Walk); J.Stroud (5 Montpellier Avenue)
Dressmakers (2)	E.Laurence (4 Montpellier Walk); L.Moulton (2½ Montpellier Street)
Fishmongers (2)	T.Woodard (3 Montpellier Avenue); H.Wyatt (6 Montpellier Street)
Fruiterers (2)	C.Freeman (4 Montpellier Avenue); W.Ody (8 Montpellier Street)
Butchers (2)	J.Smith jun. (13 Montpellier Arcade); T.Smith (15 Montpellier Street)
Optician	M.Abraham (1 Queens Circus)
Estate Agent	C.Lane (2 Montpellier Walk)
Teacher of Music	A.Turnbull (3 Montpellier Walk)
Teacher of Languages	R.Austin (8 Montpellier Street)
Prints/Drawings	J.C.Oldmeadow (7 & 9 Montpellier Walk & 3 Montpellier Street)
Hairdressers	G.Lincoln (6 Montpellier Avenue)
Clerk	W.Elliott (9 Montpellier Avenue)
Jewellers	T.Furber (12 Montpellier Arcade)
Tobacconist	G.Brown (14 Montpellier Arcade)
Upholsterer	G.Bick (15 Montpellier Arcade)
Publisher/Bookseller	H.Davies (1 Montpellier Street)
Wine Merchant	H.Caffieri (13 Montpellier Street)
Plumber/Painter/ Glazier	W. Swain (4 Montpellier Street)

In that year, 1847, sixteen traders were related to clothing and twelve to food. There were two teachers and twelve 'others'. Quite a range of services was provided, and although the shops still sold items which might be regarded as luxuries, there had been a move towards the general rather than the specific.

In the 1849 Annuaire, the figures were much the same. Of 49 tradespeople, nineteen were connected with clothing, thirteen with food and drink and the rest with what could loosely be described as luxuries and services. New trades included a paper hanger (Miss Collett) and an Ironmonger (R. Mallory).

Not everyone viewed the changes as advantageous to the area. Harpers 1854 Guide sums up one opinion:

'The rage for building, however, has spoiled this like many other undertakings; and since the erection of the range of shops along one side of the Montpellier Walk, the spa itself has lost all hold of public estimation' (4).

A print dated 26 March 1856 shows all the houses of the Walk complete, with some shop fronts. The area appeared still to be popular with promenaders (5).

It is evident from studying trade directories that Montpellier Walk did not rival Montpellier Street for some six or seven years. Shops may have been duplicated in both streets and therefore listed only once. Alternatively, they could have been used as dwellings for those working in Montpellier Street, or may not have been completed until later. Certainly, Montpellier Walk was more renowned as a social meeting place for the gentry of Cheltenham, and it is perhaps this which helped retain its character throughout the 1840s. However, by the 1850s and 1860s, trades in the area had dramatically increased. Whilst the diversity of trades grew, so did the number of shops selling 'luxury' items. Dyers, perfumers, and florists were among the 37 listed in 1850. By 1855 ten shops had been added. Amongst the new arrivals were a french cleaner, a fancy repository, a photographic shop and an auctioneer. By 1860 there were 54 trades, 25 of them not directly related to food or clothing. Although by 1865 only 49 trades are listed, the quality of some of the previous directories suggests the number is somewhat higher, and should not be regarded as complete. Davies' Guide of 1865 shows most of Montpellier Walk and Montpellier Street complete (6). They form two of the finest terraces in Cheltenham, but they had been criticised by Henry Davies, one of the residents of the area before building began. He said the charms of the area had

'...well nigh all disappeared, and in their place we have rows of glittering shops and respectable private dwelling houses. And the pump room still exists, although not unfrequently applied to very different uses than that for which it was originally designed' (7).

However, tradesmen and women still flocked to Cheltenham and Montpellier had been transformed into a busy commercial centre. The census of 1871 is probably a good point at which to conclude the early history of trade in Montpellier, since it lists both shopkeepers and houses, occupied and unoccupied, providing valuable information:

T. Sheen	Dairyman	25 Montpellier Street
J. Burrows	Butcher	22 Montpellier Street
J. Binns	Tailor	21 Montpellier Street
Uninhabited		1 Queens Circus
G. Jull	Grocer	2 Queens Circus
J. Lillywhite	Sports Depot	3 Queens Circus
G. Glover	No trade given	5 Queens Circus
Building		6 Queens Circus
Watkins	Grocers Assistant	1 & 2 Montpellier Avenue
F. Wood	Hosier and Glover	8 & 9 Montpellier Avenue
J. Fletcher	Chemist	10 & 11 Montpellier Avenue
J. W. Brays	Tailor	12 Montpellier Avenue
Building		13 Montpellier Avenue
G. F. Bick	Trunkmaker	14 & 15 Montpellier Avenue
F. Cooper	Hairdresser	Montpellier Walk
W. Draper	Tailor	1 Montpellier Walk
J. F. Lane	Auctioneer	2 & 3 Montpellier Walk
C. C. Lane	Wife	4 Montpellier Walk
S. Donovan	Staymaker	5 Montpellier Walk
J. T. Chadwick	Stationer	6 Montpellier Walk
M. W. E. Parker	Gilder	7 Montpellier Walk
J. Humphreys	Artist	8 Montpellier Walk
S. Howell	Shopkeeper	9 Montpellier Walk
M. Fish	Milliner	10 Montpellier Walk
R. Evans	Dressmaker	11 Montpellier Walk



MEDICAL AND CHEMICAL REPERTORY,  
MONTPELLIER ARCADE.

MR. J. W. WAKEMAN'S  
ONLY ESTABLISHMENT.

MR. J. W. WAKEMAN most respectfully returns his grateful acknowledgments to the Nobility, Gentry, Residents, and Visitors of Cheltenham, for the kind and liberal support given to the Establishments under the Firm of "KNIGHT & WAKEMAN;" and begs to mention that, in consequence of the lamented decease of his late Partner, he has disposed of the Business in High Street, and has taken *entirely and exclusively* to the

**Montpellier Chemical and Medical Repertory,**

where he intends to devote the whole of his time and study to the correctness and despatch of all favours committed to his care, and trusts, by unremitting assiduity, to render it every way worthy the distinguished patronage it has hitherto received.

Jan. 1837.

Fig. 1: An advertisement for Mr J.W. Wakeman's 'Medical and Chemical Repertory', from the 1837 Cheltenham Annuaire; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Library.

J.Gore	Hairdresser	12 Montpellier Walk
C.Press	Bootmaker	13 Montpellier Walk
L.Waite	Berlin Repository	14 Montpellier Walk
M.Pipe	No trade given	15 Montpellier Walk
W.G.Siddall	Greengrocer	16 Montpellier Walk
J.Lane	Builder	17 Montpellier Walk
W.King	Confectioner	18 Montpellier Walk
D.Lovack	Jeweller	19 Montpellier Walk
Building		
S.Adams	Draper	23 Montpellier Walk
J.B.Jones	Landscapes	Montpellier Walk
Uninhabited		

It is interesting to note that the Montpellier area seems to have gone through a number of phases. Initially this part of Cheltenham was popular with the gentry, with the Rotunda as the focus. During the 1840s and 1850s, extensive development, principally concerning Montpellier Walk and Montpellier Street, changed its character to one of retailing. At first this was not generally welcomed, but by the 1860s virtually all the premises had shop fronts, although some building work was still taking place. Montpellier was now a shopping area and had acquired a character all of its own, which it retains to this day.

IAN McLEAN

Notes:

1. S.Blake, 'The building of the Montpellier shops: an outline chronology', Chelt Loc. Hist. Soc. J. 2 (1984), 15-20.
2. G.Rowe, Illustrated Cheltenham Guide (1845), 27.
3. H.Edwards, Royal Cheltenham and County Directory (1872), 164.
4. S.Harper, Guide to Cheltenham (1854), unpaginated.
5. Print contained in Rock & Co., Views of Cheltenham (copy in Cheltenham Local Studies Library).
6. H.Davies, Pictorial Guide to Cheltenham (1865).
7. Ibid., 1861 edition, 13.

The Cheltenham Annuaire was used throughout the article, to give a detailed picture of how retailing developed. All the Annaires between 1837 and 1870 have been studied.

The Cheltenham Looker-On was consulted for the years 1835-1839 inclusive.

## *Parachuting in Cheltenham, 1837 to 1838*

The very first parachute descent in Cheltenham was made from a Balloon over Montpellier Gardens, by Mrs Graham's monkey, Mademoiselle Jennie, on Friday, 22 September 1837 (1). The Balloon was considerably smaller than the Royal Nassau, shown in Cheltenham earlier that year by Mr Green, for it took only four and a half hours to fill with gas, while his took over twelve hours. It was a fine day and nearly a thousand people were at the Gardens to witness the new sensation of a parachute descent.

The Balloon ascended at 5.30 p.m., with Mrs Graham and Mr Garrett (the Publican of the White Lion) in the car. Hanging from beneath the car was the parachute (folded) to which was attached a bag of ballast, and Jennie, the monkey, in a light wicker basket. It sailed away over Lansdown, rising rapidly, and Mademoiselle Jennie in her basket was cut away.

The Parachute had been designed by a gentleman described as 'the late Cocking ...that unfortunate gentleman'. He had been killed a few weeks previously when using it to descend from the Royal Nassau Balloon, so there was some apprehension for Jennie's safety. However, the Parachute inflated and opened just as it should, and floated gently to earth with Jennie uninjured (although, perhaps, not unalarmed) into a field by Lansdown Gate 'whither Multitudes repaired to his [sic] assistance' - the sudden change of sex being due entirely to the reporter of the Looker-On. The Balloon bearing Mrs Graham and Mr Garrett came down in Mr Towler's grass field at Hartpury, whence they returned to the Bee Hive in Montpellier Villas, safe and sound, to be re-united with Jennie just after 11.00 p.m.

In May 1838, Mr Graham brought his Balloon to Montpellier Gardens and ascended with his nine year old daughter and Mrs Garrett with him in the car. They had intended to release Mademoiselle Jennie on her parachute again but were unable to do so.

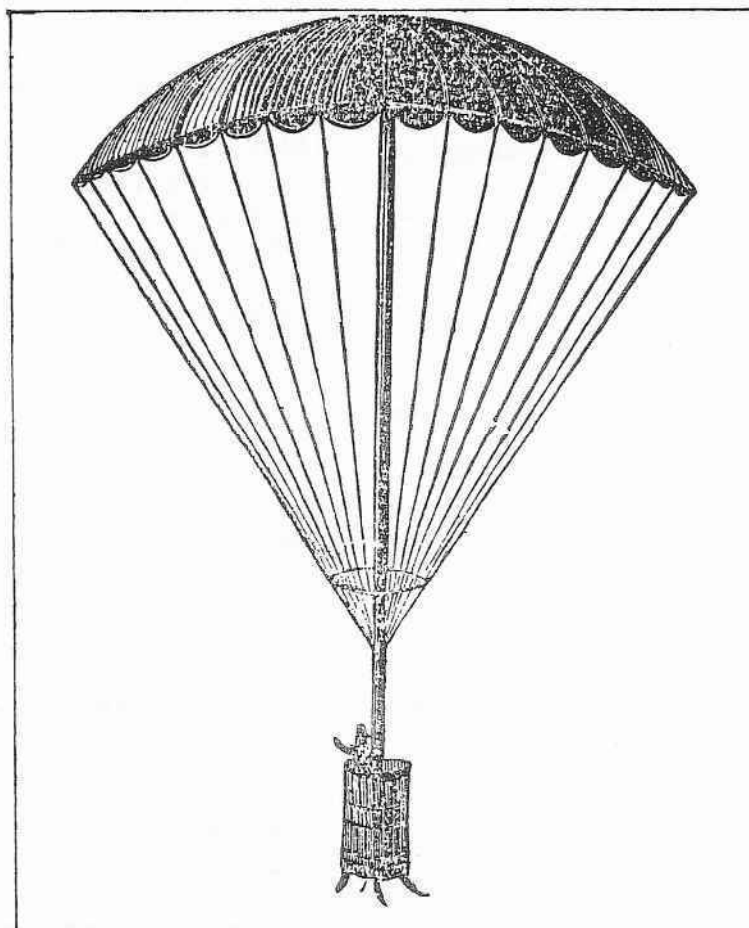


Fig. 1: Mr Hampton's parachute, from the Cheltenham Looker-On, 29 September 1838; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Library.

The public were becoming accustomed to Balloonists and new attractions were needed to draw the crowds: Mr Green, tired, apparently of his old companions in aeronautics, announced that he intended to ascend from Vauxhall Gardens in London later that September, accompanied by Mr Van Amburgh and his tiger - 'not a groon but a real denizen of the forest'. 'Wherever the Balloon may descend', commented the Cheltenham Journal, 'we can easily anticipate the terror which will seize on the wondering rustics whose eyes will be greeted, when hastening to the assistance of the aeronauts, by the sight of the Royal Bengal tiger, the first of his family who ever had the pleasure of an aerial voyage'.

The greatest sensation of all, however, was destined for Cheltenham. Mr Hampton decided to come to Montpellier Gardens and make a parachute descent. He flew his Balloon over Cheltenham during the third week of September 1838, and admired the clean and cheerful appearance of the town from the air, landing at Hatherley Court, near Gloucester, the residence of Sir Matthew Wood. He returned to Cheltenham that same evening and in the course of an interview with the representatives of the Looker-On and the Cheltenham Journal expressed his intention to 'make my descent in Cheltenham in my Improved Safety Parachute' in October.



The Journal was not in favour of such an outrageous exploit: 'Mr Hampton, we understand, entertains not the slightest doubt of being able to make a safe descent - we hope he may do so - but the experiment is perilous in the extreme, and no useful purpose can be served by it'.

The Looker-On carried an advertisement:

"Mr. Hampton's Thirteenth Balloon Ascent  
and  
First Descent in his Improved Safety PARACHUTE  
from the  
Montpellier Gardens, Cheltenham,  
on Wednesday Evening, the 3rd of October, 1838"

He intended to balloon up to a height of at least 5000 feet and then jump out, so that he was in clear view of the spectators. He invited scientifically-minded gentlemen to view his parachute at the Rotunda during the Monday and Tuesday previous to his flight, when he would be in attendance to explain the principles of the new Aerial Machine in comparison with others. A print of his parachute (fig.1) appeared in the Looker-On on 29 September with the assurance that there was 'nothing beyond ordinary risk in the enterprize'. There was, however, a great deal of anxiety among the more responsible members of the public about Mr Hampton's proposed jump. Despite his own express conviction of its total safety, most people believed it would have fatal results. Mr Spinney, the Superintendent of the Gas Works, applied to the Magistrates for their advice, and, with their approval, decided not to allow the balloon to be inflated if Mr Hampton persisted in his rash designs. The proprietors of the Montpellier property, fearing that they may be held responsible for any accidents if they allowed the demonstration to take place, resolved not to allow it. Accordingly, they had printed, and distributed, handbills stating that the ascent as originally planned would not take place, but only short demonstration descents from 300 or 500 feet. They apparently could not be made to understand that the parachute may not inflate fully in this short distance and that Mr Hampton's life would be endangered by their decision.

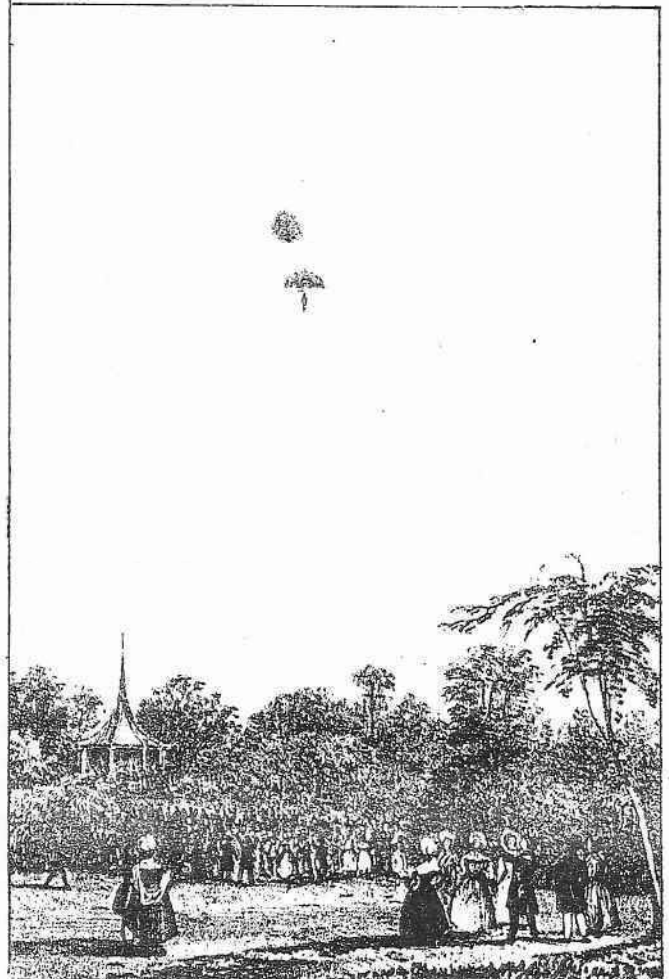
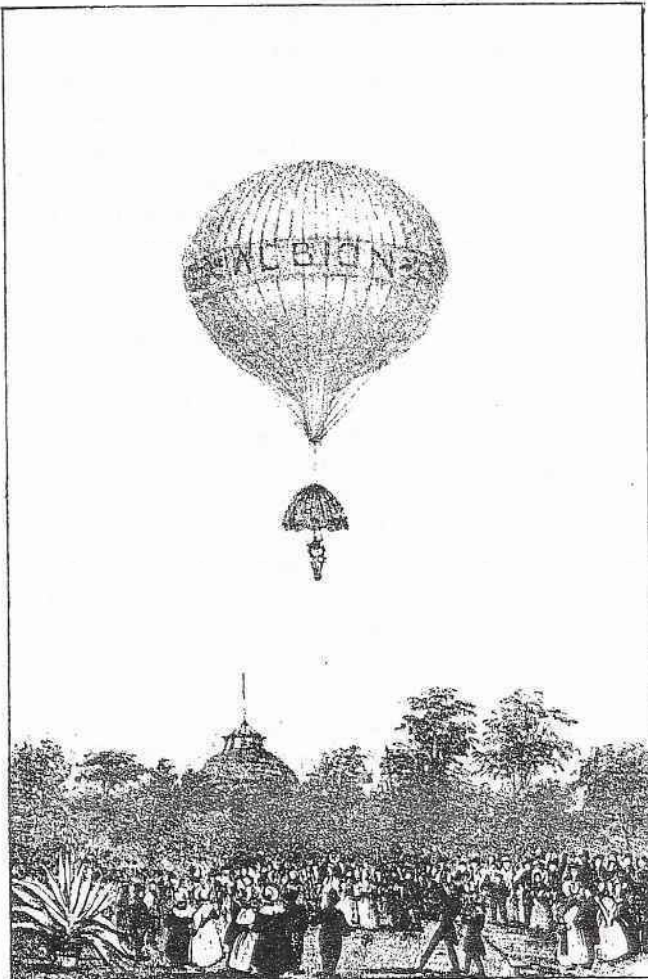
Mr Hampton, however, took his friend, Mr Grenville Fletcher, into his confidence, and between them they hatched a plot.

The people of, and visitors to, Cheltenham, misinterpreting the handbills thought that the exhibition was postponed and only a few turned up at Montpellier Gardens to watch. Undeterred, our hero inflated his balloon, 'Albion', and, assisted by Grenville Fletcher, brought his parachute out of the Rotunda (where it had been exhibited) at 4.30 p.m. on 3 October and attached it to the balloon in place of the usual car. The balloon was then attached to confining ropes of 500 feet, and ballast hung from the parachute's car (a small construction, probably of basket-work, in which Mr Hampton was to stand).

After a brief word with Mr Fletcher, Mr Hampton climbed into the parachute's car and the whole machine began a steady ascent, still tethered by its confining ropes. It went up slowly to a height of about 400 feet and then, to the astonishment and delight of the spectators, Mr Hampton whipped out a sharp knife and severed the ropes which held his balloon to the ground. The crowd cheered and he ascended rapidly to the upper regions. 'It was a beautiful sight' said the Looker-On, as George Rowe's lithograph (fig.2) shows.

At 9000 feet Mr Hampton again used his knife, this time to cut his parachute free from his balloon. At first his descent was so rapid that it 'knocked the breath right out of me' (his own words), but then his parachute inflated fully and he drifted slowly down to the earth. His balloon, 'Albion', turned on its side and exploded, and the remains of it hurtled past him to the ground below. It may have been the action of cutting the parachute free which caused the balloon to explode: it may be that it would have exploded at that moment, anyway, and Mr Hampton was the first person to have his life saved by a parachute. He was certainly the first Englishman ever to make a successful parachute descent, according to the Cheltenham Journal, and by that they probably meant Briton. He floated calmly and agreeably downward for eleven minutes and then hit the ground (rather harder than he expected) in a field near Mr Hicke's farm at Badgeworth, scratching his brow over his left eye a little, and 'was welcomed by a sheep who surveyed him with perfect calmness'. Soon his friends arrived with a conveyance and he was back in Cheltenham only an hour after leaving it. Their relief encouraged everyone's forgiveness, especially in view of the handsome apologies he made to all, and the successful outcome of his experiment.

Fig 2: The ascent (left) and descent (right) of Mr Hampton's balloon and parachute, 3 October 1838 - a lithograph by George Rowe; reproduced by courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums.



There is no doubt but that he was an extremely brave man. He admitted afterwards to some fears - he recalled 'that awful moment' when he cut himself free of the balloon:

'.. that it was an awful moment no-one, be whomsoever he may, or possessing the most cast-iron nerve, cannot but acknowledge that in such a situation, a struggle as it were between life and death,...However, my hand was firm, and my heart was bold...and my conscience clear,...and whatever accident befell, myself only would be the sufferer'.

Also, he had great confidence in his apparatus although he trusted his life to a parachute which could not have been designed or tested to anything like the standards of safety which we expect. Despite the comment of the Cheltenham Journal, it is fair to say that there are thousands of people who are alive today who know his experiment did serve a useful purpose, and are grateful for it.

The following was the weight of the parachute, with its intrepid occupant:-

The Crown and Shaft .....	80lbs
The Basket .....	36lbs
Ballast discharged in descent.....	56lbs
Ditto not discharged.....	36lbs
Mr Hampton's own weight.....	126lbs
Total.....	334lbs

It is pleasing to record that the town raised a special subscription for him to ensure that all his expenses were covered, as the handbill distributed by the proprietors of the Montpellier estate deterred spectators and very little money was taken at the gate.

BARBARA SOBEY

Note:

1. This account is based upon reports in the Cheltenham Looker-On, Cheltenham Journal and Cheltenham Free Press 1837-8.

## *Liszt in Cheltenham, 1840*

31 July 1986 marks the hundredth anniversary of the death of Franz Liszt, the famous pianist and composer; to commemorate this centenary, the Cheltenham International Festival of Music invited the two leading Liszt pianists of our time, Jorge Bolet and Louis Kentner, to give two piano recitals in the Town Hall devoted entirely to his music.

Judging from contemporary reports, Liszt was the greatest pianist that ever lived - Berlioz described him as the monarch of the piano, Chopin admired his dexterity on the keyboard, and Schumann praised his powers of interpretation. He was the founder of modern piano technique, and exerted a pervading influence on subsequent generations of pianists.





Franz Liszt

Liszt possessed an amazing ability to solve technical problems on the piano, just as Paganini had done on the violin; his twelve Transcendental Studies (S. 137) and six Paganini Studies (S. 140) bear witness to the phenomenal breakthrough in technique (1) that he achieved during the 1830s and 1840s. He took the piano out of the salon and placed it firmly in the concert hall; in doing so, he had to overcome much prejudice because many musicians of the time regarded the piano as a chamber instrument. With the support of Ricordi and Rossini, Liszt gave a concert devoted solely to piano music on 10 December 1837 at La Scala opera house in Milan before an audience of 3000 people (2).

Liszt scholars refer to the years 1839-1847 as his 'years of transcendental execution' when he toured Europe and Asia Minor as a virtuoso pianist. Liszt was the pioneer of the solo piano recital as we know it today. He was the first musician to present whole concert programmes from memory. He was the first pianist to play the complete keyboard repertory (as it was then) from Bach to Beethoven to Chopin. He was the first person to place the piano keyboard at right angles to the platform so that the open lid of the instrument reflected the sound at the audience. Even the term 'recital' was his - he introduced this title for a concert on 9 June 1840 at the Hanover Square Rooms.

Liszt arrived in England on 6 May 1840 and gave his first London concert two days later at the Hanover Square Rooms. After appearing in three concerts organised by the Royal Philharmonic Society, Liszt embarked on his series of concerts which the London press described as 'pianoforte recitals' - the first recital was on 9 June 1840 (noted above) at which Liszt played music by Beethoven and Schubert as well as some of his own works. Henry Chorley recognised the historic importance of these concerts, and wrote: 'We cannot call to mind any other artist, vocal or instrumental, who could thus, by his own unassisted power, attract and engage an audience for a couple of hours. The critics may not understand M. Liszt, but the musicians crowd to listen to him' (3).

Liszt's series of London recitals left an indelible impression on English musicians and the public alike: 'There was not a note to which he did not give meaning, and passages, which in the hands of other performers would have fallen dead on the ear, were prominently brought out by Liszt, and the hearers felt their connexion with, and importance to, the beautiful whole...we have no hesitation in saying that Liszt leaves every other performer, whether on the pianoforte or any other instrument, at an immeasurable distance behind him' (4).

Meanwhile, Liszt agreed with Louis Lavenu, an entrepreneur and music publisher, to undertake a concert tour of southern England; Lavenu planned to take a small band of performers with Liszt as the star attraction. The tour began at Chichester on 17 August, and proceeded to Brighton, Exeter, and Bath, finishing in Cheltenham on 5 September. Liszt and his entourage gave two concerts in Bath, on Tuesday 1 September at the Theatre Royal and on Wednesday 2 September at the Assembly Rooms (5), before coming to Cheltenham where they stayed at the George Hotel in the High Street (6).

The local journal announced a grand evening concert on Friday, 4 September 1840 with an unprecedented attraction - M. Liszt:

'Mr. Lavenu has the honour to inform the nobility and gentry of Cheltenham that he has succeeded in engaging M. Liszt who will on this occasion perform ... morceaux choisis from his celebrated recitals, and a grand duet with Mr. Mori on themes from Donizetti's Lucia de Lammermoor ... and on Saturday morning, September 5, at the Rotunda, a grand concert will be given in which M. Liszt will make his second appearance ... tickets, 7s. each, and family tickets to admit four persons, 24s. Stalls or reserved seats near the pianoforte, 10s. 6d. each' and the editorial continued in a similar way: 'The lovers of music may anticipate a most gratifying treat next week from the marvellous performances of Liszt on the pianoforte ... he plays thirds and octaves as rapidly as most other players execute single notes; the command which he has over the keyboard, the astonishing force and distinctness with which he performs the most difficult passages, the genius displayed in his fantasias and, above all, his expression in tender movements, such as Schubert's beautiful songs - all combine to render Liszt the most extraordinary pianist in Europe' (7).

At the evening concert on 4 September, Liszt played four of his own compositions: his Grand Galop chromatique (S. 219), the Marche Hongroise (S. 231), his operatic paraphrase of Rossini's Ouverture de l'Opera Guillaume Tell (S. 552), and the duet on themes from Donizetti's Lucia de Lammermoor (S. 628a) - this concert received ecstatic reviews in the local press:

'The first concert took place at the Assembly Rooms last Friday evening, Liszt, as was anticipated, forming the principal attraction. It is impossible to give our readers an adequate idea of the consummate taste and execution of this artist; whether in his silvery piano passages or in his con furia movements, he stands unrivalled. We had no conception before last Friday, that so much could be made out of one pianoforte. The rushing of an avalanche down a stupendous rock, the rolling of the mighty thunder, or the roaring of the sea in its most troubled moments might all be adduced as types of the tempestuous portions of his fantasias; nor in a flash of lightening, an overcharged simile of the rapidity with which he changes the character of the harmony from one style to another. We went prepared to hear a wonder, but our expectations were more than realized; the company seemed entranced, and made the Assembly Rooms ring with their plaudits; their encores were modestly and readily granted. Liszt, in his "recitals" more particularly, seems to hold converse with his instrument, he imparts, as it were, a soul to the keys and wires of his piano; and, as with his long forked fingers, he takes his winged flight over them, draws out in reply any sort of answer which may please the fancy uppermost in his mind' (8).

Another review of this concert comments particularly on Liszt's piano technique:

'Liszt's first concert at the Assembly Rooms was not so full as we had expected to have seen it from the high celebrity of its principal performer who, on this occasion, made his first appearance in Cheltenham. Liszt's marvellous performance on the pianoforte is of that extraordinary character that cannot be described; it must be heard and witnessed to be truly appreciated, and we strongly recommend those who did not attend the concert last night to do so this morning. To particularise any single piece would be useless, for the artist has the happy knack of throwing a spell over everything that he does, whether it be the most overwhelming difficulties which he overcomes with apparent ease, or the most extraordinary facility which he executes thirds, sixths, octaves, tenths, nay occasionally twelfths - or the manner in which he grasps at chords with both hands, and which he plays with such energy and vigour - in all this, he carries his audience with him, and enchants them by his magic touches. Nothing can be more delicious and elegant than his sparkling arpeggios in movements of pathos; indeed, many eminent professors have been heard to say that he is greater in the cantabile style than in the bravura. The Overture to Guillaume Tell afforded a fine opportunity for the display of his astonishing powers; nor was that opportunity thrown away, for a performance more truly wonderful we certainly never heard. We scarcely need add that his reception was quite an enthusiastic one. It is no small compliment to Mr. Frank Mori that the great artist states that he never wishes to take part in a duet with any performer in preference to his young but highly talented coadjutor who, in the grand duet on themes from Lucia de Lammermoor, acquitted himself most admirably last night...the second concert takes place this morning at the Rotunda, and we recommend all who are fond of, or themselves aspire to, pianoforte performances to avail themselves of one of the richest treats they ever have or ever can hope to enjoy' (9).

LOWINGER MADDISON



## Notes:

1. These numbers refer to the catalogue of the complete works of Franz Liszt compiled by Humphrey Searle for the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London 1980)
2. Alan Walker, Franz Liszt - the virtuoso years, 1811-1847 (London 1983)
3. Athenaeum, 4 July 1840
4. The Times, 2 July 1840
5. Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, 25 Aug. 1840
6. Cheltenham Free Press, 5 Sept. 1840
7. Cheltenham Looker-On, 29 Aug. 1840
8. Cheltenham Journal, 7 Sept. 1840
9. Cheltenham Looker-On, 5 Sept. 1840

## *The proposed enlargement of Cheltenham Parish Church, 1841*

As the Rev. Francis Close was leaving Cheltenham on his appointment as Dean of Carlisle, he was asked what he thought of the condition of Cheltenham Parish Church. 'It is a disgrace to the parish', he told J.W. Hugall, who was giving a lecture on the architecture of the building (1). Throughout Close's 30 years as the Perpetual Curate, the building had become increasingly ruinous. Minor repairs had taken place to the structure - in March 1834, July 1838, June and July 1848 and January to April 1856 - but it was clear that an extensive restoration was long overdue (2). The Parish Vestry considered the poor condition of the building in June 1850 and January 1856 and a committee was formed to put work in hand. But nothing happened (3). Close had been unable to make any progress. First, though he exercised considerable power, he was technically only a Perpetual Curate, the Rectory of Cheltenham being held by a firm of Cheltenham solicitors until 1863. Second, the intransigence of the pew owners; there were only 100 free seats for the poor, and most of the other 1100 pews were held under faculty, and rent was paid by the owners. The position became easier for the Revd. Edward Walker, who became the first Rector in 1863, but there were still problems with some of the pew-owners. Twice they prevented Walker from making any progress with the restoration, and it was not until 1875-77 that the long-awaited restoration of the Parish Church could take place.

Internally the Parish Church was cluttered with an assortment of pews and galleries. There were box-pews on most of the ground-floor, and seating in the west gallery, and galleries in the two side aisles and transepts. Most of these changes had taken place by the end of the 18th century to accommodate the increasing resident population and numerous visitors (4). During Close's ministry (1826-56), there was seating for over 1100 persons (5), yet, on some occasions, '2000 persons are often packed within its crowded pews and aisles' (6). On the visit of the Chartists to the church on 18 August 1839, Close made it clear that it was difficult to accommodate even 50 to 100 additional persons 'without inconvenience and disorder' (7). On 25 September 1849, the day of national humiliation and prayer, the church was crowded inside and outside. It was so warm that the organ could not be played. The atmosphere was so oppressive that members of the congregation fainted during the services (8). In the winter months the atmosphere would not have been improved by the fumes from the gas



lights, and the coal burning stoves - two in the nave, with flues taken through the windows, and one in the chancel, with a flue through the roof (9).

In 1738 the church was presented with a fine brass chandelier inscribed - 'Edm Smith surgeon gave this to ye church of Cheltenham ano dom 1738'. It can be seen in the engraving of the inside of the Parish Church c.1835 (see note 4). It had been adapted for gas, and then removed in 1838, dismantled, and placed in a specially made box in the church. It was sold in 1855, and, after a rather checkered career, hangs today in Temple Newsam House, near Leeds (10).

In addition to its use on Sundays, the Parish Church did not remain empty for the rest of the week. On Wednesday evening a Bible exposition was given, and throughout the week baptisms, weddings and funerals performed by a succession of assistant clergy. Members of the Parish Vestry met in a room off the north side of the chancel (11), and the room was also used for the meetings of Close's weekly 'sacramental class' (12). The principal entrances to the church were the

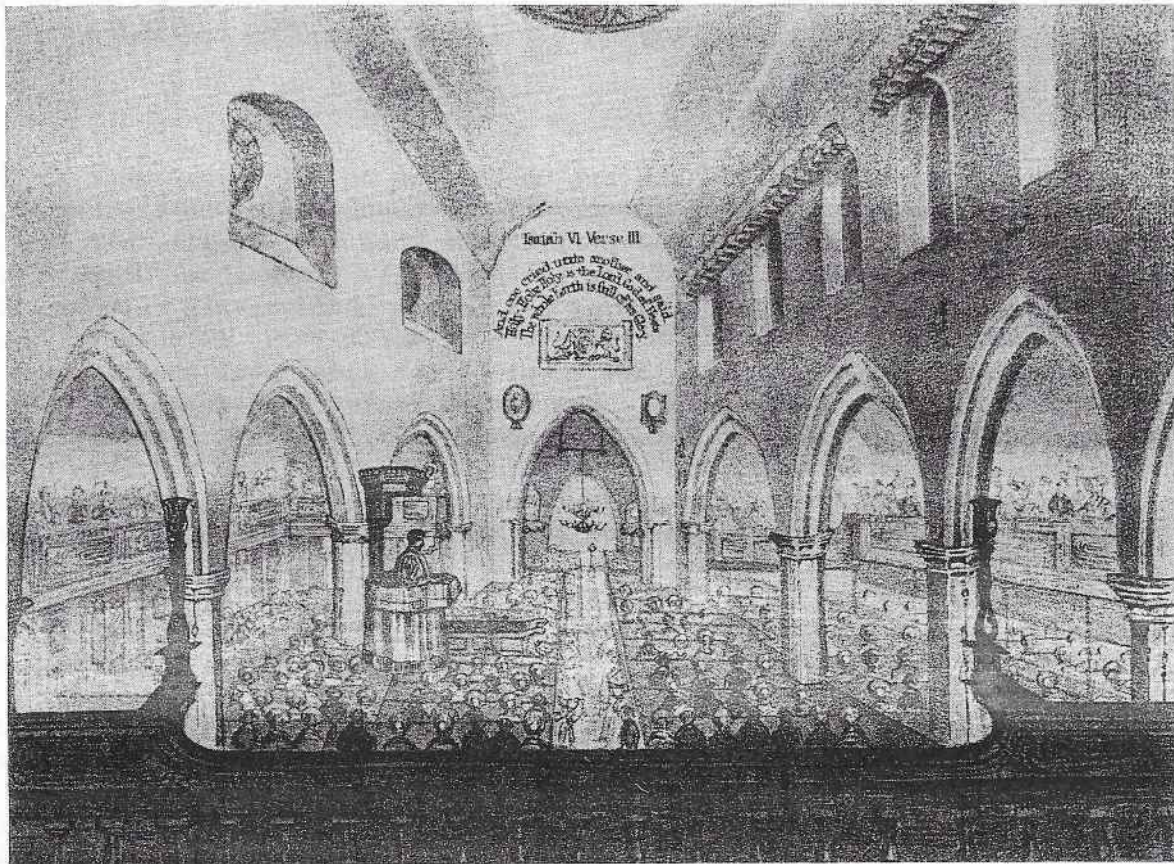


Fig. 1: The galleried interior of the Parish Church - a lithograph of c.1835; reproduced by courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums.

west door, and the north porch, which at that time faced the main thoroughfare of the town. From 1729, the room above the north porch housed the Charity School (founded 1713) and was used for that purpose until November 1847 when the school was transferred to purpose-built premises in Devonshire Street (13). From July 1787 a Sunday School was held in the room above the north porch, and from time to time it was used as a venue for holding polls on the rates and for the election of parochial officers (14).



To remedy the cramped situation in the Parish Church, Close wrote an open letter about the situation in January 1841, entitled, 'A letter respectfully addressed to the parishioners, inhabitants and visitors of Cheltenham, about the parish church'. In it he described the internal condition of the church:

'Many of the pews are so narrow that a person of ordinary size can hardly sit down in them, in some he could not stand up, and in a very few could he conveniently kneel! The long, low, flat galleries, intersecting the beautiful windows, and obstructing light and air, so oppress those who sit beneath them, that scarcely a Sunday passes without some person fainting during the service. The mis-shapen unsightliness of the whole interior; the double galleries, with an old and inferior organ; the pews, of every shape and pattern; the vast piers and pillars, altogether obscuring the view of the preacher from many, and rendering it impossible for some to hear him, unless he have a very clear and powerful voice; all these things conspire to make this church, as a place of public worship, most inconvenient to those who can obtain admittance: and that during the greater part of the year very many leave the church every Sunday for want of accommodation, is a well-known fact' (15).

Already the free church of St Paul's had been opened in July 1831 to accommodate 1200 poor parishioners; fewer than 100 poor could attend the Parish Church. When they did gain admittance, there were but 'a few inconvenient sittings in the aisles, where the poor and aged are jostled and pushed about in a painful manner, and a very few sittings in the upper gallery' (16). In addition, Close was concerned about the social composition of his congregation:

'Upon what grounds of equity can the wealthy parishioners of Cheltenham justify the exclusion of their poorer neighbours from their parish church? ... But I cannot forget (James 2:1-4), nor feel acquitted before God until I have at least made an effort to supply an adequate proportion of the poor of the parish with sittings at their church' (17).

In his open letter, Close listed his priorities for improving the condition of the Parish Church. Providing free sittings for some 500 poor of the parish,

'the nuisance of the schoolroom over the north porch; the obscuration of one of the most beautiful specimens of a circular window, by the unsightly vestry; the impossibility of reading the communion service at the proper place (excepting of course when the Lord's Supper is administered), simply because the chancel is so remote that it is physically impossible that the reader could be heard; and lastly, the fact, that the extreme antiquity of the church must occasion serious expense to the parish before many years elapse' (18).

Close's solution was to block off the two transepts and chancel, so that they could be used for public meetings and a robing room. The north and south walls of the aisles would remain, but the west wall of the church would be demolished and re-erected some 50 feet further west. The interior of the church would then be gutted, and new, slender pillars erected with galleries round three sides, and at the new east end, below the tower, would stand the communion table. New, uniform sized pews would be provided and which would increase the seating capacity by some 900 to 1000. All of this at an estimated cost of £10,000.



'The church would then be by no means immoderately large; not so large nor would it contain as many as several parish churches in populous towns which could be named; and possessing the advantage that, in its new form, the labour of the preacher would not be greater in reaching the ears of 2,450 persons, than that which is now required to reach those of 1,500 or 1,800!

The whole congregation would see the minister; and he would be able to make them hear him, with less expense of voice than is now required'. (19).

Further improvements would be the raising of the tower, and the crooked spire replaced for £2000; and the demolition of two houses to provide a view of the church from the High Street. When in January 1843, some houses adjoining the churchyard came up for sale, it was suggested that they should be purchased and demolished, and the ground opened up to the public. 'A handsome pallisading, nicely arranged, would afford convenient standing room for carriages, give a full view of the church, and be of great local improvement' (20).

Close had consulted the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, James Henry Monk, and between six to eight architects about his proposals (21). Close hoped that a committee could be formed consisting of six members of the Parish Vestry and six subscribers, who would then invite architects to submit designs in a public competition. During the alterations, which might take anything between nine to twelve months to complete, the congregation could worship in a public building in the town, and weekly and occasional services held in the chancel or transepts. Though his proposals were sound, he was prepared for them to be rejected. 'If, after the mature consideration of the majority of my respectable church-going parishioners, they think the plan ineligible, or impracticable, I should receive the decision as the indication of Providence' (22). What discussion took place is not known, but what is clear is that none of Close's proposals came to fruition, but his ideas were revived, in a slightly modified form, in 1863 and 1875.

ALAN MUNDEN

Notes:

1. Cheltenham Journal, 13 Dec. 1856, 1.
2. Registers of services (Cheltenham Parish Church archives).
3. S.T.Blake, Cheltenham's Churches and Chapels AD773-1883 (Cheltenham 1979), 33.
4. A lithograph of Close preaching in the Parish Church, and viewed from the west gallery is reproduced here as fig.1. Plan of St Mary's Church, Cheltenham, shewing the facultied pews, 1794 (Cheltenham Public Library). Faculty for the erection of north gallery in Cheltenham Church, 4 May 1775 (Cheltenham Parish Church archives); G.R.O. P78 CW 4/1/10 undated plans of gallery seating.
5. The number of seats at the Parish Church varies from source to source. The estimated width of each bottom was considered to be 20" - but some are smaller, some are larger! e.g. 1,165 sittings and benches in the aisles for 190 poor persons (Form of Inquiry . . . . 1818, Ecclesiastical Commissioners, St Paul's church); 1,177 sittings (G.R.O. P78 VE 2/3 meeting of the Parish Vestry, 14 January 1858).
6. F. Close, A Letter respectfully addressed to the parishioners, inhabitants and visitors of Cheltenham, about the parish church (Cheltenham 1841), 4.

7. F.Close, A Sermon addressed to the Chartists of Cheltenham, Sunday, 18 Aug. 1839 (Cheltenham 1839), 24.
8. Close, A Letter, op.cit., 5.
9. Insurance policy, 25 Dec. 1849 (Cheltenham Parish Church archives).
10. Cheltenham Journal, 27 Aug. 1838, 2; R. Sherlock, 'Chandeliers in Gloucestershire Churches', TBGAS 81 (1962), 129 and 84 (1965), 111-112; R.Sherlock, 'The Cheltenham Chandelier', The Connoisseur, February 1965, 81-85; R.Sherlock, The Leeds Arts Calendar 57 (1965), 15-23.
11. From March 1834, the Parish Vestry occasionally held its meetings, by adjournment, in the Infants' Schoolroom, St James' Square (G.R.O. P78 VE 2/3, 27 Feb.1834).
12. Minute book of Close's sacramental class, which held its first meeting in the vestry of the Parish Church, Friday evening, 11 Nov. 1830 (G.R.O. P78 IN/4/7).
13. Charity School Minute Book 1713-1849 (Cheltenham Parish Church Archives).
14. e.g. 15 Oct. 1845, 29 March 1848 (G.R.O. P78 2/3).
15. Close, A Letter, op.cit., 4-5.
16. Ibid., 5.
17. Ibid., 5, 6.
18. Ibid., 6. Until the abolition of Church Rates in 1868, there was a common law obligation for the parish to contribute to the upkeep of the parish church.
19. Ibid. 4, 7 (Close's italics).
20. Cheltenham Journal, 30 Jan. 1843, 2.
21. Close, A Letter, op.cit. 9, 6; a sketch plan of the proposals is given, 8.
22. Ibid., 11.

## *Beer, breakfast and bribery: electoral corruption in Cheltenham during the elections of 1847 and 1848*

It is a well known fact that the 1832 Reform Act did little to rid the electoral system of some of its more blatant evils. In the words of Norman Gash, 'the Reform Act represents no more than a clumsy but vigorous hacking at the old system to make it a roughly more acceptable shape ... inevitably therefore the characteristics of the old system persisted in the new' (1). One of these characteristics was the existence of Pocket or Proprietary Boroughs (2), and in his study of the techniques of Parliamentary Representation 1830-50, Gash names Cheltenham as one such borough (3). Here the local patron was Lord Segrave, formerly Colonel Berkeley and the illegitimate son of the fifth Earl of Berkeley.

The predominance of the Berkeleys is a well documented fact in the history of Gloucestershire (4). At one time Lord Segrave's four brothers sat as M.Ps for Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham and the Western Division of the County (5). Cheltenham's M.P. was Craven Berkeley, who held the seat from 1832 until 1847, in 1848, and again from 1852 until his death in 1855 (6). That he did so was not because the seat was uncontested: Craven Berkeley had to fight seven elections during his career as M.P. for Cheltenham, and as well as opposition from Tory candidates he had to stave off Radical challenges in the elections of 1835 and 1841.

No election was fought more fiercely and with more bitterness than that of 1847-48. Peel's government had survived only a few months after the Corn Law crisis of 1846 and Russell's administration lasted until the general election called in July 1847.

At Cheltenham there were three candidates: the sitting member, Craven Berkeley; the Conservative Sir Willoughby Jones; and a second Conservative, Captain E.C. Smith. All former Tory candidates in Cheltenham, with the exception of Sir J. Agg-Gardner who polled 655 votes to Berkeley's 764 in the 1841 election, had made little inroad into Berkeley's monopoly of the borough (7). The difficulties of the Tories' task was indicated by Lord Ellenborough's remark to the party manager, Bonham, when the latter asked him about the possibilities of a Conservative candidate being returned for Cheltenham: 'He must be a man who would fortify the ludicrous vanity and self-importance of the shopkeepers and idle inhabitants of Cheltenham by representing them' (8). However, this did not deter the Conservatives from putting up some serious opposition to Berkeley, and in preparation for the 1841 election they spent some £200 in getting between 600 and 700 adverse voters struck off the lists (9).

Success finally came for the Conservatives in 1847 when Sir Willoughby Jones polled 1015 votes to Berkeley's 907 votes. Sir Willoughby came from an army background, was a scholar of Trinity College Cambridge and later studied for the Bar. His success in 1847 may have been a general response to a feeling that the Tory party was in danger after the crisis of 1846, or it could have been decided on more local issues, such as Craven Berkeley's ill-judged statement to the House of Commons that 'more deaths from miasma occurred in Cheltenham than in any other town of the same size in England' (10).

For whatever the reasons of their success, the Conservatives celebrated in style with a magnificent dinner at the Assembly Rooms where the tables were decorated with flowers and fruit in silver baskets (11). Their victory was also celebrated in the Conservative Looker-On which saw Jones' win as 'the emancipation from a bondage the more degrading because more dishonourable than that of a rotten borough of the old times. For nearly fifteen years the town has submitted to every kind of indignity offensive to a free and moral people' (12).

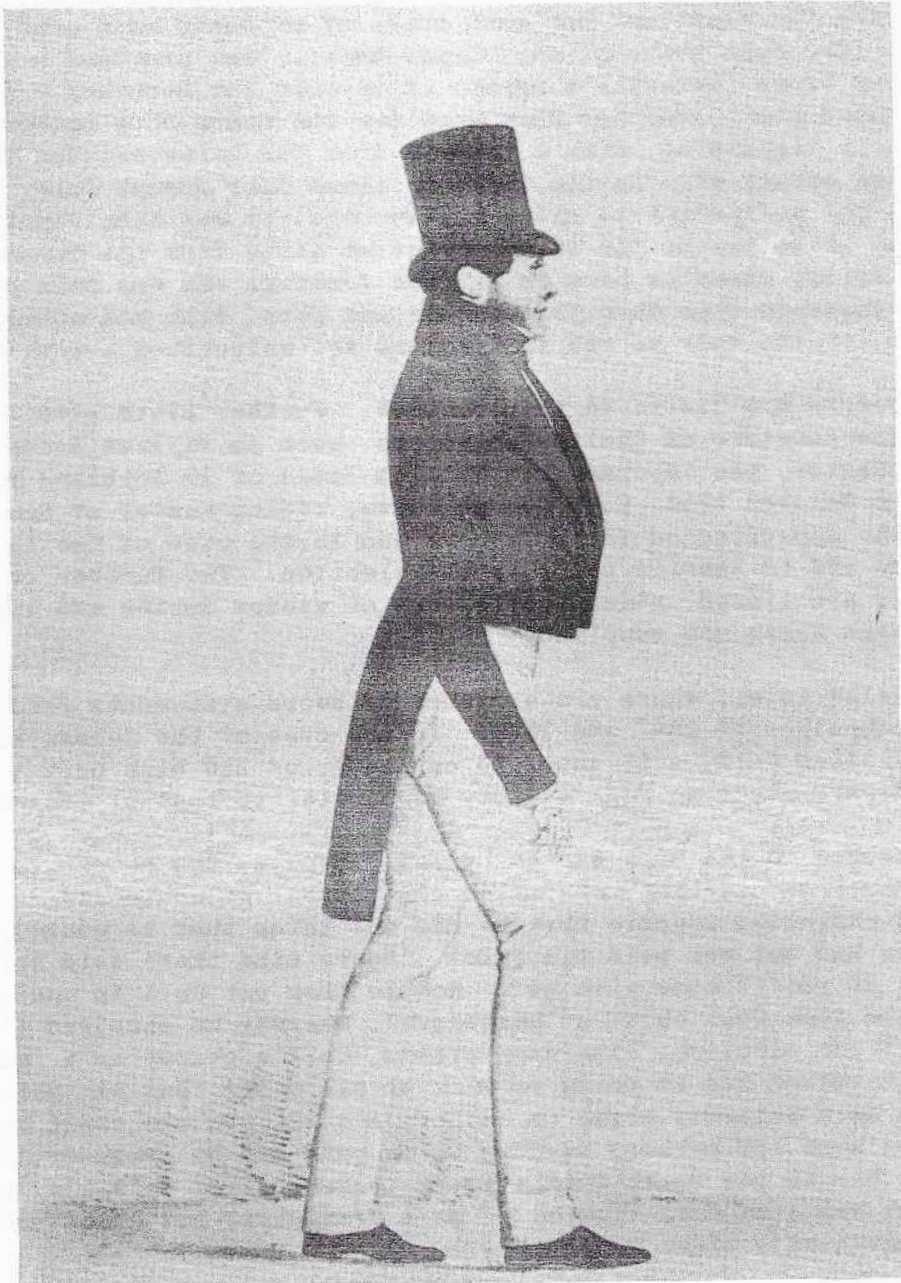
The Conservative victory, however, was short-lived. The Liberals sent a petition to the House of Commons claiming that the Conservatives had used bribery and corrupt practice in achieving their win, and consequently in May 1848 the election was declared void. The next election was fought in June 1848 between Craven Berkeley and Sir James Agg-Gardner (13), Sir Willoughby Jones having been appointed a J.P. in Norfolk. This time Berkeley won the poll by 1024 votes to Gardner's 848 (14). Berkeley however, did not take office as the Conservative launched their own petition which again produced a ruling from the House of Commons that the election was to be declared null and void. A third election was held in September 1848 between Grenville Berkeley (Craven's cousin) and Bickham Escott (an unsuccessful liberal Conservative from west Somerset). This time the Liberals polled 986 votes to Escott's 835 and Grenville held the seat until 1852 when Craven resumed the post (15).

At the Gloucestershire County Record Office there is a collection of documents relating to the Conservative Petition of 1848 (16). They include witnesses' statements as to the use of bribery and corruption by Berkeley and his agents. Despite their rather obvious bias, they do provide a useful insight into the electoral management of a Pocket Borough after the supposed 1832 Reform. They



also lend weight and credence to the arguments of those such as Samuel Harper, editor of the Cheltenham Free Press, who maintained a vigorous campaign for the secret ballot: 'the electors alone should elect according to their own free choice and wholly unbiased by any influence whatsoever' (17).

The Petition of 13 July 1848 states that 'Craven Berkeley did by himself, his agents and partisans, by divers ways and means, at his charge, and on his behalf directly and indirectly give, provide present and cause and knowingly allow to be given and provided to persons having the vote at such election (June 1848),



The Hon. Craven Berkeley (1805-1855)-  
a lithograph by Richard Dighton, c.1835;  
reproduced by courtesy of Cheltenham Art  
Gallery and Museums.



money, meat, drink, entertainment, provision and reward ... in order that he might be elected', and in addition 'that intimidation, coercion, violence and duress were by the agents, friends and managers and by other persons on behalf of the said Craven Berkeley, practised at the said last mentioned Election upon divers persons having votes at the said last Election, and that many persons who but for such illegal practices would have voted for James Agg-Gardner were by such intimidation, coercion, violence and duress as aforesaid prevented and hindered from doing so' (18).

To support their case, the Conservatives supplied evidence of Berkeley's activities during the election. One such piece of evidence is a list of 63 landlords who, like John White of the 'Cross Keys', 'was promised a spirit licence by Peter Vines' [Berkeley's agent] if he vote for Berkeley - which was afterwards granted him'. Another list provides the names of a number of voters improperly registered, with a request from the Conservatives that these voters should be struck off. On the list are those like Joseph Dancy whose rent of £8 was not sufficient to allow him the vote; or men like Joseph Freeman of Beckford who lived beyond the statutory seven miles from the borough. One of the more flagrant examples here is William Jennings who was paid generous travelling expenses to come down from London and vote. Such men should not have qualified for the vote as the 1832 Reform Act stipulated a rent of £10.

Some sixteen voters are listed in this context. Further lists give the names of a number of impersonators of Cheltenham voters, such as William Jones, a Birmingham shoemaker, who impersonated William Jones of 10 Portland Square, who had died in October 1846. Both George Reeve, riding master of Spa Buildings, and George Cooke impersonated their fathers and in the case of the latter, his father had gone off to America prior to the election. Two further categories of false voters are listed, namely collectors of window duties and lunatics, and in both cases names are supplied.

On a more detailed level, there are a number of sworn statements referring to the election campaigns of 1847 and 1848. In the case of the former is the statement of William Cull, a 26 year old carpenter of 254 High Street, and it is worthy of closer study as Cull's story is similar to that of many others.

Cull was approached in the High Street by James Boodle, the secretary of the Cheltenham Liberal Association, who asked him whether he would give his vote to Berkeley. Cull expressed concern that he did not think that he would be able to vote because he had not yet paid his rates. 'Never mind that' said Boodle, 'I'll put that right if you'll come with me'. Boodle then put Cull in contact with Peter Vines, who took Cull on as a 'messenger', whereby he received £1 a week for the duration of the election. Like many others, Cull's status as a 'messenger' seems to have involved him in doing no work at all other than his going to the Committee Room each Saturday night to collect his £1. On one visit he estimates that there were some 150 persons waiting to be paid and he proceeds to give names. In addition to his £1 per week, Boodle seems to have given Cull 13s. to pay his rates, which at the time Cull thought of as a free gift, but after the election became the subject of a court trial.

As well as receiving free beer on a number of occasions before the election, the high spot of Cull's reward from the Liberals came on election day itself. The morning before, a letter had arrived at his house with a ticket for breakfast at the 'King's Head'. On polling day Cull with ten others went to the Inn and had breakfast before they voted. On their return from the polls they continued







As to the allegations of coercion and force in the Petition, we have statements such as that of Rowland James Ticehurst, a solicitor of the town, who attempted to serve notices on a number of Berkeley's supporters (19). Ticehurst says that a Mr Arkell on whom he was serving a notice 'came up to me holding his stick in a threatening manner over me, stating I had no business to give him the notice and was extremely violent and I have no doubt that if I had proceeded to serve the notices I should have been beaten and impaired by the partizans of Mr Berkeley, more particularly by the men with short staves who came up'. Elsewhere at polling booth number six, John Baggs, a wheel chairman, on attempting to serve a notice on yellow (Liberal) voters, got attacked by four women, one of whom struck him with her umbrella.

A statement from Henry Smart, a bailiff, claims that Berkeley was recruiting strong men from all over the county (including one named Evans, a prize fighter from Tewkesbury) and armed them with yellow painted ash staves with the instruction to 'knock the blues down' should they interfere at the polling booths. In return, these men got paid ten shillings for their day's work. Henry Smart goes on to claim that a number of Blues were prevented from polling by these 'men with bludgeons'.

Further statements attempt to prove that the information gathered by the Liberals in the 1847 petition was false or the result of bribery. Either way one would have to have very strong party loyalties not to believe that both sides indulged in rather the same tactics.

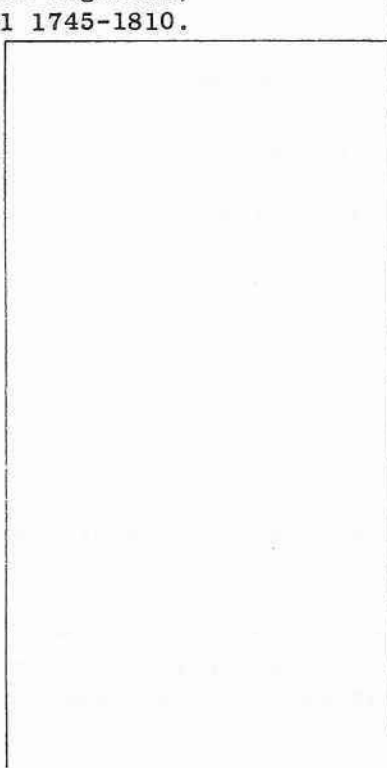
What can be learnt from these documents? Certainly Cheltenham was not a unique case. As Norman Gash has shown, disputed elections were common in this period (20). In the same week as the House of Commons was dealing with the Liberal Petition, it was hearing an almost exactly worded one from the borough of Horsham. Clearly the 1832 Reform Act had not truly reformed the system and Pocket Boroughs continued well into the 1840s. However, what is perhaps more important to notice is that general toleration of the more flagrant abuses of the system was lessening and more pressure was being exerted by Radicals, Liberals and Tories alike for a secret ballot. Second, there is the fact that Pocket Boroughs were getting harder to manage. In 1832 Cheltenham had 919 electors, in 1858 it had 2170 and in 1868 it had 3536. All that time prices were increasing and the sheer cost of elections in 'the old style' must have become formidable for a single patron. In one statement, Thomas Heywood complains at only receiving £1 per week for his services, when he expected 5s. per day; as far as he was concerned, he would take his vote off to the Tories. Not just the cost of elections was rising, but also the risk of legal proceedings since the 1841 Bribery Act. By this Act it was now possible for election committees to begin an inquiry into accusations of bribery before specific proof was found against the candidate, thereby making it considerably easier for his opponents to present a case against him. If the second half of the century did see a 'clean-up' of the system and individual influence being replaced by party controlled elections, it is likely that this change was brought about not by high-minded ideals of fairness and democracy, but by a reaction to the spiralling cost of boroughmongering and more stringent legislation.

ADRIAN COURTENAY

Appendix A

Berkeley family M.Ps in Gloucestershire during the 1830s and 1840s

Frederick Augustus,  
5th Earl 1745-1810.



- 1. William Fitzhardinge (b.1786).  
Viscount Dursley.  
Lord Segrave 1831.  
M.P. Gloucestershire 1810.
- 2. Maurice Frederick Fitzhardinge (b.1788).  
Lord Fitzhardinge.  
M.P. Gloucester 1831-2; 35-37; 41-57.
- 3. Augustus Fitzhardinge (b.1789).
- 4. Francis Henry Fitzhardinge (b.1794).  
M.P. Bristol 1837-70.
- 5. Thomas Moreton Fitzhardinge (b.1796).  
6th Earl.
- 6. George Charles Grantley  
Fitzhardinge (b.1800).  
M.P. West Glos 1832-47.
- 7. Craven Fitzhardinge (b.1805)  
M.P. Cheltenham 1835-47; 48; 52-55.

Admiral Hon. Sir George  
Cranfield Berkeley

- 1. George Lennox Rawdon  
7th Earl 1827-1914.
- 2. Grenville Charles Lennox  
M.P. Cheltenham 1848-52; 55-56.

Appendix B

Election Petitions 1832-52

<u>Parliaments</u>	<u>Void Elections</u>	<u>Undue Elections</u>	<u>Elections Made Good</u>	<u>Total Inquiries</u>
1833	6	7	10	23
1835	1	5	10	16
1837	3	14	30	47
1841	6	11	9	26
1847	15	1	8	24
1852-3	27	0	22	49

A Void election was one in which the whole proceedings were quashed by decision of the committee of inquiry.

An Undue election was one in which the committee of inquiry found the sitting member not duly returned and another candidate was substituted.

An election Made Good was one in which the committee of inquiry upheld the original return.

Table taken from Banfield, Statistical Companion for 1854 and quoted in N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel (London 1953).

## Notes:

My thanks go to Mr D.J.H. Smith, County Archivist, and the Staff of the Gloucestershire County Record Office, for their kind help in the preparation of this article.

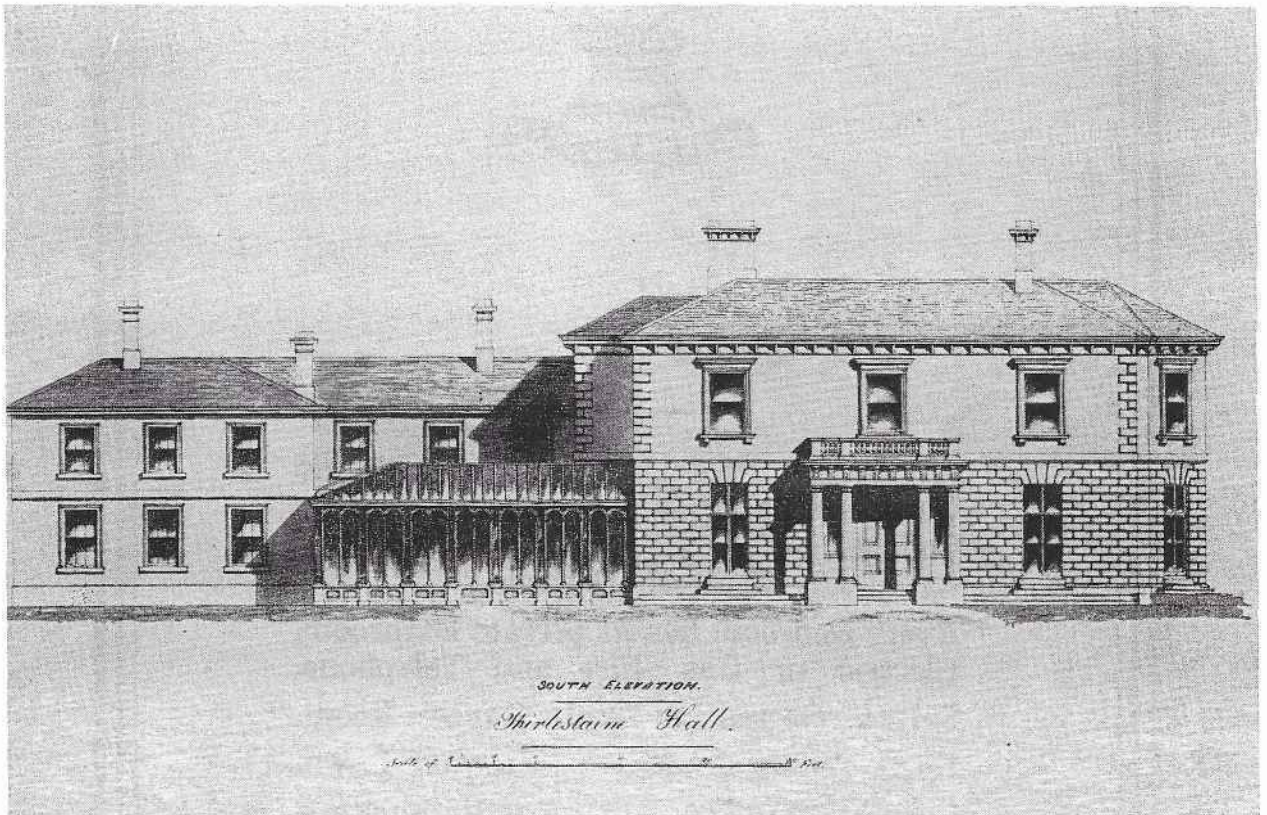
1. Norman Gash, Aristocracy and People (London 1979).
2. Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, (London 1953); cf. Appendix D.
3. *Ibid.*, 213.
4. Gwen Hart, A History of Cheltenham (Leicester 1965).
5. See Appendix A.
6. W.R. Williams, A Parliamentary History of Glos. (1898).
7. *Ibid.*
8. Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, 110.
9. *Ibid.*, 118.
10. Gwen Hart, *op. cit.*, 229.
11. *Ibid.*, 229.
12. Cheltenham Looker-On, 7 Aug. 1847.
13. W.R. Williams, *op.cit.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. G.R.O., D2025 Box 135: an uncatalogued collection of documents relating to the Petitions of 1847 & 1848.
17. Cheltenham Free Press, 29 Nov. 1834.
18. Petition Concerning the Cheltenham Election No 103, 13 July 1848.
19. These notices or handbills aimed to deter Liberal voters by informing them that Craven Berkeley's election in June 1848 would be null and void and that 'a vote for him was a vote wasted'.
20. See Appendix B.

## *A short history of Thirlestaine Hall*

Thirlestaine Hall, which is now the Administrative Headquarters of the Chelsea Building Society, is one of the largest and finest early Victorian mansions in Cheltenham (1). It was built sometime between 1855 and 1857 for a German-born textile merchant named Johann Andreas Frerichs (1801-1866), who had come to England from Bremen in 1816, and who had spent much of his life at Manchester, before retiring to Cheltenham in about 1850. The house was designed and built by a prominent local architect and surveyor named Daniel James Humphris (1816-1879), whose best-known building in the town is the General Hospital in Sandford Road, which was built in 1849. The house was presumably named 'Thirlestaine Hall' after the nearby Thirlestaine House, which had been built c.1823 for J.R. Scott, whose family were from Thirlestane in Southern Scotland. Thirlestaine Hall stands on part of the 23 acre Sandford Field, which was owned from the late 18th century by the well known Gloucester banker and miser, James or 'Jemmy' Wood. In 1835, Wood sold a little over seven acres of the field, adjoining the Old Bath Road, to a Charlton Kings farmer named William Jordan, for £2075. These seven acres, on which the house and grounds now stand, were bounded on the north and south by two new roads, both constructed by Wood - Upper and Lower Sandford Roads, now Thirlestaine Road and Sandford Road respectively. Twenty years later, by two separate transactions dated 31 May 1855 and 10 March 1856, this same land was sold by Jordan to Frerichs' trustees for £2922 10s. 0d.



The house, as completed by 1857, was built in the 'Italianate' style, and was distinguished by its fine Doric portico. This gave access to the house's Entrance Hall and Vestibule, with its glazed screen of Corinthian columns. To the right of the Entrance Hall was a large Double Drawing Room and to the left, a south-facing Morning or Breakfast Room. The Morning Room gave access to a conservatory, the site of which is now occupied by the Building Society's Computer Wing. Beyond the Corinthian screen were, to the right, the Library, and to the left, the Dining Room. These large ground floor rooms still preserve marble fireplaces and excellent plasterwork. The Entrance Hall also gave access to the cloakrooms and 'necessary offices', and to the Servants' Wing to the west of the main house.



South elevation of Thirlestaine Hall, by its architect, D.J. Humphris, c.1855; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire Record Office.

On the upper floor were 15 bedrooms, dressing rooms and bathrooms, while the basement was occupied by the kitchen and service area. The house was supplied with water and gas, and, according to an account in the Cheltenham Looker-On for 29 May 1858, 'the whole is fitted up with every comfort and luxury, and the internal arrangements are extremely chaste and appropriate throughout'. The property also included, to the west of the house, stabling, coach-houses and a coachman's cottage. The gardens included vineries, green-houses and a hothouse.

Thirlestaine Hall was occupied by Frerichs from 1858 to 1866, during which time he maintained a typically large Victorian household. In the 1861 census,

# Thirlestaine Hall Hotel

CHELTENHAM SPA



*Opened June, 1939.*

A Modern Hotel in a beautiful old Garden of 7 acres, adjacent to Cheltenham College.

Centrally Heated.

Every Bedroom has its private Bathroom, Electric or Gas Fire and Telephone.

Suites. Recreation and Dance Room.

Hard Tennis Courts. Croquet Lawn.

Gravel Subsoil. A.R.P. Shelters.

Standing and Lock-up Garages.

Fruit and Vegetables from the Garden.

Really Good Food.

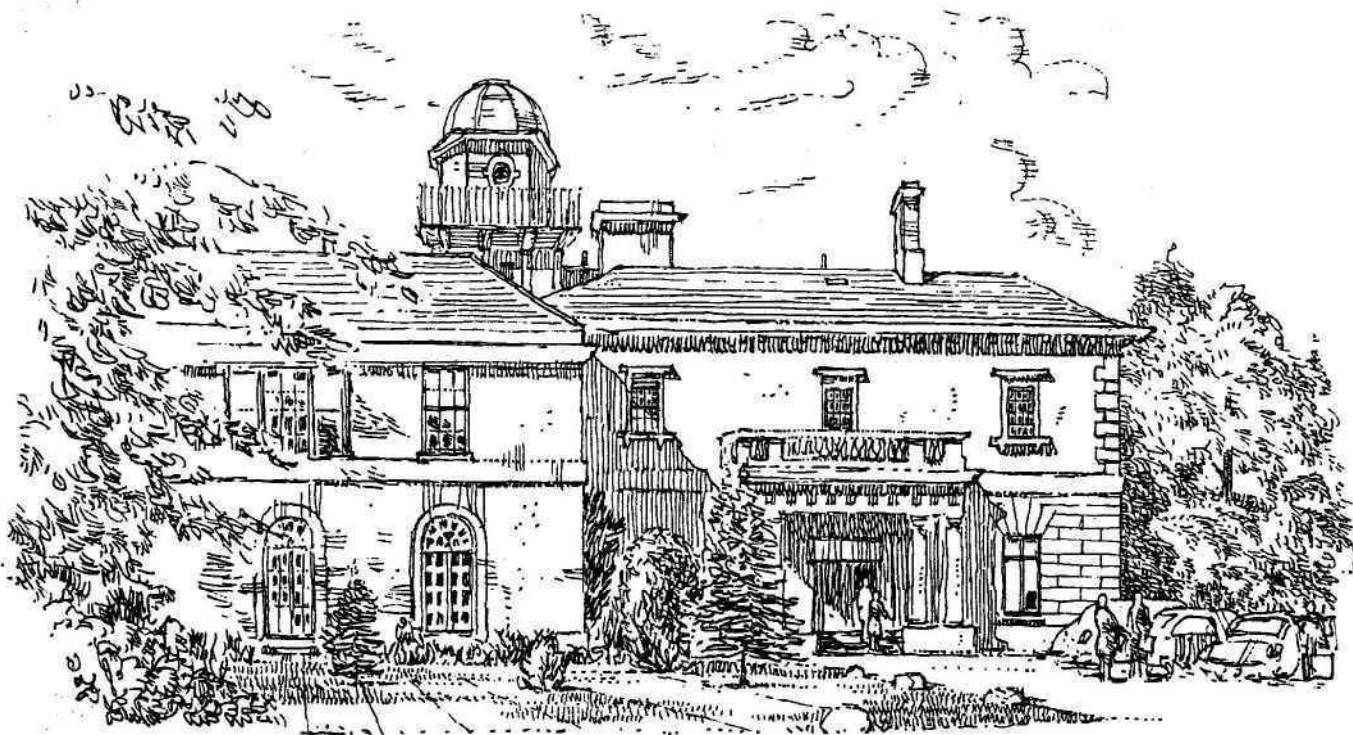
*Telephone 52732.*

*Resident Proprietors.*

An advertisement for the Thirlestaine Hall Hotel, from the 1939 Cheltenham Spa Official Guide; reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Library.



he is recorded as having no less than 13 servants - a butler, a footman, a coachman, a kitchen boy, a housekeeper, two ladies' maids, three housemaids, a nurse, an undernurse and a kitchen maid. His English-born wife, Lucy Jennings, was dead by 1861, as was his only son, Johann Heinrich, who had died in Bremen



Thirlestaine Hall today

in 1859, at the age of 18. Frerichs' two daughters lived with him; the elder, Lucy Sophia, had married a young German count, Eric Stenbock, at Florence in 1859 but was widowed only two years later, after giving birth to a son, also Eric Stenbock, who later earned a reputation as a poet and eccentric in late Victorian London.

In 1866, with his health failing, Frerichs travelled to the Bavarian spa of Reichenhall, in the hope of a cure. There he died on 3 November 1866. Under the terms of his will, Thirlestaine Hall was to be sold for the benefit of his daughters, and the house was duly put up for auction in July 1867. It failed, however, to realise its reserve price - the highest bid was £10,900 - and for the next seven years it remained in the hands of Frerichs' executors and in the occupation of Lucy Sophia and her second husband, a Treasury official named Frank Mowatt. Eventually, however, a purchaser was found, and on 31 December 1874 the house was sold to Henry William Freeman for £13,750.

Between 1874 and the purchase of the house by the Royal Insurance Group in 1952, Thirlestaine Hall was successively occupied by four families. Henry Freeman, an Alderman and J.P., lived there until his death in 1881, and in 1884 his widow sold the house to one James Cox. Cox, and then his widow, lived in the house until 1909, when it was acquired by John Player, the retired owner of a large tin foundry in South Wales. A keen student of astronomy, it was Player who added the house's distinctive domed observatory, which is visible



from so many parts of the town. Player died in 1931, and after a brief period of occupation by his daughter, the house stood empty for several years during the late 1930s, a fate shared by so many of the town's larger houses at that time. It is also interesting to note that the market value of the property had declined steadily since 1874; each time the house was sold, it fetched less than the time before, until in 1938 it was purchased by one Harry Ewart Jennings for just £4000.

Thirlestaine Hall had ceased to be a private residence, and in 1939 it was purchased for £5500 by Lt. Cnl. and Mrs Lewis-Hall, who re-opened it as the Thirlestaine Hall Hotel, and who later added the modern block on the north side of the house. Apart from during the years 1942-5, when the hotel was occupied by the American Services of Supply, which were based in Cheltenham, Thirlestaine Hall remained a hotel until Mrs Lewis-Hall sold it to the Royal Insurance Group in 1952. For the next 21 years, the house served as the Royal's Head Office Records Department, until the Department was moved to new premises at Liverpool. Thirlestaine Hall remained empty for 18 months, until, in February 1973, the Chelsea Building Society completed its purchase of the building, so beginning the building's present use as the Society's Administrative Headquarters.

STEVEN BLAKE

Note:

1. This account is largely based on information drawn from the title deeds of Thirlestaine Hall, seen by kind permission of the Chelsea Building Society. Additional information has been taken from the Cheltenham Census Enumerators' Books 1861-81 and Cheltenham directories, guide books and newspapers 1858 onwards. The architect's original plans and elevations of the house and grounds have been deposited in the Gloucestershire Record Office by the Cheltenham architects, Messrs. Rainger, Stride and Jones (G.R.O. D4532).