



# Cheltenham Local History Society

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## *EDITORIAL*

Many people will recognise this rather battered effigy as a cast iron Cheltenham pigeon, not unlike those we once had on the tops of signposts in the town centre. This one, and its socially distanced mate, are not in the town but on a pair of gates in Crippetts Lane, half-way up Leckhampton Hill. How they came to be there and where they belonged originally has long been a mystery, which member Jill Waller has endeavoured to solve. To see what she found out, turn to p18.

Inevitably, in present circumstances, this is not one of our usual Newsletters. With no talks, events or summer outings to write about we have been very pleased to be offered a variety of articles, mostly written by members, which we hope you will enjoy reading. Perhaps more people will be inspired to put pen to paper for the November issue! By then—let's hope—life may be returning to normal.

Meanwhile stay well, everyone.

*Kath Boothman*

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### *EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2020-21*

**NOTE: This is the programme as planned, but we do not know at present how much of it may have to be cancelled or re-scheduled.**

**For the same reason the new programme card that normally comes with this Newsletter will be issued later in the year.**

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

*Tuesday 22nd September:*

#### **Martin Boothman and Peter Barlow—Early Gloucestershire Vehicle Registrations**

Peter Barlow and Martin Boothman, who are both Society members, will be talking about how motor vehicle registration became compulsory country-wide with effect from 1st January 1904 and about their work in transcribing and indexing the Gloucestershire vehicle registers from 1904 to the end of December 1913. These registers tell us who owned motorcycles and cars and when, and give the owners' addresses as well as details of the vehicles. Although the registers record vehicle ownership county-wide, more people with Cheltenham addresses registered vehicles in this period than any other place in the county.

*Tuesday 20th October:*

#### **Mark Davies— 'Young Zamiel Gripeall': Cheltenham's 'crafty, crabbed, selfish' (and libelled ) newspaper proprietor and hotelier, S Y Griffith**

The entrepreneurial Samuel Young Griffith (c.1790–1865) succeeded his deceased brother John as proprietor of the *Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucester Advertiser* in 1818, and undertook a parallel career as a Cheltenham hotelier. Simultaneously, he and his wife ran two of Oxford's most prestigious coaching inns, and Griffith also published several editions of an early Cheltenham guide book. His life was not without controversy, however, and in 1827 he was the subject of a highly defamatory publication by a disgruntled former employee. It was not only in business that he took risks: in 1822 he accompanied the famous hot-air balloonist Charles Green on a flight which almost ended in disaster (as featured in *CLHS 2020 Journal*).

*Tuesday 17th November:*

#### **Professor Philip Dixon—Fifty Years at Crickley Hill**

In 1969 we began digging an Iron Age hill fort, one of a long series of forts along the Cotswold edge. After three seasons of work we found that underneath lay a complex of Neolithic enclosures, and soon after that a prehistoric temple, whose origins belonged to about 3500 BC, and which remained in use until at least the Roman period. Finally we found two separate villages belonging to the years after 400 CE. Crickley is now regarded as one of the most significant prehistoric sites in Europe. All this has taken now 35 years of digging, and its publication a further 15 years. We are now writing the third volume of the report, on the mysterious Long Mound, to be published later this year.

*Tuesday 8th December:*

**Paul Barnett—The Cotswolds Navy: What's in a Name?**

Land-locked as Gloucestershire is, with only the River Severn running gently through its midst, this talk explores the region's inseparable connection to the sea via its maritime fleet of locally named vessels and the county's contribution to financing a depleted navy during Warship Week of 1942.

*Tuesday 19th January 2021:*

**Research and Display Evening**

*Tuesday 16th February 2021:*

**Steven Blake—The Perils of Speculation in Regency Cheltenham: the Rise and Fall of the Hon Miss Monson**

During the early 19th century, Cheltenham's housing stock increased dramatically, from 710 in 1801 to an estimated 4,027, with 774 more in the course of building by June 1826. Large numbers of individuals were involved in the town's building industry, as developers, speculators and builders. One of the most unusual, in terms of age, gender and social background, was the Honourable Katherine Monson (1754-1843), who built at least 20 houses on the north side of the town between 1804 and the late 1820s, before going bankrupt in 1828. This talk will consider what is known of her life and work, thereby highlighting a hitherto little-known aspect of the town's building history, namely the role of women.

*Tuesday 16th March 2021:*

**Alan Pilbeam—The Royal Progress through Gloucestershire 1535**

We know where Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn and their first minister, Thomas Cromwell, stayed on this tour, and some of the people they met. We also know what happened at the end of the tour – the appointment of reforming bishops and the beginning of the dissolution of the monasteries. In this illustrated talk we will follow the progress through the county, view the castles, abbeys and houses where they stayed, and consider its possible links with the succeeding events.

*Tuesday 20th April 2021:*

**Neela Mann—Spas, Squabbles and Slave-owners: a Short History of Lansdown**

Henry Thompson and his son Pearson were at the forefront of the commercial development not only of Cheltenham's spa waters but also of the buildings of the Lansdown area. This talk gives a brief outline of the men, their problems and the people who enjoyed the waters and the houses of Lansdown.

*Tuesday 18th May 2021:*

**AGM followed by Geoff North—Marianne North, Victorian Artist and Traveller**

Marianne North (1830-1890) was an intrepid traveller, a botanical artist and a distant relative of Geoff's. He will tell us something of her travels and her paintings, but will start by telling us a little of the family: how it affected her upbringing and her attitude to life.

## *MORNING LECTURES 2020-21* (See NOTE on p2)

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 Alison Pascoe (01242 519413) if you wish to reserve a space.

*Tuesday 6th October:*

### **Jim Markland—Oriental Navigators and Unlikely Residents of Cheltenham**

The rise and fall of Cheltenham's spas very much mirrored that of the East India Company; many Company Officers came to Cheltenham to take the waters, educate their children or retire. The many memorials and tombstones their families commissioned pay witness to the presence of large numbers of Anglo-Indians: retired military and medical men, civil servants and lawyers and their wives, widows and unmarried daughters. They had all endured long voyages across the Indian Ocean, mostly on sailing ships, principally the old East India men, freighters chartered by the East India Company. The identification of four Commanders of such Indiamen, Captains Hay, Timins, Blanshard and Layman, all entombed in Cheltenham, has led to the uncovering of some fascinating oriental maritime adventures. One ship, the *Royal George*, once seen as the crack ship of the China fleet and on which, at times, three of them served, is at the centre of several of these stories.

*Tuesday 2nd February 2021:*

### **Joan Hughes—Churchdown Then & Now: a Personal View**

We know there has been a settlement here for at least 2000 years with evidence from the Romans and Saxons. Today it is a thriving community. Sitting as it does between Gloucester and Cheltenham, although part of Tewkesbury borough, it is dominated by St. Bartholomew's church on Chosen Hill and is home to over 1200 people. Joan has lived here for over 30 years. Inevitably there have been changes, but the essence of the village remains. It is a welcoming place with many clubs and societies catering for all interests. Despite recent developments, those walking on and around the hill will still see a green and pleasant land around them which so many are delighted to call home.

*Tuesday 6th April 2021:*

### **Judith Ellis—George Townsend, Benefactor of Boys in Cheltenham and Campden**

Many Gloucestershire boys (and some girls) have had reason to thank George Townsend, a lawyer in the 1600s who left legacies in his will for scholarships for schoolboys in Cheltenham, Gloucester, Northleach and Chipping Campden. As well as promoting the more clever boys, he also decreed that poor boys should be helped with apprenticeships, and paid for teachers for poor children. Using the records in Gloucestershire Archives and other sources, Judith has been tracing the story of his bequest which lasted for nearly three hundred years.

## The Ginner-Mawer School of Dance and Drama in Cheltenham 1947-1954

Dancing barefoot and free beneath the huge domed roof of the Rotunda must have been an exhilarating experience. During the previous one hundred years distinguished socialites had whirled around the ballroom, but from 1947 to 1954 the Ginner-Mawer students danced on the wooden floor with bare feet, bare legs and bare arms. Gone was the grand orchestra, having been replaced by Mr Harold Chipp or Miss Carthew on the piano, but the passion was no less intense.

The dancers were young students from the Ginner-Mawer School of Dance and Drama, which was well known for its Classical Greek Dance and its innovative mime and movement instruction. The school originated in London shortly before the First World War. The bombs of the Second World War forced it to evacuate to Boscastle in Cornwall. After the end of the Second World War the school finally settled at the Rotunda in the grand surroundings of Montpellier, where the dance lessons took place, and also at the Civic Playhouse (now The Playhouse) where the students made use of the theatre and its facilities.

Irene Mawer (1893-1962) and Ruby Ginner (1886-1978), were co-founders of the Dance and Drama School.



Ruby Ginner

Professionally they were known by their maiden names, though when 'off duty' they used their married names of Irene Perugini (married to Mark) and Ruby Dyer (married to Alec). The two women met in the early years of the 20th century and soon began working together in rooms at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Ruby was awarded an MBE for her extraordinary work in developing Classical Greek Dance; her work is generally agreed to be a probable representation of the dances of the Ancient Greeks.

Perhaps her barefoot students of 'the Greek' took some inspiration from the caryatids, the life-size figures which adorn the adjoining street, Montpellier Walk. These sculptures were based on those in the ancient Greek citadel of the Acropolis. The

Ginner-Mawer School's dance lessons took place in the Rotunda, which was originally a small pump room built over a natural spring. Today's fine building with its circular assembly room was erected in 1817: a grand, porticoed affair, suitable for balls and gatherings. The impressive dome, with its outer skin of copper, was added a few years later by architect John Buonarotti Papworth, making the assembly room 56ft high and 54ft across. Continuing the classical theme, the dome was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome (temple of the gods) and its proportions are almost identical. The Greek connection returns with the Doric columns decorating the inner walls.

Late in the 19th century, ownership passed from private to public hands, and all-comers could enjoy both Montpellier Spa and the adjacent Montpellier Gardens. These are the gardens that Irene Mawer would have walked through each day, as

her house was just two minutes walk away, diagonally across the square. Irene Mawer chose to focus on supporting her friend's work and willingly allowed her own importance to be overshadowed—she was highly regarded as a brilliant mime and was referred to as a 'born mime' before she even knew what mime was. For Miss Mawer, the spoken word was as important, if not more important, even than movement. Her intention was to unite poetry and dance and much of her work involved dancing to the rhythm of words, without music. Irene Mawer's work within the Ginner-Mawer School covered all aspects of theatre, voice and movement. The Irene Mawer Method of Mime was not intended to be



used as a stand-alone art, rather it was expected that the students would bring the mime into all that they did, including voice work.

When not teaching from the Rotunda Miss Mawer also worked from the Civic Playhouse on Bath Road, where she would cover all aspects of theatre, including diaphragmatic breathing; choral speaking, acting and of course mime. The students often wore their everyday street clothes for their mime lessons, or from time to time a black tunic similar to the coloured ones

worn for Classical Greek dancing. (There were not many male students, but those who did attend would have worn shorts and a T-shirt).

A fine sight towards the end of April 1950 would have been the public park at Montpellier Gardens strewn with brightly coloured theatrical costumes, gently steaming in the sun. The Playhouse had suffered a fire and the students rallied to rescue what they could of the Studio Players' belongings. The costumes had been stored under the auditorium in the cavity that was originally the swimming pool, and although they weren't burned, the clothes had been soaked from the water used to put out the fire. The *Echo* reported on 27th April that there were literally hundreds of costumes of many different types which had to be taken away in two lorry loads. The 25 dance and drama students had only returned from holidays the previous day and were split into two shifts to sort out the mess. The *Echo* also says the timing was particularly unfortunate in that the following week was to be the School's annual drama festival, adjudicated by Leslie French, a well known actor and long-time supporter of the Ginner-Mawers. (Their other supporters included Sir Lawrence Olivier and Dame Sybil Thorndike.)

Irene Mawer was not phased by the events—she had already seen the same costumes bombed during the blitz of the 1940s, when at that time everything had to be dug out of the rubble of a destroyed London storehouse. In a manner which I would expect to be typical of Miss Mawer, the newspaper reports that the drama classes would henceforth be held in the Rotunda, with Miss Mawer saying emphatically 'the whole curriculum is going on just the same'. The school piano, however, suffered a different fate and was burned to a crisp. It wasn't insured, but a generous offer from the Town Council to pay half the cost of a new one

meant that a replacement was soon found. The new piano cost 50 guineas and the Ginner-Mawer School allowed shared use of it, for other purposes connected with the Playhouse. From the ashes came the phoenix—and the Ginner-Mawers referred to themselves as the Phoenix Theatre as their pet name.



Students doing Classical Greek dancing

Curriculum items covered everything imaginable in order to enable a pupil to become either a performer or a teacher – or both! For example: History of Ancient Greece; Greek Mythology; Greek gods and goddesses; History of Dance; History of Theatre; History of Mime; Classical Greek dance; national dance; ballet dance; ballroom dancing, voice control, breathing, choral speaking,

etc. When the students gave performances, they also did all of their own backstage work, including lighting, direction, music and publicity. As well as local performances, the students occasionally played in national theatres, including the Royal Albert Hall in 1953.

Saturdays would see the local children attending dance classes under the instruction of Miss Nancy Sherwood, who had trained with the school as a young girl and stayed with them as a teacher, right until closure in 1954. And the whole was co-ordinated by another long-standing member of staff, Miss Gibbs. Full-time students signed up for a three year course, with the minimum age being 16; for some students the choice was between ‘A’ levels or dancing. Each term was about 10 weeks long and the school year began in October. By living in ‘digs’, they found accommodation around the local area in boarding houses, hotels, or as lodgers in people’s private homes. Nowadays, the Montpellier area is one of the most expensive areas of Cheltenham, but in the 1940s and 1950s it was still possible for a young student to take lodgings (room plus breakfast and evening meal) for approximately 3 guineas a week, sometimes sharing a room to bring down the cost. An alternative to a packed lunch would be to eat out, and The Cake Basket café provided a three course meal for a very small cost and was popular with the students. Miss Mawer also ate regularly at The Cake Basket—she made her way up the small staircase to the quieter room, while the girls would stay downstairs amid the hustle and bustle.

After seven years the school closed (on the retirement of Miss Ginner). The number of students was quite low—the pull of London was too enticing and drew students there instead. Cheltenham was not exciting enough and the school lacked momentum to keep going.

Irene Mawer continued to work, moving to Birmingham where she was Senior Tutor and Lecturer at the Birmingham School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art (now the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire).

*Janet Curtis* [fizzycloud@hotmail.com](mailto:fizzycloud@hotmail.com)

*Please contact Janet if you have memories of the school or information about it.*

## WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON VE DAY?

I decided to ask a few people of a certain age what they were doing on VE day and then asked friends to ask their elderly parents or collect family memories. The oldest person I spoke to was a friend's aunt of 101. What follows are a few of their accounts, dealing first with happy and sometimes raucous celebrations, then with more muted celebrations and finally with the memories of those who had little or nothing to celebrate.

The popular images of VE day are of street parties, and there were many around Cheltenham. One photograph shows the trestle tables set out and a happy gathering in Folly Lane. The Tennyson Road party committee decided not to have tables and chairs but to use the green at the junction with Shakespeare Road, opposite Mr Sykes's shop. The photo shows them enjoying ice cream. Ann, nearly 10 and third from the left in the front row, is sure they had fish paste sandwiches made with white bread—a taste which never leaves you. If there were cakes they would of course have been made by pooling food coupons. There was a mother and toddler party in Charlton Kings. Fancy dress parties were popular. There was one for children in Whaddon and one for children and young people in Croft Gardens, Charlton Kings.



Tennyson Road, St Mark's

The flags were out at the party in Waterloo Street, St Peter's.

Later in the day David and Tom, aged 12 and 8, were taken by their father to the celebrations in the Promenade. They stood outside the Gloucestershire Dairy opposite Martins the jewellers. There were people cheering, waving flags and climbing lampposts. Tom was a bit scared, because he was hemmed in and couldn't see what was happening.

John aged 13, a boarder at Chipping Campden Grammar School, was given the day off. He cycled 14 miles home to the family farm as quickly as he could. Even though it was a Tuesday they had roast beef and Yorkshire pudding to celebrate. They were constantly listening to the radio to find out when the King would speak from Buckingham Palace and they heard Churchill speak in the afternoon. At the end of the day the farm labourers came into the house for a drink. He can still remember how very excited they were. In the evening he and his mother cycled to the Tanneries cinema in Winchcombe where, after a ten minute news-reel of 'Universal News' of last week's news, they were showing Arsenic and Old Lace starring Cary Grant.

The town square and streets were packed. Speeches were made from the balcony above Lloyds Bank. Many people were carrying little flags on silver spindles. People were climbing lampposts and there was a great air of *joie de vivre*. June



aged 6½ in Whaddon remembers a party with dancing and singing all the way up Cam Road. Someone brought out a piano and everyone was happy. It went on long after dark.

In Wakefield Geoff aged 11 saw a huge bonfire made up of railway sleepers. The street lights were on and the bells were ringing. In Swansea there was so much wood left around to burn, as a result of the heavy bombing, that Viv, aged 13, went from bonfire to bonfire with a group of friends and they joined in the dancing. Some celebrations had unexpected results. Peggy aged 15 was living on



Folly Lane, St Paul's

the outskirts of Pontypool. A boy somehow got hold of fireworks for their street party. Bonfires and fireworks were forbidden during the war so for many it would be their first sight of fireworks. A rocket misfired and shot through the window of Peggy's home, setting fire to the curtains. The fire was put out and no-one was hurt but the curtains needed replacing and her mother couldn't spare coupons for the material. The boy's mother gave them some spare curtains, but of course

they didn't match the others. Peggy's mother was so ashamed. The family teased her because she left the blinds down so that it didn't show.

Dot aged 20 went singing and dancing through the streets of Cardiff. Her friend received a proposal of marriage! Glasgow girl Muriel, aged 20, had been forced by the bombing to leave Kelvinside and was living on Cumbrae, a small island in the Lower Clyde. She had no intention of missing the celebrations. She took several small ferries and was given a lift by soldiers before dancing the night away in Buchanan and Fore Streets.

Plum, aged 24, was a driver in the ATS. Mainly based in London, she drove Army Officers around and has left her diaries. She wrote, tired after being on night duty:-

*'May 8th*

*Had most of the day off.....*

*I was on Night Duty but Maire and I decided that really on Victory Night no one could be expected to stay in so we had a drink or two and then walked through Piccadilly, Trafalgar Square, up Whitehall where Churchill was speaking, to Buckingham Palace where eventually the King and Queen came out on the balcony. We got back about 12.30 very exhausted but I'm glad I did it.'*

Some celebrations were more muted. Oliver, nearly 13 and a pupil at Sherborne School said 'I can't remember VE day being such a big deal at the time. All the members of my house went into the housemaster's office to listen to Churchill's speech' and then it was back to rationing and normality. His father was still in Europe. The blackout was lifted though. Some people didn't want to celebrate. Simon in Milton Abbas, aged 4½, was woken to see the fireworks 'so that you will remember this day'. All he wanted to do was go back to bed.

There were services of Thanksgiving in churches. Mary aged 6 and her mother were walking home, from a family tea, along Painswick Road when the bell of St Philip's and St James' church began to ring. Her mother said 'Bother bedtime. Let's go to church'. It was all very exciting—she didn't yawn once, which she normally did in church. Halfway down the aisle there was a red painted Roman cross about 2 foot 6 inches high on a white base, which someone had made out of plywood.

Some people hadn't heard the news. A 10 year old girl evacuated from Coventry to Hunningham in Warwickshire, while her mother worked at nearby Baginton



Flags out in Waterloo Street, St Peter's

helping to make Lancaster bombers, had been off school with measles. A car stopped and she was asked if it was over. She didn't know what they were talking about! The bells rang in the village in the evening.

Joan, aged 26, a teacher who had trained at St Mary's, Cheltenham had with her class been bombed at her school in Teignmouth. She had moved to a school in Coombe Martin. She has the most nuanced view. She said the end of the European war had been expected, so it wasn't a complete surprise. She had mixed

feelings, thankful that the war was over, but not feelings of complete joy. She remembered the boys she had been with at Ilfracombe Grammar School, who had been killed. The war wasn't really over. A lot were still in the forces in the Far East and she said how much they hated the Japanese. A great admirer of Churchill, she listened to his speech and probably to the King's speech too. As it was a public holiday she drove around in a car with three friends. There were street parties and she joined in the dancing. She remembered her emotions on the day far more clearly than what she actually did. Her father had kept newspapers from the 8th and 9th May which remain in the family. In the *Daily Sketch* of 8th May among reports of the celebrations is the story of Mrs C the charlady putting up bunting despite having lost three sons. There is also a plea 'In our hour of triumph remember our boys still in Burma while you are celebrating by giving generously to the *Daily Sketch* War Relief Fund'.

Finally it must be remembered that not everyone was celebrating at all. June in Whaddon was told by her mother to go to a neighbour's house and tell her to come and join in the celebration. The neighbour replied 'I have nothing to celebrate, dear'. The sadness of that always stuck in the little girl's mind and still resonates 75 years later. For a Winchcombe widow, who had lost all her four sons, it must have been a difficult day. Apart from the bereaved, with the war in the Far East continuing a Wolverhampton girl of 19, whose brother was a Chindit, can remember no celebration.

For a Polish soldier, who had served in North Africa and Italy and was now with the Polish Government in exile in England, there was the knowledge that the

contribution of the Polish Free Army would be ignored in the peace.

Having seen a flag on display over the 75th anniversary weekend, which had been flown by the family in 1945, I am sure there are lots more stories out there.

If you are a certain age, what were you doing on VE Day?

*Elizabeth Bennett*

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## **Richard Liddell, from Cook to Hotel-keeper**

A little more is now known about ‘the Mysterious Richard Liddell’, the subject of a Feature article in *Newsletter* No 95 (November 2019). I asked if any reader could shed more light on him, and James Hodsdon answered the call.

Richard Liddell was born in Oxford in 1789. James has drawn my attention to a newspaper report of Liddell’s marriage at St Peter’s-in-the-East in that city in 1820, in which his occupation was described as ‘manciple’ at The Queen’s College. This was still the term used in 1822 and 1824 on the baptism certificates for two of his sons.

A manciple was a steward, the rough equivalent of a catering manager today, though at Queen’s (as the college archivist informs me) by the 1820s the position had merged with that of cook, superintending one or more subordinates who would have prepared meals for dons and undergraduates. College records show that Liddell was appointed as cook (*coquus*) in 1819 and remained so for a few years, though he frequently commuted between Oxford and Cheltenham. He had established himself in Cheltenham by 1827, when he renamed his boarding house the Clarence Hotel. The college’s Buttery Books would show when and how often he was there, but Covid-19 lock-down has prevented me from visiting the archives to check this.

The cook was able to supplement his stipend with various fees and tips, often overcharging the college for what he had purchased and selling on whatever food was not consumed. Thus Richard Liddell would have been well set up to embark on his business ventures in Cheltenham. (In a similar way, Chaucer’s ‘gentle manciple’ was a canny fellow who profited from his position, outwitting the learned gentlemen whom he served.)

I have now been able to see Richard Liddell’s will. When he died, his estate and effects were valued at under £300 (the equivalent of about £33,000 today). The legatees were ‘his friend’ the chemist Nathaniel Smith of Leckhampton, who was also appointed as his executor, and his brother George Liddell, of Fulham, a ‘Yeoman’. His married daughter Mary Catherine Noble Rye was to receive the residue (‘as her separate property free from marital control’). Richard Liddell may be less of a mystery now, but we still do not know what he did with the proceeds from the sale of his many properties so as to reduce his estate to a mere £300.

Nathaniel Smith’s career is of interest and will be the subject of a future article.

*Eric Miller*

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## A leap of faith: Christ Church's Italian apse

The image of the 'river of the water of life', mentioned in the Book of Revelation, is one of the most powerful images in the Bible. The river 'flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb'. (*Revelation 22:1*)

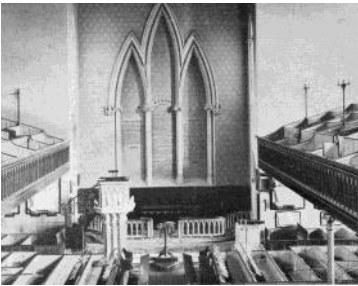
The image of the river of life is familiar to anyone who has attended a service or a concert at Christ Church. The superb tempura fresco in the dome of the apse, facing the congregation, shows Christ enthroned, with the abundant and never-ending river flowing from beneath His throne. The text quotes directly from Revelation: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst the fountain of the water of life freely.'

The exquisitely decorated apse is such an important part of the character of Christ Church that it is hard to imagine that the church was ever without it. Yet the apse was not built and painted until half a century after the church itself was built. Indeed it is a minor miracle that such a grand and colourful piece of art ever found its way into a church which was originally designed as a testament to the austere certainties of evangelical religion.



### Close's austere reign

Christ Church was built at a time when Cheltenham was expanding rapidly and needed more churches to serve its burgeoning population. The driving force behind the building of this church and a number of others in the town was Francis Close, who was the incumbent of Cheltenham Parish Church at the time. The first stone was laid by Close in 1837 and the church was consecrated in 1840. Christ Church was originally quite a plain building inside. Indeed it was part and parcel of Francis Close's plan that it should be. As his DNB biographer noted, 'his theological views were narrow'. The evils of popery, as he saw them, were never far from his thoughts.



The church in 1875

Close was a vigorous opponent of the Oxford Movement with its overt Anglo-Catholicism and he also opposed any moves to embellish churches with 'popish' features which might distract congregations from the Word of God. Indeed one of

his tracts, published only four years after Christ Church was consecrated, had the uncompromising title *The Restoration of Churches is the Restoration of Popery*. Close was tireless in his efforts to keep Cheltenham on the evangelical straight and narrow. However he left the town in 1856 to become Dean of Carlisle and died in 1882. This was long before something happened that would totally transform the church he had built.

### **Middleton's vision**

In 1888 land was given to the church by a benefactor called Alan Bruce-Pryce to build an apse and dome at the east end. The clergy and church leadership took this as an opportunity for a major restoration and renovation of the building. A restoration committee was set up, which included among its members Dr E T Wilson, father of the arctic explorer and natural historian Edward Adrian Wilson.

The renowned architect John Middleton, who had already designed several Cheltenham churches, was retained to give advice. The building and decoration of the apse presented a significant aesthetic challenge. It needed to be a bold statement, but a huge Gothic apse spanning the east end of the church did not seem remotely practical, given the resources available. As the committee noted: 'the great height of the Church and the necessary retention of the galleries [rendered] any Gothic design at once more difficult and more costly.'

Instead John Middleton came up with a different solution – an apse built and decorated in the Italian style. Quite a leap of faith must have been required to change the character of the church in such a radical way, but the committee and the church leadership were prepared to take it. The committee reported enthusiastically that 'the scheme proposed by Professor Middleton...will give a most stately and handsome appearance to the interior of the Church'.

The building of the apse was completed in the early 1890s. At around the same time the church authorities embarked on a series of other changes that would have made Francis Close's blood run cold. These included building a raised dais and choir stalls, erecting ironwork screens around the choir stalls, and cladding the pillars in marble. By this time there was also a richly decorated marble pulpit to the side of the altar instead of the plainer structure in front of the altar which had been there in Close's time.



Richmond's fresco

### **Richmond's tour de force**

A crucial figure in the transformation of Christ Church was William Blake Richmond, who painted the dome fresco in 1893. Richmond was a hugely important figure in Victorian art. He had made a name for himself as a very young man and



been elected to the Royal Academy at the age of 19. By the time he was commissioned by Christ Church he had already served as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford University. Richmond is perhaps best known for his work at St Paul's Cathedral in the 1890s, where he executed a series of bold and colourful mosaics for the choir and apse.

Richmond was a former pupil of John Ruskin, whom he succeeded as Slade Professor, and who famously taught that 'All great art is praise'. Richmond had firm views about what he saw as the blandness of the decorations in many English churches, which he described as 'caves of white-washed sepulchres, uncoloured, or if coloured at all, only in parts'.

Richmond's sensibilities were far removed from the austere world view of much of English Protestantism. Michelangelo, Tintoretto and Giotto were huge influences on him. He admired the colourfulness of Byzantine art and sought to bring something of the flavour of Byzantine and early Christian art into his work at Christ Church.

Richmond's fresco is remarkable for several reasons. Certainly it is colourful and vivid, with its depiction of Christ surrounded by angels and flanked by his apostles and the sense of vitality conveyed by the flowing waters. But more than this, it also communicates with the worshipper or spectator in a very special way. As you look up into the dome, Christ is looking back directly at you. Furthermore this is not the distant, ethereal, gaunt and pale Christ depicted in much of religious art. This is a young man, dark-haired, unbearded, healthy-looking and sturdily built. This is someone we can relate to – not just as a Saviour but as a son, a brother or a friend.

It is possible to see a similarity between Richmond's Christ and William Holman Hunt's Christ in the painting *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, which appeared in 1860. Here again the young Jesus is young, dark-haired, fresh-faced and sturdy. He looks like a real Jewish boy of the artisan class, not an Englishman dressed up – unsurprisingly, as Holman Hunt spent a long time in the Holy Land in the 1850s observing what its inhabitants actually looked like. It is entirely possible that Richmond was influenced by Holman Hunt in his depiction of Christ. The fact that Richmond painted Holman Hunt's portrait a few years after completing the fresco suggests that he was an admirer as well as a friend.

The artwork in the lower part of the apse, depicting various Biblical scenes, is pleasing enough, but doesn't quite hit the heights of Richmond's dome fresco. Nonetheless it implicitly celebrates a longstanding link between Christ Church and The Cheltenham Ladies' College, which started worshipping at the church in the 1870s. It was painted by J Eadie Reid, a visiting Art Master at the College, who also painted *The Dream of Fair Women* on the proscenium arch in the Princess Hall there.



William Blake Richmond,  
1842-1921

### The importance of being bold

It took some bold decisions to create a church as attractive and impressive as Christ Church is now. If the church leaders of the later Victorian era had stuck to Francis Close's narrow vision, if they had taken a more timid approach to the design of the apse, or made a more conservative choice of artist, much would have been lost. As it was, John Middleton's vision of a 'stately and handsome' church was amply fulfilled.



Francis Close

Yet maybe there are aspects of the church reordering of the 1880s and 1890s that have not stood the test of time so well. The fussiness of the intricate iron railings round the dais, the heaviness of the huge marble pulpit and the bulk of the marble-clad columns all seem at odds with the present-day need for informality and interactive worship.

Maybe the next church reordering, whenever it comes, will sweep some of these Victorian additions away – or maybe not. The story of Christ Church is not yet over.

*John Rawson*

### An historic photograph

We have CLHS member David Aldred to thank for this picture, which was taken about 1967 by his recently deceased friend Tim Curr who worked as a photographer for the NCB. There is much of interest in it. It shows the newly-constructed coal concentration depot on Tewkesbury Road (the road running along the top of the picture, with new houses beyond it). The large building on the left is the



former Midland Railway timber-built goods shed, with the wagons going in and BR lorries taking the goods away. In the lower part of the scene is the siding to the gas works near the top of Gloucester Road. How different it is now! This area has changed out of all recognition in the past 50 years.

## ‘Cheltenham Hall’ – a unique reference?

A recently-spotted advertisement in the London *Daily Advertiser* of 7 April 1744 is headed:

*‘To be Lett in Apartments: At Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, during the Season, A Large new-built Brick House, belonging to Lady Stapleton, known by the name of Cheltenham-Hall, pleasantly situated near the Town [etc]’.* This is clearly the house more generally known as the Great House, probably begun in 1742 and completed the following year, on the site now occupied by St Matthew’s church.

Apart from providing the first and so far only known reference to the name *Cheltenham Hall*, the announcement is interesting in other ways: it suggests that ‘Great House’ may not have been the name used by Lady Stapleton herself (it is first recorded in 1757, more than a decade after her death). There is fair evidence that Lady Stapleton originally intended the house to be used by her family and

friends during ‘the Season’, but the death in Cheltenham in August 1743 of her only surviving son appears to have brought about a marked change of heart. There is no sign of her in the town after that year, and the advertisement confirms a transition by 1744 to use as a lodging house – albeit a superior and well-appointed one. It continued thus for many years.



CHURCH-MEAD AND THE GREAT HOUSE.

This little discovery adds to the notes contributed by Anthea Jones in a previous Newsletter

and in the Journal, and a fuller story could yet be told. My thanks to John Simpson of the Pittville History Works for finding the advertisement.

(from Davies, *Stranger’s Guide*) – no copyright.

*James Hodsdon*

### *SOCIETY NEWS*

#### New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Margaret Wood  
Mike Branch



## OBITUARY

### BRIAN WHITE 8.4.1927 - 20.3.2020

Brian was born on 8th April 1927 in Bristol. He left technical school in July 1943 and whilst working for a builder's merchants he volunteered as a Naval Airman 2nd class in the Fleet Air Arm Reserve. In early 1945 (before he was 18) he joined the Grenadier Guards and was posted to Caterham in July 1945. He left the guards in December 1952 with the rank of Senior Regimental Sergeant Clerk. During his time in the guards he represented them as goalkeeper in the football team.

He met Phyllis in May 1948 and they married on 5th March 1949.

In 1953 he joined George Wimpey in London, moving to English Electric in 1956, and moved to Smiths Industries in Cheltenham in 1962 and to Dowty in 1966. At Dowty, Brian also acted as secretary to the Dowty Motor Club between 1979 and 1982, when he then became the club's chairman.

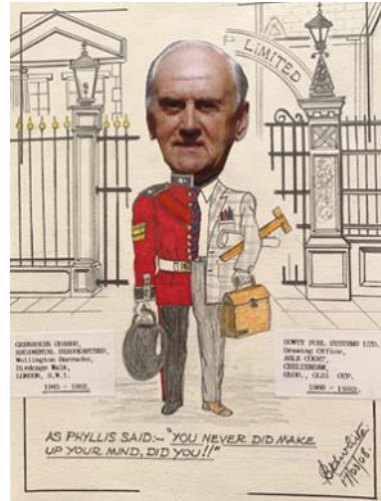
Phyllis and Brian were keen historians and were founder members of Gloucestershire Family History Society, and many in our Society will remember Brian 'meeting and greeting' members and visitors to our meetings. As membership secretary his humour was evident in pursuit of those who were a little late with their subscriptions, and his signature cartoon drawings, I believe, were instrumental in maintaining such a high membership.

Brian's caricature drawings were much admired, especially by the celebrities who were the recipients of them and who inevitably signed them for Brian. Recipients included many businessmen, sports personalities and even royalty. Sadly, in later years Brian's eyesight deteriorated significantly and he was no longer able to continue his drawing.

Brian loved going to society lectures as well as attending other lectures whenever possible, especially following Phyllis's death in 2006.

Sadly, over the last few years Brian's health worsened and he was admitted into care. He passed away on 20th March. I was proud to have been able to call Brian a good friend and I, along with many others, will miss his humour and kindness.

*Geoff North*



## Pigeon-gate –The Royal Old Well Gates at The Crippetts: Some Evidence

Located half-way along Crippetts Lane, on the boundary between Leckhampton and Shurdington, is a pair of iron gates, with square gate piers of scrolled wrought iron, each topped by a ball finial on which sits a cast iron pigeon. These gates and gate piers are Grade II listed, and the listing states they are ‘mid-late C19’ and ‘reputed to have once formed the entrance to the Old Well at Cheltenham’.

In her book *Cheltenham’s Ornamental Ironwork* (2nd ed. 1984) Amina Chatwin says that early 19th-century gate posts were often hollow in form, made of four panels of wrought ironwork, usually with a cast iron top. A couple of examples can still be seen in Cheltenham, at Halsey House in Pittville Lawn (built 1828-32) and at 25 Park Place, although these are far smaller than the 9ft-tall gate piers at the Crippetts. G P Johnson’s *New Historical & Pictorial Cheltenham Guide*, published 1846, contains a number of engravings showing wrought

ironwork gate piers at entrances to properties, including at the villas of the Imperial Promenade (the High Street end of the Promenade, the buildings that now include



Waterstones), at Lansdown Place and Lansdown Crescent, and in the railings around St Philip’s Church.

The gates at the Crippetts are unlikely to have been originally paired with the pigeon-topped gate piers. They are relatively plain with spear-headed uprights and heavy Vitruvian scrollwork along the bottom that bears no relation to the more ‘botanical’ flourishes of the scrollwork on the gate pillars.



### The Royal Well gateway:

In 1806 Henry Thompson bought a large area of land and began laying out the walks and rides of his Montpellier estate. Initially dispensing saline spa water from Hygeia House in Vittoria Walk, by 1809 he had built a pump room, the Montpellier Spa, and the facilities he offered subscribers were in direct competition to the Royal Old Well in neighbouring Bayshill. Originally the main entrance to the Old Well Walk was at the north end, in what became St George’s Road. Once the Montpellier develop-

ments had become established, it became pertinent to open a gateway in the southwest corner of the Royal Old Well ground, leading into Montpellier. This enabled visitors to access both enterprises more easily. This is the gateway where the Crippetts gate piers were originally located, although they are not necessarily the earliest pillars at the site.

In 1817 the gate between the Royal Old Well and Montpellier was locked, leading to furious correspondence in the *Cheltenham Chronicle*. One writer claimed that the proprietor of the Old Well, Joseph Chambers, had opened a free passage between the two enterprises when his spa became deserted after the opening of Montpellier. By locking the gates now he was hoping those drinking at the original spa would stay to walk in Old Well Walk. This was answered by a claim that the opening was put there by the Town Commissioners, under the Paving Act, at the suggestion and interest of Henry Thompson. However, the writer felt Thompson should not have a right of road along Old Well Walk as he had taken £50 for a right of way along his Vittoria Walk. A third letter suggested that the gates were now locked to annoy Mr Thompson, as he had not been forgiven for charging to open up Vittoria Walk – it was the revenge of a ‘malignant and depraved heart’.

The 1820 Post Office Map of Cheltenham shows the gateway in the east boundary of the Royal Old Well grounds, south of the spa buildings. The gate fronted Old Well Lane (now Montpellier Street) opposite a way to the Sherborne Spa (site of Queen’s Hotel). From the 1820s the ‘Gate leading from the Old Well to Montpellier Spa’ was designated a stand for fly carriages, wheel and sedan chairs.

### **Who installed the pigeon-topped gate piers?**

There are several possibilities as to who might have placed the pigeon gate piers at the Royal Old Well. The proprietor who had installed the gateway was Joseph Chambers, who actively improved the spas he took on. In 1829 he became the manager of the Imperial or Sherborne Spa, and the *Cheltenham Journal* of 6 April 1829 reported that he had lately removed the whole of his ‘paraphernalia’ from the Old Well, and the Imperial pump-room received ‘considerable alterations and embellishments’. He remained the principal lessee, but his successors at the Old Well were Mr and Mrs Holdship who, Amina Chatwin has suggested, may have installed the pigeon-topped gate pillars. They carried out a number of improvements and innovations at the Old Well, including lighting the Well Walk with gas, establishing Musical Promenades with a resident band, and erecting an aviary containing a collection of exotic birds.

The gates at this time are known to have been painted white, as they are mentioned in *Dolly Dubbins’ Diary*, a lampoon which appeared regularly in the *Morning Post*. In the edition of 30 July 1829 Dolly describes her family waiting to see the Duke of Gloucester, who was drinking at the Old Well. Her father was determined to attract the attention of the Duke and ‘planted himself against the gate leading to Mount Pillar’; when the Duke approached, ‘Pa ... made a most profound bow, down to the very ground, during which time the Duke passed by, and all that poor Pa got was three stripes of white paint from the gate, on his best blue coat’.

Joseph Chambers, overall lessee of various spas, under whose direction the Old Well Walks and neighbouring Promenades had been much improved, died in 1833. In December that year extensive fittings and fixtures of the King's or Royal Old Wells were put up for auction, including garden seats, shrubs and plants, lead cisterns, furniture, a summer house, rustic seats, busts, garden tools, wheelbarrows, a range of bells, a sun dial and a tump of hay. There is no mention of gates or gate piers in the list. (*Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 28 December 1833).

The next lessee of the Royal Old Wells was Miss Sarah Hasell, who was proprietor until the late 1840s when George Rowe and Samuel Onley took on the lease. Miss Hasell too made a number of improvements to the grounds, including 'many serpentine walks leading through a beautiful shrubbery' (*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 28 May 1835). She was possibly the last person who could have installed the pigeon-topped gate pillars; they were certainly at the Royal Old Well by 1844, as Dr Ker later recalled. In 1897 Dr Claudius Buchanan Ker (1821-1898), a homeopathic physician of Hadley House, Bayshill Road, gave a talk to the Friends in Council, a local coterie for social and literary fellowship (reproduced in the *Cheltenham Examiner*, 17 March 1910). He recalled his arrival in Cheltenham in 1844, and gave a good description of the town at that time.

*'... Royal Parade (Bayshill Road) ended with No.5, gardens beginning from that house and extending to Royal Well Terrace (St George's Road). In these gardens were the Pump Room of the King's Well, still, at that time, resorted to by a fair number of water drinkers; a large and handsome room, afterwards converted into a theatre, and now on its site are to be seen some of the buildings of the Ladies' College. The chief entrance to these gardens was through a green-painted gateway, on the supporting pillars of which were to be seen two pigeons, pigeons having been, so it was said, the discoverers of the mineral waters. That gateway was on the Bayshill side of the Promenade, and on the level of the Queen's Hotel, which had been built a short time before. ...'*

In 1854 the pigeon-topped gate pillars were in the news; John Hill was charged with stealing a cast iron pigeon, of 13lbs weight, from the entrance gates of the Royal Old Wells, the property of the lessee, Samuel Onley. Believing the pigeon to be of solid brass, perhaps misled by the fact that they were painted green, Hill attempted to sell it at Mr Smith's marine store in the High Street. He received two months' imprisonment with hard labour for his pains.

### **Removal to the Crippetts:**

By 1873 Samuel Onley's venture at the Royal Wells had failed, and much of the land had been developed for building. The Cheltenham Ladies' College had erected their first buildings on part of the site, the avenue of elms that had formed Well Walk had been cut down, and the land not yet built on was in the hands of the Gloucestershire Banking Company. The Bank offered to give up some of the Old Wells estate land to form a road from Old Wells Lane (now Montpellier Street), near the Queen's Hotel, to Bayshill Road. The Improvement Commissioners accepted this opportunity to improve communication in the area and what became Fauconberg Road was opened in 1874. The land that was given up for the road included the site of the Royal Well gates, which would have had to be removed at this time.

In 1871 **The Crippetts** had been put up for sale, having been farmed for several decades by the Theyer family. It was bought by William Smart Davis, owner and proprietor of the Queens Hotel. He set up a dairy herd at the Crippetts farm, to supply dairy produce to the hotel, and for a time used The Crippetts as a retreat. It was described as his ‘country residence’ in the *Cheltenham Examiner* of 22 September 1875. W S Davis would have been well aware of the changes to the area around the Royal Old Well, so near his hotel, and he seems the most likely person to have purchased the gate piers to embellish the drive to The Crippetts, when they were removed in 1873-4.

William Smart Davis let The Crippetts from 1877, while still maintaining his dairy herd at the farm there. He owned a considerable amount of other property, including Fiddlers Green Farm, Christ Church Farm and the Overton Park area, much of which supplied provisions for the Queen’s Hotel. Following his death on 22 July 1881, it took the Trustees of his Will over 20 years to sort out and sell his estate, valued at c£80,000 (equivalent to nearly £10,000,000 in 2020). The Crippetts was let to a series of tenants during this time, including Dr E T Wilson and his wife Mary, whose son Edward was inspired by the landscape and the abundant natural history to be found there.

The earliest newspaper reference to the origin of the iron gate piers (that I have found), appears in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 27 January 1912, in an article on the history of the Royal Old Well Walk, stating that they ‘now form the entrance to The Crippetts, but originally stood at one of the Old Well Walk entrances’.

*Jill Waller*

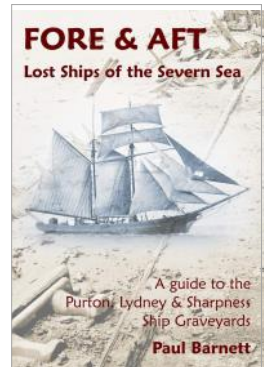
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## NEW PUBLICATION

### **Fore & Aft: Lost Ships of the Severn Sea**

by Paul Barnett

Paul Barnett is a maritime historian who regularly gives talks on aspects of shipping on the Severn. In this book he encapsulates the results of many years’ research into the histories and last resting places of the 121 ships buried at Purton, Lydney and Sharpness on the Lower Severn—the largest ship graveyard in mainland Britain. As a member of Friends of Purton Paul normally conducts guided tours of the hulks. This is not possible at present but will start again, it is hoped, in the spring of 2021. In the meantime there is much to be learned from this lavishly illustrated book, which contains over 450 unique photographs.



Signed copies may be obtained directly from the author, price £14.95 + £2.50 p&p by cheque to 19 Lea Road, Brockworth, Gloucester GL3 4JD, or via Bacs or Paypal to [barnadillo@aol.com](mailto:barnadillo@aol.com)



## BOOKS FOR SALE



### News from the CLHS Donated Books ‘Shop’

I have had a good sort out of the donated books, journals etc during the lock-down, and hope it won't be too long before things get back to normal. However, the Bookshop is always open, so please contact me via my details below with any special requests.

Having run the Bookshop for a few years, I am going to relinquish the role at the end of next season, May 2021. I hope someone will take the Bookshop on as it is such a good way of raising money for the Society. Until then, I want to sell as many books as possible to make it easier for the next person, so I have decided to have a bumper sale, which will run from now until the end of next May, with everything at HALF PRICE.

If you haven't been at meetings where the books have been on sale, please refer to my pages in past copies of the Newsletter and you will have an idea of current titles and prices.

Now is the time to build up your library!

If you wish to enquire about any books please contact me by phone on 01242 232740, or email [heatherbell71@hotmail.com](mailto:heatherbell71@hotmail.com) I am happy to deliver any books locally or they may be collected from my home address. Thank you for supporting the CLHS Bookshop.

*Heather Atkinson*

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## The Bryan Jerrard Award 2019

The Bryan Jerrard Award is given annually for what the judges believe to be the best published article on an aspect of Gloucestershire's history during the previous year. It is named after Bryan Jerrard, who was the Chairman of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council's Local History Committee (the predecessor of the Gloucestershire Local History Association) between 1978 and 1998. The winner and runner-up for the Award are usually announced at the GLHA's annual Local History Day, but due to the current health emergency, this year's event was postponed and the usual presentation of the Awards did not take place. Despite this, the Award prizes—book tokens for the winner and runner-up—were once again generously sponsored by The History Press.

### The winner of the 2019 Award is -

Mullin, David, 'Forty Shilling Freeholders? How the Foresters got the Vote', *The New Regard* (the Journal of the Forest of Dean Local History Society) **33** (2019).

### The runner-up is –

Hodsdon, James, 'Sea and Spa: The Two Careers of Captain Henry Skillicorne (1678/9 - 1763)', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **136** (2018).

### The other finalists for the 2019 Award were –

Dyer, Christopher, 'People on the move in Chipping Campden and District, 1200-1525', *Signpost* (the Journal of Chipping Campden History Society) **11** (Autumn 2019).

Ellis, Judith, 'George Townsend – Benefactor to Campden Boys', *Signpost* (the Journal of Chipping Campden History Society) **10** (Spring 2019).

Hudson, Janet, 'Marking time: some Stonehouse clocks and clockmakers', *Stonehouse History Group Journal* **8** (2019).

Ing, Chris, 'Highgrove – The Story of a Victorian Villa', *Charlton Kings Local and Family History Society Research Bulletin* **65** (2019).

Manton, Stuart, 'Cheltenham's Zoo Wars: Proposed Zoological Gardens in Pittville and The Park in the 1830s', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **35** (2019).

Maxwell, Carol, 'Those infectious little cripples – Painswick's Alexandra Hospital', *Painswick Chronicle* **21** (2018).

Moore-Scott, Terry, 'Living in a Severn-side village in the 17th/18th centuries: a study based on probate inventories for Minsterworth between 1614 and 1771', *Glevensis* (Gloucestershire Archaeology Annual Review) **51** (2018).

Williams, Clifford, 'The First Policewomen of Cheltenham: in Wartime and Peacetime, 1918 - 1945', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **35** (2019).



## *CAN YOU HELP?*

### **C W Northing, artist**

Charles 'Willie' Northing lived in the Cheltenham area from the late 1920s until 1939 and painted many local scenes, including this view of Cleeve Hill from Bishops Cleeve. As he was a professional artist most of his work was sold, but his descendants are anxious to restore as much of it as possible to the family, or at least to photograph any works now in private hands. Does anyone know the whereabouts of any picture by him? He normally signed his works C W Northing or CWN.



### **Tarren's market garden, Alstone Lane**

Some enquirers are looking for information about the market garden that was formerly run by their late father Ronald Tarren and their grandfather William Eric Tarren in Alstone Lane next to the old Police Station. They are particularly keen to find photographs of the house or garden. The only picture they have is in a wartime newspaper cutting which records how one of the large greenhouses was shattered by a bomb, leaving a massive crater next to the house. (Ronald Tarren thought the bomb had been aimed at the nearby Honeybourne line.) They would like to hear from anyone who remembers this or has any other memories of the market garden.

*If you can help with either of these queries please contact Jill Waller on 07512318866 or e-mail [jill.waller@virginmedia.com](mailto:jill.waller@virginmedia.com)*

## NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the November 2020 issue by  
**Monday 6th October 2020**  
 to the Editor: Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA  
 Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: [kboothman3@gmail.com](mailto:kboothman3@gmail.com)

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