

Cheltenham Local History Society Journal

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Cover Illustration: Devonshire Street School, opened in 1847. See pages 32 and 39.

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Artwork by Aylwin Sampson

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The former Cheltenham Examiner office in Clarence Street; see pages 36 onwards.

Prestbury Ratepayers of 1698

'What was it really like then? What sort of people walked down these streets, sat in this church, worked in these fields - and in those other fields that lie under the new houses? What sort of lives did they lead?'

Such questions are the mainspring of much historical research, no less so because they are doomed to remain unanswered except in the sketchiest and most partial manner. The starting point for the present exploration of a village society nearly 300 years ago is a church rate assessment for the parish of Prestbury in the year 1698, written out in full at the back of the first volume of Churchwardens' Accounts for that parish (1). Details are filled in from other surviving documents of the time, mainly wills and inventories (2). Typically, a will reveals the writer's status or occupation, and something of his family connections, and occasionally lists his land holdings. An inventory may give more or less detailed information on all sorts of moveable possessions in the house and outside, even to crops growing in the fields; the listing normally proceeds methodically from room to room, and so indirectly reveals the number of rooms in the house.

The rating assessment itself is bare enough. After a formal heading setting the rate of the year at 2s. per yardland, there follows a list of 104 names each with a sum of money against it; the total rate for the parish is stated, and the assessment is signed by nine leading parishioners. Rates were levied on the basis of land occupied, whether as owner or tenant, and some names appear more than once, no doubt in respect of separate holdings. Putting multiple entries together, we are left with 88 individual ratepayers. Relevant wills survive for 43 of these people: 33 for the ratepayer him/herself, nine for the deceased husband of a rate-paying widow, and two for the fathers of rate-paying heirs. In 32 cases the corresponding inventory is available.

There are also two or three entries in the assessment where the liability to rates appears to reflect a special legal status, rather than land tenure as such. The lord of the manor, Lord Craven, paid at the rate of 2 yardlands 'for the Royalty', though the whole of his land was almost certainly leased out. Similarly, the 'Dean & Chapter' (of Hereford) paid a rate of half a yardland for their tithe entitlement (3). It is also probable that one part of (Squire) William Baghott's rate, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ yardlands designated 'for the Parsonage', relates to his possession of the advowson.

The yardland is notoriously slippery as a measure, showing wide local variations. In Prestbury, however, the common 30 acre unit may well apply. The total area of the parish at this date was 3054 acres (4); of this, 625 acres was occupied before the Inclosures of 17323 by the open hilltop common land (5), and a further smaller acreage would be accounted for by other common areas, roads, etc., leaving perhaps 2330 to 2400 acres in individual occupation. The total rate levied for Prestbury was £8 7s., i.e. 83 $\frac{1}{2}$

yardlands; more accurately, deducting the dues which seem to derive from legal status rather than land, 78½ yardlands. On the basis of 30 acres per yardland this implies 2348 acres liable to rates, fitting well with the estimate above; in this article therefore I have regularly assumed 1 yardland = 30 acres.

Four people in the village paid rates on more than four yardlands (i.e. more than 120 acres), accounting together for about 980 acres, two-fifths of all the disposable land in the parish. Another 6 people had 2 yardlands or more (but less than 4), 8 people had 1 yardland or more (but less than 2), 13 people had ½ yardland or more (but less than 1), 17 people had ¼ yardland or more (but less than ½), and 40 people had less than ¼ yardland, i.e. no more than about 7 acres, representing perhaps one or two little fields. There is a fairly smooth descent from the largest holdings to small ones, with no obvious break between 'well-to-do' and 'the others'. How many had so little land that they escaped rates altogether? Perhaps not many: at the bottom end of the scale, ten villagers paid a rate of 2d. (2½ acres), eight paid 1½d. or 1d., and one person paid only ½d.; these small numbers at the tail end of the hierarchy do not suggest that there are many others 'lost' by the cut-off at ½d. rateable value. Sir Robert Atkyns, writing a decade later (6), provides general confirmation; he estimated that Prestbury had 100 houses and 445 inhabitants. So in 1698 the 88 heads of household paying rates probably account for all but a handful of families.

At the top of village society are some easily recognisable characters. The Squire, William Baghott (7), was the second richest inhabitant in terms of land held (about 220 acres, even without the Parsonage rate); his family had bought the estate originally owned by Llantony Abbey, and in the mid-16th century had built a fine house at Hall Place (now Upper Noverton Farm). His will of 1725 contains bequests to his five younger children totalling £2000, though as in many wills of this time the expectation seems to have been that the cash would be found from sale of property or future income. Whatever their social status, the Baghotts were not idle gentlefolk; a generation later, this squire's son kept account books (8) which make it plain that the family was directly involved in farming their land. The Squire also made provision for his youngest son Kinard, then 15, to have the living of Prestbury when it next became vacant. With the current incumbent nearing 60, it must have seemed to the Squire that Kinard was safely provided for, but as it turned out, the Revd Francis Welles lived to be 90; by the time he died Kinard was long established as rector of King's Stanley, but he then took on the additional living of Prestbury!

Christopher Capel, with 165 acres, represents the New Family in the village. Capels appear in Prestbury records from 1663 (9); by 1700 they had bought the Baghotts' 'sheep pasture' (10). They continued to buy up land throughout the 18th century, and by mid-century had built themselves a fine house, (now Prestbury House), in the Burgage. To judge from the 18th-century Baghott account books (11) the Capels stood somewhat apart from the network of buying and selling which tied the Baghotts to their farming neighbours.

The Vicar in 1698 was Edward Bedford; already an elderly man, he died the following year. He was a scholar, leaving a library of books valued at £25, and his handwriting, preserved in several wills he drew up for his parishioners, is flowing and modern. His son Henry was also in holy orders; his four daughters were well-educated too, for he bequeathed to his wife her

choice of 12 books in English from his library, for herself or her daughters. He makes a tantalising reference to having provided funds to set up one of the daughters 'in her trade', but leaves no hint as to what sort of occupation this was. The vicar probably lived as comfortably as anyone in Prestbury; as well as almost 120 acres of land in the parish, (mostly glebe, but some held in his own right), he owned a house in Swindon, let out to a tenant. His horses were fine animals: he left two horses and a colt valued together at £38, whereas in other inventories it is rare to find a horse worth more than £5. There is no mention though of any sort of carriage - how did his wife and daughters travel around? For all his relative affluence, the vicar too was closely connected with the land, and produced a good deal of his own food. His inventory shows nine cows, 25 sheep, three pigs, a plough, a cheese press, wheat and pulse in the barn, at least five or six acres of growing corn, and stores of malt, wood and dung. The total value of his goods was £207.

The biggest land-holder in the parish was neither squire nor vicar, but a widow, Mrs Abigail Lorraine, who since the death of her husband three years previously had managed the 450 acres of the Prestbury Park estate (12). John Lorraine styled himself a gentleman, though his land was not freehold, but leased from Lord Craven. He left Abigail with seven children and pregnant again at the time of his death; it seems that their oldest son, Thomas, was still too young to take management of the farm. John Lorraine's goods were valued at £566. His house, probably the one shown on a 1768 estate map (13) near the present northern boundary of the racecourse (SO 958250), had 10 rooms including hall, kitchen, buttery, dayhouse, and a 'mens chamber' for his living-in farm servants. On the evidence of his inventory, the farm was primarily pasture; John left a herd of 155 cattle, (64 cows valued at £3 each and 91 yearling 'hoggs' at 13s.), and a flock of 220 sheep (80 ewes with their lambs at 10s. and 140 other sheet at 8s.). He had a ton of cheese in store. He owned a plough, but there was only £8 worth of grain about the house; in other inventories an acre of growing wheat is valued at about £2, so this only represents the harvest from a few acres, and is probably for his own domestic use.

As well as Prestury Park, there were six other landholdings of more than 2 yardlands; in descending order the owners or tenants were: Mr French, John Newman, Mrs Hawling (another widow - her husband John had died two years previously), William Randle, John Hatton senior and Mr Robbins. A seventh holding, of just under 2 yardlands, may also be included in this group as the relevant inventories show many common features; John Head had recently acquired this land under the will of his father-in-law Giles Barnes. It was William French who in 1700 up-dated an old survey of Lord Craven's Prestbury estates (14), listing the current tenants. He himself held the lease of Hyde Farm, an ancient land unit in the north-west of the parish (15); like the Lorringes therefore, he farmed a single compact area, fitting the modern idea of a farm. John Newman, in direct contrast, had a freehold estate of classic pre-inclosure form, with strips of land scattered throughout the common fields, and some early-inclosed pieces of pasture on the lower hill-slopes. His will (16) lists his entire freehold estate, consisting of at least 29 detached pieces of arable, several of them only a single 'land or rudge' (17), with at least half a dozen 'parcels' or 'closes' of pasture; one piece of ground called Finchcroft, (there is a modern Finchcroft Lane, off Noverton Lane), had been planted with cherry trees. Newmans were substantial landowners in Prestbury by 1575; perhaps it was partly due to their time-honoured position that John Newman was styled a Gentleman.

In the name of God Amen I Edward Hathaway of Prestbury
in the County of Gloucester Husbandman being weak in body but
of sound memory and understanding blessed be God for it do this
fifteenth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand seven
hundred and thirteen make this my last will and Testament in
manner and form following. that is to say First I bequeath my Soul
to my Creator trusting through the infinite mercy and merits of
Christ Jesus my Saviour to obtain the pardon of all my sins; and
my body to the earth to be decently buried at the discretion of
my Executors herein after named. And as for my worldly goods which
God in his mercy hath lent me I thus dispose of them. I give to my loving
wife Amy Hathaway all my houses lands and freehold Estates whatsoever
to hold and enjoy during her widowhood and immediately from and after
her marriage or decease which shall first happen. I give to my son John
Hathaway my two lands in Smithwood lying under the hedge by the highway
together with all ditches moss hedges ditches and appurtenances whatsoever
to have and to hold to him and his heirs for ever. And all the rest of my
houses lands tenements and hereditaments whatsoever I give to my nephew
William Cook and my cousin William Glover and the survivor of them their
heirs and assigns for ever. Upon this special trust in them reposed that
they shall by sale or otherwise equally divide all my said houses lands
and tenements among my three children ~~John Amy and Elizabeth~~
~~John Amy and Elizabeth~~ after they have in the first place discharged all my debts if any
it is my Will that if my eldest son Edward Hathaway is willing to have the house
and homestead called Harris my said trustees shall upon his paying to them ten
pounds to be divided as above convey the said houses and homestead to him and
his heirs for ever. I give all my goods cattle and chattels to my loving
wife Amy Hathaway for the payment of my debts and to make an executrix
for Solo Executrix of this my last will and Testament. In witness whereof
I have hereunto set my hand and Seal this day and year above written.

Signed, Sealed and Published

in presence of

Edward Hathaway

The May 1713
The Rector

24 Junij 1713
Jurat Executrix sola
Dicitur

Probat fuit hoc testam^{entum} meo genante die mensis Junij
Anno Dni 1713 coram Vobis Viris Honoris Juris & quibus Dicitur Rector
in Aprobis et Dni Dni Coram permissione & auctoritate & potestate in
Sua & auctoritate per Amy Hathaway videlicet legitime & legitime
primitive de bene et ad de plene et nona de plene et ad de plene
salvo jure iustitiae

A Prestbury will: that of Edward Hathaway, a husbandman,
1713. Hathaway owned very little land, and paid only 2d.
rate. The will was written by the Revd Francis Welles.
Reproduced by kind permission of the Rt Revd the Bishop of
Gloucester (Glos R.O. will no. 216).

Hawling, Randle, Barnes and Hatton all reckoned themselves yeomen; they were prosperous folk, the first three named each leaving goods valued between £137 and £225. John Hatton's inventory is the odd one out with a total of only £56; one might guess that by the time of his death in 1699 he had already handed over the land and stock to his son. Certainly, John Hatton the younger died in 1718 richer than any of them with an inventory totalling £591. Their houses were quite large; the main room was the hall, with sometimes a parlour and kitchen too; there would be three or four upstairs 'chambers' and perhaps an additional 'lower chamber' downstairs, possibly also a cellar; there was a dairy or milkhouse and a buttery (a storeroom for provisions and liquor), and some had also a 'dayhouse', another working room which might contain a cheese press, a 'powdring tub' (for salting?) and barrels. We may be able to guess more precisely what one of these farmsteads looked like; within recent times, the thatched cottage at the corner of Bouncer's Lane and Blacksmith's Lane was known as 'Randall's Cottage' (18), though there is no definite evidence that our William Randle lived there. The farming of this group seems to have concentrated on sheep and arable crops. Each had a flock of 60-80 sheep, a few (5-14) cows, a few (1-8) pigs, and half-a-dozen horses; (Hatton left neither sheep nor horses). Thomas Hawling had a crop of growing corn worth £60, and while William Randle's inventory, taken in February, listed only one stack of barley (£12), one of wheat (£7 10s.) and a 'parcel of rye in the straw' (£1 10s.) remaining in his barns, his father's inventory, taken in August only three years before, showed a crop of '48 acres of corn of all sorts' which with some hay was valued at £100. Like Randle, John Head's father-in-law grew a lot of barley (£30 worth), and only £10 of wheat, as well as £10 of 'pulse', presumably the same crop as the beans planted by the squire in the 1730s (19). This sort of farming would be suited to a traditional scattered land-holding like John Newman's; sheep could be pastured on the open hill-top common land, but only someone with big enclosed lowland fields like those of Prestbury Park could think of maintaining a large herd of cattle. As well as the commercial quantities of grain stored in barns, the farmers (like the vicar) kept small supplies for household use, generally in an upstairs room. In the chamber over his parlour, John Head's father-in-law kept; 'half a weigh of old wheat, 3 bushell of new wheat, 2 bushell of barley, 8 bushell of malt, 6 bushell of pulse, hundred & half of cheese'; there was wool in the closet off another upstairs room, and a flitch and a half of bacon in the kitchen. William Randle had 3 hogsheads of cider in his buttery.

One man paying rates on 2 yardlands in Prestbury has received no mention so far - Mr Robbins. In spite of his large land holding and respectability (the title 'Mr' generally implies at least a substantial farmer), no other reference to him has been traced, and he may be one of the fairly large group of people who owned or leased land in Prestbury but were resident outside the parish. The most eminent of these were Kinard Delabere of Southam and Mr John Sturmeay of Swindon Manor, but other Prestbury ratepayers whose wills confirm that they lived in Cheltenham and had land in Prestbury are: Thomas Bliss (smith), William Church (yeoman), Robert Ellis, Thomas Kemitt (yeoman), and James Wood (maltster); four or five others were probably in the same situation.

How much land did a yeoman need to keep his family in reasonable security? The evidence from our group of villagers is not clear, especially as a man's fortunes could go up or down between the 1698 assessment and the record of his estate when he eventually died. Certainly, there were men with less than two yardlands whose lifestyle seems indistinguishable from that of the bigger

A True and perfect Inventory of the Goods Chattells of Thomas Hawling late of Prestbury in the County of Gloucestershire deceased April 30th 1696

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Dining Apperrell	10-00-00
In the hall two table boards, six Joyne Stools one settle a Jack two pair of hand Grou two spits a fire Shovel and a pair of Tongs one Doren and halfe of Powder eight, three Little four posts four Salletts one Crap pair and Warming pan	04-00-00
In the full Chamber two Trunk Beds and one Black Bed with all other furniture thereto belonging	05-00-00
In the Room next to the Hall Chamber one Bed and other furniture	02-10-00
In the Room in the Hall one Bed one table and other furniture thereto belonging	01-10-00
In the Room over the Kitching one Bed and other furniture thereto belonging	01-10-00
In the Dairy one Cows profit with other necessary belonging to it	01-00-00
In the Chamber by the Kitching Chamber one Bed and other things in the same Room	02-00-00
In the Close Ten Tysells	01-10-00
The Coal and Mault in the House	03-10-00
Season Horfes and Cattle	35-00-00
One Wagon two plowes Drayes and all other Inplements of husbandry	12-00-00
Season Cows two Hogs four two yearling Turkes Pheas	32-10-00
Five sheep	20-00-00
Four piggs	02-10-00
And Crops of Corn growing on the ground	68-00-00
Total	194-10-00

Apprenticed by us

John Head
 William Nutwell
 George Hartman

By fund erat Roi Jurata et ad
 Glou Offavo discurfus Marfy to ad
 1696 Jun 21 ff Meriam Halbing viduam
 et hanc pth 207 ff 2^o p^o et q vero of plene
 et sub q p^o fund tunc de addend et q^o p^o

194-10-00

A Prestbury inventory of 1696: that of Thomas Hawling, one of a group of prosperous yeoman referred to on pages 2-3. Reproduced by kind permission of the Rt Revd the Bishop of Gloucester (Glos R.O. inventory no.215).

land-holders. Gabriel Little for example with about 40 acres had an inventory totalling £91; he had 7 horses, half-a-dozen acres of grain, and a flock of perhaps 30 or 40 sheep on the hill. At the 1 yardland level, John Turbett's 30 acres included a piece of meadowland, which allowed him to keep 6 milch cows, and he had a crop of hay worth £15; he owned a horse and a colt, there was grain worth £7 in his barn, and he had 3 pigs; perhaps he had no common rights, for he kept no sheep. With less than one yardland, there is little evidence of farming at a commercial level (though William Hosier, paying rates on about 17 acres in 1698, owned 50 sheep at his death only 5 years later). That is not to say that humbler people did not raise what crops and animals they could on their patches of land; indeed at all levels home-grown grain and beans, with bacon, milk and cheese where possible, were an important part of the family economy. Widow Smart had inherited from her husband land rated at 8d. (about 10 acres), and he had managed to keep a cow plus another yearling. Edward Hall paid only 3½d. rates, but on his few acres he had a crop of growing corn worth 15 shillings, and he even owned an old horse and a single pig. Curiously, there is no mention of poultry in any of the inventories; perhaps birds were considered too trivial to value, for surely there must have been fowls scratching round the cottage doors.

Not too much can be read into the term 'yeoman' as a mark of status in itself. Four ratepayers are described in their wills as 'husbandman', but all these wills were drawn up by the Revd. Francis Welles, who succeeded Edward Bedford as vicar in 1699, and the choice of word seems to be simply the new vicar's personal preference. Traditionally it was the particular mark of the yeoman that he owned his land, but in 1698 two Prestbury 'yeomen' were rated at only 2d. (2½ acres); on the other hand Edward Watts, one of two ratepayers described merely as a 'labourer' owned two houses, one let out to a tenant and the other inhabited by his son; he bequeathed a small crop of grain growing on part of his 5 acres, and also 'the garden stuff if there be any' - home-grown vegetables must have been important to most villagers, though they rarely feature in inventories. The other labourer paid only 2d. rate, so his bequest of 'all my land and houses' is probably just a ready-made legal phrase (though with his cottage of 2 rooms downstairs and 2 up, and more than 2 acres of land, Richard Hathaway occupied more space than most of us today). Fourteen years before, the churchwardens had paid for his blue coat when he was selected for the militia; in the 1690s he was employed from time to time on odd jobs about the church - washing the linen, mending the gate, providing cloth to keep the pigeons out of the clock chamber (20).

In our sample of 43 wills, only 4 people apart from the vicar assigned to themselves any trade or occupation outside farming. In 1698 John Worlock was a taylor (rate 6d.), Richard Ballinger was a cordwainer (i.e. a shoemaker, rate 3½d.), Mary Brown was the widow of a slatter (she paid ½d rate), and Mrs Jane Marshall was the widow of the landlord of the King's Arms (8d. rate). There is nothing in the inventories of most of these people to set them apart from the other villagers; the cordwainer had an acre of grain, and the taylor owned 2 cows and a calf, 2 sheep and 2 pigs; there is no mention of tools or stock in trade. John Browne, the slatter, did own 4 ladders (poor fellow, he died unprepared, without time to have a will drawn up; his is a will nuncupative, that is, the sworn statement of a witness to his spoken wishes. Did he fall from one of those ladders?). The innkeeper, Thomas Marshall, does stand out in owning unusually lavish domestic equipment. His kitchen contained 'twenty three dishes of pewter of all sorts seaven pewter Flaggons Tenn pewter Chamberpotts three pewter Tankards two pewter Bakers (beakers) a Dubble Quart pot' and more. The bedroom furnishings included cushions, a

carpet and 'one down bed with curtaines and vallians (vallance?); the King's Arms seems to have been quite a high-class establishment.

If few people described themselves as tradesmen, there is some evidence that a 'yeoman' might nevertheless have a secondary trade or speciality. Edward Cook (rate 1s.5d.) owned the 'water grist mill' in Mill Street and a bakehouse in the Burgage, but he still called himself yeoman, rather than miller or baker. Even the labourer Edward Watts bequeathed tools inventoried as '5 hatchetts a bill a spade & a Shovel', - did he specialise in hedging and ditching? There are suspicions too that both John Bleeke (died 1695, his son paying rates in 1698) and John Kemmett may have run taverns of some kind. Yeoman Bleeke's inventory lists a typical mix of 7 acres of crops, some livestock and farm implements; however, he also owned a cider-mill, and had no less than 17 hogsheads (of cider?) in his buttery; he had 2 tables in his kitchen, and 53 pounds weight of pewter ware. Kemmett did not die until 1727; his well-furnished house at that date, with its 'clock and case at the Stairs Head', 2 tables (again), generous supply of pewter dishes, porringers and spoons, could simply reveal a prosperous farmer with a large family and workforce; but one of his rooms is called 'the shop' a vague term certainly, but not usual in the yeoman's houses; in fact, the only other one in the present group of inventories is the King's Arms.

Not surprisingly, the value of inventoried estates tends to decrease for ratepayers with progressively smaller land-holdings; in this small sample, averages are not very meaningful, being too easily distorted by special cases; however, of the 22 inventories relating to people with less than one yardland, most (fifteen) amounted to less than £30, and nine were less than £10, the lowest being £3. People in general had little ready money. Cash bequests in wills can be misleading; the usual intention, sometimes explicit but often assumed, was that bequests would be financed from future income or from the sale of property; it is commonly stipulated that a bequest be paid within a set period, often one or more years, after the testator's death. The first item in an inventory is normally 'His apparel and money in his purse': for the vicar, the value was £10, but for the vast majority of his parishioners this item came to no more than £5, and could be less than a pound. This is not to say that they all lived from hand to mouth; the usual course if there was any spare cash seems to have been to lend it out at interest to another individual, and bonds are listed as assets even in humble inventories; the slatter John Browne had £12 'out on Bond' to a brother-in-law.

Throughout the middling and lower ranks of ratepayers (those with anything less than 1 yardland), houses consisted of 1 or 2 main rooms downstairs (hall or kitchen or both), with perhaps a buttery, and from 1 to 3 'chambers', one of which was sometimes downstairs also. The chief furniture in the hall or kitchen was the tableboard on its separate (trestle?) frame, with seating on a form and probably at least a couple of 'joint' (joined) stools or chairs. Two villagers, one of them the slatter, had 'twiggen chairs'; 'twiggen' means 'made of twigs or wickerwork' (OED), but these particular chairs could be the same as the ones 'with hay bottoms' bequeathed by the slatter's father; perhaps they were cane or rush-seated. Much higher up the social scale, the vicar had 8 leather chairs, and yeoman Randle had some 'Dutch chairs' in his parlour. There was occasionally a cupboard or dresser in the hall, but most of the storage furniture was upstairs; in the chambers there would be at least some coffer or chests, and possibly a press (cupboard). As well as clothes, these chests contained the household linen: sheets of flax or hemp, tablecloths and napkins, even in the poorer houses. The 'beds' (i.e.

mattresses) were stuffed with feathers or flock, (one was filled with straw), and the bedstead was sometimes a tester. As well as sheets, blankets, bolster and (sometimes) pillow, there was generally a rug or coverlet to go on top, often a red or yellow one. Any precious articles would be kept upstairs; the slatter kept 3 pewter dishes, a porringer and a salt cellar there, and a few years earlier the father of one of the ratepayers kept a Bible in his bedroom.

Downstairs again, the smaller household items were sometimes listed in inventories according to their material - pewter, brass, iron, 'cooprie' (cooper's ware). Even humble people usually possessed a couple of pewter dishes, and more prosperous homes might have six or more, with perhaps a pewter flagon, a candlestick, a chamberpot, or a salt cellar. Brass was the preferred metal for cooking pots and pans and kettles, though these could also be of bell metal or iron. Several families owned a warming pan, but the material is not specified. In some inventories, the listing of ironware around the fireplace runs to considerable length; as well as the fire grate and andirons, there might be shovel and tongs, spit, links or hooks, gridiron, frying pan, dripping pan. The wooden cooper's ware included a multiplicity of items - barrels, hogsheads, vats, tubs, cowls, skeels, pails - used for making or storing cheese, bread, and beer. Many houses had a dough trough or a cheese press, kept in the main room if there was nowhere else for them, and malt mills were not uncommon. Two men had guns, one described as a 'birding gunn'. Three people, not all of them specially prosperous, owned longcase clocks.

Overall, the inventories of this time often suggest a bare and comfortless domestic environment. This impression is probably true in large measure, but it is important to remember that many details escape listing; for example, it is rare to find mention of earthenware or wooden dishes or cups, or of any kind of cutlery, yet these must have existed. In a well-run household, where there was enough food and enough fuel for comfort, some of these houses must have been in reality far more homely than they seem from the documentary evidence. Some ordinary people did have leisure and means to enjoy a touch of luxury; the widow Anne Beckett, living on $\frac{1}{2}$ yardland, bequeathed to her grand-daughter Mary Hooper 'One flaxen sheet, one Holland pillowbeare (pillowcase) having a seam and lacework through the middle; one napkin marked M:H and five shillings in money.'

A new rating assessment had to be drawn up by the parish officers every year, but that for 1698 is the only one to have been preserved (at least for the period up to 1770). Thanks to the particular conscientiousness of the churchwardens for that year, this chance survival has made it possible to sketch an outline picture of Prestbury at the close of the 17th century. It was essentially an agricultural society, where a gentleman was simply someone who could pay others to do the manual labour on his land. The medieval open-field system, with individually owned strips, still survived as the basis of most arable farming and the hill-top common land was an important part of the economy, supporting flocks of sheep, large or small, owned by individual commoners. By this date though, there was wide variation in the size of land-holdings, and many shades of status among the majority group of villagers who called themselves yeomen. Most villagers must have depended to a greater or lesser extent on day-wages for work in other men's fields, but the ideal to which they aspired was the self-sufficient household, growing its own grain and vegetables, keeping a cow and a pig or two, making its own bread and cheese and beer. In the wider world, William III had been king of England for 9 years, and any threat of trouble from the deposed James II had receded.

England was not - for the moment - at war. After a turbulent half-century, it must have seemed that things were returning to normal, and older folk no doubt hoped that life would carry on as it always had. But big changes were on their way for Prestbury. Within not much more than a generation, the passing of the Inclosure Act for the parish in 1731 brought the possibility of new kinds of farming, and put an end to the image of the self-sufficient cottager. Then in 1738 Henry Skillicorne began to promote his new spa in Cheltenham, only 2 miles away. Soon, it was attracting numbers of rich and sophisticated people, a whole new class of tenants and customers for Cheltenham, - and for Prestbury. Things would never be quite the same again.

BERYL ELLIOTT

Notes:

1. G.R.O. P254 CW 2/1.
2. Unless otherwise stated, wills and inventories subsequently referred to may be found via the main indexes of wills and inventories in the G.R.O.
3. Prestbury had been a possession of the Bishop of Hereford in medieval times, and after the Reformation Hereford Cathedral retained tithe rights on a substantial area of the parish.
4. V.C.H. 8, 67.
5. Prestbury Inclosure Award, G.R.O. P254 SD 1. As well as the open hill-top, the old common fields were inclosed at the same date, amounting to another 725 acres.
6. Sir Robert Atkyns, History of Gloucestershire, (1711).
7. The true lord of the manor of Prestbury was Lord Craven, but according to Atkyns (1711), the Baghott estate was also 'reputed a manor'. A church seating plan of 1751 (G.R.O. P254 CW 4/1) refers to the current head of the Baghott family as 'squire'.
8. Account books of William Baghott Delabere, 1726-1746, G.R.O. 1637 E1.
9. Prestbury Baptism Register; William Capel was baptised in 1663 and Christopher Capel (probably the one mentioned here) in 1667.
10. Survey of Craven estates in 1623, with annotations for 1700, G.R.O. D184 M24.
11. Accounts of W. Baghott Delabere, 1726-1746.
12. For the history of this estate, see B. Elliott, 'Prestbury Park Farm', Chelt Loc Hist Soc J 3 (1985), 1.
13. Map of Prestbury Park, 1768, G.R.O. D184 P1.
14. Survey of Craven estate, 1700.
15. B. Rawes, 'The Hundred of Cheltenham and its Boundaries', Chelt Loc Hist Soc J 2 (1984), 8.
16. John Newman's will (1719) does not survive as such, but it is quoted extensively in a legal document of 1764, G.R.O. D184 T77.
17. In Prestbury wills of this time, the usual designation for a strip of land in the open field system.
18. Pictorial map drawn by Hubert Williams in 1978, on display in Prestbury Library.
19. Accounts of W. Baghott Delabere, 1726-1746.
20. Churchwardens' accounts.

Pittville Nursery Garden and the Ware Mortgage: a cautionary tale

Introduction

Once upon a time there was a nursery garden in the south-west corner of Wellington Square. It is shown on Merrett's map of 1834 as a Botanic Garden. Doubtless, like its better-known competitors, it supplied exotic species and pandered to the gentry's desire for a smattering of sophistication and culture. But it was really just a commercial nursery. It existed for less than 30 years but, in that time, it ruined the lives of one family and brought nothing but worry and expense to another.

Richard Ware

Richard Ware was a self-made florist and nurseryman of some substance. He leased the Imperial Nursery (now Imperial Gardens) where he traded on a large and respectable scale. In 1824-7, he laid out the walks and ornamental gardens of Pittville for Joseph Pitt with great taste and a liberality which seemed to scorn the calculation of expense.

He wanted to establish his business on a freehold site which he could leave to his sons. So, in March 1828, he bought five adjacent building plots in the corner of Pittville Square (now Wellington Square). The conveyance granted him the same privileges as other owners and residents (e.g. the use of the Square garden) but also permitted him to carry on the business of a nurseryman or florist. He was not required to pay a rent charge.

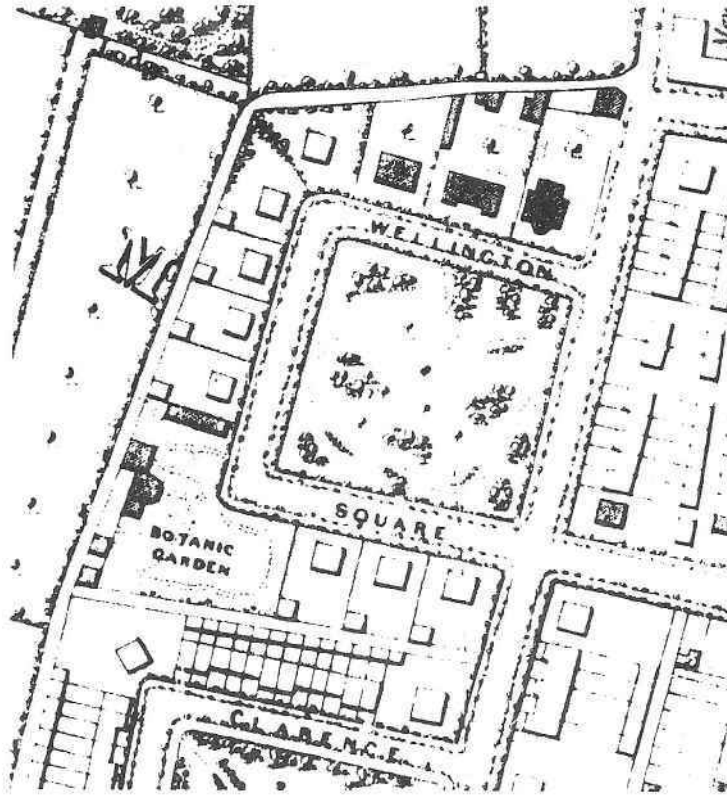
He built himself a cottage (now The Old Lodge) in the corner of the site and moved into it at the end of 1828. He turned the rest of the site into a garden and walled it in at very great expense.

In 1829-30, he bought a copyhold plot in Pittville Street, on the site of the modern No 12, and built a shop (with living quarters) there.

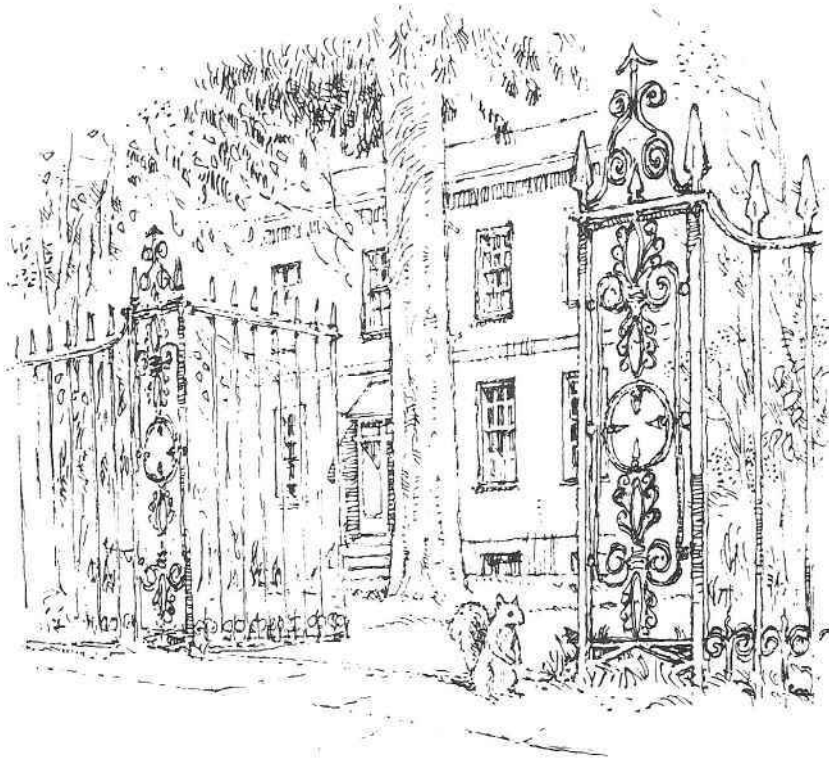
Meanwhile he started to build greenhouses and a conservatory on the Wellington Square site. In order to increase the income from his property, he also started to build a large house (now Wellington Lodge) for letting out to a genteel family.

But in February 1832 Richard died aged about 50 after a long and painful illness. He left a wife, Ann, of 37 and eight children, John (14), Emily (13), Dora (11), William (8), Charlotte (6), Elizabeth (5), Augusta (3) and baby Ellen, who was only 6 months old.

He left his gold watches, his silver and some insurance shares to be handed over to his children when they came of age. The rest of his property was put on trust to provide an income for Ann so long as she did not re-marry or co-



Detail from Merrett's map of Cheltenham (1834). The buildings shown on the 'Botanic Garden' are, from north to south, long greenhouse, large house (Wellington Lodge), conservatory communicating with greenhouse, small (Gothic) cottage, nurseryman's cottage (The Old Lodge).



Wellington Lodge, in the former Wellington Square Botanic Garden, with its ornamental ironwork. The history of the Garden and its buildings is discussed on pages 11-18.

habit with any man whatsoever. After Ann died, and after all the children had come of age, each surviving daughter was to receive an annuity of £15 p.a. Subject to the payment of these annuities, the Nursery was entailed to John and William and their heirs for ever and the shop likewise to Emily and Dora.

However, in a desperate Codicil dated two months before his death, Richard wrote that he was apprehensive that the provisions made by his Will for the benefit of his wife and children might not be so effective as he was desirous they should be if all the erections on his Pittville estate were not completely finished fit for use and occupation. He authorised his trustees to borrow money to pay the expenses of finishing the various erections so that they might be as productive in respect to the rents and profits thereof as possible.

Debt

Richard's trustees found that he already had mortgage and bank debts totalling £2600 and that they would need a further £426 to complete the buildings in Wellington Square. It is hardly surprising that five trustees disclaimed or resigned in the six months following Richard's death.

The new trustees consolidated the debts in a single mortgage secured on both the Pittville Street and Wellington Square properties. The lender was Lady Cooper, born Isabella Bell Franks, a rich heiress with an estate at Isleworth and several slave plantations in Jamaica and Grenada. She had married an undistinguished baronet, the Revd Sir William Henry Cooper (1766-1833). She was a friend of one of the new trustees, Mr Joseph Hartland of Lombard Street in the City of London, who often visited Cheltenham on her behalf.

In order to cover the building work, the trustees raised a second mortgage of £426 from a Mr James Fallon. They completed the buildings in 1833 and also built a small working man's cottage with pointed windows which soon became known as Gothic Cottage. In the end they were able to repay £61 of the second mortgage, leaving an outstanding debt of £365.

The net effect of this ruinous scheme was that properties which were almost unsaleable and which would never produce more than £161 p.a. gross rent were mortgaged for £2965 with interest payments of £148 p.a.

Ann soon moved into the large house (Wellington Lodge) and let rooms to lodgers. She rented out the two cottages, the nursery and the shop. For five years she managed to keep up the mortgage payments with some help from John.

Meanwhile Emily moved out to Leckhampton, presumably in service, where she married a local plasterer, William Wilkins, in 1836.

In 1837 the nursery and cottages fell vacant and Ann had to default on the November interest payment. Lady Cooper's solicitors, Messrs R. & J.B. Winterbotham, promptly sequestered the rent of the shop and tried to find a tenant for the nursery. They started to charge Ann £40 p.a. rent on the house. But she could not clear the November rent until the following March and then could pay no more. She even failed to pay the insurance premium due at midsummer 1838.

When John came of age in the spring of 1838, the trustees could not produce his insurance shares. They claimed that the shares had been sold to help pay

the mortgage interest. In the summer John married Elizabeth Robinson, a coachman's daughter from Staverton, in Staverton Parish Church.

Eviction

In July 1838, Winterbothams advised Lady Cooper that there was not the slightest possibility of her being paid her mortgage interest and suggested that she might offer the premises for sale; but they had some doubt whether she would meet with a purchaser. Richard's trustees (though sorry for Ann) declined to have anything to do with the fate of the property.

Lady Cooper obtained Counsel's opinion on the possibility of selling the properties. Counsel advised that she could sell the freehold of the Wellington Square site but that she had no power to sell the copyhold premises in Pittville Street. The latter could only be sold with the consent of Ann and her children, most of whom were still under age.

In August, Winterbothams reported that they had found some difficulty in persuading Ann to quit the large house since it was furnished by her and she was (without paying rent) getting something by letting lodgings. Meanwhile John offered to rent the Nursery Garden and Gothic Cottage for £55 p.a.; but Winterbothams were not persuaded that he would be a suitable tenant.

In December, Winterbothams told Ann that, if she could get a 'friend' to pay the arrears of interest and provide for its punctual discharge in future, the capital might remain as long as she liked. Otherwise they were convinced that Lady Cooper would sell. But Ann was not prepared to propose anything.

In the following February, Winterbothams advised Lady Cooper that (looking at all the circumstances) nothing could be done with the property while Ann remained on the premises, that as a preliminary she should be required to move and that all repairs necessary to put the premises in tenantable order should be immediately attended to.

In March, Ann put up a 'To Let' notice on the large house and told Winterbothams she was making every exertion to find a tenant. But they were not impressed.

That summer, Ann lost her first two grandsons: John's son, Richard, only lived for three days and William Wilkins junior died of TB at the age of 5 months. But fortunately Richard had a healthy twin sister who was named after Ann.

In August, Winterbothams had repeated interviews with Ann without satisfactory result. She declared that she could not leave herself destitute and would not give up possession of the Great House. Winterbothams' response was that, unless progress was made before 4 September 1839, Lady Cooper would take legal proceedings to eject her from the premises.

Before the Court Order could be executed, Ann removed her furniture and took the younger children to live with the Wilkinses who had moved to 10 Hanover Street. But, defiant to the end, she refused to hand over the keys or to cooperate in showing the house to potential tenants.

Remission

Winterbothams had already let the Nursery Garden and the larger cottage to a nurseryman called Thomas Meggs for £65 p.a. In 1840, they let the large house to a Miss Harris who named it 'Victoria House'.

In 1840 Ann entered into negotiations with Lady Cooper and Mr Hartland. Lady Cooper or her solicitors must have destroyed the relevant correspondence since only one letter, which is filed in the wrong bundle, has survived. But the upshot was that, in January 1841, Lady Cooper and Mr Hartland bought the second mortgage (which was now worthless) for £282 of their own money. They then drew up a new second mortgage deed which charged the (non-existent) income with an annuity of £20 payable to Ann for life. Lady Cooper paid the annuity out of her own pocket in quarterly instalments until Ann died. One of Richard's trustees, a builder and bricklayer called Matthew Lane of 10 St Paul's Street North, was discharged and released from personal liability. Mr Hartland was left as sole trustee.

We can only speculate as to the reason for this strange turn of events. In the light of the previous history, it seems unlikely that Lady Cooper was acting out of disinterested pity or generosity. Somehow Ann had turned the tables. Could she have uncovered some wrongdoing by Mr Hartland or Lady Cooper? Could this be connected with the disappearance of Richard's insurance shares? We shall never know.

In June 1841, Emily Wilkins died in childbirth, attended by an illiterate midwife from Larput Place.

Dora was in service with a family at 118 Bath Road. In November 1842 she married George Banaster, a draper of 121 Brunswick Street, in the Parish Church. They soon moved to Oldbury, near West Bromwich.

Charlotte worked as a dressmaker. Early in 1845, she had an illegitimate baby boy called William. Sadly he only lived for 19 months and died of bronchitis at Ann's home at 1 Hungerford Street.

Thomas Meggs, the nurseryman, also looked after a small black Alderney bull and some milking cows in a field on the opposite side of Wellesley Road (on the site of Gable End and 13 to 23A Marle Hill Parade). The animals belonged to Mr J.B. Winterbotham, the solicitor. The bull was normally tethered in a shed with a heifer. But, early one May morning in 1846, it got loose and ran among the cows in the field. Mr Meggs tried to drive it back to the shed with a stick. But the bull turned on him, gored him in the back as he tried to flee and trampled on him. Passers by summoned help and drove the bull away with stones. But Thomas Meggs soon expired.

For some years before Mr Meggs was killed, the nursery had been managed by one William Ware, who was probably Richard's nephew. In 1847 he took over the lease and moved into the nurseryman's cottage. Unfortunately the business was not successful and he soon abandoned the garden. But he stayed on in the cottage until about 1850.

Ann succumbed to dropsy and died in May 1848 at 1 Hungerford Street. A week later, Lady Cooper paid the final instalment of Ann's annuity. Ellen, who was still under age, went to live with the Banasters.

Charlotte moved to Bristol. There she met John Swaffield, a young tailor of 26, who had already been widowed. They were married at Bristol Register Office in April 1849.

William (Richard's younger son) had been a harness maker but then enlisted with the 98th Regiment of Foot. He died unmarried in April 1851 while serving as a private at Peshawar.

The last tenant of the Nursery was William Harris who leased it from 1851 to 1855.

Foreclosure

Lady Cooper died at a great age in January 1855. Her executors resolved to cut their losses and call in the Ware mortgage.

The surviving heirs had dispersed. John was employed as a nurseryman in Wolverhampton. Ellen and the Banasters were still in Oldbury. The Swaffields were in Birmingham. Elizabeth was in Mayfair. Only Augusta, who was in service at 69 Promenade, remained in Cheltenham. They were all dependent on their earnings, which in some cases were very small. They were aggrieved that Richard's daughters had never seen a farthing of the annuities given by their father's Will and that the insurance shares had disappeared. They were sure that they had been wronged. But they did not know how or by whom.

Messr H. & G. Lake of Lincoln's Inn, acting for Lady Cooper's executors, wrote to each of the heirs threatening to file a Bill of Foreclosure. They suggested that the heirs might prefer to satisfy themselves that the property was insufficient to pay the existing debt and, if so satisfied, consent to join in a Deed of Release to the Mortgagees.

Charlotte Swaffield replied on behalf of the family. They were all quite agreeable to sign the Deed of Release providing Lady Cooper's executors would make them a small recompense.

Lakes then made a detailed proposal. They enclosed a letter from Messrs Young & Gilling, who were now managing the properties, valuing them at £1850 and detailing the rents which were now only £115 p.a. The debt amounted to £2880 capital and around £1000 arrears of interest. Lakes stressed that Lady Cooper had not foreclosed from a kind consideration for the late Mrs Ware but her executors were now bound to get in the Mortgage. Strangely, they did not mention the £20 annuity which Lady Cooper had paid to Ann. They offered to write off the interest arrears if the heirs paid off the capital debt. Otherwise it occurred to them to propose that, if Mr Ware's children should execute a Deed for releasing their interests, they (Lakes) would recommend the executors to pay the children's legal expenses plus £50 to be divided equally among them.

Lakes commissioned Mr Hartland to visit the heirs and commend the proposal to them. He was unsuccessful. But presumably he was able to establish that the surviving heirs knew little or nothing of the events of 1840. The Wares held a family meeting and agreed to demand £50 each.

Lakes were astonished. They had never known a more bare-faced attempt to make an unrighteous bargain. Their object had been to let the family of Mrs Ware derive some trifling benefit rather than spend the money in law. The matter

was now at an end and they would at once file a Bill and foreclose the Mortgage.

John replied by return pleading for some increase in Lakes' original offer. But they refused to make any improvement.

Meanwhile William Wilkins wrote to Lakes from West Bromwich to enquire whether he had any right to Emily's entitlement under her father's Will.

Lakes instructed Counsel to draft the Bill of Foreclosure. But at the eleventh hour the Wares capitulated and agreed to release their interests. The Disentailing Deed was duly prepared. In August 1855, Lakes sent a courier to obtain the signatures of Richard's six surviving children and of William Wilkins: he handed over £7 2s.10d. in exchange for each signature.

Divison and Sale

Lady Cooper's Executors were advised by Young & Gilling that the Nursery Garden was not likely to pay. So they divided the Wellington Square property into three auction lots, firstly Victoria House with its modern boundaries, secondly the two cottages with a small garden area and a path to Wellington Square and thirdly a building plot somewhat larger than the site of the modern Old Lodge Court. The auction was held in October 1855; Victoria House was knocked down to a painter and glazier called William Walker for £610; the other two lots and the Pittville Street shop failed to attract buyers.

But when Mr Walker's solicitors examined the title, they discovered that Lady Cooper's executors had no power to buy freehold or copyhold land and so were acting in breach of trust. Mr Walker insisted on a personal indemnity from Lady Cooper's son-in-law, the Revd Edward Dawkins, before he would complete the purchase.

He let Victoria House to an Irish lady, Miss Frances Armstrong, and her companion, Miss Mary Holt, who renamed it 'Wellington Lodge'. In 1860, Mr Walker sold the freehold to the two ladies. They seem to have used the house to board children whose parents were in India. They took down the conservatory and built a new wing on the south side of the house. They also built some out-buildings in the north-west corner of their garden. They lived there until they died, Miss Armstrong in 1890 and Miss Holt in 1909. The property was then passed down in Miss Holt's family who owned and occupied it until 1987.

Daniel Olive, who was a well-established fishmonger with a shop on the corner of High Street and Winchcombe Street, bought the two cottages for £385 in 1857. He also obtained an indemnity from Mr Dawkins. He moved into the larger cottage, which had been known as 'Victoria Cottage' for a short time, and renamed it 'Wellington Cottage'. He rented out Gothic Cottage for some years but then used it as an out-building: it does not seem to have been used as a residence after 1870. He built another substantial out-building, with two floors and a cellar, adjacent to the Wellington Lodge boundary. The function of this building is not recorded. In 1868, he moved his shop to more central premises at 4 Promenade.

Isaac Lawrence, a photographic artist, bought the Pittville Street shop for £280 in 1863.

No one wanted the building plot. Eventually, in 1865, Daniel Olive bought it for £275 and added it to his garden. He renamed the property 'Flesk Lodge' and occupied it until his death in 1893. His family then retained it until 1931.

Later Development

In March 1939, a local developer called Edwin Bateson bought Flesk Lodge. He converted Gothic Cottage into a garage with a first floor store room. He extended Daniel Olive's out-building southwards across the yard and converted it into a house, which he called 'Clive Lodge'. He fenced off the new house and garage and sold the rest of the property in September. The latter was renamed 'Old Lodge' by the purchasers.

In 1950, the then owner of Old Lodge sold off most of her garden for development. An inconspicuous block of six flats, known as 'Old Lodge Court', was built there in 1960-61 by a well-regarded local builder, Les Jackman, whose yard was at the end of Northfield Terrace.

The present garage of The Old Lodge dates from 1980.

Sources

The main sources for this article are Richard Ware's Will in the Public Record Office (ref. PROB/11/1800/337) and Lady Cooper's papers in the Greater London Record Office (Accession 775/690-760). I have also consulted the Census returns from 1841 to 1881, the birth etc. registrations and/or wills of many of the persons mentioned and press reports of the inquest on Thomas Meggs.

I am grateful to Mr P.E. Burge of Clive Lodge for allowing me to inspect his early deeds.

The properties are shown on Merrett's Map of 1834, on the old Town Survey, c. 1856 and on the 1:500 Ordnance Survey Plan of 1884. The Building Plans of Clive Lodge are held in the Gloucestershire Record Office (No.5223). George Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide (1845, reprinted 1981) includes sketches of the Imperial Nursery (p.20), of the fishmonger's shop at 4 Promenade (p.11) and of Young and Gilling's office at 50 Promenade (p.16).

Secondary sources include Henry Davies' Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham (1832), the Cheltenham Annuaire (Directory) from 1837 onwards and Steven Blake's Pittville 1824-1860 (1988).

I have used modern street numbers to identify premises mentioned in this article. These mostly differ from those in use in the 19th century.

A.J. CAMPBELL

The rise and fall of Edward Rupert Humphreys: a mid-Victorian scandal

In January 1849, the death was announced of the Revd Henry Hawkins, Headmaster for some 32 years of Cheltenham Grammar School. For the greater part of that time, the Vestry of the Parish Church and the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College Oxford had been engaged in bitter dispute over the administration of Richard Pate's Foundation. The Grammar School, in common with many other establishments of its kind, was by 1849 in a state of decay which the founding in 1841 of the new Proprietary College (for the sons of gentlemen) did nothing to alleviate. The Vestry Committee, led by Francis Close, finally succeeded in November 1851 in bringing the Chancery Court case to an end but already, before that, plans were afoot to revive the ancient foundation and to give to Cheltenham a school which belonged to the townspeople rather than to the incomers who despised them or at best tolerated their presence as necessary to the comfort of their betters. In 1849, the governors of the Grammar School announced their intention of providing accommodation for boarding, taking over the building known as Yearsley's Hotel next door to the original Elizabethan School House. The next step was to appoint a new Headmaster who would revive the moribund school and restore its reputation as a seat of learning in the face of strong opposition from its much younger competitor. To give Francis Close his due, he was anxious to see the status of the Grammar School raised - though not in so far as it would begin to rival the College; the Grammar School was for the respectable tradesmen and their ilk, the College for the aristocracy. In 1852, therefore, the President of Cheltenham College, Dr Norris, introduced Dr Edward Rupert Humphreys at the re-opening of the Grammar School; by 're-opening' is meant only the opening of the school under its new Headmaster after a period of a few weeks in early 1852. Henry Hawkins' son, William, had, in fact, kept the school going from 1849 to 1852 and at the opening ceremony there were about 100 day pupils, though, as yet, no boarders.

The appointment of Dr Humphreys, son of Thomas Humphreys of Stradbally, S. Ireland but of lowland Scots origin, was in several ways a surprising one. To begin with, he was not in Holy Orders - an unusual state of affairs for a man in such a position at this time. As it is known that there were at least four other applicants for the post, all of them clergymen, one is tempted to think that Dr Norris and the Fellows of Corpus Christi had had their fill of Francis Close with his endless tirades against the High Church and the Oxford Movement in particular and his relentless pursuit of those who dared to oppose his views. By appointing a layman, they doubtless hoped to avoid the inevitable theological clashes with the incumbent of St Mary's. But it is more surprising that Dr Norris and his fellow patrons seem not to have looked at all closely into Humphreys' professed academic qualifications. For both his degrees - M A Edinburgh and LL.D Aberdeen were honorary - the latter having been awarded for supposedly meritorious work in Canada of which no record exists. Moreover, although he matriculated in the Michaelmas term 1836 and entered Magdalene College Cambridge, he did not take his degree and no more is known of him until he reappears as Headmaster of a small school on Prince Edward Island, Canada. He remained there for three years, during which time he persuaded the Legislative Assembly to aid him financially in publishing an edition of the works of Horace, on the strength of which he seems able to have returned to Britain as head Classics master at Merchiston Academy, near

Edinburgh and thence to CGS as Headmaster, acquiring two honorary degrees on the way. He came to Cheltenham with recommendations from many notable people - professors at Edinburgh University and the Attorney General of Prince Edward Island among them - all neatly printed in a booklet. These days, a quick telephone call would verify the authenticity of such testimonials, but presumably the Fellows accepted them without question, bowing perhaps to the superiority at that time of Scottish education over the English variety. What does seem clear is that Edward Rupert was possessed of a charismatic personality, and charmed all he met with his enthusiasm and drive - after decades of the rigid morality and narrow-minded adherence to the status quo, Humphreys' arrival must have seemed like a breath of fresh air in stuffy Victorian Cheltenham.

There was certainly great enthusiasm in the town for the new order at the Grammar School. From hardly a mention in the weekly newspapers there was now scarcely an issue which did not have some reference to the new order of things under Dr Humphreys - his plans for the future, the innovations he proposed to make and the achievements of his pupils. It soon became clear that he was determined to rival the College and in doing so to entice away prospective pupils from that establishment. He was a skilful publicist and succeeded so well in his aims that even Close had to admit that he had worked wonders in reviving the Grammar School's reputation, though in a letter to Dr Norris, the good reverend gentleman expressed alarm at what he described as an 'attempt to place the lowest tradesman's son on a par with ... the College, which is so exclusive in its character' and was of the opinion that 'our aristocrats here' would not stand for their butcher's boy and their own boys wearing the same cap - Humphreys had introduced the mortar-board as standard wear for his pupils in common with the College boys.

In a very short while, Humphreys had stamped his personality on the town of Cheltenham - indeed, he sometimes seems to be rivalling Francis Close in his domination of the pages of local news in the Examiner. He lost no time in revitalising the Grammar School and his efforts in that direction were widely applauded in the town, especially among those of the middle classes - that is, the tradesmen, clerks etc. who had at last woken up to the fact that they had a school on their doorstep which would welcome their sons and educate them to a higher level than that to which they had previously aspired. Small wonder, then, that the new Head's boundless enthusiasm and progressive (for his time) innovations gained their approval. Quite soon (during the year 1853-4) the School was divided into two departments, Classical and Commercial, and Science was introduced into the curriculum in both. Frequent notices of these changes appeared in the Examiner. Humphreys never lost an opportunity to publicise his school and its activities - when Queen Victoria passed through the town, Grammar School boys were stationed on a coal-siding to see her train flash by; parties of boys were taken to Pittville for the Horticultural Show and so on. Soon, he was appearing on platforms all over the town, giving lectures and addresses and presiding at public meetings. Many of his lectures were printed and published nationally and widely advertised in the local press. He wrote (and spoke) on such diverse subjects as 'Moral Philosophy', 'England's Educational crisis', 'Government of India', 'Political Science' - even (a sop to Francis Close, surely) 'The Dangers of Romanism'. He fostered an interest in Science, not only in the School but also among the adult, 'respectable' working-classes, by instituting evening schools for shop workers and the like, becoming President of the Cheltenham Athenaeum (previously the Working Men's Institute) which had its headquarters in Crescent Terrace with a library and other facilities for members. At each annual prize-giving, the principal

speaker would make some reference to Dr Humphreys' zeal, energy and power and his pioneer work in promoting the teaching of Science was particularly emphasised - so much so that this innovation was drawn to the attention of Prince Albert who was graciously pleased to present to the School a book on the natural history of Deeside. In 1856, there were eight permanent members of staff, augmented in that year by a master from University College School, London to teach Gymnastics and Fencing and two part-timers (Monsieur Tiesset and Dr Blancke) for French and German.

It would be surprising if all this publicity for the Grammar School had not aroused some feelings of animosity among the upper class parents and pupils of the exclusive College up the road. There were one or two nasty confrontations between the rival establishments during these years, several of which resulted in court cases, reported in full in the Examiner of the time. Dr Humphreys never failed to jump to the defence of his staff and pupils when these occurred and the Examiner, at least, reflected his partiality. Thus, when a party of Grammar School boarders, out for a walk in charge of the Drill Master, Mr Andrew Livingstone, met a similar party of College boys who attempted to force them off the pavement and a skirmish ensued, the Examiner gave full coverage to a report of the event and subsequent court proceedings. For Dr Humphreys had taken the case up and two College boys had been charged with assault. Their case was not helped by the evidence given by the master in charge whose disdain of his opposite number at the Grammar School to whom he referred as a 'member of the lowest orders' and therefore not worthy of notice (Mr Livingstone had ventured to suggest that the College boys might make way for his party on the pavement) made an unfavourable impression on the magistrates. They found the case proven and fined the offenders. This report was followed up in the same issue by a letter from Dr Humphreys explaining his reasons for bringing the case at all. It was, he said, not the first time that such assaults upon his pupils had occurred - in some cases boys as young as eight years old had been involved and there had been what seemed like a determined campaign to entice pupils away from the Grammar School in favour of the College by references to the contamination of the lower classes and so on. It seems that Humphreys was already learning that in Cheltenham more, perhaps, than in any other town, academic excellence was not the main factor leading to a school's success. Class, above all, was what mattered. For Close and his like-minded friends, education was a fine thing - by all means teach the deserving poor to read and write, just a little. Even, slightly higher up the social scale, expand the curriculum to include a wider range of subjects and thus provide an army of clerks and superior tradesmen. But there must be no encroachment over the boundaries. The Grammar School was for the town, the College for the sons of gentlemen and no one would ever be allowed to forget it.

For the moment, however, Edward Humphreys carried all before him. For the next few years, he worked endlessly to promote the cause of the Grammar School, not only among the tradespeople and others of the lower middle-classes but also with the socially important and the wealthy who quite often parted with large sums of money to assist him in his educational ventures - the provision of University scholarships, the pioneering work in the teaching of Science and the expansion of the Classical department. And all this time, he carried out himself a full teaching load; according to Francis Close he was a gifted teacher having a peculiar talent 'in eliciting the best from his pupils'. Moreover, in addition to his work at Cheltenham, he became President of the College of Preceptors in London and was appointed examiner to the East Indian Government. No opportunity was ever missed to bring the Grammar School

to the forefront of Cheltenham's educational establishments. In November 1855, Lord John Russell (a former Prime Minister) and Lady Russell were entertained to dinner at the School, attended by local clergy, some high-ranking Army and Navy officers and one or two professional men. Following the meal and speeches, Dr and Mrs Humphreys accompanied their guests on visits to Cheltenham College and the Normal Training College (St Paul's). One wonders what Mrs Humphreys thought of all this junketing and the grandiose schemes in which her husband engaged. Was she present also on other social occasions: at the numerous public lectures in which he played a principal part and which the Examiner never failed to report in great detail - as, for example, the second lecture of the Cheltenham Athenaeum in 1856 when Grammar School boys were among the audience (in the gallery) and the upper classes were accommodated in reserved seats. The occupiers of these seats were listed in some detail; no Mrs Humphreys, but Mrs Comyn was there - a fact which has some significance in the light of later events.

This year, 1856, was to be the last of Humphreys' meteoric rise to fame and glory. All these efforts to rejuvenate the Grammar School, to establish himself in local society, perhaps to rival Cheltenham College, had cost money - money which he did not have and which he therefore had had to borrow from wealthy people of the town. They had also cost time which, burdened by teaching and public work, he equally did not have. In 1855, driven by the need to publish proof of his reputation as an intellectual and a man of letters, he had engaged one Mr Henry Owgan of Clifton to 'ghost-write' a series of books for him, among them a Manual of Moral Philosophy published by the O.U.P., a translation of Livy and a Manual of Political Science. Naturally enough, Mr Owgan required payment for these efforts, as did some of the masters at the school who had been recruited to widen the curriculum without the prior agreement of the Governors. Gradually, it became widely known that Humphreys was running into debt and when word reached the President of Corpus Christi there were many concerned letters from that gentleman to which Humphreys replied that the money spent on the School was unavoidable and that he had in fact spent £6,000 which he was never authorised to spend, and which he had probably raised as 'loans' from his influential friends. By now, his relations with Oxford had rapidly deteriorated. Yet when, in January 1857, deductions were made from his salary by way of interest on the loan, a 'deputation of subscribers' delivered a memorial to the President of Corpus Christi protesting about this move and calling for the restoration of his salary in view of Dr Humphreys' 'ability and zeal' in conducting the Scholastic Department of the Grammar School and of raising it to its present 'high and honourable position'. This memorial was signed by Earl Fitzhardinge, Baron de Saumarez and Lord Northwick in addition to 69 of the most eminent men in Cheltenham including 12 ministers of religion, nine justices of the peace, five medical men and several solicitors, among them Mr J.B. Winterbotham.

But all this was to no avail and even Edward Humphreys' most enthusiastic supporters had to acknowledge defeat and admit that their golden boy was a fraud and a trickster of more than ordinary proportions. When he was compelled to file a petition in bankruptcy his debts were found to exceed £26,000. Even this might have been forgiven - he had been a fool and financial recklessness had led to his downfall but he would not have been the first prominent citizen of Cheltenham to have ruined his career in that way. But soon wild rumours of gross moral turpitude began to circulate, culminating in letters to Dr Norris, President of Corpus Christi, which asserted that Humphreys was a man of ill-repute who was totally unsuited to hold the position of head of the Grammar School. Finally, there were meetings in the town at which Humphreys announced

his impossible financial position, adding that he would soon be 'in a different hemisphere'. All of which was only too true; his debts were enormous - to the Gloucester Banking Company £1,636; to the Revd J.J.C. Saunders £2,838; to the dental surgeon Mr S. Tibbs £2,841; to the masters at the school an undisclosed sum in unpaid salaries; the list goes on and most significant of all to Dr Stephen Comyn of Wolseley Villa £2,994. His wife we know was ill - bills for medicines were among his undischarged debts - his family was naturally distressed by the scandal surrounding his name. Humphreys wrote desperate letters of remorse - to a friend Mr Joberns (to whom, incidentally, he owed £4,038), to Mr Jeffery, the Second Master at the School, to excuse his absence. Then he fled, leaving behind him his wife and six children - and taking with him Mrs Comyn, mother of eight and wife of that doctor to whom, as we have seen, he owed £2,994. Not until the very last moment did he tender his resignation and by the time Dr Norris wrote to acknowledge it, Humphreys and his companion had sailed from Liverpool en route for the New World. On arrival in Boston he was immediately arrested (as an undischarged bankrupt) and placed in a cell where he is reported to have asked for wine and cigars only to be told politely by his gaolers 'No, Sir. This is a temperance house and smoking is strictly forbidden'.

The Examiner, which almost until the last had been one of Dr Humphreys' staunchest supporters, now launched a bitter attack on its former hero. Predictably, in mid-Victorian Cheltenham, it was his immorality which was most roundly condemned - bankruptcy was one thing, it might happen to anyone, but adultery was inexcusable. One wonders what Francis Close, by now safely ensconced in the Deanery at Carlisle, would have said about the whole sorry affair - material here for a whole series of sermons one imagines. The Examiner pointed out that only three days before his precipitate departure, Humphreys had convened a meeting of parents at which he admitted his disastrous financial position and threw himself on their mercy. He must, however, already have been planning flight. It seems that he had lied to his wife before leaving town, telling her he was going to see friends in Derbyshire who might help him and 'borrowing' her watch and all her loose change before he left (accompanied by Mrs Comyn). Not until the poor woman received a letter from Derbyshire inviting her and her husband to spend a few days with their friends did she realise the deception and a note written by him from Liverpool confirmed her worse fears. The Examiner lost no time in setting up a fund for Mrs Humphreys and her family, headed by the President of Corpus, to which many of the contributors were those who had been wronged by her husband. The Governors gave places at the School to those Humphreys boys old enough to attend though one went off to America to join his father. Notwithstanding the resultant upheaval, the annual prize-giving took place at the school as planned, Dr Norris presiding and the Examiner commented on the irony of the fact that even as the event was taking place in the main school, Humphreys' furniture and effects were being auctioned off by Mr Sweeting in the Headmaster's house next door.

How the tea-cups must have rattled over this scandalous affair in comfortable, charming Cheltenham - and not only in Cheltenham, it appears, but throughout the land, provoking even letters to The Times. Though there were fears among the general public that this was the end of the Grammar School, such was not the case. Dr Norris, a patient and kind-hearted man, did all he could to help at this time. After presiding at the June prize-giving (at which he referred briefly to Humphreys' 'improvidence, carelessness and reckless expenditure' leading to his 'utter break-down') he saw to it that a successor should be appointed with all speed. So the Grammar School carried on, with some success,

it must be admitted, although with never the same panache as in those years between 1852-9 and there were to be many set-backs and difficulties before the arrival in 1919 of Mr R.R. Dobson whose drive and ambition for the School reflected that of his unfortunate predecessor but whose character proved equal to the task of establishing it as one of the country's leading boys' Public Day Schools, highly esteemed in the educational world of the time.

As for Dr Humphreys - according to Dr Bell, he lived on for another 20 years, ending his days on Prince Edward Island. From his exile, he published in 1862 a book on the education of officers and corresponded on Masonic matters with a Mr J. Brook Smith. Also according to Dr Bell, Mrs Humphreys and her family later joined him, while his ghost-writer Henry Owgan disappeared from his home in Clifton in September 1859. But of Mrs Comyn there seems to be no record.

Shocked and disgusted as the inhabitants of Cheltenham were by Edward Humphreys' defection, there yet lingered in the town a sneaking admiration for his achievements at the Grammar School. After all, he had raised its academic standards to a point where it could compete with the College, he had given opportunities to boys whom that College would not accept on social grounds and shown that they could win scholarships and enter the Universities with the best of them. His promotion of the teaching of Science was genuinely innovative and forward-thinking for his time and established a tradition which was to result in the production of several eminent men of science in the ensuing years - among them the engineer Benjamin Baker who helped to design the Forth Rail Bridge and the London Metropolitan Railway and the medical pioneer W.H. Corfield. Moreover, he brought some liveliness and modernity to a town long under the repressive influence of Francis Close. Four years after his departure in 1863, the Examiner in its editorial compared the golden years when the Grammar School had been so successful when 'Dr Humphreys was devoting himself heart and soul to raising the status of the Cheltenham Grammar School ... under (his) management this once promising institution reached its culminating point' with the more sober regime currently in force under his successor when 'its annual processions and prize distributions have dwindled into comparative insignificance'.

With hindsight, it is possible to see that Humphreys' headship of the Grammar School was doomed from the start. In any other town but Cheltenham, with its rigid social structure, and given more financial acumen than he possessed, his ambitious plans might well have succeeded. But the existence of Cheltenham College, founded for the 'sons of gentlemen' meant that the Grammar School could only ever be second best in the eyes of the local gentry who feared contamination from the tradesmens' and clerks' sons in the High Street. Had things turned out differently, it might have been E.R. Humphreys who gave his name to that other Victorian foundation, rather than Dean Close. As it is, his story seems conveniently to have been forgotten - understandably perhaps, in view of its scandalous ending. Yet while it lasted, his time in Cheltenham seems in retrospect to have lifted the town out of its genteel apathy as a decaying spa and brought some sparkle to the lives of its ordinary inhabitants.

BARBARA KING

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Cheltenham Grammar School, from George Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide (1845)

Glimpses of Cheltenham through the pages of a Victorian schoolmaster's diary

'After tea, Father Mills and I went through the fair - a scene of the wildest confusion and noise - bells ringing, gongs sounding, organs playing...merry go rounds, etc. This being Father Mills' birthday (49 years) I treated him to a pipe 1/-...On getting home beat Mr. Fletcher in 2 games of dominoes...We then supped from a tripe supper - with apple tart...After a stirrup cup of brandy and water left at 10.45 arriving (at Badgeworth) at 12 midnight. Moonlight'.

This lively reference to Cheltenham's mop fair of October 1873 is one of many glimpses of 19th-century town life which appear in the diaries of William Thomas Swift - a rather earnest young schoolmaster at Badgeworth, then about to take up an appointment as Headmaster of Churchdown School. William had kept a diary since at least 1859 and was to continue without a lapse until just a few days before his death in February 1915.

The creation of such a long series of diaries is uncommon enough, but for it to have survived in good condition is a rare treat for the local historian. The collection - comprising some 49 small black notebooks - was given to the Gloucestershire Record Office by the author's grandson in 1980; its G.R.O. reference number is D3981. Their wealth of detail about everyday life, local events and personalities is now more readily accessible thanks to the work of the late Dr Graham Dowler of Churchdown (a member of this Society) who in a voluntary capacity compiled a resume of the contents of each volume, a task which would have been impossible for Record Office staff to undertake given the other demands on their time. Dr Dowler's catalogue (an 80 page typescript) is now available in the Record Office searchroom and provides an invaluable aid to appreciating the full scope of Swift's diaries. In this article I have selected just a few of the many references to Cheltenham, hopefully giving the reader both an idea of the extent of Dr Dowler's work and an impression of the varied nature of the original source.

Swift's mother and stepfather, John Mills (the Father Mills mentioned above), lived at 28 Townsend Street. When the diary begins, Swift was training to be a teacher at Carmarthen College, but his holidays were spent at the family home. The immediacy of day-to-day events over a century ago is, of course, one of the main appeals of the diaries. One such was the regular occurrence of a visit to the house of the butchers to slaughter the family's pigs: 'Full of business this morning - 2 pigs killed etc - butchers stayed to dinner' (9 January 1862). The following day drama ensued, for whilst his mother was melting the lard it boiled over causing a fire in the chimney which set the whole street up in arms. Returning to the business of the pigs, William records that he continued to salt the joints and melt lard 'all night till 1/4 past 10'. Twenty years on and it was still a household event of note, 'pig-killing at Mother's caused as usual father Mills to get helplessly drunk - I gave him a bit of my mind' - to little effect it would seem for he was later 'brought in by a man at 4.30' (14 October 1882).

Christmas, New Year and other church festivals are usually recorded in some detail during Swift's stays at Townsend Street. A typical entry from Christmas Day 1863 reads: 'A very great row all night - partook of wine and biscuits at 2 - the cocks crew, people Hallowed at 6, a band sprang up - several times

1884

June

b. Friday

Reading 2 Hrs
as usual

- (1) Review of Words
- (2) read Philo-Soph
les Jours
- (3) Dr. Morgan's lect
1st on Physiology

This morning Coals came & cut up the fags - They weighed 20 score 2 lbs - After Breakfast mother weighed out & various joints - Jo made out & tickets for them - Kate next was dispatched off with them - Fr. M. & I took the hamper to Station G.W. - with Mrs. Pococke Bacon & pig meat. The Fire arm to 5/19/10 next to Walters - just as we arrived - a fire wh. began last night amongst some paraffin at a Iron mongers in Bath-Road adjoining - & wh. was thought to have been put out - now burst out afresh - there came 4 firemen - with a patent water force hose &c. immediately (by Walters) Iron put it out - We then left for dinner - after our nap in front sitting room - read afterwards Magazines &c. - Above all The trial of Edgar Page yesterday before 1 Magistrate - on charge of stealing £10. The Sentence was 2 months imprisonment with hard labour - Wh. last item Cheryle & Lawyer tried to get him off - but Mr. Lacey said there were various degrees of hard labour - & that the case ought to have gone to the Assizes - Mother had 7 ducks hatched - & of 50 1st = Fr. M. I went to Crown - with Chatterlings to their supper - putting on at Walters again on road - We supped in Kitchen - with Aunt & Annie & talked chiefly on Mrs. Pococke & Page - when Will apperly & his companion came in - We left seated at 11 - to bed -

- at 11, went to St. John's. Psalms chanted - dined - R. beef and Plum pudding as usual - at 3 went to the Crown (in Upper Park Street off the London Road) with Grandmother - found Mr. G. Hambling and Miss H. there, teaed, talked of Mr. Robart's removal etc - supped - sang at 11.20 returned home'.

Christmas time was also the season for traditional entertainments, although some were more enjoyable than others. The family frequently went to a pantomime in Cheltenham, but on Boxing Day 1871 the performance was spoilt by the stench and row; the gallery was very crowded and amidst the coarse remarks and swearing it was almost impossible to hear the show. The rest of the family were ready to leave but despite John Mills' 'high wrath' at the noise, he insisted they stayed. At least they avoided the experience suffered by Swift at Bristol on a previous occasion when he had almost been crushed in the entrance to the gallery.

Such incidents did not deter Swift from making regular outings to the local theatres. In May 1884, he saw a performance of 'The Three Hats' which was enlivened towards the end by the arrival of Lord Fitzhardinge, who received an ovation. It was Yeomanry Week in town and the Promenade was filled by a good many of the Hussars 'giggling, smoking and strutting - some rather broad in their pronunciation'.

In a later diary, he described an outing with his son Arthur to an opera at the newly opened Regent Street theatre on 8 October 1892. The trip began with a tricycle ride from Churchdown through the poor roads in Badgeworth and with the tricycles safely parked in the Bayshill Inn yard, father and son hastened to the theatre. Swift thought the decorations very beautiful, particularly the fine ceiling, and admired the electric lighting and gold and brown colour scheme. Typically he included a note of the cost - 1s. 6d. for a seat in the Pit at a matinee. After visiting the 'subterranean refreshment Bar' they meandered home via the Bayshill Inn, the Lansdown Inn and the Plough.

Street entertainment is also frequently mentioned, partly because of its impact on Swift's school children. When the circus was in town, absenteeism was high and perhaps that accounts for his rather disparaging descriptions of these shows. He certainly considered that people parted with their money unwisely as the acts were often weak; but the crowds were drawn in by the excitement of hearing the circus band playing in the High Street and only afterwards realised they had been duped, as on 23 September 1882 when a disappointed audience discovered that there were not even any horses to go on with the performance. As a neighbour put it, 'when it came to the point they had nothing to perform - which caused an uproar'.

Summer walks were a less expensive and more edifying form of pleasure, and Swift enjoyed combining church visits with his excursions - often covering 20 miles in a day. A popular shorter walk, then as now, was to Leckhampton church and Hill. On 10 August 1868, Swift remarked on the many fine new graves at the churchyard there and also some very old wedge-shaped stones with full length old crosses. After a picnic lunch two fields beyond the church he climbed the Hill, finding it quite an effort in the heat of the day but looking forward to drinking from a favourite spring, 'the Diamond of the Desert', on Charlton Common. To his disappointment he found that it had been fouled by a flock of sheep just above so he went lower down Sandy Lane and drank at another spring from a trough.

Within the town, the new lake at Pittville Park could be enjoyed from 1898. The Swift family walked around the new lake on 17 August and admired the very picturesque scene, especially the fall over the rocks at the west end and the boats, but 'were disappointed in not hearing the band and Mr. Gilding as announced - who performed in the old park'.

The diaries frequently refer to new buildings and other developments in the town, although some entries are frustratingly brief - such as the bald statement that the new GWR station was a 'decided improvement', 22 September 1894. Other descriptions are more detailed, for example that of the Cheltenham College baths in Sandford Field which Swift saw on 13 September 1883. He was impressed by the highly polished and stylish equipment, particularly the pumping engine, and noted that the bath held 100,000 gallons: 'the boys go in 50 at a time - 1/2 hr. allowed to each lot'.

From the College baths he walked up Rosehill Street, past the site of the pool which an uncle used to rent, and then along Haywards Lane, one side of which had been spoilt by the Revd Armytage's brick works. It had been some time since he had been on Battledown and he found it almost unrecognisable save for the house on the summit with green shutters. There were new roads and new houses everywhere and he had difficulty finding the hollow oak which he and his brothers had played in as children.

Other developments more welcome to Swift's tastes were the restoration of some of Cheltenham's churches. He was pleased to see 'the change for the better' at St Mary's in 1888 effected by the removal of ugly galleries, including the one in which he and his friends had sat as youngsters listening to Revd Close's sermons. On a visit to All Saints after a gap of several years he was struck by the many changes wrought there by 1904: the many improvements included an apse built with altar and furnished and filled up for daily Eucharist and service; 6 lights on the altar and 2 fine candelabrum on the floor right and left; a service book with carved oak corners chained to the litany desk; frescoes and angels on the western wall; oil paintings; a much enlarged organ; a chamber for choir practice; and a choir screen - 'the whole as perfect as possible' for Swift's high church sympathies.

Religion and religious issues of the period pervade the diaries. Some of the lengthiest entries concern church services and summaries of sermons. There are many rather barbed comments about Dissenters and 'Low Church' supporters, and Swift would often enter into heated debate with his opponents. He fell into an argument with a Mr Carn in Bettam's the bootmaker's shop in the High Street on 20 April 1866 because the latter had said that the Low Church party would join hand in hand with the Dissenters to pull down the Established Church on account of the Ritualists. In rising to the bait and telling Carn of his party's shortcomings, Swift realised that they had gathered an interested audience of passers-by.

On another occasion, Swift was attracted into the Congregational chapel in Winchcombe Street because of the 'great noise' coming from inside. It proved to be a practice for the chapel's anniversary and from their vantage point upstairs, Swift and a companion beheld an 'uproarious' scene: 'the choir most tickled us - also (the minister) Dr. Brown's attitude down near his reading desk, which seemed to say "I am lord of all I survey".' A marginal note reads '18 gallons beer supped' and presumably refers to this choir practice (25 September 1873).



Townsend Street



Cheltenham College Baths

There is a brief reference to the controversy over the Dean Close Memorial School in 1886 which again illustrates the depth of religious antagonisms among the Anglican ministers in the town. The Revd E. Cornford was much against the proposal, saying that the money (£10,000 raised by subscription) might have been much better spent building a private chapel for the Training College 'so that the students would not be forced to St. Paul's to hear the wretched Calvinism of Mr. Wright'. Swift had been astonished to hear Cornford holding forth as he had suspected him of being 'a little tainted' with the same views.

Swift's duties as churchwarden of his parish included finding replacement clergymen in the absence of Churchdown's incumbent, Dr Smithe. On 21 December 1888, Swift was tramping the streets of Cheltenham to find someone to conduct a funeral service. Various acquaintances had failed him - the Revd Cornford of Etchowe House in Lansdown Road was indisposed with lumbago and the Revd Woseley Lewis at Pittville Circus had just been booked by another parish. Rather than criss-crossing town again, Swift resolved to accost the next clergyman he saw. He apologised to the Revd Lyne for so unceremoniously approaching him in the street (the Bath Road), and the latter agreed to perform the service himself. As he wrote his name and address resting on the street pump, Swift mentally summed him up as 'a man over 50 years - a little mildewed with a rather shabby waistcoat and coat'. The Revd Lyne arrived at Churchdown inauspiciously; he fell twice going up the hill and was plastered in mud, so had to be washed off, and had also forgotten his spectacles and had to borrow a pair from a member of the congregation. To crown it all, there was a flurry of activity when at the last moment the sexton feared the coffin was too big for the grave. However, Swift was relieved to hear the Revd Lyne preach impressively.

Swift was active all his working life in local church and government affairs: amongst other commitments he served as an overseer of the poor, was a trustee of parish charities and ran the local sick club. Although the general tone of his diaries is cheerful, some entries cast light on the harsher side of life; occasionally they are abrupt: 'saw a poor Woman taken to the Union (workhouse) to die' (27 January 1862); more detailed is a description of the scene at the home for sick children in Winchcombe Street, in which a crippled relative, Walter Hambling, lived. The formidable matron, Miss Tombleson, was unwilling to admit Swift and John Mills until they had explained that they were related to Walter and that Swift had come especially from Churchdown to see him. The place was very clean and well ventilated - Swift even records that the bedsteads had red and brown coverlids - but what seemed very uncomfortable was that there were no pillows on the beds. 'Little Walter was lying in a perfectly horizontal position engaged in knitting. I took him 2 story books 3d. each. Father Mills took him oranges and a scone. He seemed pleased to see us. At a table sat a sister in charge of the medicine bottles - with a bow to her and a shake of hand to Walker we left for W. Hambling Senior.' This visit took place on 25 November 1882 and Walter died the following April.

In contrast to the lively accounts of parish affairs, there are very few references to national events; Swift's interest in politics (he was a life-long Conservative) seems limited to descriptions of Cheltenham during general elections. On the night of 23 October 1873, shops in the town shut in anticipation of disturbances as torchlit processions of the Conservative and Liberal Parties' supporters came through. The following year (3 February) business in town was halted, 'people all in suspense as to the member being by ballot not known yet till 10 o'clock...In going along the Gloucester Road

(at 9.30) I heard the bells, firing and cheering so knew that Gardiner (the Conservative) was "In". Religion certainly took precedence over politics in Swift's eyes: he was particularly offended at the hurly-burly in the town during Easter Week 1880 and criticised Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli) for deciding to hold an election at such a time.

However, one important national issue of the period, tea-totalism (inextricably linked to religious beliefs of course), does merit several references. Band of Hope temperance meetings were held regularly and Swift attended one such rally at Battledown by the Oaklands in August 1861. 4000 people were present to hear a Mr Smethers deliver a speech. The diarist's support for the movement was undoubtedly limited - although he strongly disapproved of his father-in-law's drunkenness, much of his own social life and entertainment centred on local inns - and this comes through in the account of the rally where more description is given to the statues and fountains in the private grounds of Battledown than to the event itself. (He left the rally to join his mother and stepfather at the Crown Inn.)

Towards the end of his life, the campaign for votes for women was gathering pace and Swift recorded two incidents in which Suffragettes were believed to have been involved: in December 1913, Alstone Lodge was set on fire supposedly by two Suffragettes 'who did not approve of the magistrates because they were not women'. They were also suspected of being responsible for a fire at St Paul's Training College in January 1914 which caused £5,000 damage, although Swift added that this rumour was not confirmed in The Citizen.

Educational events and issues were more likely to be included in a schoolmaster's diary. Swift started his career as a pupil teacher at Devonshire Street School and the master, Frank Wheeler (later headmaster of the Parish Church Boys' School), became a life-long friend. Wheeler gave lectures in science, especially electricity, which Swift regularly attended in the early 1870s. He was obviously fascinated by Wheeler's demonstrations, as on 18 November 1873 when 'Frank insulated a boy on a stool with glass legs and beat him with a cat's skin until he could light a gas burner from the electric sparks from his knuckles'. The local schoolteachers union, of which Swift was a member, met monthly at Devonshire Street and voted to join the National Union of Education Teachers in 1870. An NUET meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms on 2 February 1889 to voice objections to the system of payments by results. The hall was about $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ full and the president of the Union gave a witty speech condemning the system: 'the gist of his remarks being that inspectors should visit schools more often - see the actual working - report accordingly - that the cleverer children should not be kept back by the dull ones'. The meeting broke for tea at George's Confectioners, 367 High Street, in the larger room behind the shop, and then reassembled for the 'social meeting' with dancing and piano music. Swift was amused to see Frank Wheeler capering about the floor.

Apart from attending Wheeler's lectures, Swift also heard speakers at the Working Men's Club in town and was a keen student of all manner of topics - archaeology, geology, languages, history, theology. He recorded what he read (a few hours most days were devoted to books) and of course made good use of libraries, including the Cheltenham Free Library which he first visited in 1888 shortly after its opening (typically he notes the cost of the catalogue - 9d).

Medical conditions and their treatment were another topic which interested him and many local doctors are mentioned within the diaries. The 'extortionate Dr. Turnbull' of Cambray Place (20 December 1879) was considered too expensive to treat a relative from Pen-y-van who had cancer of the nose. In trying to arrange a doctor for the Shurdington village sick club Swift first saw Dr Newton of Oriel Lodge, then Dr Jessop of Cambray Place - who refused because he did not keep drugs - and finally Dr Cottle of Winchcombe Street, who kept Swift waiting because he was 'in the solemn act of dining'. On a separate occasion, Dr Newton's 'representative' saw Swift when he was suffering from a severe chill and the patient was most impressed by the time and trouble the doctor spared: 'he said there was not any danger at present but that I must be careful - have nourishing food - keep out of draughts and so on. He then prescribed a powerful tonic (the prescription is written out in full) after two bottles of which I was to see him again. His manner very kind and he evidently took the utmost pains, I being with him over $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour' (August 1888). Swift duly returned to Churchdown with a jug full of his Mother's cow's cheek soup. When his son, Harry, was ill during November 1897, Dr Prance of Alderley Villa in Queen's Road was telegraphed, and he came out to Churchdown on his bicycle to prescribe castor oil and pastilles, with a mustard plaster to the heart if the attacks renewed themselves.

Swift had married 'the girl next door' (almost - at 7 Townsend Street North), Rose Poole, in 1864; their marriage appears to have been a happy one although she relatively rarely appears in the entries. One of their six sons, Arthur, seems to have been a source for some parental concern. Aged 14, he applied for a post at Cavendish House in Mr Carter's department (10 October 1883) - Swift noted that this gentleman was 'dangerously ill bordering on brain fever from overwork' three days later (presumably not from the strain of supervising Arthur!) - and subsequently was apprenticed to an F. Matthews. His master insisted on cancelling the contract after accusing Arthur of looking through some confidential papers, thereby costing the family 15 guineas (4 February 1886). The following April he was apprenticed as a piano tuner at Dale and Forty's in the Promenade whose terms were that he should start earning in March 1887 at 4s. per week; from the following September, when he would be 18, he would earn 6s. and thereafter he would receive an annual rise of 2s. The firm kept a close eye on its employees: it complained about Arthur attending Elmstone Hardwicke church and wearing coloured neckties according to the Christian season. Mrs Swift went into Cheltenham to talk to his employers and Arthur promised to attend All Saints (17 October 1888). For the time being he presumably satisfied his employers as he was promoted to a 'round' the following January, which necessitated wearing a high hat. But four months later he had fallen foul of Mr Forty again, who accused him of 'damaging the spring of a door, hiding from Mr Forty in Wright's the ironmongers last Thursday and being seen with his hat on the back of his head'. Swift 'consoled with Mr. Forty on these three melancholy points and promised to speak to Arthur'. No further reference is made to the firm until 2 February 1910, when Swift learned of a fire there which had caused some £3-4000 worth of damage.

Another son, Leonard, began working at Steele's motor repair shop in the High Street, which was stated to be financed by a man named Fairlie of Ashley Manor, Charlton Kings, 'whose passion is "motors"' (6 August 1907). He had an estate in Perthshire and told Leonard to take a week or so's paid holiday while he himself was away from the town (a remarkably generous offer in Swift's estimation).

Other entries relating to local tradesmen are usually very brief although taken as a whole they add to the impression of town life of the period. The whole family went to Nott's, the photographers, in Pittville Street for 'cartes de visite' (small photographic portraits) to send out to Swift's brother Charlie in America (2 September 1866). Charlie, described as a basket-maker by trade in the 1861 census, emigrated in May 1866 - at a cost of £10 - but he did not prosper in his new home. By 1876 his letters home related a sorry tale of middling circumstances and family illnesses. His wife died the next year and he wanted to come home, thinking his mother would look after his son Willie, but Mrs Mills 'threw cold water on the idea'.

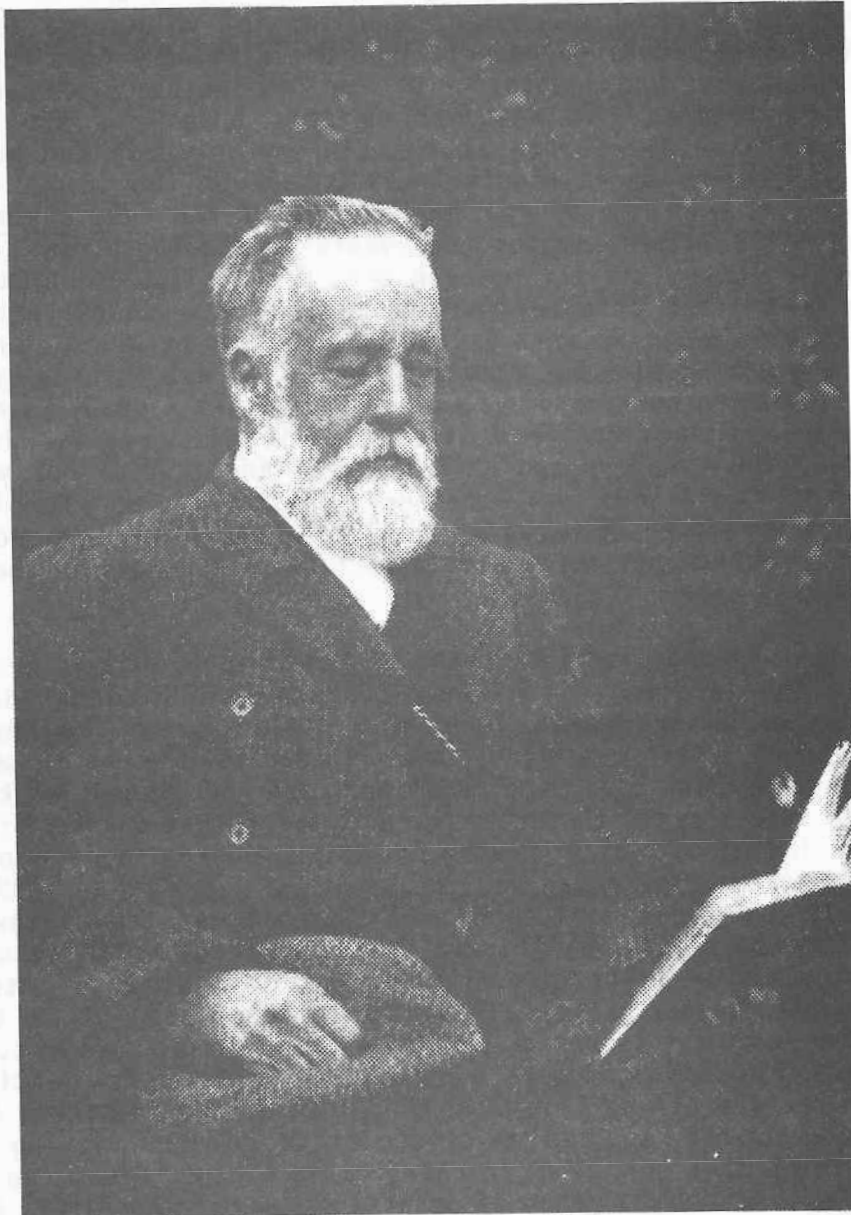
By far the most lively and detailed scenes in the diaries are holidays spent with relatives, either in Cheltenham or with his mother's family in Stone near Berkeley, and family events such as weddings. A typical entry refers to the wedding of the Hambling relations on 9 November 1881. On arriving at the Crown in Upper Park Street at 11 am Swift found the breakfast laid for 30 persons and the bridal party had just left for All Saints where the marriage was solemnised with a full choral service and the wedding march was performed by 'Van Holst' (presumably Gustav's father). The party returned at 12.15 'and soon after 12.40 we sat down to breakfast which lasted till 2.20 - cold chicken, ducks, roast beef, veal pies, fruit, ham, tarts, etc, etc, wine, sherry, port, beer...In the afternoon the company amused themselves with music, singing, etc. then followed tea at 5. At 5.30 the newly married departed amidst showers of rice by cab for the station on their way to Abergavenny. Dancing then began...I played the concertina...Spinning and trencher was the next game and forfeits, etc. Left at 9'. (The party did not break up until 4 am.)

In conclusion, the obvious drawback of the diaries as a historical source is the usually tantalizingly brief length of their entries (and thereby often obscure reference to individuals and events), but when studied as a whole a strong flavour of Victorian life and values undoubtedly comes through. Dr Dowler was greatly impressed by Swift's character as it emerged from the pages and this kept him to his task when the diarist's small handwriting was testing his own patience! Researchers visiting the County Record Office are indebted to the work of such enthusiastic volunteers as Dr Dowler. While there may not be another collection of records quite like the Swift diaries to work on, there are many other sources which could benefit from detailed listing or indexing undertaken by interested members of the public - especially members of a local history society.

JULIE COURTENAY

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to the County Archivist for permission to use extracts from the collection in this article. I have supplemented some details in the diaries with information from various Cheltenham directories and the 1861 census enumerators' returns.



William Thomas Swift, photographed in later life;
reproduced from H.Oram, Churchdown: a village
history (1954)

Indexing the 'Cheltenham Examiner'

At a meeting of the Cheltenham Local History Society in the spring of 1989, Mr F.G. Harber, Divisional Librarian, appealed for volunteers to take part in a Local Newspaper Indexing project. This was a pilot scheme to compile an index of names, topics and events for use by local studies researchers both now and in the future. In response to this appeal, a small group of interested members met Mr Harber at the Library in April and subsequently about seven volunteers began regular weekly work on the index. This work entails reading through the microfilmed copies of the Cheltenham Examiner, page-by-page, noting names, topics and events (excluding births, deaths and marriages) and entering the information onto paper slips for manual filing. Later, it is hoped that this information will be transferred onto computer files, using a terminal. We work as far as possible in pairs, for two hours per week and are making slow but steady progress. We are assured by Mr Harber and his staff that the work is of value and that it is already being made use of, and though sometimes we feel like screaming if Francis Close utters another word or the Literary and Philosophical Institution has yet another lecture or the Oddfellows yet another banquet at the Beehive, these irritations are more than compensated for by the occasional serendipity, the odd nugget of extraordinary information which we come across in the course of our work.

One thing we have learnt over the months of indexing is that in order to make sense of what one is doing, it is necessary to have at least some slight knowledge of the history, both local and national, of the period being covered. Without this knowledge, some items in the newspaper can be completely incomprehensible; the Examiner was published weekly (every Wednesday) and some stories tended to run and run so that one may find oneself recording a beginning but never knowing how things ended since, by next week's stint, other indexers have moved on. We began our indexing in 1839 (when the Examiner itself was first published). Cheltenham was then a town of some 30,000 inhabitants, still a 'Pleasure Town', the favourite resort of the nobility and gentry, with its spas, its Balls and all kinds of entertainment for the leisured classes. Yet already there were signs that times were changing and the national issues of the day - the Chartist Movement, the Anti-Corn Law League, the religious debate between the High and Low factions in the Anglican Church - are all reflected in the pages of the Examiner. And though Francis Close on the one hand and the aristocratic, pleasure-loving set on the other, might think that they were in charge they did not always go unopposed in local affairs. In 1839, a group of Chartists invaded the Parish Church one Sunday to be told by Close that rebellion against an elected government was sinful, 'offensive to the Almighty and little short of an insult to His worship'. Besides the Chartists, the Dissenters and the Radicals all made themselves heard at this time.

In the course of our indexing, the same names occur again and again - Francis Close, of course, Craven Berkeley, M.P. for Cheltenham 1832-47, Dr Thomas Wright, F.R.S. Surgeon at the Cheltenham hospital and a frequent lecturer at the Literary and Philosophical Institution in the Promenade, Lord Sherborne, Lord of the Manor, Pearson Thompson, the developer, the Jearrad brothers, the solicitors W.H. Gwinnett and the Pruen, Jessop and Winterbotham families, to

name but a few. But for some of us there is as much interest in that not inconsiderable body of men and women which existed side by side with the prosperous and aristocratic residents of the town, whose names, if they are recorded at all, appear only in the Police News and the Magistrates' Court reports, accused of mostly petty crimes: vagrancy, drunkenness, stealing - small items of money, a loaf of bread, a handkerchief - and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour, sometimes transportation to Australia. Then there are all the residents of the Workhouse (a new one was opened in Swindon Rd. in 1841) - men, women and children with no other means of support. There is a complaint in the 8 June 1842 edition of the Examiner deploring the number of beggars to be found on the streets of Cheltenham and urging respectable townspeople not to give money to these wretches but to 'send them to the poor house'. There was also, of course, a host of domestic servants, coachmen, saddlers, blacksmiths, artisans and craftsmen of all kinds to serve the nobility and gentry and one wonders whether any of these were tempted by the advertisement in an 1841 Examiner, offering free passage in steerage from Bristol to Australia to 'skilled tradesmen, agricultural labourers, shepherds etc.'

Despite the efforts of Francis Close and the fact that all over the country the popularity of the 'Pleasure Towns' was beginning to wane, there was still plenty of entertainment to be had in Cheltenham for those who could afford it. There were galas (with fireworks) to celebrate all kinds of national occasions - the Queen's marriage to Prince Albert in 1840, the births of their children and so on - there were races at Prestbury (frowned on by Close) and concerts and entertainments of all kinds at the Royal Old Wells and the Assembly Rooms - although, alas, there was no Theatre (to the delight of Close, it had burnt down in 1839 and it was not until 1891 that a new one was opened in Regent Street). But already there are hints that the characters of life in the town was changing. By June 1842, the Examiner was appealing to the public to support the Waterloo Gala at the Royal Old Wells, stressing the importance of 'keeping up the town's reputation'. The coming of the railway was also making its impact; the line between Cheltenham and Gloucester was opened in 1840 and there were regular daily services (though not on Sundays - Francis Close saw to that!) advertised each week. At the same time, the coach proprietors were making a last-ditch stand, advertising new routes at reduced fares in a desperate attempt to compete. In 1840, the composer Liszt gave a recital at the Assembly Rooms followed the next day by another at the Montpellier Pump Room. Though the local critics were full of praise, both concerts were poorly attended. There may have been better audiences for those given by Gustavus von Holst, grandfather of the composer, who had settled in Cheltenham in the 1830s and taught the piano to a succession of young lady pupils.

It seems, however, that a growing interest in scientific, political and theological matters was beginning to have its effect. The societies which were establishing themselves were now of the self-improving kind - not only the Literary and Philosophical but the Mechanics' Institution, the Working Men's Association for the lower orders, the various Missionary Societies and the Horticultural Association which held two shows a year at Pittville and Montpellier. The same names recur in the reported proceedings of all these bodies and one cannot help wondering what Mrs Thompson, Mrs Wright and even Mrs Close et al. were doing while their husbands were engaged in setting the world to rights. Though in the case of Mrs Close, there may have been some sense of relief from her husband's endless pontificating on every subject under the sun - not for nothing was he to be dubbed 'the Pope of Cheltenham' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson when the poet arrived in 1843. There will be many

more entries in our Index under the heading "Close, Francis the Rev." since he did not leave Cheltenham for the Deanery of Carlisle until 1856. But there is much more than the utterances of that gentleman already recorded and much more still to come. There has only been space here for a brief mention of some of the names and events so far recorded. We have found the work of indexing a rewarding, fascinating and often diverting job. We hope that others will be encouraged to join us in this very worthwhile project.

BARBARA KING

SOME GEMS FROM THE EXAMINER 1852-57, EXTRACTED BY BARBARA KING AND PETER SMITH.

The 'Brown Horse' of Cheltenham

(5 May 1852)

In the edition of 5 May 1852, the Examiner describes the appearance of a Brown Horse on the side of Cleeve Hill ... 'immediately above 'Queens Wood' and it is best viewed from the higher part of Prestbury Park'. It pointed out that 'the head and neck were formed by some freak of nature in the arrangements of the rock and turf'. This part was seen from his window by a Mr Yearsley of Clarence Street ... 'who conceived the idea that it would be a good thing to go for the whole animal'. Mr Yearsley then called in the 'artistic assistance' of a Mr F.C. Sextie and ... 'Under their direction an outline was drawn and a number of men employed to dig out the turf, the completion of this task being commemorated by a good supper, and copious draughts of home-brewed.' The Examiner then suggested that as Mr Yearsley was himself a foxhunter, 'this novel work of art should be dedicated (with permission) to Lord Fitzhardinge'. It had also claimed that 'the 'Brown Horse' of Cheltenham is quite equal to its older and more celebrated rival the 'White Horse' of the ancients on the Wiltshire Downs.'

Cheltenham Old Parochial School

(16 February 1853)

Sermons are advertised at the Parish Church on Sunday on behalf of this old and very excellent Charity. 'Those, who a few years ago were venturesome enough to ascend the broken stairs leading to a miserable loft, over one of the porches of the Parish Church, might have found a couple of dozen idle and ignorant boys pretending to learn from a drunken and ignorant master. Such is the Old Charity School as it was. Those, who had the good fortune to visit the capacious school room in Devonshire Street on Monday last, might have seen Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, putting one hundred and forty-six boys through a variety of mental exercises, and eliciting replies to the most abstruse questions, which might well put the most intelligent spectator to the blush. Such is the Old Charity School as it is - and such is the institution (supported by voluntary contributions) in behalf of which the sympathies of the Cheltenham public are now invited.'

The Water Question Under a New Aspect

(27 December 1854)

'At one of the chapels in the lower part of the town it had been arranged that a grand baptismal ceremony should take place on Christmas day, there being, we believe, from a dozen to twenty adult candidates for immersion. At the time appointed however, it was discovered that no water was to be obtained, in which to perform the ceremony, the whole of the wells in the neighbourhood being drained by the new sewers lately constructed. Under the circumstances the imposing ceremony had to be postponed until a more convenient season.'

The Appointment of Sexton

(19 January 1853)

'From the number of candidates for this office - eighteen or twenty altogether - it would really appear that one half of the parish is actuated with the benevolent desire of burying the other half! Such a prolific issue of addresses and handbills, and such a persevering canvassing as the rate-payers have been subjected to during the last few days, was surely never before known within the memory of 'the oldest (unburied) inhabitant'. It will be seen by our columns this morning that the Incumbent of the Parish, having ascertained that the appointment lies with him, and not with the rate-payers, has, after consulting with his Churchwardens, nominated Mr George Lewis, sculptor, of Clarence Street, to fill the office. Thus, in sporting phraseology, a 'lark horse' wins the stake; and, while the forty-and-one actual have been 'beating the bush', another has quietly bagged the hare. From what we hear Mr Lewis is a very proper person for the office; and, if so, all the harm we wish him is that he may long live to enjoy it - but that the duties and the fees accruing thereafter may (from the proverbial and increasing healthfulness of Cheltenham) 'grow small by degrees and beautifully less.'

Taking It Easy. Constables on Night Duty

(30 November 1853)

'On Monday last, a couple of 'guardians of the night' were brought up before the magistrates, on a charge of neglect of duty. It appeared that the active Police Serjeant, Jeffs, in going his nightly rounds discovered that the policemen appointed to patrol the Tivoli and Park districts were non est inventus, and after a patient and diligent search he discovered the two truant 'Bobbies' comfortably snoozing in a fly at the back of Lansdown Crescent. On telling them to 'come out of that' the affrighted peelers commenced rubbing their eyes and stammering forth excuses, the most characteristic of which was, that as the fly was left in that exposed situation they were afraid it would be stolen, and, therefore, got inside to protect it! The magistrates thought the excuses exceedingly ingenious but not very probable, and, therefore, rewarded their sagacity by a fine of 20s. each and a promise that if they were ever 'caught napping' again, they would send to walk up the 'wooden hill' at Northleach.'

Reckless Fly Driving

(9 February 1853)

'A very narrow escape from a serious accident occurred last Wednesday evening in the Colonnade. It appears that two flies were passing at a rapid rate, in the direction of Montpellier, while another, conveying some ladies to a concert at the Assembly Rooms was coming, at an equally rapid pace, towards the High Street. Either from the darkness of the night or the careless conduct of the drivers, the three flies came into a violent collision; the shock being so severe, that the two wheels of each side of the middle fly was struck completely off, leaving the body, to the no small terror of the occupants, unceremoniously deposited in the middle of the road. Fortunately no bones were broken and after a good deal of swearing and grumbling two of them were able to proceed to their destination and a fresh fly being procured for the party, who had been so unceremoniously unwheeled, they reached the concert room without any further mishap.'

In March 1855, the Streets and Highways Committee discussed the desirability of using sweeping machines for scavenging the roads in preference to manual labour. In the same month, one William Pitt was charged with hawking salt in Brunswick St. 'against the statute in the New Town Act'. On hearing that he was 'not in his right senses' the magistrates discharged him with a caution.

In April 1855 the Board of Guardians' return for the first quarter of the year shows that the paupers consumed:-

48 pints wine
216 glasses gin
520 quarts ale
98 quarts porter
4608 quarts table-beer
822 gallons milk

However, in May, they recouped some of this expenditure when the gas bill came in and gas consumption was found to be £5 less than estimated. The total cost for 2 weeks in May was 2s. 6d. (12½p).

In September 1855, there was a Grand Firework Display at Royal Well to mark the Fall of Sebastopol. About 1300 people were present, 'some luxuriating in the fragrant weed' (only the gentleman of course!).

From the literary page of that same month a contemporary criticism of Tennyson's poem 'Maud' expressed in verse

'Dismally dull and dolefully dawlin'
Tennyson's 'Maud' should be Tennyson's 'Maudlin'.'

In November, the Board of Guardians installed a new Steam Cooking Apparatus at the Workhouse. This was said to have great advantages, among them 'the purification of the great unwashed in the tramp ward'.

In August 1856 among the entertainment to be found in Cheltenham was the visit of Cooke's Cirque (sic) - Charity School Children admitted free of charge - and at the Assembly Rooms a Diorama of India where 'A Grand Indian Punkau' will 'be used so as to cause a current of cool air to circulate agreeably through all parts of the room during the warm weather.'

GLOUCESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE ACCESSIONS RELATING TO THE CHELTENHAM AREA, 1990

The following list comprises those archives of local interest deposited or donated to the Record Office during 1990. The larger collections have yet to be catalogued and packaged, and therefore access for researchers may be delayed (uncatalogued collections in this list are denoted by an asterisk). Records less than 50 years old are not usually available to researchers without the written permission of the depositor.

BBC Radio Gloucestershire: sample of the station's breakfast show broadcast (on tape cassette), including coverage of some local events, 1990. D6234

*Bruton Knowles, estate agents of Gloucester: additional office files including some relating to Cheltenham properties, 1950s-70s. D2299

*Cheltenham Borough Council: rate books and valuation lists for Cheltenham borough and parish, and Charlton Kings parish and urban district, c.1873-1913. CBR

*Cotswold Tape Recording Society: tape recorded programmes of entertainment used in hospitals, old people's homes and the like, including events and personalities in Cheltenham, 1960-c.1976. D6112

*Engall, Castle and Millichap, estate agents of Cheltenham (and their predecessor firms): Pittville Estate receiver's accounts and papers, 1804-1891; estate agents' report books, 1873-1942; office accounts, 1894-1975; property sales records, 1895-1969; valuations and other papers, late 19th-20th cent.; wartime requisitioning files, 1940s. D6187

National Union of Agricultural Workers: Northern District Committee (meeting in Cheltenham) minutes, 1949-51. D5080

Ordnance Survey: 'minor control point albums' for Gloucestershire containing many snapshot photographs of Cheltenham streets and roads, 1945-80s. D6110

*Prothero, Phillott and Barnard, architects of Cheltenham: miscellaneous plans and drawings, none identified as local properties, early 20th cent. (from the trustees of the Summerfield estate). D6106

The following Anglican parish records were received:

Charlton Kings (St.Mary): religious publications from the parish library, 1622-c.1720; photographs of the church, vicar and choir, c.1873-1913. P76

Christ Church: schools minutes, 1870-1947 and plans, 1927-30; parish committees minutes and property records, 1913-77. P78/3

St. John: registers, 1855-1947; vestry and PCC minutes, 1897-1966. P78/6

St. Luke: registers, 1855-1969; vestry and PCC minutes, 1916-50; school minutes, 1903-19. P78/7

St. Stephen: church accounts, 1883-1960; various committee and PCC minutes.

Deeds were received throughout the year from solicitors and private individuals. They included 14 St. Paul's Street North, 1835-1983 (D6238);

'Morley' in Cranham Road, (1851)-1891 (D5841); and property in the Promenade, 1826-1975 (D6082). The larger collections from solicitors' practices are not yet catalogued (the firms represented are Griffiths, McIlquham & Co., John Martlew & Co, and Willans, Stannard & Davey).

JULIE COURTENAY
Senior Cataloguer
Gloucestershire Record Office

RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON THE HISTORY OF THE CHELTENHAM AREA

The following is a list of books and articles published on the history of Cheltenham and its immediate surroundings during the past couple of years.

Aldred, D., Cleeve Hill: the story of the Common and its people, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1990. 174pp. £9.95.

Arnold, P., Footlights and greasepaint: the first 100 years of the Cheltenham Operatic and Dramatic Society. £4.90.

Ashton, O., W.E. Adams: Chartist, Radical and Journalist (1832-1906), Bewick Press, Whitley Bay, 1991. 200pp. £8.95.

Bowes, J., Cheltenham College Who's Who, The Cheltonian Society, 1989. 433pp. £19.95.

Charnock, D., Oldacre: a Gloucestershire family and business, The Book Guild Ltd. 1990. 267pp. £12.95.

Ellis, C., Smith's Industries at Cheltenham, Smiths Industries, 1990. 128pp.

Fisher, R., Edward Jenner 1749-1823, Andre Deutsch, London, 1991. 361pp. £20.

Garrett, J.V., 'Charles Baker of Painswick and Cheltenham and the development of roads around Stroud and Cheltenham in the early part of the 19th century', Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology Journal, 1989, 2-8.

Greene, J., A record of commemorative plaques in Gloucestershire hospitals, privately published, 55pp.

Hamlin, C., 'Muddling in Bumbledom: the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns 1855-1885', Victorian Studies 32, no 1, 55-83. Includes Cheltenham.

Paget, M. (ed), Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletins, published half yearly, with a wealth of information on the history of Charlton Kings. Approximately 40pp per issue, £1.75 or £1.80.

Pearce, T., Then and Now. An anniversary celebration of Cheltenham College 1841-1991, The Cheltonian Society. 1991. 272pp. £33.95.

Stait, B., Rotol. The history of an airscrew company, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1991. 180pp. £12.95.

Torrens, H. and Taylor, M., 'Geological collectors and museums in Cheltenham 1810-1988', The Geological Curator 5.5 (1990), 175-213.

Turner, J.M., 'Hengler's Grand Circus and Gloucestershire', Gloucestershire History 3 (1991), 4-5.

Williamson, R., The organs of Cheltenham 1791-1989, Self Publishing Association, 1989. 143pp. £9.50.