



Cheltenham Local History Society

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EDITORIAL

Of the five noteworthy women of Cheltenham pictured on the left, two or three at least are likely to be recognisable to many people. Dorothea Beale, celebrated Principal of the Ladies' College, Grace Billings, Cheltenham's first lady doctor and Lilian Faithfull, Miss Beale's successor and founder of the Lilian Faithfull homes, are almost household names. The other two may be less familiar. Edith How-Martyn (above) and Florence Earengy were sisters. Edith was a suffragette and a pioneer of birth control, while Florence, shown here as a captain in the first World War Women's Volunteer Reserve, became a barrister. To learn more about these and other local female celebrities, come to the Society's Local History Afternoon at St Andrew's Church on August 13th. There will be a talk, a choice of two guided walks and many fascinating displays to browse. Doors open at 1.30 pm. Don't miss it!

Kath Boothman

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EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2016-17

Meetings start at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade
Visitors pay £2.

Tuesday 20th September:

James Rendell—H H Martyn

Much of Gloucestershire's industrial heritage is attributable directly to the skill, ingenuity and inspiration of one gifted man and his son, yet few people are aware of the Martyn family and what they gave to our county. This talk follows the life of Herbert Henry from his early experience of poverty in the back streets of Worcester to the glory years, the founding of H H Martyn in Cheltenham, the Gloucester Aircraft Company and Dowty. We shall travel far to see the wonderful works of art created by talented local men that adorn the stately buildings and ships of the world. It is a journey worth taking.

Tuesday 18th October:

Jane Adams—Healing with Water: Cheltenham Spa in the National Context, 1800-1960

The talk will examine Cheltenham's growth and reputation within the broader context of the development of English spas in the 19th and 20th centuries. The fashion for taking the waters contributed to shaping the town's distinctive character and by the early 19th century Cheltenham ranked as one of the country's elite watering places. Its relative position declined in mid-century but later recovered so that by the 1920s the town was again celebrated as a specialist spa. This talk will discuss how changing ideas and practices associated with the therapeutic use of water contributed to these changing perceptions of the resort town.

Tuesday 15th November:

Rose Hewlett—Living on the Edge: Communities along the Upper Severn Estuary

The hostile, yet wonderful, environment of the Severn estuary from Lydney and Sharpness to Gloucester requires a life of adaptation for both the natural world and man. Rose Hewlett will talk about farming, fishing and flood defences along the upper Severn estuary from Roman times through to the present day.

Tuesday 13th December:

Steven Blake—Pittville after Pitt

On February 9th 1842 Joseph Pitt, the developer of the Pittville Estate, died at the age of 83, with debts of at least £154,000. This talk will look at what happened next: the administration of Pitt's Estate by the Court of Chancery, the sale of the remaining building land at Pittville in 1843-5, the building of 62 new houses within the Estate between 1843 and 1890, and the Estate's management by the

local surveyors, Engall, Sanders & Co. between 1842 and 1890, in which year the Pump Room and Gardens were sold to Cheltenham Corporation.

Tuesday 24th January 2017:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 21st February 2017:

Adrian Barlow—Stained Glass in Cheltenham

Cheltenham boasts a rich and remarkable collection of 19th and 20th (and now 21st) century stained glass, which deserves to be more widely known and better appreciated. It is rich because it includes important windows by Burne-Jones, by Arts and Crafts artists such as Henry Payne, by the Scottish stained glass artist, James Eadie Reid, and by international artists such as Lawrence Lee and Joseph Nuttgens. All the major Victorian firms are also represented, and their glass repays close scrutiny. The collection is remarkable, first because by no means all the most interesting windows are to be found only in churches; secondly, because one of the artists taught at the Ladies' College before the First World War; and thirdly, because Cheltenham was also the place where the now internationally acclaimed Tom Denny made his mark with the stunning sequence of windows in the church of St Christopher, Warden Hill. This illustrated lecture aims to whet the appetite for further exploration.

Tuesday 21st March 2017:

Alec Hamilton—Coates Carter: a Late Flourishing of the Arts & Crafts

In 1908 John Coates Carter, Wales's most distinguished Arts & Crafts architect, retired to Prestbury. He was 49. For the next 19 years he immersed himself in Cheltenham life. He served as churchwarden at St Mary's, Prestbury, where his memorial is to be found. He designed its rood beam, chapel screen and pulpit, the powerful war memorial crucifix outside All Saints, furnishings for St Mary's, Charlton Kings and for churches in Gloucester and Slimbridge; and he remodelled The Manor House, his last home, in Prestbury. In Wales he had established himself as an original, adventurous and bold designer. But his most glorious buildings came after retirement, in an Indian summer of dramatic work in Newport, Abercarn and, most evocative of all, the tiny church of Llandeloy. In this lavishly illustrated talk, Alec Hamilton discusses a great Welsh genius coming to a sort of peace in the tranquil Vale of Severn.

Tuesday 25th April 2017:

Jan Broadway—Georgian Nurseries in Gloucestershire

The eighteenth century saw the development of a number of retail plant nurseries in Bristol and in towns and villages across Gloucestershire. This talk will explore who became nurserymen, what they grew and what we can tell about their nurseries. It will also look at how they marketed their plants and who their customers were. Finally it will consider the factors that led to the success and longevity of some nurseries, while others failed in more or less spectacular ways.

Tuesday 23rd May 2017:

AGM followed by John Dixon—Beguiling Barbara Cartland: ‘Stranger in our Midst’

Do not be deterred by a mental image of an eccentric woman who wrote books about old fashioned virtues! Barbara Cartland’s books were much less fascinating than her own life. She was born into a well-known family, the Scobells, who lived at Walton House, Ashchurch near Tewkesbury, from 1911-1937. Her parents’ wealth derived from the Cartland brass manufacturing company of Birmingham, and she might never have become a writer if her parents had not been thrust into (genteel) poverty after the suicide of her Cartland grandfather Colonel Scobell, followed by the tragic death of her father in World War I. Married twice, Barbara’s own private life was something at variance with the image of romantic life portrayed in her books, and speculation about the parentage of her daughter leads us into intriguing Royal circles. Her second marriage however was long and happy. After World War II she moved into public affairs, pursuing some ideas which in the long term were not as eccentric as they were portrayed. At long last ennobled and after a long widowhood, Dame Barbara died in 2000.

MORNING LECTURES 2016-17

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke’s Hall, St Luke’s Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £2 from all attending these lectures is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no charge) from 10.00 am. Lectures start at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only—please contact Chris Conoley (01242 700428) if you wish to reserve a space.

Tuesday 4th October:

Angela Panrucker—The Story of Sudeley Castle

Sudeley Castle in its time has been a hunting lodge, a manor house and a royal residence, and the talk will touch on some of the more important events in its long and complex history. As the speaker’s first introduction to Sudeley was through flowers, however, there will also be some discussion of the gardens—it’s not undiluted history!

Tuesday 1st November:

Paul Scott and/or Allen Miller—The History of the Cheltenham Playhouse, 1806-2016

Although Cheltenham’s intimate theatre, the Playhouse, dates back only to 1945 (making it the first new theatre in Britain to commence operating while World War II was still being fought), the history of the site dates back to 1806 when Henry Thompson established his salts manufactory. Since then it has been a swimming pool, steam mill with bakery, slipper baths and a medicinal spa, and

host to indoor cycling lessons, an indoor cricket school and a gymnasium—the latter resulting in probably the only known death by vaulting horse—making it one of the town's most unusual and fascinating buildings.

Tuesday 4th April 2017:

John Chandler—Cheltenham's History in Black and White

Cheltonians of a certain age will recall the 2.00 pm phenomenon, when the town centre was gridlocked by coaches of every imaginable hue, but especially the monochrome vehicles of the eponymous Black & White Motorways. This company, and the consortium of coach operators called Associated Motorways of which it was part, created in Cheltenham a hub for express coaches second only to London's Victoria Coach Station. This talk will ask why it happened and why it came to an end, and assess its importance for the local and national economy.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

Note new venue: Meetings are normally held at Glebe Cottages, Church Road, Leckhampton (next to the churchyard), at 7.30 pm Admission £2 for visitors.

Wednesday 21st September:

Fiona Mead—What can Victorian School Logbooks tell us about Local Social History?

Wednesday 19th October:

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

Wednesday 16th November:

Alan Pilbeam—Old Gloucestershire Paths

Prestbury Local History Society

www.prestburyhistory.com

Meetings are held at Prestbury Women's Institute Hall (corner of Bouncers Lane/ Prestbury Road), starting at 7.30 pm unless otherwise stated. Guests pay £2.

Monday 24th October:

Norman Baker— a short talk on Prestbury Fields followed by Rebecca Sillence and David Jones with Research Guidance

Monday 28th November:

John Simpson and Steven Blake—Pittville

Charlton Kings Local History Society

www.charltonkings.org.uk

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

Tuesday 27th September:

David O'Connor—Troubled Waters

Tuesday 25th October:

Neela Mann—Cheltenham in the Great War

Tuesday 22nd November:

Heather Atkinson—Cheltenham Workhouse

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Swindon Village Society

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm unless otherwise stated.

Non-members pay £2.

Wednesday 21st September:

Ray Wilson—Mills on the River Chelt

Wednesday 19th October:

Amy Woolacott—Sacred Wells and Springs

Wednesday 16th November:

Barry Simon—The History of Swindon Hall

Gotherington and Area Local History Society

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

Tuesday 27th September:

David Aldred—The History of Cleve Hill: The Cotswolds Health Resort

Tuesday 25th October :

Professor Christopher Dyer—Surviving or Thriving: the World of the Gloucestershire Peasants

Tuesday 22nd November:

Ian Hollingsbee—Inside the Wire: the Prisoner of War Camps in Gloucestershire, 1939-1948

Exhibition**Holst Birthplace Museum**

www.holstmuseum.org.uk

4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham

12th June to 1st September:

Miniature Museum of Museums

A unique interactive artwork created by Tara Downs and Bart Sabel inspired by the collections of three Gloucestershire museums: the Holst Museum, the Museum in the Park (Stroud) and the Waterways Museum (Gloucester). What links them is ingenuity, and the Miniature Museum invites visitors to explore their intriguing inventiveness through touch, sound and music.

REVIEWS

At our morning meeting on March 1st **Hugh Torrens** told us **The Incredible Story of the Guiting Stone Pipe Company 1805-1915.**

The Stone Pipe Company (SPC) was set up to supply London, Manchester and Dublin with clean drinking and other water through clean, solid and pure stone. Cities were rapidly expanding and existing water supplies were inadequate to supply the need of the growing population and larger residences. Previously water had been carried through elm pipes, which were short lived and leaked, or cast-iron pipes which were more expensive and produced iron-stained water.

Portland Stone was initially trialled to produce the pipes but Guiting stone was chosen as the company's single source of stone in England. This was because of the large sized blocks which Guiting stone could uniquely yield. At the Guiting quarries engine houses and workers' cottages were built. From each block of stone two pipes were produced by a steam boring machine: an outer and a smaller inner one, leaving a central core. For a few frantic years a massive manufacturing enterprise operated, with more than 30 tons of bored pipes leaving the works each day. Finished pipes were taken away by horse and cart, the heavy weight wearing grooves in the roadways. Plans were made to run first a major canal and then a long tram road into the SPC works to facilitate the transport of finished pipes, but these proved impractical due to the local terrain.

Then, suddenly, in July 1812, the pipes failed, at first in London and then on a massive and terminal scale. They had proved incapable of withstanding the higher, now steam-driven, water pressures being demanded. These were needed to provide 'high service' to the tops of the fashionable houses it had been hoped could be supplied in the cities.

Many of Britain's most famous engineers had been deeply involved, notably James Watt senior (the steam engineer), William Murdoch (the pioneer of gas lighting) and John Rennie (the famous civil engineer and SPC chief engineer and shareholder). The Butterley Company in Derbyshire had supplied tramroad wagons which had never been fully paid for.

The involvement of all these people in the Stone Pipe Company is never explored in their biographies. Backbiting and bankruptcies followed, including that of one major London bank. The failure of the enterprise was one of the first cases of 'systems failure' in British engineering history. The speaker emphatically denied the claims that the whole enterprise was fraudulent, especially in view of the reputation of the engineers involved.

Critically, the failure soon yielded one major advance, since it helped initiate the systematic testing of engineering materials in Britain.

Sue Robbins



The Mayor, Neela Mann and Chairman David Scriven at the book launch

At our meeting on March 15th the book **Cheltenham in the Great War** was formally launched with speeches of appreciation by Sir Henry Elwes, who wrote the book's Foreword, and the Mayor, Councillor Duncan Smith, as President of the Society. Afterwards, the author **Neela Mann** gave a talk to a full house in the Council Chamber.

Cheltenham in 1914 was not the Cheltenham we think of today. It was 'a town to let' – a town of 800 houses empty or to let. By 1914 the town was described as being in a state of

'incipient decay'. Still, it was referred to as an Anglo-Indian paradise for a resident, leisured class made up mainly of retired military and colonial personnel. It was these two factors that were Cheltenham's salvation. The houses were perfect for accommodating the 11,000 or so troops and aeronautical cadets billeted here during the war. Red Cross VAD hospitals occupied six of these houses as well as two schools. The leisured class, especially the ladies of the Mayoress's Linen Committee, provided the supplies for the military hospitals, staffed the eight hospitals, organised parcels for Prisoners of War from Cheltenham and raised money for war causes. Not only was money raised for Soldiers' Day but the whole town from school children to professional people, including marketeers and traders, contributed £186,958 for a submarine in one week in 1918. The equivalent today would be over eleven million pounds!

Neela covered other aspects of life in Cheltenham such as the Council's move into the Municipal Offices, which were bought and renovated at a cost of £14,000. The move was described by one newspaper as '..cheap and nasty...and would make Cheltenham an object of ridicule...' How times change! Trench warfare—the growing of food to combat shortages during rationing—including the Queen's Hotel raising 43 Gloucester Old Spot pigs and 161 acres being under cultivation in the town. One resident, however, refused to give a piece of her land as the idea of cabbages close to her window conflicted with her aesthetic tastes!

Cheltenham's own munitions industry and aeroplane factory as well as the giant Quedgeley shell filling factory and the fruit pulping and canning factory employed thousands of Cheltenham women, many of whom would previously have been servants in the houses of the leisured class.

The book, as Neela explained, is just a glimpse of how the town responded to the war and her talk could only skim over some aspects of those war years for people in Cheltenham. It is a book that deserves to be read, containing as it does many contributions by Cheltenham people to the war effort not previously recorded. Books are still available at meetings at the discounted price of £10 (rrp £14.99) or from Neela Mann at neela.mann@live.co.uk or 01242 238920. All proceeds go to Cheltenham Local History Society.

Our speaker on April 5th was **Dr Tim Jordan** talking about **The Cotswold House**, the title of the book he wrote with Lionel Walrond in 2014. Tim said there was no typical Cotswold house but a great variety, though with common features. The use of local stone was what gave it its character, and the nature of the landscape had much influence on styles. He showed a map of the Cotswolds, which extend from the escarpments around Cheltenham in the west to the pasture lands near Oxford in the east, and as far south as the hilly area north of Swindon. Of the very earliest houses, all built of wood, a few cruck cottages survived in places such as Didbrook and Broad Camden. Many more with square timber frames had later been faced with stone so that they no longer looked like wooden houses. Roofs would normally have been thatched, because thatch was cheap; many still were today. Bibury's Arlington Row, built as a monastic wool store in the 1380s, only acquired a stone roof with dormer windows when it was converted in the 17th century for local weavers. Weaving was an important industry at that time, and weavers' cottages in the Stroud area have similar well-lit upstairs workrooms. Estate cottages formed one large category of Cotswold houses, many built by early 19th century estate owners who took pride in housing their tenants well. Rodborough had a whole group built in the Arts and Crafts style. As for farm houses, some evidently had wealthy owners in later years: Tim showed examples of primitive cottages which had evolved into big houses with proper fireplaces and extra rooms. In many cases a medieval hall house had an upper floor added, but the hall sometimes survived as it was, even in larger houses such as Chavenage. Many houses, especially grander dwelling, had changed dramatically in the course of their history and showed traces of every period from Norman to Edwardian. Almshouses, built for the poor with a rich benefactor paying for the upkeep, were often designed by well-known architects. There were good examples at Burford and Wotton-under-Edge. The stone itself was the most important element of all—accessible, easily workable when quarried but hardening with exposure, and available in many local varieties of colour and texture. As it split easily it made a handy roofing material, cut in graded sizes from 6" at the ridge to 24" at the eaves and still available today (at a price). Windows were often an interesting feature. Over time they grew larger, sometimes with decorated mullions. Sash windows became popular in the 18th century, smaller houses having sideways-sliding sashes. Early dormer windows were tucked into the eaves, later ones higher up. Many old houses had grand new entrances added—he showed examples of Georgian doorways in Chipping Campden. Modern houses built in Cotswold stone often still had features echoing older houses. The Cotswold house, he concluded, even if never pure, was a delight. After this richly illustrated talk the audience surely agreed.



Cruck cottage at Didbrook

Tony Conder's talk on April 19th was entitled **Gloucester's Railways, Then and Now**. He said his aim had been to make sense of the rail network around the city itself. Much development had taken place in the 1820s and 1830s: by 1841 London, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Birmingham were all linked. Gloucester's importance lay in its docks, and the mineral and coal wealth of south Gloucestershire prompted more railway development. A broad-gauge line came up from Bristol in 1844, followed by lines from Stroud and the Forest of Dean. Cheltenham's need for coal was served from 1811 by a horse-drawn tramway straight to Gloucester docks, later replaced (on different rails) by steam trains. Whereas the existing lines north of Gloucester linked towns between there and Birmingham, business interests wanted a direct fast line from Birmingham to Gloucester docks. The Lickey incline, south of Birmingham, presented a challenge on this route, but with the aid of American Norris locomotives it was overcome. By 1840 the new line had passed through Cheltenham and reached Gloucester Central station, still providing no direct link to the docks. In the early days every new railway line was a local project, but in time mergers created bigger companies. For years the Midland Railway, which ran the Derby to Birmingham line, was at loggerheads with the Great Western over the question of gauges. Tony showed a picture of Queen Victoria changing trains at Gloucester to join the Great Western line. This drew public attention, and the sheer inefficiency of the arrangement was ridiculed



Gloucester Eastgate in 1962

in the press, especially as freight had to be transferred as well as passengers. When a parliamentary commission came to see Gloucester station, the freight manager deliberately unloaded three trains to make it look as chaotic as possible. Parliament, recognising the need for standardisation, in 1846 opted for the standard gauge of 4ft 8½ ins. In 1847 a branch line to Gloucester docks was built at last and the city began to expand. The South Wales railway reached Gloucester in 1851 and a standard gauge line went via Gloucester to Bristol in 1854. Even so, broad gauge survived in Gloucester until 1872, and at one time there were five stations. He showed a plan of the Midland and Great Western stations side by side, with the long platforms favoured by Brunel which would take two trains one behind the other. Safety and comfort on the railway still left much to be desired; passengers were encouraged to buy insurance, trains were unheated until the 1880s, and first class was very much more comfortable than second or third. Industry thrived in Gloucester as more lines were built around the dock area and railway links developed with other parts of the country, supporting a busy import and export trade. Rolling stock built at the wagon works near the docks was shipped all over the world. This has all gone now, and since Gloucester Eastgate (the former Midland station) closed in 1975 only one station remains. Meanwhile the main north-south line still goes through Cheltenham and trains have to reverse in Gloucester as they did in 1844. It was a complicated story, but the audience clearly found it very interesting and asked several questions at the end.

After the AGM on May 17th **Gwilym Davies** entertained us with a lively introduction to the **Folk Music of Gloucestershire**. Besides singing to his own accompaniment on the piano accordion, he illustrated his talk with photos and video clips. Gloucester folk songs, essentially, were just songs collected within the county; they had general themes and many were also found, with variants, in other counties. He played a recording of an old man in Stonehouse singing a song of which a Devon version also existed.

The songs we know about we owe largely to people such as Cecil Sharp, Percy Grainger and Peter Shepherd who went around noting and recording them in the early 20th century. Cecil Sharp collected about 270 between 1904 and 1921. His collection included love-songs, soldiers' songs, wassails, carols, singing games and work songs. He used to seek out the oldest occupants of the workhouse and ask what songs they knew. Gwilym showed a picture of Percy Grainger, who worked in Gloucestershire in 1907-9, using a phonograph., and played one such recording made at Winchcombe workhouse. As an example of a widely-known song with local variants he played Will Ballinger of Deerhurst, born in 1876, singing 'The Daggle Taggle Gypsies'. A recruiting song called 'The Gloucester Blinder' on the other hand had genuine local credentials, as did 'George Ridler's Oven' which was advertised on an old poster as 'a Gloucestershire song'. Gwilym sang this one himself. Gypsy communities in the county, those who were local people rather than travellers, used to know many ballads. One family, the Brazils, knew 100, and he played recordings of them made in 1979, noting that their style of singing often used scales unfamiliar to us.

He next drew attention to morris dancing, a very old tradition still surviving in some places in the early 20th century when collectors first took an interest in it. He showed a video of Chipping Campden dancers performing a typical Cotswold morris dance. There were also Gloucestershire morris mummers, who performed a sort of pantomime (with many variations) involving stock characters such as King George, the Doctor and Father Christmas, with a song at the end. He showed a video of one such performance.

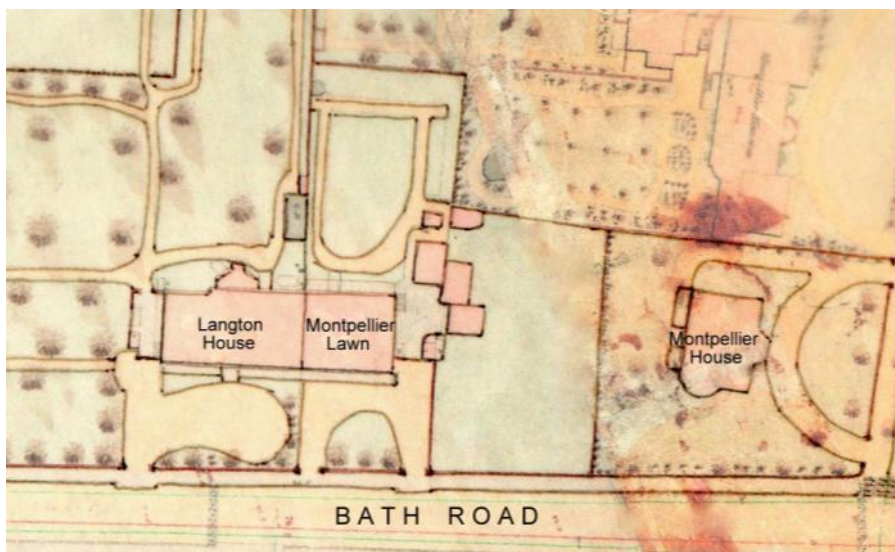
Wassails were drinking songs sung by groups going from house to house, sometimes carrying a decorated bowl, as in a picture he showed of the Tetbury wassailers in 1930. He played a video of Billy Buckingham, last of the Woodchester wassailers, singing in 1995.

Collecting Gloucestershire folk music was still very much an ongoing project. He drew attention to a new website supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, www.glostrad.com where all the songs and tunes collected in the county by himself and others (about 700 so far) were being brought together. There was more folk music still alive than people might imagine, and as part of our cultural heritage he thought it should be preserved.

In conclusion he got the audience to join with him in singing a rousing chorus of a song from Arlingham, 'Waysail, waysail to me jolly waysail'. It made a fitting end to an amusing and instructive talk.

*FEATURE***FROM RAJAHS TO ROGAN JOSH**

A visit to the Spice Lodge Pan-Asian restaurant prompted me to find out who were its earlier occupants, in the expectation that some would have had connections with the Indian Empire, as so many houses of that period do. It turned out that I was not mistaken and that several interesting and important families had lived there (its original name was Montpellier House) and also in the two neighbouring houses, Langton House and Langton House (see map).



From the Cheltenham Old Town Survey, 1855-7, annotated

The occupants of **MONTPELLIER HOUSE** (dating from about 1838) included: **Lady Russell** (1844 to 1847), widow of a former Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir William Oldnall Russell.

Colonel John Wynch (1848 to 1853) of the Madras Artillery, together with his wife and four children, all but one born in the East Indies.

David James Staig Thorburn (1858 to 1865), who had served as a surgeon with the Honourable East India Company, and his India-born wife Louisa. Their son **Septimus Smet Thorburn** was during those years a day boy at Cheltenham College, before entering the Bengal Civil Service. He retired as Deputy Commissioner of the Punjab and wrote extensively about the sub-continent. His elder brother **David Arno Smet Thorburn** later served as a Surgeon-Major in the

Army Medical Department and was mentioned in despatches during the Afghan War of 1879-80.

Major-General Frederick Thomas Whinyates (1892 to 1896) one of a large family, all born in India, who made Cheltenham their base.

At **MONTPELLIER LAWN** the most noteworthy occupant was **Lieutenant-General Jackson Muspratt-Williams** (1876 to 1897), of the Madras Fusiliers. In India he distinguished himself in combat and engineering work, in road and railway projects and the building of a dam and a range of school and residential buildings. On retiring to Cheltenham he was chairman and president of the General Hospital and was one of the first churchwardens of St Stephen's church.



Advertisement from the Cheltenham Guide, 1935, when Langton House was a hotel

At **LANGTON HOUSE**, the neighbouring property, the occupants from 1844 to 1846 were the Reverend James Anthony Savage and his wife Margaret. She was the **sister of Sir James Brooke** ('Rajah Brooke') who was appointed by the Sultan of Brunei to rule over Sarawak. Like her brother and five siblings, she had been born in India. (Sir James visited the Savages in

1848, but they had moved to Pittville by then.)

From 1854 the house was occupied by **George Hougham Skelton** and his wife, four of his nine daughters, a grand-daughter and four servants. His father had been Governor of St Helena, and his mother had been born in the East Indies. His final post in the Indian Civil Service was as a Magistrate and Collector. He died in 1873 but his widow remained at Langton until probably 1883.

Eric Miller

Mick Kippin in Chelsea

We are pleased to report that Mick Kippin has settled very happily at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. He says that life is wonderful and he has yet to meet a Pensioner who doesn't say that going to live there was the best move he had ever made. The only thing he has to worry about is not having anything to worry about!

Here he is in his 'scarlets' in Green Park.



For those members who were unable to attend the AGM on 17th May, summary reports are printed below. Full minutes of the meeting will be circulated prior to next year's AGM. If you did not have a copy of the accounts and would like one posted to you, please telephone the Treasurer on 01242 231837, or else e-mail suebrown@waitrose.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 17TH MAY 2016

The Chairman welcomed the Mayor Cllr Chris Ryder, who had agreed to be President of the Society for her term of office and to chair the meeting.

Election of Officers and Committee:

The Chairman, David Scriven, said that he was standing down and so far no nominations for a new Chairman had been received. The Mayor, as Chair, said that the Committee would appoint an acting Chairman at its next meeting.

The following were elected:

Treasurer: Sue Brown **Secretary:** Chris Conoley

Committee: Jill Barlow, Kath Boothman, Alec Hamilton, Neela Mann, Sue Robbins, Sally Self.

Chairman's Report (*summarised*): David Scriven said the Society had had another good year, attracting plenty of interest and support both locally and from further afield. Membership had reached 400, a target he had set himself when he became Chairman, and he hoped it would continue to grow. Thirteen meetings had been held (two more than in previous years), four in the morning and nine in the evening. They had covered a great variety of topics and all had been well attended. He thanked the Programme Secretary David Johnson and the numerous people who had helped with the meetings. The Society had organised six summer outings: a one-day Arts and Crafts tour of the Cotswolds, taking in Rodmarton Manor and churches at Chalford and Selsley, two guided walks in Cheltenham and three guided walks in Tewkesbury. It had been actively involved in the Heritage Open Days weekend, the Cheltenham Civic Day in June and the Montpellier Fiesta and Quedgeley Show in July. Throughout the year the Society had also provided displays at the Local & Family History Library. Members of the Society had as usual been involved in projects aimed at making local history information more accessible to the public. In the ongoing VCH project they had assisted with research, the cataloguing and transcribing of material and fundraising to facilitate the publication of a volume on Cheltenham. In the 'KnowYourPlace' project they had helped to prepare digitised historical maps for use in online research, mapping community heritage across the West of England. A new book, *Cheltenham in the Great War*, written by CLHS member Neela Mann but based partly on research done by other members, had been published and launched by the Society in March 2016. The Society's website was now being managed by Dr Jan Broadway, and the Chairman thanked her for the work she

had already done on it. He expressed the Society's gratitude to Gwyneth Rattle, who had stepped down from the Committee, for her years of valuable service. He thanked Sally Self and Kath Boothman for their respective roles as Editors of the Journal and the Newsletter, and all others who worked to support the Society.

Presentation of the Peter Smith Award: The award was given to Joyce Cummings, who had joined the Society in 1997 and served 12 years on the Committee as Publicity & Advertising Officer and the contact for Local History enquiries, a task she still continued. Enquirers were always very complimentary about her helpfulness and the quality of her research, which helped to enhance the Society's reputation. Joyce had also contributed Journal articles, created displays, sold books and been a willing helper at all Society events over the years.

Treasurer's Report (summarised): Sue Brown said the Society's finances were sound. Although the constitution did not require it, an independent examination had been carried out as usual by Alison Milford, a Certified Accountant. There was an excess of expenditure over income of £1,212.48 in the general fund and an excess of income over expenditure of £450 in the Peter Smith Award fund, Judy Smith having generously donated a further £500. There was also the £200 Cheltenham Arts Council grant for 2015 which had not yet been spent. Income from subscriptions continued to increase in line with the growth in membership. There was a Gift Aid receipt of £654.95 and donations to the general fund totalling £119.80. Donations from sales, which included sales of books given to the Society and percentage sales from authors, had amounted to £280. Since *Cheltenham in the Great War* was published in March, income from sales had covered publication costs, though postal charges related to sales of the book had added considerably to the usual expenditure on postage. The Society's other publications continued to sell well. During the year the Society had donated £1,000 to the Victoria County History project; this was to be the first of three annual donations.

Any Other Business: The Secretary, Chris Conoley, said the Society wished to express its deep gratitude to David Scriven. After serving on the Committee since 2009 he had taken over as Chairman at a critical time, when Sue Newton became terminally ill. Since then he had been unstinting in the time and effort he had given, not only supporting and encouraging others but involved 'hands-on' in the Society's projects. He was well liked and appreciated and would be much missed.

Address by the Mayor, Councillor Chris Ryder (summarised): Cllr Ryder said she was passionate about the architecture of Cheltenham; in her work as a florist she had often 'dressed' local buildings. We were all lucky to live in such a lovely area, which was also very much appreciated by visitors, including many from abroad. She was aware that some members were involved in projects such as the restoration of Cheltenham's war memorial, and she thanked them for that. She promised to come to the Local History Afternoon in August if she were free that day. Finally, she wished the Society all the best for the 2106-17 season.

SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

David and Margaret Jones

John Beard

Rick and Sue Plummer

Michael Davies

Janette Broome

John Barrett

New members' interests:

David Jones—Prestbury Garden Village; Prestbury War Memorial; Prestbury's thatched heritage; Sir Thomas Phillipps and the Thirlestaine House collection; the academic studies of Paul Meyer and Lucy Toulmin-Smith

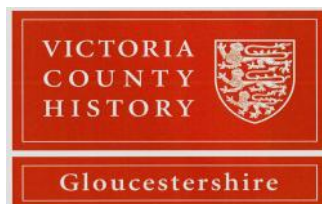
Janette Broome—social history, architecture, gardens, churches

VCH News

It has been a busy few months, especially for Alex Craven as he completes the writing-up of his latest draft Cheltenham sections covering the period from the discovery of the waters and on up to 1852. We look forward to having Alex with us for at least another year. It is good to report that we've reached the period when volunteer contributions are coming into their own, which helps spread the load for Alex. Our County Editor, John Chandler, has recently been focusing hard on finishing VCH Glos Volume 12, which will be printed this summer and launched in mid-September. His attention is now on pulling together the various draft sections already completed for the medieval and early modern centuries, and I hope the result of this will be available for comment on the VCH website before too long. We still hope to have enough material for an interim paperback production on 'Cheltenham before the Spa' though this isn't now likely to happen before 2017. The Latin Group meantime has been picking up a number of little gap-filling tasks, including some estate accounts for Leckhampton lands held by the Berkeley family. So we are now well-informed on the price of nails and axle-grease in the early 1300s.

As a spin-off from the Skillicorne research in support of the 300th anniversary of the Cheltenham waters, some more facts have come to light about the early days of the spa (eg the existence by 1740 of a coffee room at the well), and I expect some of this new information will be woven into the VCH account.

On the fund-raising front, we have again greatly enjoyed Sally's Teas & Talks: excellent talks from John Chandler and Anne Strathie, and many thanks to Sally and Russ for providing the venue, the refreshments, and the good weather which has allowed us to admire their garden as well. We still need to boost funds for the continuing work on Cheltenham's history, and with the Committee's blessing I



am planning to make a fresh appeal to CLHS members this autumn, asking you to consider supporting us by signing up for a regular donation.

James Hodsdon

Society Volunteers

Society volunteers have been hard at work on several projects. Two more fundraising events to support VCH Cheltenham's Big Red Book have been held this spring. John Chandler gave a talk called 'Mangle-Wurzle Brandy', concluding with a tale of ingenuity, greed and animosity set in Minety, which in Victorian times was part of Gloucestershire. This was followed three weeks later by Anne Strathie, who made 'Connections' between those who served with Captain Scott on the *Terra Nova* exhibition and Cheltenham and the local villages. Thanks to excellent support from members, we have now passed the £2000 mark.

The volunteers working at Gloucestershire Archives have now completed the cataloguing of 216 boxes, with more coming on-line every week. If anyone has a spare moment, please go on to the Archives webpage, navigate to the digital catalogue, CALM, type in D2025, then watch the impressive list of documents appear! Also another band of volunteers, often working under difficult conditions, has continued to note events from a range of Cheltenham newspapers, 1824 to the 1850s. All this work is appreciated on three fronts – VCH editors, Gloucestershire Archives and Cheltenham Family and Local Studies Library. My very best thanks to all who are helping in so many ways.

Sally Self

Joyce says thank you!

Joyce Cummings, this year's winner of the Peter Smith Award, has written to thank the Committee for nominating her and to say it took her by surprise. The same evening, she added, she met a grateful member whose query she had recently answered—which only goes to show how much she deserved the award!



BGAS library

The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society library in the University of Gloucestershire's Francis Close Hall will be open for Heritage Open Days from 10 until 12 on Friday 9th September. Some of the rare books will be on display and knowledgeable members of the society on hand to answer questions. Do not be put off by the society's name – it is as much interested in history as archaeology. If you have ever wanted to browse a selection of early Cheltenham guide books or books about Tewkesbury, Cirencester and other places in Gloucestershire, or if you have wondered about the difference between close rolls and patent rolls, liberate rolls and fine rolls but been too afraid to ask, now is your chance. For more information about the library go to www.bgas.org.uk

Jill Barlow

OBITUARY

AMINA CHATWIN, 1927-2016

Anyone who attended the memorial service for Amina Chatwin at Christ Church on 20th April without having known her well in her lifetime will have been astonished and impressed to learn of the range of her achievements.

Born in Wellington Street, an only child, she lived in Cheltenham all her life apart from two years spent in Paris. Her mother ran a dance school, and Amina herself was a prize-winning dancer in her youth. In the 1950s she became involved with puppetry through her neighbour Olive Blackham, who ran a travelling



Amina and her puppets

marionette theatre called The Roel Puppets. From 1957 to 1959 Amina served as cook-housekeeper to the British Military Attaché in Paris. After that for 30 years she worked in the fashion trade, running her own shop in Montpellier. Although she semi-retired in 1987, she continued to run a showroom and mail order dress business for a further five years.

Amina was for many years an active member of numerous societies, and lectured and contributed articles to many publications, not least the CLHS Journal. Her topics included evocative memories of her childhood in Cheltenham during World War II. Her involvement with the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology, of which she was a

committee member, Chairman and finally President, was an extension of her long-standing interest in metal-working. As a member of the British Artist Blacksmiths Association she was not only a practitioner—and she did wood-carving too—but also a researcher and the author of an authoritative book on modern British blacksmiths. Unsurprisingly she was also very interested in Cheltenham's ornamental ironwork. Her book on the subject, published in 1975 and reprinted in 1984, is still used as a source of reference today. She gave talks on the subject and led guided walks around the town until just a few years ago when her health began to fail.

Amina served on the Society's committee in the early 1990s and regularly attended meetings and social events until near the end of her life. In 2007 CLHS, with the support of other local societies, nominated her for an Arts Council Award for her services to local history. This recognition was long overdue. Amina was delighted, and thoroughly enjoyed the evening presentation ceremony at the Everyman Theatre. She will be missed and long remembered.



At the Arts Council Award ceremony in 2007

The Deerhurst Lecture 2016



‘The Road to Deerhurst: 1016 in English and Norse Sources’

Dr Matthew Townend

Saturday 24th September 2016 at 7.30 pm in St Mary's Church, Deerhurst

The Lecture will commemorate the millennium of the peace treaty made at Deerhurst between King Edmund Ironside and King Cnut in 1016.

Admission on the door from 7 pm.

Tickets (to include a glass of wine and cheese) £5.00 Students £3.00

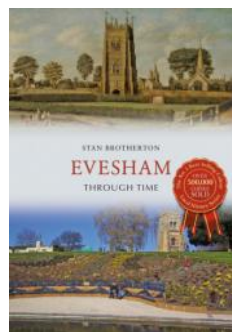
NEW PUBLICATION

Evesham Through Time

by Stan Brotherton

Evesham is a picturesque market town that sits within a loop of the River Avon roughly halfway between Stratford and Tewkesbury. The name of the town (from Eof's home) evokes the Legend of Evesham, which tells how a swineherd saw a vision of the Virgin Mary. Evesham Abbey, founded by St Ecgbwine in the early 8th century, grew into one of the most important abbeys in England. The iconic bell tower, completed about 1532, stands as an imposing reminder of the dissolution of the monasteries.

Evesham grew from a small Anglo-Saxon settlement, centred on the abbey, into a thriving market town serving the surrounding Vale of Evesham. The temperate climate of the vale, nestling between Bredon Hill and the Cotswold Edge, allowed it to develop into an important centre for horticulture. Indeed, Evesham is world famous for market gardening, especially the growing of asparagus.



Published in paperback in April 2016 by Amberley Publishing, price £14.99.



BOOKS FOR SALE



DONATED BOOKS, MANY IN 'AS NEW' CONDITION

The New Club—Neil Parrack (new copies) £8.50

A Grand City: Bristol in 18th and 19th Centuries –Ed M J Crossley Evans, now £6 (2 copies)

History of Cirencester—Beecham , now £23

Miniatures— Dudley Heath (1905) £20

Mee—The King's England series, and Pevsner County series: Various counties and prices, please contact me for details.

BGAS RECORD SERIES (see November 2014 Newsletter for titles).

Various prices between £5 and £20 and 'bundles' as below.

Bigland's Gloucestershire Collections, Vols 2,3,5,8; 4 volumes for £30.

Gloucester Apprenticeship Records, Vol 14, £10, Vol 25, £25, or both for £30

Gloucestershire Feet of Fines, Vol 16, £5, Vol 20, £5, Vol 27, £30 or all for £35

Berkeley Muniments, Vol 17, £5, Vol 18, £20, or both for £22

OTHER TITLES

Back again Mr Begbie—Revd Begbie, OBE (ex Cheltenham College Day Boy) - £20 (new condition)

Very many thanks to everyone who has donated books to CLHS this year. It's amazing how the proceeds from the book sales mount up to help the Society's funds.

From the September meeting onwards, we will once again have many interesting books for your perusal, available for purchase on the book stall as usual.

There will also be books for sale at the Society's Local History Afternoon at St Andrew's Church on Saturday, August 13th.

Heather Atkinson

The Gloucestershire Buildings Recording Group
is pleased to announce our
Mini Conference on Saturday 30th July 2016
THE OLD BUILDINGS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

There will be three lectures:

10.00-11.00 am Living in peasant houses in Gloucestershire, 1200-1550
by Professor Christopher Dyer

11.30-12.30 pm The use of Cotswold stone in the buildings of Gloucestershire
by Nigel Patterson

1.00-2.00 pm The tree-ring dated buildings of Gloucestershire
by Dr Andy Moir

VENUE: Porch House, Castle Street, Thornbury, South Glos, BS35 1HA

COSTS: Free to GBRG members, £2 if booked in advance, £3 on the door
(doors open at 9.30 am)

Please see the GBRG website <http://www.buildingarchaeology.org/>
for further details

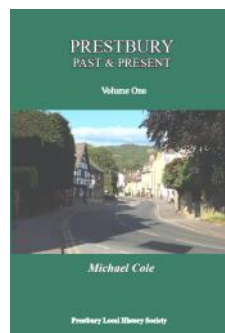
NEW PUBLICATION

PRESTBURY PAST AND PRESENT

by Michael Cole

Everyone can see that Prestbury has a long history and an attractive legacy of old buildings. But there is, as yet, no published history giving any deep insights into this heritage. *Prestbury Past & Present* is an attempt to remedy this, relating the legacy of past centuries to the village as it exists at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In this first volume Michael Cole opens up several neglected areas. Published by Prestbury Local History Society, of which the author was co-founder and chairman, this is intended to be the first of several publications which together will make a substantial body of research and reference. This volume has four main sections: an introduction describing the parish in general terms; a detailed look at 'Lost Buildings' and their forgotten heritage; a statistical analysis of Victorian Prestbury, entitled 'Masters, Servants & Tradesmen'; and a review of numerous prehistoric finds within the parish. It has 150 pages and 33 illustrations.



Published by Prestbury LHS in May 2016.

Available from Prestbury Post Office and the Library, price £10.

FEATURE

PAST CRIMES AND MISDEMEANOURS IN MINSTERWORTH

In the years I have been writing about the history of Minsterworth I have only had occasion to investigate two serious crimes committed in the area: one was a case of manslaughter in the 16th century and the other a case of piracy on the river in the 15th century. Otherwise, from what I have found in the records, the people of Minsterworth seem on the whole to have been a peaceable lot, and what transgressions they have perpetrated have been quite mild. Records from the Gloucester Quarter Session courts in the 18th and 19th centuries for example suggest that the main misdemeanour in Minsterworth was committed by traders using defective weights. For instance, in September 1800 William Smith, blacksmith, Richard Cole, grocer, William Phelps, grocer, Margaret Harper, flour retailer and Sarah Pool, salt retailer were all found guilty of this minor offence for which the men were each fined £1 and the women five shillings. In 1808 John Syms, a servant formerly of Minsterworth, was fined £20 for not appearing to take the oath to serve in the militia or providing a substitute (England of course being at war with France at that time).

As to offences of an indelicate or immoral nature, very little is known but there is a snippet from 1540 which indicates that one particular parishioner, guilty of an unexplained ‘immoral offence’, was made to walk around the churchyard in his night shirt with a lighted candle – and this was in the February of that year! [He had probably been found guilty of fornication.]

Also spare a thought for the plight that ladies of England (and of Minsterworth), overly keen to make themselves attractive to men, narrowly avoided in 1670 when an Act of Parliament was proposed outlawing the use of cosmetics and other artificialities by women. The key text of this so-called ‘Marriage Act’ read as follows:

‘Be it resolved that all women of whatever age, rank, profession or degree, whether virgin maids or widows, that shall, after the passing of this Act, impose upon or betray into matrimony any of His Majestie’s male subjects, by scents, paints, cosmetics, washes, artificial teeth, false hair, Spanish wool [a type of rouge, made by extracting the colour from wool fabric dyed with cochineal], iron stays, hoops, high-heeled shoes or bolstered hips, shall incur the penalty of the laws now in force against witchcraft, sorcery and such-like misdemeanours and that the marriage, upon conviction, shall stand null and void.’

Sources vary as to the outcome of this proposed legislation. One I have seen says that Parliament did not make the Bill part of the law of the land. Another that, as far as is known, this Act is still on the statute book (look out ladies!). The former outcome seems to have been what actually happened, however, since a second attempt to introduce it was made in 1770 and that was also unsuccessful (relax ladies!).

Terry Moore-Scott

Suggestion for Research

CLHS member Dr Alan Munden, who lives in Newcastle upon Tyne, writes:

May I encourage someone to do some research into two Cheltenham organ builders? One was **William Evans** (who kept a music shop in Cheltenham) and the other the very well-known **Henry Willis** (1821-1901) who began his organ building career under Evans. Willis played the violin in the Gloucester Music Festival in 1847. In the same year he restored the organ at Gloucester cathedral. He was a friend of the equally well-known Samuel Sebastian Wesley. I don't know when Willis left Cheltenham, but clearly his career began in the town. Willis—usually known as 'Father Willis' (because he was the eldest member of a generation of organ builders)—was famous all over the world for his organs. A church in Gateshead is proud of its Father Willis organ. No-one on the 'Members' Interests' list seems to claim organ builders as one of their interests, but I hope there may be someone who would consider doing some research into this. The Cheltenham connection is quite significant.



Henry Willis

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CAN YOU HELP?

Francis Deeks

An enquirer born in Cheltenham in 1942 and educated at the Grammar School but now living in South Australia recalls the elaborate mobile displays he saw in the toy department of Cavendish House when he was a boy. These were built by Francis T Deeks, who lived in Arle Road near the corner with Alstone Croft where he himself lived. He was a remarkable craftsman—see this website for a video of his work:

www.britishpathe.com/video/working-models/query/Francis

Does anyone share these memories, or know any more about Deeks?

Thomas England and Spa Buildings

Thomas England was a wealthy corn factor who sold his mansion in Headingly, Leeds in 1866 and settled with his wife Mary in Spa Buildings, Cheltenham. He died there in 1877 and she returned to Yorkshire. An enquirer asks whether anything is known about him here, and would also appreciate any information relating to Spa Buildings.

Mystery sculpture

An enquirer says she believes that the polychrome mahogany bust pictured here, now in her possession, came from a bric-a-brac shop called The Treasure Chest owned by her late husband's grandmother in or near Townsend Street, Cheltenham, in the 1950s. There is nothing to show who carved it or whom it represents. Does anyone remember seeing it? Can anyone shed any light on it?



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

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward articles for inclusion in the November 2016 issue by
Monday 10th October 2016
to the Editor : Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA
Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: kbooth@dircon.co.uk