



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 90

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

March 2018



EDITORIAL

A U-turn at the Pump Room! It was recently announced in the *Echo* and on the Pump Room's website that would-be visitors would in future have to telephone ahead to arrange admittance. The Council, which owns the building, and the Cheltenham Trust, which manages it, had apparently decided that its role as a hire venue was to be paramount. The Pump Room has of course long been hired out for events, but it was still possible to make an impromptu visit, and many of us will have done so, perhaps as a way of entertaining house-guests. The Pump Room is a Cheltenham show-piece and we like to show it off. The *Echo* noted that this decision had 'sparked anger in the town's residents'. Well, for once public opinion seems to have carried some weight. The decision has now been reversed and the Pump Room is again open to visitors from Wednesday to Sunday between 10 am and 4 pm. Hurray!

Kath Boothman

For CONTENTS please see page 23.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 22nd May in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham at 7.30 pm prompt. (See **Agenda enclosed with this Newsletter—please bring this with you to the meeting. Copies of the minutes of last year's AGM will be available on the door.**) The Mayor, as President of the Society, will chair the meeting and give a short address.

Election of Officers and Committee 2018-9

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2017 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they so wish. Nominations are invited for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and for committee members. If you would like to nominate someone or be nominated yourself, either for one of these posts or as a committee member, please contact the Secretary Chris Conoley (email chris.conoley@btopenworld.com) or phone 01452 700635 for a nomination form.

After the AGM business is concluded **Alan Pilbeam** will give a talk entitled **A Week's Holiday in the Forest of Dean in 1880.**

SUMMER VISITS

You are invited to take part in the following visits with the Society. **IN ALL CASES PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR PAYMENT AND A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. There will be a priority booking period for members only until 13th April and, as places are limited on these visits, you are advised to book early to be sure of getting a place.** If you wish to bring a non-member as a guest, please indicate this on the form when booking your own place. If there is any availability after 13th April, places will be offered to non-members in order of application. **If you find that you cannot attend a visit for which you have booked, please inform Sue Brown (01242 231837) or another committee member of your cancellation, so that someone else may have the opportunity to take your place.** If you don't let us know that you cannot attend, we shall expect you to pay the cost.

Wednesday 13th June at 6.00 pm and Wednesday 20th June at 6.00 pm

Walk around Cheltenham Southtown—200 years of local trading history

The southward expansion of Cheltenham in the last decades of the Georgian era witnessed the building of many fine new villas and mansions, together with the emergence of a lively trading, artisan and residential community. Here were the butchers, bakers, school teachers, stone-masons, laundresses, coachmen and straw-bonnet makers who provided services for the wealthy. Then known as South Town, the area was greatly influenced by the construction of the horse-drawn

tramroad from Leckhampton to Gloucester docks in 1810 and by the creation of the Bath Road in 1813. Straddling the old parish boundary between Cheltenham and Leckhampton, the area remains highly diverse today.

This 90 minute circular walk, led by Stuart Manton, begins and ends at the Norwood Arms, following a route along Bath Road to the Suffolks and then back to the start via Great Norwood Street. Along the way we will hear about some of the personalities and events that have shaped this vibrant area in the last 200 years, stopping to look at the shops, pubs and other notable buildings.

Wednesday 11th July at 6.00 pm and Wednesday 18th July at 6.00 pm

Lady Writers of Cheltenham Walk

The walk, led by CLHS member David Elder, also well-known as the author of 'Literary Cheltenham' and 'Cheltenham Heritage Walks', starts and finishes at the Neptune Fountain, The Promenade and lasts about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 mins. It will visit some of the sites associated with famous lady writers who have visited or lived in the town. These include, among others, Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lady Margaret Sackville and U.A. Fanthorpe.

Wednesday 15th August leaving at 9.30 am from Royal Well, returning 4.45 pm.

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL ARCHIVES, TUDOR HOUSE AND THE COMMANDERY MUSEUM

Our day visit to Worcester will include three of the most significant historical buildings in the city, which will be visited in turn in small groups so that they can be comfortably enjoyed.

The Tudor House is situated on one of the most historic streets in Worcester. This 16th century timber framed building brings a long vanished Worcester back to life. Inside the rooms are not crowded with furniture but open for you to see. A few choice exhibits (most of which you can touch as well as look at) are complemented by fascinating interpretations of the history of the city.



The Cathedral Library contains a collection of medieval manuscripts from Anglo-Saxon times onwards. It also houses books collected from the 16th century to the present day together with pictures, prints, artefacts and archives. The historic Music Library is also housed there.

The Commandery is a complex half-timbered Tudor house on the site of an 11th century hospital and an earlier Saxon chapel. The hospital was one of the last monastic foundations to be dissolved by Henry VIII. The Commandery is most renowned for its role in the Civil War, when it was used by Charles II as his headquarters before the Battle of Worcester in 1651.



EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2018-9

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

Tuesday 18th September:

Mark Davies—The First English Aeronauts: some momentous early air balloon flights from Cheltenham

Tuesday 16th October:

David Smith—The Fifth Earl of Berkeley and Mary Cole (1784-1811): a Regency Scandal

Tuesday 20th November:

Sue Rowbotham—Maskelyne and Cooke, Cheltenham's Men of Mystery

Tuesday 11th December:

Sue Jones—The Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham

Tuesday 15th January 2019:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 19th February 2019:

Paul Barnett—Disaster Waiting: the Severn & Wye Railway Bridge Disaster

Tuesday 19th March 2019:

Michael Cole—An Excursion to Southam, 1879

Tuesday 16th April 2019:

Tony Comer—The History of GCHQ

Tuesday 21st May 2019: AGM followed by

Fiona Mead—Letters and photos from St Helena: A Glosters officer describes guarding Boer POWs

MORNING LECTURES 2018-9

Morning lectures will take place in 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 (01452 700635) if you wish to reserve a space.

Tuesday 2nd October:

Edward Gillespie—A Brief History of Cheltenham told through its Festivals

Tuesday 5th March 2019:

John Simpson—Friends of Pittville

Tuesday 2nd April 2019:

John Butterworth—History of the Stagecoach in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire

Reminder...

MORNING LECTURE

*Tuesday 3rd April, 10.00 am for 10.30 am
at St Luke's Hall, Cheltenham*

Carrie Howse—Rural District Nursing in Gloucestershire 1880-1925

*The 2018 CLHS Journal will be available for
collection at this meeting*

FOR YOUR DIARY

Gotherington Local History Society

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

Tuesday 27th March:

Chris Povey—The Evesham Bell Foundry

Tuesday 22nd May:

John Putley— ‘Git Orff Moi Land’

Historical Association

Meetings normally begin at 7.30 pm and visitors pay £3. Cheltenham meetings take place in the Teaching Block, University of Gloucestershire Park Campus, and Gloucester meetings at the Oxstalls Campus.

Monday 16th April in Cheltenham:

Dr Erin Peters (University of Gloucestershire) - Royalist Print Culture and Civil War Memories after the Restoration

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 23rd April:

Norman Baker—Paying the Parson

Monday 21st May:

Val Porter—Prestbury’s Stables and Jockeys

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

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

Wednesday 21st March :

Sarah Parker—The Life and Legacy of Dr Edward Jenner (1749-1823)

Wednesday 18th April:

Dr Sue Jones—Leckhampton Heroines of Women’s Suffrage



Swindon Village Society

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm unless stated otherwise. Guests are charged £1. (Single membership is £5, family membership £10.)

Saturday 14th April, starting from the Village Hall car park at 9.30 am:

Annual bird and nature walk

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 March:

Virginia Adsett—Children’s Hour (the children’s radio programme)

Tuesday 24th April:

Don Sherwell—The History of St Mary’s Parish Church

Tuesday 22nd May:

Nick Humphries—Recent Archaeological Discoveries at Chedworth Roman Villa

Holst Birthplace Museum

holstmuseum.org.uk

Saturday 24th March at Christ Church Harwood Hall, 7.30 pm:

Sonia Solicari, Director of the Geffrye Museum of the Home—Busts, Shells, Feathers....and the Piano: the Victorian Parlour

See the museum’s website, www.geffryemuseum.org.uk, for a taste of the rich period interiors on which Sonia is a leading authority.

Exhibition

In the Paper Store at The Wilson from 9th June 2018 to 31st March 2019:

‘At Last Fighting is Over’: The return of Cheltenham’s official war picture

See article on opposite page.

NEW PUBLICATION—special offer**CHELTENHAM BEFORE THE SPA**

by Beth Hartland and Alex Craven

The familiar image of Cheltenham as a large and prosperous former spa town, world-famous because of its Georgian and Regency architecture, its festivals and educational establishments, masks an earlier history. Although numerous descriptions of the town have been published, most say little about the centuries before the 1740s, when it began to develop into a fashionable

resort. This is the fullest account ever attempted to chronicle those centuries, from the late Saxon period until the 18th century.

To take advantage of the pre-publication 25% Discount Offer, contact any Committee member or email your interest to either James Hodsdon jj49@btinternet.com or Sally Self journal.clhs@btinternet.com

Cheltenham's Forgotten War Memorial Painting

Cheltenham
Remembers.

CLHS's contribution to the 'Cheltenham Remembers' Project

Cheltenham Borough Council, with a grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, will be managing a year-long project to commemorate the end of the First World War, entitled *Cheltenham Remembers*, which began with the restoration of the War Memorial outside the Municipal Offices.

CLHS has contributed to an exhibition at The Wilson's Paper Store which is to be called 'At Last Fighting is Over', from 9th June 2018 to 31st March 2019. Neela Mann, author of 'Cheltenham in the Great War' and member of CLHS, has been instrumental in facilitating the return to Cheltenham of the picture described as 'Cheltenham's Forgotten War Memorial Painting' and in researching and displaying material related to the painting and the Cheltenham officers portrayed.



A relieved platoon of the 1st/5th Gloucesters, marching in from the trenches past headquarters at Hébuterne, 1916 by Fred Roe, R.A.

Image by permission of the Curator of Anne S K Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, R.I., USA

This painting by Fred Roe, RA, entitled *A Relieved Platoon of the 1st/5th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment*, was originally commissioned by Cheltenham Borough Council as a war memorial in 1920. 'E' and 'F' company of this Territorial battalion were the first soldiers to go to war from here the day after war was declared, led out of the Drill Hall, North Street by Captain Noel Huxley Waller, who is also in the painting. In particular, the painting is a memorial to Lieut Cyril Winterbotham, who died at the Somme on 27th August 1916. His brother Percy, a sitting Cheltenham Councillor when he enlisted, is in the painting too, as is Company Sgt-Major William Tibbles who received the MC for leading the men when all officers, including Cyril Winterbotham, had been killed in action.

Also on view at The Wilson with the picture will be rarely seen items from the collections, as well as items on loan from The Cheltenham Ladies' College and The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum.

There will be a special preview event (admission free) for members of the CLHS from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm on Thursday 7th June, when author Neela Mann will give a talk.

LOCAL NEWS

National Railway Society founded in Cheltenham 90 years ago

January 1st 1928 saw the founding of a railway interest society in Cheltenham by two young men, Aubrey Broad and Leslie Lapper, members of a local group that had first met in a garden shed. The new society's name was The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, because it was initially hoped that there would be two membership sections.

It soon became apparent that the RCTS was not just for Gloucestershire people, as others from across the country joined. A magazine was soon published and this in turn became *The Railway Observer*, which is still issued every month. By 1930 the RCTS became London-based and attracted a growing membership as it highlighted changes to the locomotive stock of the 'Big Four' railway companies of that time.

Indoor meetings began in larger population centres along with visits to engine sheds and works such as Swindon. In 1938 the RCTS chartered a special train to take members up to Kings Cross station, hauled by vintage Great Northern Railway No 1. During the Second World War the society continued to publish its magazine, albeit in a much-reduced format. Meanwhile a number of RCTS members serving in Egypt managed to meet to keep up their interest.

After the war the society continued to grow. In the following 20 years recording engine numbers became a popular hobby for schoolboys, many of whom as young adults joined the RCTS. A group of Cheltenham members decided to hold meetings locally, the first being held at the former Railway Hotel near St James's station in October 1963. Within a year local membership had so much increased that the society formed its own Cheltenham Branch.

In March 1968 the society held its 40th anniversary celebrations in Cheltenham, based at the Queen's Hotel, with the original founders Aubrey Broad and Leslie Lapper as the principal guests. This was the last time both gentlemen were present as Aubrey Broad sadly died the following year. By then the society had well over 4000 members, though since then that number has halved. In 2017 the society became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and (to highlight gender equality) the Management Committee now has its first lady member.

This year sees the 90th anniversary of the RCTS, and meetings are still being held here at the Victory Club on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. To commemorate its founders, on April 12th the Cheltenham Branch is having a special plaque unveiled at Cheltenham Spa station, generously funded by GWR Charities. Members of both founders' families will be present at the unveiling.

Richard Neale

Cheltenham Joint Branch Secretary

REVIEWS

At our meeting on November 21st **Steven Blake** asked the question **Who was John the Muffin Man?** and proceeded to answer it by showing that the identity of this early 19th century local character was not such a simple matter as we might have thought. There are six undated sketches of him, all showing him as a dwarf with a white apron, a top hat and a cloth-covered basket over his arm. One names him as John Millbank, born in Colchester; others note that he was 3ft or 3ft 6ins tall. He appears in a print of about 1840 and in Rowe's 1845 *Guide*. The Wilson has a woodcut of him standing on a clock with a Latin inscription and a newspaper advert for an 1830 exhibition called Papyrotamia by the artist William



John in the High Street
Detail from the 1840 print

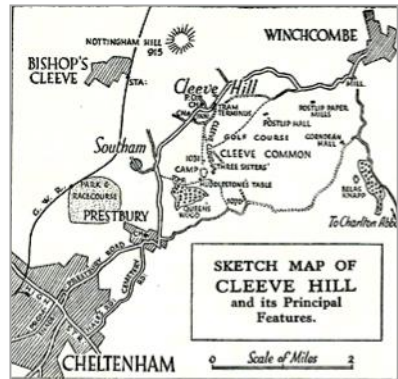
Hubard in which a picture of 'Little Johnny' was the main attraction. Oddly enough in March 1834 the *Chronicle* recorded his death, aged 85, though John Bowen, born in 1837, reminisced about seeing him in his childhood. It seems there must have been more than one 'John the Muffin Man', and this impression is confirmed by an article on muffins in the *Chronicle* later in 1834, which specifically mentions a John II, who could be seen coming out of a baker's shop with his basket and stick, followed by children.

What were the muffins that John sold? English muffins, as known from the 18th century onwards, were made with a white yeast dough and normally served toasted and buttered. They became popular with all classes. By 1850 there were over 100 muffin men in London, who traded by buying 24 muffins for 8d and selling them at ½d each. Steven next explored some later images from the Wilson, some of which were identified as other Cheltenham street traders such as 'Dickie Dumping', a bootblack, and Henry Clarke, a 'diminutive strolling gingerbread man', who, according to the *Examiner*, was well-known in the town for twenty years. Clearly others besides John became familiar local characters, but it is still puzzling that there are so many different and unattributed pictures of him in particular. Steven said he had not found a comparable collection in any other town and felt that many questions about him remained unanswered. He finished by reading a poem about a muffin man that had been sent to a local newspaper by one William Creed in 1935. It had first been published in 1846 accompanied by an engraving of a muffin man with a bell, presumably not 'our' John, who did not carry a bell. In response to a question at the end as to why muffin men were dwarves, Steven said such jobs were often done by disabled people. Someone else suggested that John might have earned money by posing to be sketched, which could explain the number of pictures of him. The audience had evidently been intrigued by Steven's story and left with plenty to think about.

On 20th February **David Aldred**, standing in at short notice for David Smith, who was unwell, gave the talk on **Cleeve Hill, the Cotswold Health Resort**, that he was originally to have given in December when it was cancelled owing to bad weather. He said his aim was to chart the development of what had been marginal land into a fashionable suburb. The Cheltenham to Winchcombe road was turnpiked in 1792, but as it was very steep for coaches in places a new road was built lower down to replace part of it, and where the new road cut through fields, pieces of land suitable for development were left. As the 1841 census shows, the existing inhabitants of the area were working people such as quarrymen and hauliers, but the new houses that were then built were occupied by

wealthier people who did not earn their living from the hill. One house built in 1847 looked like a castle, and around 1850 Captain Burnet moved his racing stable up to Cleeve Hill. David contrasted maps of 1885 and 1924 to show how many houses had been built in that time. Some of these properties changed hands numerous times, so it was a shifting population. A change came in 1890 when an act was passed regulating the use of common land, and the Borough Council paid £50 a year for the people of Cheltenham to be allowed access to the hill for recreation. In 1891 a group of gentlemen founded an exclusive golf club up there, which prompted the Council to

start another club open to ordinary townspeople. In 1892 a group of well-wishers bought a disused quarry for £150 and built a convalescent home there for poor hospital patients, with separate sections for men and women. It was given over to convalescent soldiers in World War I, and today, much enlarged, it is the Malvern View Care Home. The affluent people who settled on the hill in the late 19th century wanted to make their new home into a community, and as early as 1870 the Revd Henry Taylor converted part of his house into a chapel where they could meet on Sundays. In 1901 the Free Church of England built a prefabricated church dubbed the ‘tin tabernacle’, which was soon in competition with a church in the Arts & Crafts style built at the instigation of the Bishop of Gloucester. Meanwhile there was much new building and speculation in land prompted by the advent of the tram line in 1901. Henry Swift, who lived at Malvern View, built one of several new boarding houses for visitors, and the builder Arthur Yiend built many houses in Post Office Lane and Besford Road. The hill soon became a popular tourist destination: David showed a photo of people in their Sunday best who had come up the hill by tram. Amenities available to them included the Geisha Tea House, where they could stay for the weekend, Mrs Hobley’s Cosy Corner Tea Lawn and the Cleeve Hill Café. People continued to move up to the hill, and houses are still being built there now, but the whole settlement on Cleeve Hill, thanks to its distinctive origin as a health resort, remains to this day very untypical of Cheltenham.



Map from a 1930s tourist guidebook

FEATURE

Outward Bound for New Zealand.... Or not...?

Robert Stokes, the Pittville architect, who left England in 1839 for New Zealand, was not the only local person looking southwards for a new life. While Stokes went out with his job assured – as a surveyor for the New Zealand Company – others responded to the Company’s offer of a free passage to ‘Mechanics, Gardeners and Agricultural Labourers’, of good character, married and not over 30, who would help establish the settlement that became Wellington. Adverts appeared in many papers in mid-June 1839 (though not apparently in any Cheltenham titles). One hopeful applicant was Philip Greenway, of 40 St James Street, Cheltenham, whose letter below survives in Company correspondence at Kew (CO 208/2). I’ve not found any other reference to the writer, but I felt his rather plaintive ‘chaser’ letter to the company’s overworked secretary, John Ward, was worth sharing.

Cheltenham, July 14/1839

Sir

I take the liberty of troubling you the second time with a few lines having received no answer from the letter I wrote to you a fortnigh ago as I thought the Zealand Land Company had not completed their shares might cause the delay and feeling anxious to emigrate to there or Australia is the cause of my making this application to you as you have offered a free passage to any person of good character either mechanic or agricultural, and for the management and understanding the art of agriculture I can produce a Character from farmers of considerable experience and also of my understanding in the diseases of horses and Cattle and for which you can apply yourself for that and for which you will get a satisfactory answer - the names I will give you in a future letter if you think proper to answer this. Be kind enough to give me an account of the climate and seasons, also the distance it is from here and how far from Australia and how life and property will be preserved as I think there ought to be some protection and what kind of shelter there will be provided as I can form an Idea how it will be in the establishment of a new colony and wether we shall be compell^d to pay our passage in Labour or bound to serve a certain time and in what length of time as an Answer will Much oblige me by the return of post as I see in the advertisement the first vessel is to sail on the first of August instant.

I am sir

Your Obedient Servant

Philip Greenway

The letter is endorsed ‘Answered 26 July’ – predictably, the reply doesn’t survive!

James Hodsdon

*LOCAL NEWS***Second Cheltenham Blue Plaque awarded to CLHS member's house.**

On Tuesday 12th December 2017 the house of Society members Derek and Rosemary Rowles at 11, Tivoli Road gained a second blue plaque. Unveiled by the Mayor of Cheltenham Councillor Klara Sudbury, it celebrates the life and work of Dame Sidney Browne, the first President of the Royal College of Nursing, who



The Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Klara Sudbury; Maxine Melling, Chairman of Cheltenham Civic Society; Dr Cecilia Akrisi Anim, President of the Royal College of Nursing; Derek Rowles, owner of 11 Tivoli Road

lived at the house after she retired in 1927 until her death in 1941.

The President of the Royal College of Nursing, Dr Cecilia Akrisi Anim, said that Dame Sidney was a nursing visionary and a pioneer who campaigned for a standardised nursing curriculum and a register of qualified nurses at a time when the profession was not recognised and women did not have the right to vote. She helped

to establish the Royal College of Nursing over 100 years ago, becoming the first President, and was also appointed matron-in-chief of the newly formed Queen Alexandra's Imperial Service.

The ceremony was organised by Cheltenham Civic Society and attended by members of the Royal College of Nursing (sponsors of the plaque) and of the University of Gloucestershire, which launched its first nursing courses in 2017. Three of the first students on the course braved the freezing temperature to pose for a photo without their coats. Afterwards a reception was held by the University at Fulwood House, The Park, where an exhibition of research material concerning Dame Sidney's life and work, made available by Derek Rowles, was displayed by University Archivist Louise Hughes.

Derek's article on Dame Sidney Browne appeared in CLHS Journal 19, 2003. The first Blue Plaque was sponsored by the New Theatre to commemorate the life and work of the actor Sir Ralph Richardson on reaching the age of 80 and awarded by the Cheltenham Civic Society in 1982. This event is recorded in CLHS Journal 20, 2004.



Dr Akrisi Anim with the three students

Derek Rowles and Jill Barlow

Photographs by Dr Susannah Rowles and Jill Barlow



Here’s something new!

The Society has a new Facebook page, and seeks followers. If you think that social media is not for you, and is rather high-tech for a History Society, please don’t stop reading now – we’d like to try to change your mind.

We hope that Facebook will help us in two ways – first, to increase our communication with members, in addition to, but not as a replacement for, the emails and Newsletter which we already circulate, and we hope that members might share their research interests and requests for local history information. Secondly, we would like to reach out to a wider audience on social media, with the hope of attracting new members to the Society. We are intending to advertise our meetings and other events, displays at the Local History Library, publications for sale and volunteer projects.

If you already have a Facebook account, then please follow us. If you don’t want to sign up to Facebook, you are still able to keep up to date with the Society’s page by opening it in your web browser, exactly the same as viewing any other web page. You won’t be sharing any personal information, and no-one will be able to contact you.



SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

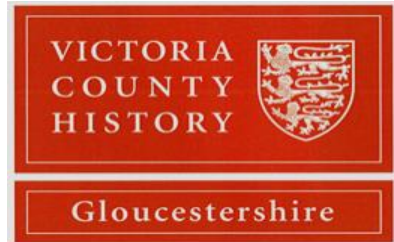
Sandra Heath Wilson
Tony and Janet Duffin

Freddie Gick
Henry Hopkins

Andrew North

VCH News

Our paperback entitled ‘Cheltenham before the Spa’ is making steady progress through the publication pipeline at the VCH Central Office in London – but we still don’t have a firm issue date, so I would ask all those who have registered advance interest in a copy (over 110 of you – hooray and thank you!) to be patient a little longer. In the meantime we have the evening talk by the book’s co-authors, Beth Hartland and Alex Craven, on the revised date of 20th March (was 17th April).



Having looked at the options for a re-run of John Chandler’s talk at the Literature Festival last October, we now plan to take a slot at the Gloucester History Festival in September. County Archivist Heather Forbes is very busy with this already, and has said she’d welcome a VCH contribution once again. Seeing how well the last one went, there is also talk (but so far no more than that) of another ‘History Tag’ session at the GHF. Those who have been to the Gloucester Festival previously will know what a variety of events is offered, at some historic venues – and not expensive either.

Meanwhile, back at this end of the Golden Valley: with Alex Craven having brought the draft history of Cheltenham as far as 1945 (we hope to get this on the web soon), we’ve been thinking how to continue the project down to the present day. Funding doesn’t currently allow us to engage anyone full-time to research modern Cheltenham, but we are very keen to maintain momentum if we can, and an interim solution has been found. Jan Broadway, known to many of you through the VCH volunteers and/or BGAS for her talks on horticulture, will be acting as part-time editor for post-1945 Cheltenham. We are hoping that as previously, there will be volunteer inputs to this – indeed, we already have Andrew North looking at the Local Government records for us, which is very welcome, given his long career experience in that field.

Speaking of volunteers, we are as ever indebted to the indefatigable Sally and her band, who throughout 2017 carried on powering through box after box of previously uncatalogued deeds at the Archives. This has made a staggering amount of new material easily available to researchers – and not just VCHers, but everyone who comes after us. A big thank you indeed!

James Hodsdon

Projects

Society members continued to work hard at several of our Research Projects. Between six and ten of us meet at Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, every Monday. The total of boxes now catalogued has passed the 350 mark: our latest challenge is Accession D3119, an uncatalogued section of the archives of Cheltenham Original Brewery in the late 19th/early 20th century. It only contains 25 boxes and we are already speaking to Kate Maisey about our next task.

Also at the Archives, we have been introduced to a new skill: ‘pinning’. No, not pinning each other against the walls, but learning how to attach information to specific sites on a map. The starting point is a website - kypwest.org.uk, the ‘kyp’ standing for ‘Know Your Place’, a website steered by professionals with contributions from organisations, such as Historic Environment, and from volunteers. It is possible to attach text, pictures and even sound. We are learning to ‘pin’ material on Cheltenham’s World War One soldiers. David Drinkwater has gathered information and pictures from the *Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire Graphic* on around 3,000 soldiers and sailors. He has recorded, for each individual, details of his unit, place of residence and whether he was injured, hospitalised or killed. The project has been interesting and frustrating in equal measure: interesting because it is a new skill that can be learnt quickly, and frustrating because some locations where the soldiers lived do not now exist and the software can prove temperamental at times.

Work on our other two projects, the Miles *The Story of Cheltenham and District* and the Mike Grindley archive, continues slowly. Of the 10 Miles scrapbooks, four and half have been catalogued and a small section of Mike’s archive has been scanned and preserved in digital form.

To explain how we are cataloguing the Miles books, a Power Point presentation has been created which will be available for you to view at the next Society meetings. Please do take time to look at what is involved. If you want to contribute, the Miles, Grindley and KYP Projects can all be carried out, after initial training, from an armchair in your home. For those of you who prefer to ‘get out more’, volunteering at the Archives teaches new skills and you get to meet enthusiastic and like-minded people – it’s not all work, we stop for coffee and lunch.

How about making a (belated) New Year’s resolution to VOLUNTEER?

To view the results of our work online, open www.kypwest.org.uk and go to Gloucestershire. Cheltenham’s maps (19th and 20th century) have only just started being ‘populated’, but for a project that has been well developed over several years, see <http://maps.bristol.gov.uk> To see catalogued accessions at the Archives go to <http://ww3.gloucestershire.gov.uk/CalmView/> and in Advanced Search type in any of these numbers: D2202, D2025, D3119 .

Sally Self

Welcome to our New Journal Editor

We are delighted that Julie Courtenay, a long-time member of the Society, has agreed to take over the editorship of the Journal from this autumn. She has served on the Committee, and many of you will also have met her at Gloucestershire Archives, where she has worked for more years than she cares to remember.

FEATURE

Alfred Miles (1853-1932) and ‘his life’s work’.

Now that we have completed the cataloguing of the first two of Alfred Miles’ ten scrapbooks, a picture of the man himself is beginning to emerge. It appears that he started at least some of the books in 1925, for in his own words, ‘My work, 1925, is to Write’, though he realised that at 77, ‘it might be late to begin my life’s work’. He seems to have continued the compilation until the early 1930s.

The paternal side of his family came from Bristol and his grandfather, Samuel, was in the 11th Hussars in the late 18th century. On the maternal side, Alfred claimed that they ‘had been coach builders for generations past’. Samuel Miles junior, born in Stroud, founded the coach-building firm that was to become Alfred Miles Limited of Cheltenham, in 1860. The exact date that Samuel Miles, with his son Alfred, arrived in Cheltenham is uncertain, but it is likely to have been in 1875/6.



Alfred Miles with seven of his ten volumes
Vol.10 p636 Pic 158

Alfred was apprenticed at the age of 10 and by 19 was ‘in a very large establishment of coach builders in Long Acre, London.’ He returned to Cheltenham three years later and ‘at once set to work to build up a business which soon had the trade of the County’. It is uncertain when he assumed full responsibility, but by 1881 he was listed as employing four men and four boys at 19 Albion Street. He claimed that

‘to be a coach builder was to be master of over 50 departments – designs, draughtstman [*sic*], timber, iron, steel, cloth, leather, paint and varnish ... for it was a trade commanding Art, Taste, Talent and Fashion’.

The business continued to expand, and he opened a showroom in Winchcombe Street at a cost of £3,500 in 1896/7; a contemporary trade card, advertising ‘Carriages Built for all Parts of the World’, shows the two-storey room packed with a wide variety of carriages. The invention of the car saw the demise of carriages; ‘coach building has departed in peace’ claimed Alfred and then listed 20 firms active during the preceding period. In the early 20th century the business turned to building, maintaining and hiring cars, and Felix, Alfred’s son, went on to manage the business until 1959, when they were bought out by Hawker-Siddeley.

But what of Alfred the person and his devotion to the history of Cheltenham? He was, he states, originally spurred into action by Canon Johnstone of All Saints’ church to write ‘an account of the worthies of the town’. He initially recorded 2,000 names and considered writing a single volume. Later, in 1928, when Dr Ritson of the Bible Society expressed the opinion, undoubtedly to Alfred’s annoyance, that ‘Cheltenham had no history as it was a new place’, he determined to record its development in eight to nine volumes. The earliest books do indeed

start with the Ice Age and slowly, often in agonising and repetitive detail, continue to the early 20th century.

The volumes are of a uniform size, 10 x 15¾ inches (26 x 38.5 cm), with thick boards, cloth-bound in green and cream and stamped in gold 'History of Cheltenham and District by Alfred Miles', with the volume number on the spine. Each volume has about 680 pages, and apart from Volumes 8 and 10 which are partly empty, they are packed with handwritten, printed and illustrated pages. Miles has hand-copied the relevant sections from Atkyns (1712), Rudder (1779), Bigland (1786-94) and other antiquarians, and, often with scant regard for other historians' work, cut up and glued in the printed pages from Goding, Ruff and other guides and treatises. He also makes use of articles from the *Daily Mail* and the *London Illustrated News*, indeed any information that he considered relevant – we have so far found 55 sources and we are only at the start of Volume Three!

The scrapbooks appear to have been compiled haphazardly. The right-hand pages were compiled initially and illustrations, to the left, added later. Accurately copying from other people's work is never easy and he is inclined to make copying or spelling errors. That Miles was devoted to the town's history over many years is shown by attendance at local lectures: the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club and Literary and Philosophical Institute often feature. He was also in correspondence with other antiquarians, and acquired any illustration that might prove relevant.

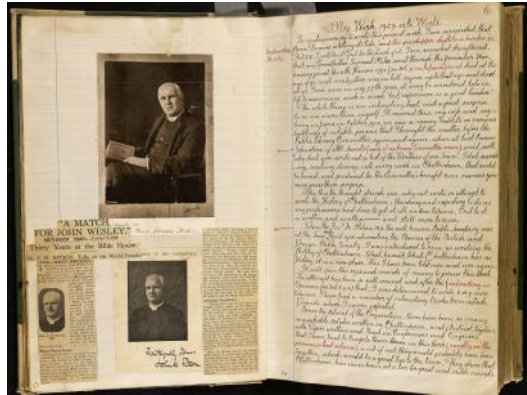
At some point Alfred evidently felt that he was coming to the end of an eventful and active life, for on the last page of Volume One his 'Epitaph' appears. As it sums up his work in Volume One, it is quoted in full:

'My Epitaph

There are over 320 handwritten pages, 320 pictures and 320 pages of printed matter in this volume. All praise to my Creator who has given me health and strength and has not allowed my hand to forget its cunning or my brain to cease its function. I have dived into the Centuries that are passed with pleasure and it has been my delight to do this work. I trust that the noble minds that in the future will look into these books will have as much happiness to dive into them as I have in writing them. A. M.'

On behalf of all those busily cataloguing his ten volumes, may I say that it is rewarding to think that Miles has granted us 'noble minds'!

Sally Self



A typical scrapbook page

Vol.2 p13-14 Pic 531

*FEATURE***Down Memory Lane**

I thought it might be interesting to look back 30 years and see what the Society was doing and planning at about this time in 1988. The Spring issue of the Newsletter that year was only number 12—the present one is number 90—and it consists of four typed A4 sheets stapled together, with a subscription form and a booking form for the summer outings attached to the back.

Aylwin Sampson has recently taken over from Steven Blake as Chairman, and membership currently stands at 94. The annual subscription is £3.50, or £5.50 for a couple. ‘Let us now seek to increase our membership,’ Aylwin says in his opening remarks ‘for there is much to be done in the coming year.’

There seems to be plenty to look forward to in the summer ahead. After the AGM, which is to be held on April 12th, the next event will be on May 3rd, a walk on Cleeve Hill led by David Aldred. ‘Members will be able to see for themselves the



Kedleston Hall, the Robert Adam house in Derbyshire visited by the Society in 1988

areas which Mr Aldred covered in his interesting talk last October’. (David has talked to us just recently about Cleeve Hill—see p10—but he obviously knew it very well even then.) Next, in June, there is a conducted tour of Cheltenham College, and on Saturday 2nd July the Local History Regional Conference at St Nicholas Hall, Swindon Lane, where the Society is hosting meetings and also offering tours of Pittville and Prestbury and a visit to the George III exhibition at the Pump Room.

Saturday 23rd July brings the first of the two full day coach outings which at that time, it seems, the Society normally organised in conjunction with the Cheltenham branch of the WEA. This one goes to Tutbury in Staffordshire (with a coffee stop at the Hilton Park Services on the M6) to visit the ruins of the castle and the Norman church, and then to Kedleston Hall near Derby, ‘a house recently acquired by the National Trust’. Admission to the house is £2.50.

On August 6th there is to be a coffee morning hosted by Steven and Maggie Blake, where cakes, plants and bric-a-brac will be on sale, then on Saturday 20th August the second outing, which goes to Chester with an optional visit to the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum in the afternoon. The party leaves Cheltenham at 8.30 am, so by the time they get home at 7.30 pm it will have been a long day. Each of these outings costs £5.50, cheaper in relation to the subscription than they are nowadays.

That brings the summer activities to an end, and in September the new programme of meetings (evenings only) begins with a talk on ‘Cheltenham Buildings’ by Mr Christopher Bishop. As Aylwin comments, ‘the programme for 1988-9 should maintain standards of scholarship, interest and authority’. I think we can say those standards have been kept up ever since.

Kath Boothman

*OBITUARIES***Reginald Nidd and Richard Lacock**

We have been saddened to hear of the recent deaths of two of our longest serving members, Reginald Nidd and Richard Lacock, who, with their wives, joined the Society in its early days in the 1980s.

Reg trained as an electrical engineer and moved to Cheltenham in 1953. In the 1990s he was the Society's auditor. His historical interests included transport, inns and the financial affairs of Pearson Thompson. Joan Nidd donated her collection of local history books to the Society and their sale raised over £200.

Richard was headteacher of Chosen Hill School from 1977-88. A keen rambler and Cotswold Warden, he was instrumental in establishing the 26 mile Cheltenham Circular footpath in 1995. He did a great deal of research on the history of the Quakers. Jean Lacock was the Society's chairman from 1995 to 2000.

Both Reg and Richard attended meetings regularly until prevented by illness.

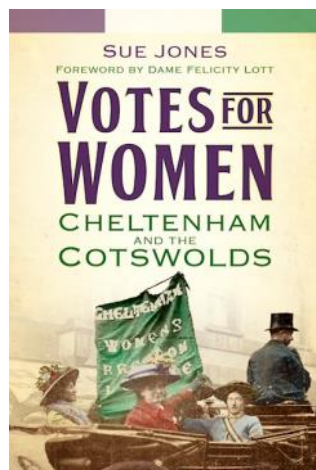
Jill Barlow

NEW PUBLICATION

Votes for Women Cheltenham and the Cotswolds

by Sue Jones

IN 1918 after years of campaigning many British women over the age of 30 gained a parliamentary vote. Cheltenham was the hub of activity in the Cotswolds, and before the First World War it had a number of vigorous societies and individuals. From being imprisoned for trying to approach the prime minister to refusing to be counted in the 1911 census, local women – and many men – from across the region fought a valiant and dignified campaign to make their voices heard. At a time when women had very little power inside or outside the home, this is the story of how they supported each other to demand a say in the affairs of the country. Richly illustrated and featuring previously undiscovered material, this is the first book to investigate the women's suffrage movement in the Cotswolds and to celebrate the many who supported the cause.



Published in paperback in February 2018 by The History Press, price £14.99 or **£12 direct from the author. Please email sejones47@hotmail.com for details.**

*FEATURE***Charity in 17th Century Minsterworth**

I often get a thrill when holding in my hand an original document, especially one hand-written, perhaps hundreds of years old, which can give a palpable feel for the people and the lives they led a long time ago.

Such was my experience when recently I did an inventory of old papers and records held by my local parish church here in Minsterworth and came across a register of baptisms, marriages and deaths between 1633 and 1738. All the entries in it had been meticulously hand-written by successive vicars (much as they are even today) and it represents a potentially valuable source of information for anyone trying to trace their local family histories. In addition, there was the occasional note inserted by the vicar of the day about special collections made for various distressed causes. Two of these, both in the early 18th century, were the consequence of nation-wide briefs issued by the King to every parish in the land to raise funds for the relief of Protestants being persecuted by Catholic authorities abroad. One, in 1703, was for the relief of ‘the poor Protestants of the Principality of Orange’ and the other (in 1716) for ‘distressed Protestants of Great Poland and Polish Russia’.

But what really aroused my curiosity was this entry:

*‘Ano Dm : 1653
Given (the yeare above written)
By the Inhabitants of the pifhe
Of Minsterworth towards the
Relief of the diftressed Towne of
Marleborowe the Summe of Sixe
Shillings and Eight pence.’*

The explanation for this unusual entry became clearer when I discovered that in 1653 the medieval town of Marlborough in Wiltshire suffered a terrible fire which ran down both sides of the High Street, causing almost total devastation of the town. An appeal for donations towards re-building the town was authorised by the government and read out in churches throughout the land.

So, if you are ever visiting or passing through Marlborough, just think that in the 1600s the humble folk of little Minsterworth in Gloucestershire paid all of 6s 8d towards the town’s revival – in theory the equivalent of £25.50 in modern money!

Terry Moore-Scott

Gloucestershire Local History Association

LOCAL HISTORY DAY

Saturday April 28th, 10.30 am—4.00 pm
at Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Road, GL3 2JH
Open to all, admission FREE

The theme of the meeting this year is
‘Between the Wars: Life in Gloucestershire 1919-1939’

As before there will be displays by various local history societies and an award for the best display. The Brian Jerrard Award for the best article of the year in a local history publication will be presented, and there will be a programme of talks during the day. Refreshments will be available.

The Deerhurst lecture 2018



‘Deerhurst, Pershore and Westminster Abbey’

Dr Richard Mortimer, former archivist to Westminster Abbey
Saturday 15th September at 7.30 pm in St Mary’s Church, Deerhurst

Tickets at the door £5, students £3
 Further details available at <https://deerhurstfriends.co.uk>



BOOKS FOR SALE



News from the CLHS Donated Books ‘Shop’

Although we have missed a couple of meetings, there was a moderate response to the idea of advertising a selection of smaller local history books which could be posted to those members who are unable to come to the evening meetings and miss out on browsing our book stall. With the permission of the Committee I have been able to sell to a local bookseller some books, not relating to Cheltenham or its neighbouring towns, and on other more general topics, which have raised £80 towards the Society’s funds. If you are interested in any of the books below please contact me by phone on 01242 232740, or email heatherbell71@hotmail.com

Discovering Alstone, vols 1 & 2. Ed C Green, paperback, £4 each

Scene together, Aylwin Sampson, paperback, £3

Cheltenham Observed, Aylwin Sampson, paperback, £4

Everyman Theatre, Official Centenary Brochure, paperback, A4 size, £4

Guide to the Cheltenham Ladies’ College, 1931, paperback, A4 size, £4

Pleasure Town, Cheltenham 1830-1860, hardback, £7.50

Cheltenham, A History, S Rowbotham & J Waller, hardback, signed copy, as new, £12

Cheltenham, A Pictorial History, S Blake, hardback, signed copy, as new, £12.50

A History of Cheltenham, G Hart 1st Ed 1965, hardback, £10. 2nd Ed 1981, hardback, £10

Leckhampton 1894, the End of an Era, Ed B Stait, 1st Ed 1994, paperback, £4

Old Leckhampton, D Bick, paperback, £3

A Gloucestershire Quiz Book, J Owen, paperback, £2

Bishop’s Cleeve to Winchcombe in old Photographs, D Aldred, £4.50

General History – ‘Life and Times of...’ by various authors, Ed Antonia Fraser.

Hardback, good condition – not in order of reign! Alfred the Great; King John;

The Norman Kings; The Saxon Kings; William I; Edward I; Edward II; Edward

III; Edward IV; Richard I; Richard II; Richard III.

£5 each, £8 for 2 and £10 for 3.

I would like to thank everyone who has brought me their unwanted books – it is surprising how much we can raise for the Society by selling them on. We can also occasionally offer local maps and pictures at reasonable prices.

Heather Atkinson

CONTENTS

AGM; Summer visits	2-3	CLHS on Facebook	13
Lecture programme 2018-9	4	Society News	14-15
For Your Diary	5-7, 21	Obituaries	19
Reviews	9-10	New publications	6, 19, 23
Features	11, 16-17, 18, 20	Books for Sale	22
Local News	8, 12	Can You Help? Next issue	24

CLHS DISPLAYS IN THE LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

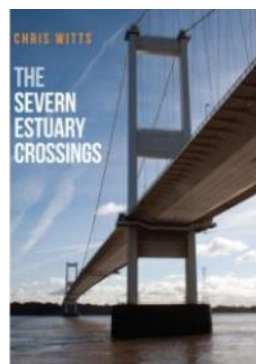
March-April	Cheltenham Slave Owners
May-June	Cheltenham before the Spa
July-August	Food for Free: the History of Cheltenham Allotments

NEW PUBLICATION

The Severn Estuary Crossings

by Chris Witts

With its powerful tides and one of the highest tidal ranges in the world, the Severn Estuary has been a barrier between two nations. Until the Severn Bridge was opened in 1966, the only way to cross was by ferry or railway tunnel. In the 19th century Thomas Telford spoke of bridging the estuary, but at the time it was too expensive and dangerous; the railway tunnel was built instead. From 1926 until the Severn Bridge opened, The Old Passage Severn Ferry Co Ltd operated from Aust to Beachley, and motorists either queued to join the ferry or faced an arduous 60-mile road journey via Gloucester. In 1958 construction began on the Severn Bridge, the design of which has proved so reliable it has been copied around the world. As traffic increased a new bridge was needed, and in 1996 the Second Severn Crossing was opened, with the distinction of being the longest river crossing in Britain. Using a wonderful array of rare and unpublished images, Severn expert Chris Witts celebrates this phenomenal feat of engineering.



Published in paperback in August 2017 by Amberley Publishing, price £14.99.

CAN YOU HELP?

Charles Dealtry and *The Nazarene Messenger*

An enquirer living in the USA is interested in the history of one Charles Dealtry, who lived in Cheltenham (at least from 1881: he died in 1891) and was associated with a magazine called *The Nazarene Messenger*. The volume he owns was published in Canada, but it indicates the magazine was to be published in Cheltenham from 1888 onwards, and he knows it was published at least through 1901. Has anyone ever heard of either Dealtry or the magazine? Any information would be much appreciated.

Alfred Elkington

An old harmonium has been found at Dean Close School, where it was probably used in the chapel in the period 1909-1917. It bears a dedication to the memory of 'the late Mrs Alfred Elkington' who, so far as is known, was unrelated to anyone at the school. An enquirer would like to know whether anyone can shed any light on the possible identity of Alfred Elkington.

Cheltenham Conservative Club

An enquirer seeks information and photos relating to the Cheltenham Conservative Club in the early 1940s. Her father James C Coates was the steward there for a time, but the only record she has is a reference letter from the club written when he left.

Photo wanted

An enquirer asks if anyone has an old photograph of John Lance & Co, the shop which formerly occupied nos 125-128 High Street, between Boots and Pittville Street.

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 any material for inclusion in the July 2018 issue by
Monday 4th June 2018
to the Editor: Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA
Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: kbooth@dircon.co.uk

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