



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 101

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council
Registered Charity No. 1056046
<http://www.chelllocalhistory.org.uk>

November 2021



EDITORIAL

As a follow-up to the early engraving of Cheltenham and its surrounding landscape shown on the cover of our last issue, here is a slightly later and slightly less distant view, in colour this time. It is a painting by the landscape artist Thomas Robins, who was born in Charlton Kings. The date is 1748, only about 35 years after Johannes Kip's 1712 engraving, but Cheltenham has grown in that time from an insignificant small town into a 'Spaw', as the title spells it. Further information, handwritten, is given below the title. We are told that the Mineral (ie mineral water) was discovered about 30 years ago when in 1719 one Gabriel Davis found himself cured by it and sank a well, but it was 'not in any great repute till 1740'. Now Captain Henry Skillicorne, the present proprietor, has 'made a handsome Walk and Additional building'. Clearly, the artist thinks, the new-found status of the town is what will particularly interest viewers of the picture. Steven Blake has researched the origin and ownership of the painting and established that it is one of at least two very similar versions, which, as he says, has caused some confusion. Turn to page 11 to read all about it.

Kath Boothman

For CONTENTS please see page 24

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME

As it has not so far been possible to return to our usual evening venue in the Council Chamber at the Municipal Offices, we have arranged to hold evening meetings this year at St Luke's Church Hall, at 7.30 pm on Wednesdays rather than Tuesdays. A few meetings will continue to be 'virtual', by Zoom, and two of these will be on Tuesday evenings. Morning meetings will also be on Tuesdays just as before. Please note that this year's AGM is to be held in December.

Tuesday 7th December by Zoom:

AGM followed by John Putley—Gloucestershire Christmas

Wednesday 19th January 2022:

Simon Ridley—The History of the Bells at Cheltenham

Wednesday 16h February 2022:

Mike Bottomley—Katherine Parr, Gloucestershire's Queen: the Life, Loves and Times of the Last Wife of Henry VIII

Tuesday 8th March 2022 by Zoom:

David Elder—Dr Edward Thomas Wilson (1832-1918), Father of the Antarctic Explorer

Wednesday 20th April 2022:

Kirsty Hartsiotis—The Arts and Crafts Movement in Local and Cotswold Churches

Wednesday 18th May 2022:

AGM followed by Martin Boothman and Peter Barlow— Early Gloucestershire Vehicle Registrations

MORNING LECTURES 2021-22

Tuesday 1st February 2022:

Liz Davenport—Woodchester Mansion: an Unfinished Masterpiece

Tuesday 5th April 2022:

David Addison—Lord Northwick's Art Collection at Thirlestaine House

MEMBER'S QUERY

Alan Jamieson, who lives in Charlton Kings, has recently unearthed this little copper disc in his garden and wonders if it is a relic of the old town gas supply to his house, or possibly part of an old street lamp. It is 3.2cm (1¼ ins) in diameter. If you know, or can suggest, what it might be, please contact our query expert Jill Waller on 07512318866 or email jill.waller@virginmedia.com



Our first event of the new season was **Mark Davies'** talk by Zoom on 22nd September on the theme of **'Young Zamiel Gripeall': Cheltenham's 'crafty, crabbed, selfish' newspaper proprietor, Samuel Young Griffith.** As his first illustration Mark showed a question mark, explaining that he could not find an image of Griffith. This was surprising, since despite fairly humble origins (he was born in Bath around 1790) he became a well-known figure and achieved much in his lifetime. The unflattering description of him quoted above came from a book published in 1827 attacking one James Webb, 'the noted philanthropist' and his 'equally notorious travelling secretary' - who was Samuel Griffith. Samuel is vilified throughout the book, whereas his elder brother John Knight Griffith is mentioned in more favourable terms as 'a good humoured harmless fellow'. John was the publisher of the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Advertiser*, and of the 1815 Cheltenham Guide. (See page 14 for more about the Guide.) What had Samuel done to attract such enmity? It seems that in 1813 he met and was employed by the wealthy James Webb, 'a man of eccentric habits who went about the country seeking objects of distress whom he might relieve' - but, according to the author of the book, 'fitted to any thing in this world rather than a benefactor to youth'. The evidence suggests that Webb was homosexual, and that the job of his well-paid secretary was to find young men he could take advantage of while ostensibly just offering financial help. This was scandalous enough, but something else lay behind the libellous book. In 1818 John Griffith died and Samuel took over as editor of the *Chronicle*. In 1823 he married Sarah Naylor, daughter of the landlord of the Plough, and embarked on a successful career as a hotelier, the Plough being a busy and prosperous coaching inn, as were others he managed in later years. The book came out in 1827 and Samuel Griffith, recognising himself as the 'notorious secretary' sued for libel in 1828. Many extracts were read in court and the case created a sensation, but James Webb, having been declared a lunatic in 1824, could not appear. The text was allegedly based on documents belonging to one Miles Watkins, who appeared for the defence (he had worked for Webb at one time), but was not the author and may have had nothing to do with the book. Who, then, had written it? The real author was the Irish-born William Henry Halpin (1793-1848), an educated man and a prolific writer, who had been hired by Samuel Griffith as assistant editor of the *Chronicle*. Although Griffith claimed later that he had taken Halpin in when he was in a 'distressed state' and treated him kindly, they did not get on well. A third edition of the Cheltenham Guide appeared in 1826 (there had been a second edition in 1818) with Samuel's name on it, giving no credit to Halpin, who had in fact written it. That explained Halpin's grudge against him. As witnesses later testified, Griffith was not capable of writing the Guide himself. When Griffith sacked him without paying for the work he had done, Halpin took him to court and won the £52 he was owed. Griffith nevertheless won his libel case in 1828 and Halpin went to prison. Griffith continued to prosper, taking over the Queen's Hotel in 1840 and the King's Arms, Oxford, in 1859. There he died in 1865, well regarded but, one suspects, not universally popular. As Sue Brown said when thanking Mark at the end, he was an interesting character who may have been his own worst enemy.



The Plough, Cheltenham

At the morning meeting at St Luke's on October 5th **Alan Pilbeam** told us about **The Royal Progress through Gloucestershire, 1535.** Alan said his main interest was in landscape and how it changed over time. After the Normans brought their castles and deer parks and the Black Death left its legacy of deserted villages, another great change had come with the dissolution of the monasteries. It was in July 1535 that Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell set off to 'progress' through the west country, and a good deal is known about their route. Henry was 44, less vigorous than formerly but still an impressive figure. Having just become head of the English church he was keen to observe the monasteries he visited on his travels, judging many of them to be far too rich. Anne was in her early 30s. Like Henry she was fond of hunting and hawking, and she too was interested in meeting people who favoured church reform. Thomas Cromwell, Henry's humbly-born chief minister, was concerned mainly with filling the royal coffers. He had been commissioned by Henry to look at the church's income and see how the king could claim the proportion previously given to the pope, and also to examine the moral state of the church (which was found to be scandalously low). Cromwell mostly travelled ahead, and when the royal couple and their entourage made their first stop at Sudeley Castle he slept at Winchcombe Abbey. Alan told something of the history of the castle since it was built by Ralph Boteler in the 1440s. Nearby was Hailes Abbey, where Anne's chaplain went to see the famous relic of allegedly holy blood. The party next visited Tewkesbury, possibly staying at Forthampton Park and making contact with the Traceys of Toddington, who were known to be pro-reform. They then stayed at Gloucester and briefly at Leonard Stanley Priory before going to Berkeley Castle, which like Sudeley was crown property at the time, to enjoy some more hunting. There were further stops at Thornbury Castle, Acton Court, Little Sodbury and Winchester before, homeward-bound, they stayed for a time in Windsor to avoid an outbreak of plague in London. Alan then showed pictures of the places he had mentioned. At Sudeley he showed, besides the castle, the boundary of the deer park, recognisable as such, he said, because it had a ditch inside the encircling bank to prevent deer from escaping. Winchcombe still has its fine church but little remains of the abbey where Cromwell stayed. At Tewkesbury and at Gloucester (which was St Peter's Abbey until Henry made it a cathedral) the royal visitors would have stayed in the abbot's lodgings. At Berkeley Castle the rooms they slept in can still be seen. Thornbury Castle, home of Edward Stafford, was essentially a grand manor house and survives now as a hotel, with a knot garden featuring the distinctive 'Stafford knot' still in place. Acton Court, where the owner Nicholas Poyntz had an extra wing built for the royal visit, was once the home of William Tyndale. Like Hugh Latymer, who also preached in Gloucestershire, he was pro-reform. The dissolution of smaller monasteries began that same year, 1535, enabling prominent local families to acquire more land. The Traceys gained Toddington, the Duttons took Sherborne, and many others built grand new houses across the county. In a sense the changes that were to have such a far-reaching impact all began with the Royal Progress.



Thornbury Castle

Neela Mann's talk on October 20th was entitled **Booze, Balloons and Burials**. The intriguing title did not disappoint. We were taken on a fascinating journey around the streets of the Lower High Street area, through the eyes of some notable local characters and entrepreneurs who lived through a century of rapid commercial and residential change. In 1800 Cheltenham's population was around 3,000, comparable to a small village. The Promenade and Montpellier had not yet been developed. Swindon Road was accessible across fields. On 7th September 1813 locals marvelled at the sight of James Sadler's balloon, with his son as a passenger, ascending from Cheltenham. It travelled as far as Chipping Norton, pursued by a local farmer brandishing a pitchfork! Orchard and meadow land changed hands over the course of the century for housing. Pearson Thompson sold to William Weale (baker) and his widow sold to James Agg Gardner in the late 1830s. Until the tramroad was opened from Gloucester Docks to Gloucester Road in 1811 coal and building materials travelled by cart from the canal at Coombe Hill. Affluent local figures including Lord Sherborne and Dr Edward Jenner gave financial support for turnpikes. The tramroad was bought out by the railway in 1859 and closed two years later. Details appear on a plaque at the former Hop Pole pub in Gloucester Road. The railway had a halt in the High Street and 252 people were displaced when it was built. The line ran along an embankment alongside the former burial ground sited in Market Street, now the site of the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. As the population grew, the parish churchyard filled up and this burial ground was opened, with the Chapel designed by Rowland Paul. In turn it filled up and by 1865 a new cemetery was being created in Prestbury. Some former gravestones were reused as coping stones, now almost hidden beneath vegetation bordering the wall in Market Street. The White Hart Inn stood at the turnpike near the modern Honeybourne Gate at the junction of Gloucester Road. Nearby stood White Hart Lane where magician John Maskelyne was born in 1839. In 1940 the Stoneville Street bomb



Dobell's warehouse

destroyed part of the inn. Nearby the Albion Brewery operated from 1826 to 1874 on the site of Market Street, and the Gas Light and Coke Company on the site of the current Tesco store. The former Baptist Chapel was eventually persuaded to vacate the land by the threat of being 'stunk out'. Gaslight was introduced to Montpellier Spa and the Rotunda from 1825. Dobell's wine merchants' premises stood where Honeybourne Gate is now. The firm's Royal Warrant - as whisky purveyors to Queen Victoria - can still be seen above Costa Coffee in County Court Road. John Dobell lived at 133 High Street. His precocious son supported the business from childhood and later became a poet of dubious quality. It is still possible to identify the site of former buildings by their modern names or by small signs and plaques, some a little tricky to locate. The former bath house is now flats on the corner of Burton Street. The Quaker Burial Ground, dating from 1682, was in Grove Street. Elm Street has been the site of a Jewish community since 1824.

Anne Bateman

VCH News

While Louise Ryland-Epton's research on Leckhampton continues to gather pace, the VCH Gloucestershire team has also been busy further south. In Cirencester, Lord and Lady Bathurst very kindly offered to host a fund-raising event for the VCH at the Mansion in Cirencester Park. We were blessed with a fine September evening, and some magnificent (indeed, *munificent*) support from local well-wishers – enough to pay for much of the remaining work on the Cirencester & District Red Book. Thoughts are therefore turning to how this sort of event might be replicated in Cheltenham, as we still need to find the funds to complete the research on Charlton Kings, besides bringing all the drafts done to date into a harmonised and properly edited whole, ready for publication.

A detailed read-through of the Elizabethan manor court books for Cheltenham continues. These are the clerk's rough notebooks, not the formal record (lost many centuries ago), so the writing varies from poor to atrocious. However, a couple of entries (in 1572 and 1577) give evidence that besides the several mills along the Chelt, there was once also a windmill here. It was situated in *Wyndmyll Knappe*, described as a close of pasture in Cranmoors. This may have been demesne land, the precise spot awaiting discovery but presumably elevated enough to catch a breeze.

Occasionally, the clerk's notes have a separate sheet of paper inserted. In the careful handwriting of the Cheltenham constable (we can almost picture him flipping open his notebook and licking the tip of his indelible pencil) we read of the following sanguinary breaches of the peace, reported in October 1577.

For blud shede: Walter French alias Lane made affray with Walter Farreuter, and their daggers drawn. Value of each of the daggers 6d. Richard Lane and Walter Farreuter drawed blud of Davie Harrisson, and the said Davie at another time drawed blud of Richard Lane. William Baker alias Powell and Raffé Powell made a bludeshed of John Farreuter and drawed blude.

One suspects that there was no lasting damage in these encounters, and that Walter, Raffé and the rest all survived to nurse their grievances for another day.

James Hodsdon

Meanwhile at Gloucestershire Archives our team of volunteers, masked and socially distanced as ever, continue their patient work.

Picture courtesy of Nick Berkeley



*SOCIETY NEWS***New members**

A warm welcome is extended to the following :

Justina Linton	Susan West	Peter Waring	David & Margaret Jones
Steve Gallagher	Irene Stewart	Martin Stephens	Desmond O'Driscoll
Alex Clark	Steve Roth	Hilary Bate	Richard Seymour & Liz Giles

Society Update

Our AGM will be held at 7pm on Tuesday 7th December on Zoom, when we will elect the officers and committee for 2021-2022.

Many thanks go to Joanna Vials, Chris Bentall and Chris Conoley, who are standing down, for their service on our committee over the last few years. We are also grateful to Sue Robbins who, although relinquishing her role as Acting Chair, is standing again for the committee.

Nominations for the committee so far comprise David Elder (Chair), Sue Brown (Treasurer), Alison Pascoe (Secretary), Heather Atkinson, Anne Bateman, Kath Boothman, Mary Moxham, Colin Nyland, Oliver Pointer, Sue Robbins and Maggie Winterburn. Nomination forms, to be returned by 23rd November, are available from cheltlocalhistory@btinternet.com

David Elder writes of his intention to stand as Chair: *'I joined the committee in March after becoming concerned that a society as important as CLHS has been struggling over the past few years to find a permanent Chair. I would now like to put my name forward as a possible candidate to fill the position of Chair from December 2021, but am equally happy to give my support to another member who would be interested in standing.'*

Alison Pascoe

NEW PUBLICATION**Pills, Shocks & Jabs**

by Peter Cullimore

Peter Cullimore, author of *Saints, Crooks & Slavers*, tells the remarkable story of the dissenting doctors of Georgian Bristol. They included a pioneer in jabs against the small-pox pandemic of the 1700s, a 'madhouse' doctor who reformed the brutal treatment of the mentally ill, a male midwife with a side-line in painting exquisite watercolours and an amateur GP who dispensed pills free of charge and treated disease with electric shocks. All were prominent doctors in the city and all were Quakers. They faced prejudice for their nonconformity but formed a tight-knit and mutually supportive community that saw it as a moral duty to help the sick and needy.

Available from independent bookshops, price £12. Can also be ordered directly from the publisher, Bristol Books, via their website bristolbooks.org

*FEATURE***Cheltenham's Boot and Shoemakers**

The sad closure of Adcock's and of the shop premises of Keith Scarrott, two long established independent shoe shops, reminds us of the history of this trade in the town and how it has changed.

The Adcock family sold shoes here for six generations, starting in 1879 at 322 High Street. There Mr Adcock made clogs for the Flowers brewery workers and clogs with a leather leg front for carriage washing. He was also an agent for the



popular Thrift boot. They moved in 1983 to the Bath Road premises, the shop on the corner of Hermitage Street where another shoe shop, Lawrence's, had traded since 1903.

On moving to Cheltenham in the 1890s Mr Lawrence, like many bootmakers, originally worked from his home in Naunton Crescent, aided by his wife who machined the boots. He and his wife opened the shop and their daughters Maud and Minnie later took over the business. One school-boy customer remembers the two sisters, one very tall and thin and the other small and round. Adcock's take us back to a time when directories would have listed 'boot and shoemakers' rather than 'shoe shops' and when many makers

worked from their homes, before the industrialised shoemakers of Northampton, Leicester, Norwich and Street and later overseas factories took over the mass supply of footwear.

We mustn't forget it was not only men who wore boots—ladies wore button boots until the first world war, whether to conceal their ankles or draw attention to them is not quite certain.

George Rowe's *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* of 1845 includes, on Montpellier Avenue and adjoining the Queen's Hotel, a Mr Stroud 'whose stock of varied shapes and colours of Boots and Shoes' will afford 'comfort in walking' or 'ease and elegance for general use'. The 1891-2 Cheltenham Post Office Directory lists 46 boot and shoemakers in the town, of whom six paid for advertisements. Adcock's was the most long-lasting among them, although other firms traded well into the twentieth century and their names would still be familiar to us. In some cases the same premises were taken over by other shoe shops.

Although this article is primarily about privately owned shops, two nationwide chains had already arrived by the 1890s, Stead and Simpson and Oliver George. Both would survive until the present century, when they were taken over by Shoe Zone. Stead and Simpson, then at the top of the Lower High Street, had been founded in Leeds in 1834 and supplied boots to the Confederate Army in the American Civil War, opening retail stores in the early 1870s. Oliver George,

founded in Leicester, had over 100 shops by 1889.

Two of the bootmakers who advertised in the 1891-2 guide were already in existence by 1840. Steel's, established in 1839, had a boot warehouse at 79 High Street boasting the largest stock in the West of England. The warehouse at 3 Queen's Circus advertised reliable quality at the very lowest prices and shoes made with promptitude. 'Indian orders carefully executed'. The High Street branch was still in existence in 1948.

The Schwamenkrug family of Dutch-German extraction had moved to Cheltenham from Northampton in 1815. Stephen Schwamenkrug, born in 1817, trained as a boot and shoemaker and set up his business in 1840 working from his home in Portland Square. By 1851 he had moved to Great Norwood Street. By 1860 he had a shop at 17 Suffolk Parade and at the end of the decade employed 6 men including his son William, who would continue the business until the 1920s after Stephen's death in 1891. They advertised hunting and shooting boots, court shoes of high class style and quality and 'charges moderate'.



Pocock Brothers of 387 High Street could boast of Gold and Silver Medals at the Health Exhibition of 1884, one of the exhibitions held in the Crystal Palace which attracted four million visitors. Pitcher and

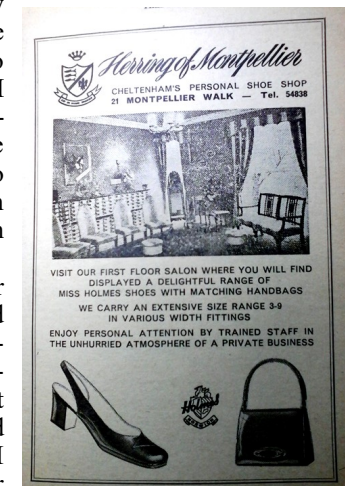
Son of Winchcomb Street, manufacturer of every description of boots and shoes, were also agents for an insurance company which appeared to offer £100 Legacy in case of Death!

Perhaps the most famous of the Cheltenham shoe shops was Slade's, which may have started as early as 1789. They also traded in Cardiff and Worcester. Their shop at 12 Promenade Villas, and later at 76 and 78 The Promenade, was perhaps the quintessential Cheltenham shop. Theirs was a prestigious address in the mid-twentieth century when the Promenade was known as the Bond Street of the West and there was a branch of Aspreys a few doors away. John, who shopped there from the late 1930s when he was equipped with clothing to go to prep school, described it as a *brown* shop. Inside there were glass counters on either side - the clothing on the left and the terrific choice of shoes on the right, by then accompanied by the ubiquitous X ray machine that was used to check the exact fit of shoes. Miss Dorothy Ryan, upright with dark greying hair and glasses, was in charge, assisted by Miss Walker and Mr Lamb. The tasteful window displays added to the genteel sense of *brown*. Their fine leather shoes made in the 1960s can still be found for sale online and examples of their shoes and neckties are among the costume collection held at the National Trust property at Killerton. The Cheltenham shop closed in 1971.

Reference has been made to shoe warehouses. Mary, as a very young child, can remember going into Sharpe's leather warehouse off County Court Lane in the early 1940s. W Sharpe and Sons started in the nineteenth century and was then

run by the sons. She describes the warehouse as a fascinating big glass-roofed hall with no windows. On the walls there were enormous leather hides stretched out and beneath, at shoulder height, a shelf or two all around the room full of individual lasts. These were of use in the Indian colonial trade: an existing customer could order new boots from India by reference to his last number. So distinctive were the Sharpe's toecaps that it was said that if two colonial officers met in the jungle one might say 'I see you buy your boots from Sharpe's of Cheltenham.' By 1948 the business, with its Promenade shop decorated with ironwork, had been sold to A Jones and Sons, Bootmakers Ltd. Many children would remember riding on the rocking horse when their shoes were bought at Jones.

Daniel Neal was a nineteenth century shoemaker whose sons diversified into children's clothing and shoes, setting up stores where they had an arrangement with a local school. When they came to Clarence Street, Cheltenham, in 1933 the arrangement was with the Ladies' College. They had a good shoe department, and the most common memory I found was of children's excitement at having their feet X-rayed there. The child looked down into the machine and wiggled his or her toes in the shoes in the green light while mother and the shop assistant looked down from the sides of the machine. Despite the (then unrecognised) dangers of the machine it was in use the shop from the 1940s until at least 1971.



In the mid twentieth century Melville's ran a flourishing business in the Strand where they too had an X-ray machine. The walls were lined with shoe boxes and the shop extended over a large area. Later Richard Herring established his high class shoe shop in Montpellier, seen above in his 1974 advertisement in Kelly's Directory which speaks of 'the unhurried atmosphere of a private business'. The shop has gone but the firm continues to trade online.

Finally we return to Keith Scarrott. Founded in 1975, they have sold high end fashion shoes for nearly 50 years and became one of the town's longest established private businesses. From platform soles and sandals in the 1970s to fine leather shoes and boots in 2020s, most of their stock has been imported. They are interesting in that their future online and in pop-up shops may point forwards, but equally the fact that their shoes are designed in Cheltenham and made in small workshops in Italy and Spain takes us back to the nineteenth century workshops. Whatever the future holds for the independent shoe trade in the town it is unlikely that another firm will equal Adcock's record of six generations in the same trade.

Elizabeth Bennett

Thomas Robins' 1748 *West Prospect of the Spaw & Town of Cheltenham* x 2

The panoramic view of Cheltenham on the front page of this Newsletter will no doubt be familiar to many members, who might assume that it is the painting (in body colour and gouache) that is on display in The Wilson's Cheltenham History Galleries – and which has been reproduced in a number of publications on the history of the town, including my own *Cheltenham: A Pictorial History*, published by Phillimore & Co. in 1996.

That assumption is, however, incorrect, for this is actually a second version of Robins' *West Prospect*, which is in a private collection, whose owner (new CLHS member Alex Clark) has kindly supplied an image for the Newsletter. This has in fact also been published before, as an illustration in John Harris' monumental account of Robins' work, *Gardens of Delight. The Rococo English Landscape of Thomas Robins the Elder*, published by Basilisk Press in 1978. Both paintings are certainly by Thomas Robins the elder (1716-1770), who was a significant landscape artist - and his 1748 view of Cheltenham is certainly significant as the earliest dated view of the spa well, the Well Walk and the Great House, with St Mary's church and the town beyond.

A careful comparison of the two versions reveals a number of significant differences, the most obvious being the title – The Wilson's version (which I shall call No 1) is entitled 'The Prospect' while that in the private collection (No 2) is 'A Prospect'; in addition, the title of No 1 is in upper and lower case while that of No 2 is all upper case. There are also some minor differences in the inscription below the title, which recounts the history of the well between 1719 and the 1740s, and while the buildings of the town are pretty much identical in both versions, the form of the trees in the foreground and the number and placement of the sheep, cattle and people are not, while the horse-drawn coach shown close to the spa well in No 2 is absent in No 1.

The existence of these two versions has caused considerable confusion over the years. The earliest reference to one or the other is to be found in the *Cheltenham Examiner* for 12 July 1843, which notes that 'a very curious drawing has just been brought to light, representing a view of Cheltenham nearly a century ago'; the article includes Robins' name, the date and the inscription and notes that it was then in the possession of Mr Alder (who ran a stationer's business at the corner of Clarence Street and the Promenade), but that it 'ought to be carefully deposited in the Museum of the Philosophical Institution'.

Whether or not it was acquired by the 'Lit & Phil' is unknown, but what is certain is that at some point No 2 was acquired by the bibliophile Sir Thomas Phillipps: did he perhaps purchase it following the closure of the 'Lit & Phil' and the sale of its collections in 1861? Or did he purchase it from Alder? Or, as has been suggested, was it acquired by Lord Northwick, whose art collection, housed at Thirlestaine House in the Bath Road, was sold following his death in 1859? Phillipps certainly purchased Thirlestaine House to house his huge Library, so perhaps he purchased this painting as well. More research is clearly needed!

At some point a lithographic copy of Phillipps' version was produced (probably by Phillipps' own private Middle Hill Press), a copy of which is held by the British Museum - and which may be seen on the Museum's website: Reference 2006, U.3820. This was certainly in the British Museum's collection by 1888, and in 1902 its existence was brought to the attention of Mr Jones, Cheltenham's then Librarian; a photograph of the lithograph is included in the Wilson's History File on Robins, and it was later used as an illustration (Plate 6) in Gwen Hart's *A History of Cheltenham*, published by Leicester University Press in 1965.

Sir Thomas Phillipps died in 1872 and his collection eventually passed to his grandson, Thomas Fitzroy Fenwick, who began the task of disposing of it, but it was not until 1964 that No 2 was sold – by Alan G Fenwick, at a Christie's sale, at which it was purchased by a London Gallery. Since then it has been sold on at least twice, being acquired by its present owner at a Christie's auction in 2007.

Far less is known about the provenance of No 1, other than that it was purchased by Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum from a Tewkesbury antique dealer in 1954: unfortunately, the publicity surrounding its purchase claimed that it was once the property of Sir Thomas Phillipps and that it was the basis of the British Museum print – which was clearly not the case!

Exactly why, and for whom, Thomas Robins produced two versions is uncertain, but is it too fanciful to suggest that one might have been for Henry Skillicorne, the owner of the spa well and the other for Lady Stapleton, the owner of the Great House – both of which are shown prominently in his *Prospect*?

Intriguingly, there is in fact a third version—a watercolour and pen & ink drawing contained in a volume of 136 drawings by Robins (four of which are of Cheltenham) that was acquired by the Victoria & Albert Museum in 2000 (Reference: 1308:6 – 2001; see <https://collections-vam.ac.uk/item/057327/drawing-robins-thomas/>). Again, the placement of the people and animals is very different from either of the other versions, but perhaps this is Robins' original sketch on which versions 1 and 2 were based?

Steven Blake

FEATURE

The Complete Diary of a Cotswold Parson. The Diaries of the Revd Francis Edward Witts 1783-1854 in 10 volumes, edited by Alan Sutton

Many CLHS members will no doubt have read the 1978 publication, *The Diary of a Cotswold Parson*, which comprises extracts from the diaries of the Reverend Francis Edward Witts (1783-1854), selected, edited and introduced by the architectural historian, David Verey. They may also be aware that, since 2008, Alan Sutton (who published the 1978 book) has been gradually publishing the diaries in their entirety, suitably edited and introduced by himself, a task that he began working on 40 years ago, in 1981.

The entire series comprises 10 volumes, the final volume, which was published in 2020, being a monumental two-part index of people, places and subjects which

runs to a staggering 1,456 pages, and which provides the key to unlocking the wealth of information for local, family and national historians that is contained within the diaries.

As well as being Rector of Upper Slaughter from 1808 until his death, Francis Witts was a prominent, well-connected member of local society, serving for 42 years as a magistrate, and at various times as the Chairman of the Stow Poor Law Union, as a Governor of the Gloucester Infirmary and as a trustee of a bank, a lunatic asylum and several turnpikes. Inevitably, these involvements - and his wider social connections - brought him into contact with a whole range of his contemporaries, who feature in his diaries, while he was constantly 'on the move' around the County, observing and recording the world around him.

One of the journeys that Witts made regularly was from Upper Slaughter to the Quarter Sessions at Gloucester, which involved passing through Cheltenham, where he had in fact been born, the son of an Oxfordshire clothier, in a relative's house in the George Inn Yard in 1783. The diaries

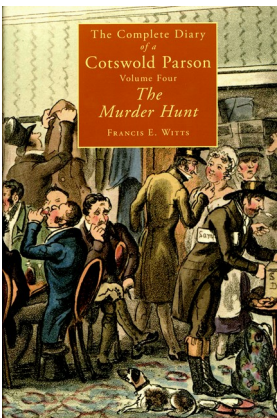
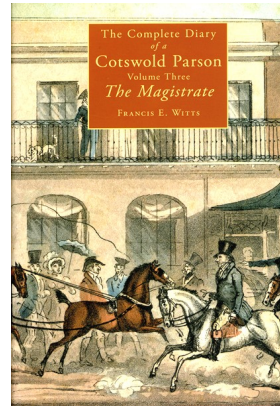
are therefore rich in references to Cheltenham, and the 'places' index includes a total of 58 separate topics for Cheltenham from 1801 onwards, many of them being descriptions of the rapid changes taking place in the expanding spa town: its fashionable new estates, such as Montpellier and Pittville with their walks and rides, pump rooms and residential terraces, its many new public buildings, such as churches, chapels and schools, as well as glimpses of its social life in the Assembly Rooms and at the Theatre.

The 'people' index (which comprises entries for around 3,600 individuals!) includes many names that will be familiar to anyone conversant with the history of Cheltenham during the first half of the 19th century, and the diaries include 'pen portraits' of such well known local figures as Joseph Pitt, Francis Close,

Lords Ellenborough, Northwick and Segrave - and the architect John Forbes, whose 1835 trial for forgery is recounted in some detail.

Alan Sutton must be congratulated on the completion of this mammoth task (between them the 10 volumes number 6,531 pages and, when placed on a bookshelf 'end to end', measure 18 inches!) and he should be thanked for making these fascinating diaries, which remain part of the Witts family papers, available both to the general reader and to anyone studying the first half of the 19th century: I would certainly urge CLHS members to take a look at them - they are all still in print, at either £50 or £80 per volume, and a complete set may be consulted free at Gloucestershire Archives.

Steven Blake



FEATURE

A General Cheltenham Guide, 1818

In his recent talk about 'Zamiel Gripeall', alias the early 19th century newspaper proprietor Samuel Young Griffith, Mark Davies referred several times to a guide-book produced by Griffith and his brother. It was an early entrant in the long



series of local guides promoting Cheltenham as a spa town that continued well into the 20th century. We have had a chance to examine the second edition, published in 1818, which included a fold-out map of the environs of Cheltenham and numerous advertisements for hotels, shops and other local businesses. As proclaimed on the front cover, it was 'Compiled from the most authentic sources' and embraced not only the 'History, State and Description' of the town but also 'A Statement of the

Virtues and Qualities of the Mineral Waters' and 'A Summary of the Disorders in which they are recommended, and the Modes of their Application'. All these subjects, and many more, are well covered within the 220 closely-printed pages of this pocket-sized volume.

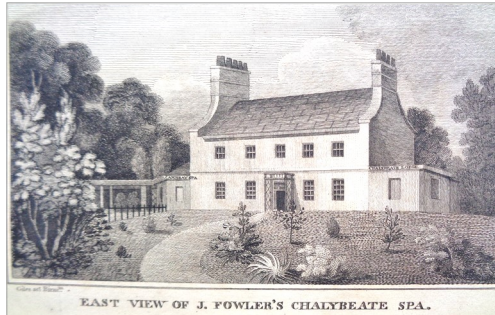
The history of the town, quoting Domesday and detailing the ownership of the manor and hundred through the middle ages and up to the 17th century, has been conscientiously researched. 'We shall...overlook the accounts of Sir Robert Atkyns and other historical writers,' says the author dismissively, 'which abound with conjecture and misrepresentation; as we fortunately have had access to original charters, grants and other authentic records, which enable us to give a much more accurate account of the early history..' The following chapters describe the situation and climate of the town (noting the longevity of its inhabitants) and its 'local advantages'. Everything is presented in the most favourable light. There was the abundance of fruit and vegetables, the 'excellency of the meat' and the wide



choice of fresh fish from the Severn and the Chelt. There was the admirable local infrastructure: coal from the Forest of Dean and elsewhere reached Cheltenham via the New Railway from Gloucester, there was a new Market House, and sundry Acts of Parliament had led to great improvements in the roads. Particular attention is given to an Act of 1806 which, recognising that Cheltenham had been 'for near a century past a place of great public resort on account of the

salubrity of its air, and its celebrated mineral waters' appointed Commissioners to take responsibility for almost everything in the town, with the power to impose penalties for any infringement of their rules and regulations. Many such by-laws are quoted—the prices to be charged by sedan chairmen, for example, are meticulously listed. 'It is essential to give a full idea of those local laws which affect Visitants, as well as resident Nobility and Gentry.' The Guide clearly aspires to be a useful handbook for the more prosperous members of the existing population as well as for newcomers to the town.

Now we come to the famous Spa. Its discovery and the development of the facilities are described in detail, and its reputation, 'even in the most remote colonies' is said to be so great that since 1780 visitor numbers have increased from 470 to 32,000, with the season now extending from March to late November. Bath had of course long attracted winter visitors: Cheltenham laid claim to the summer season. We are to understand that it was no less genteel than Bath, for chief among its many advantages were 'the social manners, equally free from coarseness and familiarity'.



The writer's account of the waters and their uses in the following chapters does not, as he says 'descend into *minutiae* of chemical and medical detail' and does not aim to supersede professional advice. (There were after all large numbers of doctors in the town keen to dispense the latter.) So he devotes short chapters to the Aperient Waters - especially recommended for those returning from the East and West Indies in a 'drooping, debilitated and enervated state' - and the iron-rich Chalybeate Waters, both kinds being notably good for digestive disorders. It was a point worth emphasising, since many of the visitors who came here for the sake of their health were probably suffering chiefly from the effects of over-indulgence. Then he discusses the benefits of warm and cold bathing, available at what is now The Playhouse in the Bath Road on payment of three shillings for a warm bath and two shillings for a cold one. There were also saline baths (good for scrofulous infections) and cold showers, and within the same establishment was Mr Thompson's Laboratory, where the essential salts in the chalybeate waters were extracted by evaporation and bottled for sale. This complex process, which he evidently found especially interesting, is described at some length. Next we learn about the different wells in the town—at Montpellier, Alstone, Sherborne and Cambray—the walks and rides associated with them and the charges for taking the waters. The Sherborne Spa, with its extensive gardens and magnificent pump-room, was the newest and was expected to open in the current year (1818). There follows, appropriately enough, a list of Resident Physicians, Surgeons and Chemists and Druggists.

Next he turns his attention to hotels and boarding houses, beginning with the Plough, which is perhaps not surprising since the landlord was Samuel Griffith's

father-in-law. It was a coaching inn, as was the George Hotel, and the mail services that ran from each of them are given in full. Thirteen more hotels and boarding houses are described, with careful indications of the clientele they attracted. All provided the best of comfort and service (of course), but those



towards the end of the list are mentioned as being frequented by 'commercial gentlemen' and 'the most respectable tradesmen'.

The next chapter deals with Charitable and other Institutions and is concerned mainly with schools, including the Grammar School, Sunday Schools and the Old School of Industry for the Education of Female Under Servants where clothing could be made to order: a shirt for two shillings, for example, or a nightcap for 6d. This institution, founded in 1806 'to promote religion and industry among the female poor'—and to provide a steady supply of well-trained domestic servants—had proved very successful and an asset to the town, serving as an asylum for orphans and a house of refuge for friendless young women. It was supported by voluntary contributions and

public fund-raising efforts, as were the Dispensary serving both in- and out-patients, founded in 1813, the new Poor House founded in 1809 and the Cheltenham Cobourg Society for the Relief of Poor Lying-in Married Women, which lent a box of baby linen for the confinement and the first month. It all did Cheltenham credit. The reader must surely be impressed by so much evidence of a civilised, caring community.

The section on churches begins with the history and architecture of St Mary's and includes churches and chapels of other denominations, assorted but less numerous than they were to become later in the century. Fashionable Amusements, centred largely on the new Assembly Rooms, included balls, concerts and card playing, and there were plays at the Theatre in the Cambray Colonnade where seats cost 5s for a box and 2s 6d in the pit, prices probably beyond the reach of less affluent local people. Lastly there were circulating libraries, the Cheltenham Library run by Mr Bettison in the High Street, Williams' Library next to the Assembly Rooms and several more, all offering access to newspapers and journals as well as books. Two or three of them rented and sold musical instruments and sheet music too. A brief survey of tradesmen such as jewellers and wine merchants and a summary of the regular postal services from the post office in Gyde's Terrace (now Grosvenor Street) completed the range of information about the town itself that the author of the Guide thought his readers would need. It remained to advise them on the best ways of exploring the surrounding area. Excursions are suggested to all points of the compass, with much historical and other information about the towns and villages to be seen on the way and especial attention to places of particular interest such as Berkeley Castle and Tewkesbury Abbey.

What a mine of information! Perhaps not a book to read from cover to cover, but certainly one that could occupy hours of casual browsing, or, thanks to its handy index, quickly deliver the answers to very many questions. It cost three shillings, which seems a high price, particularly considering that it was a paperback; but it must have sold well, since it ran into at least three editions. The first came out in 1815, this one 'upon an entirely new plan' as it says on the cover, was the second and there was to be a third in 1827. The author of the first two was Samuel Griffith's elder brother John Knight Griffith, but the third, as Mark Davies explained, was by a different writer, John having died in 1818.

A small puzzle remains. The entrepreneurial Samuel, who was to become a hotelier as well as a newspaper proprietor, printer and publisher, was judged by his contemporaries to be quite incapable of writing the Guide, even though he claimed authorship of the third edition.. Yet the second edition is not only thoroughly researched but clearly and fluently written, apparently by someone who was well educated and no stranger to literary work. One can only think that John and Samuel Griffith must have been two very different people.

Kath Boothman

Another historic photograph

In last year's July issue we showed an aerial picture of the railway in the Tewkesbury Road area as it was in about 1967, taken by David Aldred's late friend Tim Curr. David has now found another of Tim's pictures. It is a photograph of Malvern Road station taken in 1969. The station had closed on 3 January 1966, but the line to Honeybourne remained open for freight, and so two working signals can be seen here. After the line closed completely in 1976 part of it was rebuilt as the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway from Cheltenham Racecourse station. The scene captured by the photograph is one of disuse and decay. The buildings still remain, although the bridge from the booking office to the platform has been demolished. The sidings are completely overgrown, and the engine shed has disappeared.

A solitary railway worker can be seen, walking off the end of the platform.

Today all that survives is the station approach and part of the platform facing along what is now the Honeybourne line foot path.



FEATURE

Four weddings and too many funerals

There was always a shortage of European women in India, especially during the heyday of the Cheltenham Spas. The relentless flow of men to the Orient and high mortality made sure of that. If the marriage market was poorly stocked in India, then there was England to look to. After a twenty-year service in the subcontinent an East India Company officer could look forward to a lengthy furlough back 'home'. In those days Cheltenham was the go-to destination for returning Anglo-Indians. They flocked to the town and, naturally, it was a most convenient place to search for a bride. (Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, founder of Singapore, discovered this on his return from Java in 1816 when he met and later married Sophia Hull.)

One man so minded was Major Thomas Alexander Cowper of the Bombay Corps of Engineers, a widower. Major Cowper had started his career with the East India Company as a cadet at the age of 15 when he first travelled out to India. In 1816 his long service leave brought him back to England and, like so many others, he found his way to Cheltenham. On 27th March 1819, Major Thomas Alexander Cowper married Charlotte, second daughter of David Maitland, Esq of Cheltenham. Their first son arrived on 5th December. Major Cowper received permission to travel back to India and they booked a passage on the Indiaman *HCS Marquis of Huntley*.



HCS Marquis of Huntley

Two young ladies, no doubt hopeful of their future prospects, were to accompany Mrs Cowper. They were Adeline Maitland, presumably Charlotte's sister, and Elizabeth Gwinnett, the daughter of Theodore Gwinnett, a well-known Cheltenham Solicitor. East India Company regulations required that these two, who were not travelling on Company business, placed a bond of £400.

Captain Donald MacLeod was the commander for the journey from London, first to Bombay and then to China. This was the *Huntley's* fifth voyage. She had been MacLeod's since the very start of her career. For this trip John Reid was the purser. They would sail in company with *HCS Dunira* and *HCS Lady Melville*. The full complement of passengers for Bombay, received on board in London on the 28th February 1820, comprised: Major Cowper and his party, Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Dyson of the 12th Bombay Native Infantry, Mrs Dyson and one other lady, a couple of officers of the 67th Regiment of Foot, 11 other assorted men and four servants. The passenger list makes no mention of any infants. Lieutenant Colonel Dyson had also found a bride very recently, marrying Emma Louisa Muntz on 19th October at Northfield, Worcestershire. Like Elizabeth, Charlotte and Adelaide, the three Cheltenham girls, Emma Louisa was literally about to embark on the trip of a lifetime. The *Marquis of Huntley* set sail for Bombay from the Downs on 5th March. On

board the senior passengers would enjoy the privileges of the Captain's table, whilst those less fortunate would mess with the third mate. Dyson, Cowper and their parties would undoubtedly enjoy the former.

From leaving the coast of England the voyage to Bombay took three months. There can be little doubt that there was ample opportunity for convivial moments during this lengthy and at times monotonous journey for, on 17th June, ten days after the parties disembarked, the eighteen-year-old Elizabeth Gwinnett married

Captain Donald MacLeod, and within the fortnight, on the 29th June, Adeline Maitland married the ship's purser John Reid.

In Bombay, Thomas Alexander Cowper returned to his duties with the Bombay Corps of Engineers, rising to the rank of Lieutenant



The former Town Hall, Bombay

Colonel. As Chief Engineer he was to go on to design the monumental Bombay Town Hall with its exceedingly impressive eight-column Doric pavilion. This remarkable edifice took over 13 years to build. Unfortunately, he never saw it finished, dying in 1825 at the age of 45. The Government granted his widow Charlotte a pension and she returned home on the *HCS James Sibbald* that same year with her four remaining children. What further became of her and her offspring is not known, although it seems likely that she returned to Cheltenham. Curiously, Thomas Cowper's only memorial is a plaque on Bombay Town Hall.

In due course Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Dyson, husband of Emma Louisa Muntz, became Colonel of the 18th Bombay Native Infantry and in 1854 achieved the rank of General. He was to serve under General Sir Charles Napier who, for a while, retired to Cheltenham.

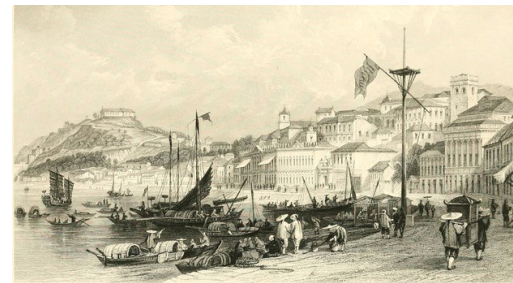
Elizabeth and Adeline did not remain in Bombay. Instead they continued on the ship to Bengal, now as Mrs MacLeod and Mrs Reid, this time with their own servant Elizabeth Brown who came on board in Bombay. The ladies were joined by one Lieutenant MacDonald of the Madras Native Infantry, an officer suffering a long and distressing illness who was to die at sea three days before the ship arrived. Deaths at sea on these long voyages were far from uncommon, and he was not the only casualty of this voyage.

The *Huntley* arrived at the New Anchorage on the Hooghly River, near the town of Diamond Harbour, on 13th August. John and Adeline Reid left the ship with the permission of the Government and took passages to Europe on the *Golconda* the following February. Oddly, their names are absent from the published list of arrivals at Gravesend. The vessel had been badly delayed by weeks of adverse winds and it may be that they disembarked at the Downs. Of them, also, nothing further is known.

Elizabeth's adventure had, however, only just begun. Eventually, the *Marquis of Huntley* continued on its way to Penang (Prince of Wales Island) where it arrived on 6th November in company with the *HCS Dunira*. The journey then progressed

through the Malacca Straits to Singapore, arriving there on 21st November, less than two years since Raffles founded the settlement. By Friday 26th January the ship had entered Chinese waters and anchored towards Macao in the mouth of the Pearl River. The following day she moved over towards the island of Lintin where a Chinese pilot arrived from Macao to take her up river: through the Bocca Tigris narrows, past the Second Bar Pagoda to the anchorage at Whampoa, the nearest to Canton. There the ship's needs would be attended to by a Chinese comprador, cargoes of Indian cotton exchanged for teas: Twankey, Hyson, Bohea and Congou. Men spoke of silks, nankeens, china root, rhubarb and of measures in taels, piculs and cattys. After many months at sea, sailors might seek out the female comforts of the lob lob boats or, maybe, oblivion in the bars on Canton's Hog Lane. Elizabeth would see little of this. Ladies, in particular, were prohibited from visiting Canton. It was customary to disembark passengers travelling back to Europe via China at Macao and to bring them on board again when the ship was cleared to depart.

Cosmopolitan Macao, however, was also a new world and save for a few classical buildings was utterly different from Cheltenham. Hard-nosed Anglophone traders had cuckooed their way into this jaded, begrudging Portuguese enclave. On one



Praia Grande, Macao

hand it was indeed a strange Luso-Chinese world of pidgin and Portuguese, black African slaves and talk of dollars, silver and opium, on the other it was a little corner of England or Massachusetts.

The China trade was the cornerstone of the East India Company's Merchant Service. Every year maybe two dozen of the finest merchant ships in the

world would wend their way from London to Whampoa, each with a crew of 150 or so, yet, despite the large number of visiting seamen, many did not make it to Macao. This was the trading season and most of the Company's men would be at the English Factory in Canton, but Macao was where the small number of expatriate families remained year-round. There was always hunger for news and for the company of visitors, to whom generous hospitality was shown.

For Elizabeth there were also ample opportunities for strolls or a ride out in a chair. There was the market, the Company Chapel and Library, numerous Portuguese churches and joss houses (temples) to visit. It was however winter and it would have been chilly. When Elizabeth stepped out of her home, Cheltenham's Albion House, to commence her travels, she might well have imagined finding a husband in Bombay and living the life of an officer's wife in India. It seems inconceivable that she could ever have contemplated arriving, with her own servant, on the long curving waterfront of Macao's Praia Grande and entering this extraordinary closeted world.

The turnaround of the *Marquis of Huntley* was unusually fast. The vessel was ready for the return in a little over two months. Mrs MacLeod was received back

on board for England on Monday 25th of March 1821. Fortunately for Elizabeth, who fell pregnant soon after re-embarking, the voyage home was relatively quick. The ship returned through the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra, where it stopped briefly at Anyer. There was also an obligatory stop at St Helena, on 19th July. The voyage was marred, however, by a serious bout of mutinous behaviour at a critical moment when the ship was riding on only one anchor on its return to English waters. Eleven dozen lashes were meted out between four perpetrators as an example to the crew. They were at the Downs on 9th September. Elizabeth's baby Donald Gordon Theodore MacLeod entered the world in London on New Year's Day 1822 and was christened at St Anne's, Soho on 1st May. Sadly, he would never really know his father, who passed away a few days earlier on 21st April. Most fortunately for Elizabeth, on 31st October 1820 and whilst at sea en route to Penang, her husband had added a Codicil to his Will to her benefit. He was part owner of the *Marquis of Huntley* and seemingly a wealthy man. He wrote:



'I bequeath unto loving Wife Elizabeth MacLeod the Annual Interest of all Sums of Money & other property of every kind due to me at my decease, to be invested in Government/landed Security, enjoyed by Executors, by my Wife as a Jointure or Annuity during her natural life, The Principal whereof at her death to devolve, together with all other expectancies to any Child/Children that I may have by my marriage with her, to be divided equally amongst them....'

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in years to come, this would become a matter of contention between the Gwinnett and MacLeod families.

Within a little over two years, Elizabeth had sailed tens of thousands of miles across the North and South Atlantic and Indian Oceans to the South China Sea and back, had found a husband, become a mother and then found herself widowed and an inheritress. She had visited Johanna (modern day Anjouan), the three Presidencies: Bombay, Bengal and Penang, along with Singapore, Macao and St Helena. On the way she had experienced life at sea, would have enjoyed much varied company, heard numerous tongues and seen and sampled many cultures. It really had been quite an adventure. Back in England, Elizabeth returned to Cheltenham. She would not remarry but died on 28th November 1825, to be followed to the grave by Donald junior, aged four, on 11th February 1826. They are both buried in Prestbury.

In the end all three of the Cheltenham girls found their way back to England. In time many more young hopefuls would embark on that long trip to the East Indies, their lives too often marred by tragedy.

Jim Markland



BOOKS FOR SALE



News from the CLHS Donated Books 'Shop'

Often overlooked as too ephemeral, town guides provide both a fascinating snapshot of the health of a place at a point in time through the advertisements placed by retail, business and leisure concerns; and an insight into how a place sees itself, in the presentation and editorial approach taken in the guide.

The following are a basis for an excellent collection in themselves, but equally source material for an economic and social history of Cheltenham in the past half century. Rarely dated as such, from internal evidence we can currently offer:

Cheltenham Official Guides for mid-1960s, later-1960s, 1969/71, 1974, c1977, c1983 – six guides at just £1.00 each; Cheltenham A Town for the 1990s (Hobsons Publishing, 1990) £1.00; Cheltenham Spa Centre for the Cotswolds Visitor Guide 2000 £0.50; and Mark Daniel, ed, The Diamond Jubilee in Cheltenham (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2012) £1.50.

We also have guides to a number of other Gloucestershire towns and churches – a full Autumn/Winter list can be found on the 'Library and Bookshop' page of the CLHS website (www.cheltlocalhist.org.uk). Orders may be placed at any time, in the normal way.

Thinking ahead, there are many potential Christmas gifts amongst the often 'as new' books in our list:

Archie Miles, Cotswolds Moods (2003) hard covers, fine, in fine dust wrapper, as new within. £4.00

Nicholas Kingsley, The Country Houses of Gloucestershire Volume One 1500-1660 (Cheltenham, 1989) hard covers, fine, in fine dw, as new within. £10.00

Alister Moffat, The British A Genetic Journey (Edinburgh, 2013) hard covers, as new in dust wrapper. £5.00

Barry Cunliffe, Iron Age Britain English Heritage (London, 2004) paperback, as new. £5.00

Jonathan Clark, A World By Itself A History of the British Isles (London, 2011) paperback, very good. £7.00

We also have two copies of **John Hudson**, A Cotswold Christmas, both paperback, as new. £3.00; and **Keith Clark**, The Ghosts of Gloucestershire (Bristol, 1993) paperback, as new, name sticker to first page. £2.00. And, for relaxing after Christmas lunch, how about: **Julia Owen**, A Gloucestershire Quiz Book (1996) paperback, as new. £2.00; **Robin Brooks**, So You Think You Know Cheltenham (2004) paperback, as new. £2.00; and **Julia Skinner**, Did You Know? Cheltenham A Miscellany (2010) hard covers in dust wrapper, as new. £2.00

Donated books are always welcome. If you have books on Cheltenham that you would be happy to donate, we would be very grateful to receive them.

Oliver Pointer

(01242 216889 or 07400 197989; hardy_pointer@hotmail.com)

Promotion on the Prom

To coincide with the start of Heritage Open Days 2021, on September 11th from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm Cheltenham Arts Council hosted a promotional event for its members on the Promenade. Using the farmers' market stalls for displays, CLHS and about a dozen other organisations were able to promote membership and their programmes for the 2021-22 season.

With many additional people in town to explore Cheltenham's historic buildings, we were able to chat to a wide variety of interested passers-by, learning about their research interests and explaining what membership of CLHS has to offer. We were also able to network with other organisations with similar interests and objectives; we generally agreed that we should try to work more closely together in future.

Though not permitted to sell any items or collect money, we did have a selection of older Newsletters and Journals on display to pique interest and for take-aways. Perhaps next time we can have our website on display to highlight the many resources available there.

Four hours flew by as we learned more about what interests Cheltonians and visitors in our historic town. It was a great promotional opportunity, ideally linked to the HODs festival, and perfectly timed for the start of our new speaker season. We will certainly hope to be there again in September 2022.

Oliver Pointer

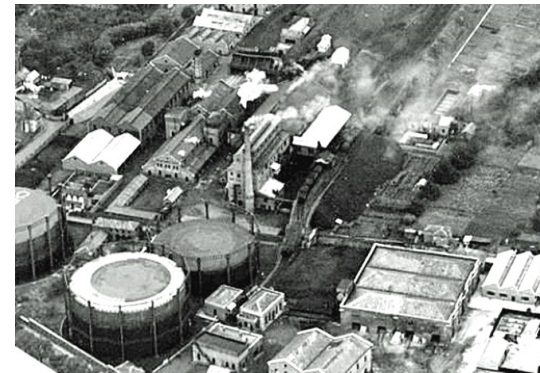


QUERY CORNER

A Message from our Expert

As Query Master for the Cheltenham Local History Society I have answered over 250 queries since taking on the role in the summer of 2018. The vast majority of queries are from people researching their family history or wishing to know more about the history of their house. (Thanks, David Olusoga!) However, occasionally more unusual enquiries crop up, which present more of a challenge.

One recent enquiry was about the location of a beetle, *Amphimallon solstitiale*, the Summer Chafer or European June Beetle. It had been recorded in 1945 in a paper by C C Townsend, who had studied the fauna of a dry carbon dump at the Cheltenham gas works, and my enquirer was anxious



to identify the exact location. Townsend's article gave the size of the tip and mentioned a nearby old allotment. With the help of various maps (courtesy of Know Your Place) I was able to find the allotment, but the clincher was an aerial view of the gasworks taken in 1938 (Britain from Above). This

shows a waste dump alongside the viaduct that brought the railway into the gas works, near the allotment. This site is now the corner of Tesco's car park, near the exit to Collett's Drive. As an added bonus the CLHS will be acknowledged in a forthcoming Summer Chafer atlas.

Jill Waller

CONTENTS

Lecture programme 2021-22;	2	The Robins painting (cover picture)	11-12
Member's Query	2	The Complete Diary of a Cotswold Parson	12-13
Reviews	3-5	A General Cheltenham Guide 1818	14-17
VCH News; Volunteers	6	Another historic photograph	17
Society News	7, 23	Four Weddings and too many Funerals	18-21
New Publication	7	Books for Sale	22
Cheltenham's Boot and Shoemakers	8-10		

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the March 2022 issue by
Monday 14th February 2022
 to the Editor: Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA
 Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: kboothman3@gmail.com

We are always very pleased to receive contributions from members—articles of any length, interesting facts and photos, memories, comments, are all welcome.