



# Cheltenham Local History Society Journal 14 1998

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James Hodsdon  
32 King's Road  
Cheltenham GL52 6BG  
tel 01242 233045

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Mr B H White  
32 Turkdean Road  
Cheltenham GL51 6AL

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Cover illustration by Aylwin Sampson shows *The Rock House*, viewed from the south-east. Based on photographs and plans, the drawing reconstructs the house's appearance in its later years. (See article starting on p. 11.)



*(reproduced by courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums)*

# Clara Winterbotham 1880-1967: “Cheltenham’s First Lady”

JULIE COURTENAY

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‘HOW VERY interesting!’ commented Queen Mary on being introduced to Cheltenham’s first woman mayor, Clarissa Winterbotham, in February 1922. However, the events which determined the rise of Clara (to use the name she was better known by) to this position - as one of only two women mayors elected in 1921 - are no less interesting for the light they shed on a prominent local family and its place in Cheltenham over several decades.

Clara was born into a family with roots in Cheltenham at least into the 18th century. Her great-grandfather William, a noted Baptist minister, was sent to stay in 1770 with his maternal grandparents, the Hyetts, in Cheltenham<sup>1</sup>. Later William settled as minister of Shortwood Baptist Chapel in the Nailsworth valley but his four sons were educated and trained as solicitors and thus began a process which established a family network of professional and political interests throughout the county, but particularly in Stroud, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham.

William’s eldest son, Rayner, moved to Cheltenham in the mid-1820s just as the town was in the grip of ‘brick and mortar mania’<sup>2</sup>. It must surely have seemed an attractive and vibrant place to a young solicitor and Rayner was soon joined in his practice by his youngest brother, John Brend<sup>3</sup>. John had married in 1828 and needed to establish a family home. One of the prime new residential areas was the Pittville Estate. Building work there had been abruptly halted by the national financial crash of 1826 but a recovery was well underway by the early 1830s. John bought a plot on the north-east corner of Clarence Square for £330 and by June 1835 his home - Amberley House - was being built<sup>4</sup>. Over the next 130 years or so, John himself, his son James and his granddaughter Clara would live within 200 yards of their original family home.

Clara grew up in a family whose members had been committed Liberals for three generations. Her grandfather and father had been active in local government since 1852. On his father’s death in 1881 James became head of the firm of solicitors (now styled Winterbotham Gurney & Co) and was also elected as one of Cheltenham’s first aldermen. He may have been tempted to go further in the political sphere but he refused nomination as a local Liberal candidate because of his many other commitments. However, he continued to work for the Liberal cause and became president of the East Gloucestershire Liberal Association.

But the heart of James’s life was his family. He and his Australian born wife, Eliza, whom he had married in 1879, had seven children, all born at their house in Wellington Square, Cranley Lodge, between 1880 and 1891. James delighted in his family, especially his first-born, Clara, and he was an attentive, firm but amusing parent. On eight year old Clara complaining about how hard she found it to stick to her piano practice, James replied ‘One is not only learning the piano - one is learning first the piano, second obedience, third

patience, fourth self-control, fifth unselfishness & sixth to sixtieth all the other things that help one to make the lives of others and one's own life happy and bright and good... Do you think Mrs Darby ever imagines she can teach such a lot at once?'

From an early age Clara displayed an engaging ability to organise herself and others. One of her few surviving childhood writings is a note of plans for an outing on Saturday 17 October, 1891:

1 o'clock	lunch
1.45	start from Cranley Lodge in pony trap
1.50	call for Gwen (a cousin)
2.15	get out in Spring Lane for walk
3.30	turn homewards
	if feet wet walk home
	if feet dry
4.20	catch bus at Prestbury Post Office
5	tea in school room
6.25	entertainment (to be arranged during walk)
7.30	finis!

After her education at the Ladies College between 1890 and 1900<sup>5</sup>, Clara began to travel further afield to visit friends and family. Her aspirations at this stage are not recorded but remarks of a reassuring kind from her father in 1898 suggest that she was beginning to show some signs of impatience with her domestic outlook: 'Girls at home sometimes think & feel as if they had 'nothing to do', 'no object in life', and so on. But, if they only knew, the Prize of Life is to be the light and happiness of life to those in the home'. For the time being, Clara continued with the path determined for her by her family and in 1900 she spent some months in Germany to learn the language. While she was there her father wrote 'you were quite right in thinking we should not grudge you the time for your Nursing duties. I hope they will be crowned with a lasting success.' There is no more evidence of what this work involved, but it suggests that she was at this stage looking for a meaningful occupation.

Back in England her brothers and sisters were still at school or college - the boys at Oxford. On her return Clara resumed the pattern of domestic life interspersed with travelling, her most ambitious solo journey being to India in 1907 where she stayed with relatives, the Hills. Some indication of her future ambition is perhaps suggested by her father's worries that life at home would seem very dull and duties very monotonous on her return.

By now, and by contrast, Clara's brothers were settling on their chosen careers: John Brend (Jack) became an Anglican priest in 1908; James Percival (Percy) qualified as a solicitor and in 1911 was elected a town councillor for Cheltenham; Cyril - very much the brightest academic star of the family - had been called to the Bar. In addition, and to his father's delight, he had been adopted as prospective Liberal candidate for the East Gloucestershire constituency. However, their father's health was failing and in 1913 he was advised to take a holiday. Clara accompanied her parents to Egypt but her father was taken ill in Luxor and died there. At this stage Clara was poised to take on responsibility for

running the family home but the events of the First World War were to transform her world.

Immediately war was declared, her two brothers Percy and Cyril joined up. Using her nursing experience in Dresden, in October 1914 Clara decided to 'do her bit' by training in a London hospital for a few months. On returning to Cheltenham she worked at the St John Hospital, recently opened in the Gloucester Road School where she was appointed a VAD staff nurse. Clara spent the whole period of the war at the Gloucester Road Hospital until its closure in February 1919. The sensible, serious young girl had emerged as an efficient and capable administrator. She was appointed as the hospital's quartermaster in April 1918 and was also on the town's Food and Fuel Control Committee. At the end of the war she was awarded the MBE for her services and had established her local reputation for hard work and dedication to duty.

An enormous blow came to the family when news reached them that Cyril had been killed in action at Ypres in August 1916. As well as being marked out as a talented politician, he had inherited his father's love of poetry and his own poems were highly regarded<sup>6</sup>. Clara's other brother, Percy, had resigned from the town council in 1917 because he was still on active service and when he returned to Cheltenham after the war, he threw himself into the family firm and did not take a prominent part in local politics. With her father and closest brother dead, and Percy tied up with his professional commitments, perhaps it was now that, with the war finishing and her nursing duties coming to an end, Clara felt she could and should carry on the Winterbotham tradition of public service and responsibility.

The wartime experiences of many women had broken down barriers to their taking an active role in local and national politics. Women had been able to stand for council elections since 1907 and by 1914 there were some 50 women councillors in England and Wales. Furthermore, by 1918 the way was open for them to become MPs<sup>8</sup>. In fact, Clara herself was 'elected' alderman (i.e. not elected by the borough voters but co-opted by the councillors themselves) in May 1918 but turned the offer down because she felt she had no time to spare from her hospital work. However, her friends eventually convinced her to change her mind and she was co-opted in July that year as Cheltenham's first woman councillor to fill a vacancy for the East Ward caused by the election of W H Horsley as alderman. She stood at the elections of November 1920 and was returned for the East Ward.

Her performance as councillor convinced many of her colleagues that she should be proposed as mayor to succeed Alderman Bendall in 1921. The proposal was not unanimous - Edwinson Green wrote to the editor of the *Echo* that he had opposed it because 'the serious and unparalleled condition of our country at home and abroad ... requires the highest qualities of business capacity, experience and firmness of will that ... *only a man* ... could be expected to face and carry through successfully'.

Nevertheless the election was carried and Cheltenham was one of only two towns with women mayors appointed that year (the other being Southport). The formal ceremony in the Council Chamber on November 12th was packed with women supporters eager to share in this historic occasion, including members of the Cheltenham Women Citizens' Association and the local branch of the National Council for Women. Her proposer, Mr J Stewart, spoke of her record as a councillor, as well as 'her noble presence and charming manner'. Mr

Yarnold who seconded paid tribute to the Winterbotham family and hoped that her term in office would 'forward more speedily our true social progress, and influence in a wider sphere women's emancipation, which must benefit not only our town ... but the whole of civilisation'.

Clara no doubt enjoyed status as a Winterbotham and the family name may have been enough to capture a foothold on the civic ladder, but her achievement by becoming Cheltenham's first woman mayor seems to have definitely been on her own merits. In her modest but humorous way she had her own answer to the question 'Why appoint a woman?'. To gales of laughter among the seventy or so at her mayoral banquet in the Pillar Room of the Town Hall, she said she thought this reply would appeal to the Town Improvement Committee: 'Because it is an excellent advertisement which costs you nothing!'

While there were pressing problems of unemployment and hardship in the town - one of her first meetings was with striking tram drivers - her year in office is marked more by the number of conferences which were held there. Not only did these reflect the town's growing prestige but they were an important source of income and employment. Press reports show Clara as a confident and amusing speaker at the opening of these events and frequently note that Cheltenham's reputation was enhanced by her performance in the role, bearing out Clara's own thoughts on the value of cheap advertising!

Apart from these duties, as mayor she was also chief magistrate and was thus the first woman to preside over the Cheltenham Bench. She had many opportunities to address public meetings and she frequently paid tribute to the influence of her family upbringing particularly her father's example. This moral foundation and her own experience had taught her how important a religious education was. She spoke in support of Sunday schools, modern school buildings for the poorer areas of town, temperance, the role of charities and the importance of the League of Nations.

Council minutes for 1921 give a flavour of the day-to-day running of its business. Clara sat on the housing committee, the street & highways committee, the general purposes & watch committee, the burial board committee, the finance committee and the art gallery & museum committee - which she also chaired. Concerns ranged from nuisances caused by council tenants keeping hens, to using direct unemployed labour to repair the soup kitchen. It was also reported that the fire brigade had to be called out twice in one month and the chief constable was asked to recommend points in town for 'drive slowly' warning notices for 'mechanically propelled vehicles'.

The list of Clara's activities and responsibilities at this time is quite remarkable. Not only was she attending to all her public commitments but in the early 1920s she was also running a large household which contained her two sisters' children, her elderly mother and her sister Lilian who was slightly simple. An additional concern was her brother Jack who had had a breakdown and was in the Barnwood House mental hospital in Gloucester.

Her sisters Beatrice and Cicely had both married missionaries (Francis Monk and Handley Hooper) and were working overseas while their children were young. Cyril Hooper and his brother John were aged four and two when they went to stay with Clara ('Aunt Tat')

at Cranley Lodge in 1921. They and their cousins, Elizabeth and Jim Monk, all lived at the nursery in Cranley Lodge under the wing of the old family nanny, Nurse Bartlett.

Her nephew Cyril recollects that 'it was quite a large household. There was also a cook helped by two kitchen maids in the large basement run of rooms; a parlour maid who looked after the dining room and pantry, sometimes with the help of another maid as she also answered the door bell and guests; upstairs were two chamber maids - an under-nanny and for a period two of them to take us walks and see to our meals which we had in the nursery except for Sunday lunch in the dining room and tea with Granny in the drawing room. There was a gardener and a groom or chauffeur to see to transport into town.'

Clara ran the household efficiently but caringly. She took the children on Easter and summer holidays and on Saturday picnics, bought them clothes and games, wrote weekly letters from them to their parents, and arranged for their education at the Ladies' College Kindergarten, as well as making sure that they were brought up within a strictly religious family discipline. Prayers were held every morning after breakfast with all the staff and the children. Bedtime prayers were said in the nursery. Sundays meant services at St Matthew's in the morning and again after lunch - and no games were allowed that day apart from a missionary version of Happy Families.

Needless to say, the holiday outings were a source of great excitement. The children would spend Easter at a farm on Cooper's Hill, reached by a two-horse bus via the Old Bath Road from which they descended half-way up the hill to give the horses a lighter load! They enjoyed watching aeroplanes loop the loop before landing at the aerodrome at Brockworth. In the summer there was such a crowd of children, aunts and nurses that on one occasion Clara arranged for a saloon car to be hitched to the back of the train to go to the seaside in Wales - at each change of train the carriage was detached and linked to the next!

Little wonder then that Clara's mother's letters to her youngest daughter, Cicely, in Kenya often refer to how hard-pressed Clara was with all her work, but Eliza always praised Clara for never neglecting her family. The two sisters and their mother often shared views on politics yet as Cyril Hooper recalls it was Cicely who was apparently more of a militant women's rights campaigner than Clara - she was nicknamed the Kenyan suffragette. In October 1922 Eliza wrote to Cicely explaining that they were 'all in agonies of an election with the Liberal candidate here doing his best but, of course, he is a stranger to everyone. He is an honest straightforward man and people seem to like him. We had a big meeting at the Town Hall the other night for the League of Nations and both candidates were there and he certainly compared favourably with our old friend Sir James Agg-Gardner ... I believe all [Sir James's] supporters are heartily sick of him and would have adopted Clara without a moment's hesitation, Liberal and Conservative, and she would have got in. She has been asked by her admirers on both sides why she isn't going in and assuring her they will vote for her, but sometimes these promises don't mean much.'

Clara declined to stand and decided instead that her role as a borough councillor was the more appropriate way to serve both town and party, but I would also suspect that her family commitments were one of the principal causes for her setting her sights at a local rather than national level. While press attention on the general election was dwarfing the

issue of the election of the mayor, Clara asked her fellow councillors to appoint a committee so that the question could be thoroughly discussed without her being present. However, in the albeit partisan words of her mother, Clara was being 'implored to take [the mayoralty] for another year by all sorts and conditions of men and women. There may be one or two in the Corporation who might not be broken hearted ... who do not approve of women taking such a conspicuous place, but they must be very few'. Her supporters declared that she had gone from 'triumph to triumph' and Clara was unanimously reelected as mayor. At the same time she was also elected alderman with her mother reflecting 'Alderman Winterbotham... Doesn't it sound strangely familiar, the daughter instead of the father and she will also wear his gown when she is no longer mayor'.

At the beginning of 1923, Eliza had an operation and within a few months, after a slight heart attack, was practically an invalid. However, Clara continued to care for her mother at home with a nurse as well as looking after the children. Her main activities outside the home, apart from her council duties, were her support for the local Liberal Association and the Missionary Society. As chairman of the Liberal Association, in June 1924 she was occupied with helping a new candidate, Mr Holmes, in his campaign to win local support. His very smart wife dressed beautifully and travelled a good deal. Clara wryly observed that if the candidate's wife made the mistake of trying to patronise the Cheltenham Liberal Women's Association woe betide her husband's chances 'for if they dislike anyone it is all up with them.'

In order to support the missionary work of Beatrice and Cicely and their husbands, both Clara and her mother were indefatigable fundraisers. Clara gave much time and energy to the Cheltenham association of the Church Missionary Society and shared the organisation of a large CMS exhibition in the town for October 1924. Her mother could not think how she was managing to keep on as she did, with an October election looming as well. It threatened to be the last straw, but Eliza was glad to report to Cicely that Clara felt there was no choice but to stick to the exhibition rather than the election: 'I think Clara is quite right to keep to her work which has been filling her thoughts and time for the last year - God's work'. Clara took heart that the exhibition had been a great success and would have 'a great spiritual effect on the life of the town and district'.

However, inevitably Clara's own health broke down and for several months during 1925 she was housebound. Her brother Percy died in December that year; he had quietly dealt with all the family's business concerns so Clara was faced with having to take on even more responsibilities. Not surprisingly Cicely determined to return to England to take charge of her two children again in the spring of 1925 and with this the long series of letters from England stopped abruptly.

The press of public and family duties from the mid-1920s left Clara little time to record events for posterity and this, combined perhaps with her typical modesty about her achievements, means that her remaining life is relatively sparsely documented in the family archive. Apart from photographs of borough ceremonies in the 1940s<sup>8</sup>, the remaining evidence in the archive to her later years is found mainly in a few letters of condolence written by well-wishers to her surviving sister, Cicely, and in a few summaries of her career in local newscuttings.



By 1954, when she retired from the council at the age of 74, she had been mayor five times and in 1943 had been only the second woman (the first being Miss Beale) to be presented with the honorary freedom of the borough. At her acceptance speech she characteristically paid tribute to her father who had taught her that in a community it was the duty of everyone to take a share of the responsibility in some way or another for the government and well-being of the place.

Clara had certainly lived up to his expectations: council minutes during the war years showed that she sat on at least seven committees, at various times chairing the public health committee, the general purposes and watch committee, the British Restaurants committee and throughout the war, the Art Gallery and Museum committee. In the late 1940s and 50s she also chaired the education committee, in 1951 becoming another first - the first woman president of the National Association of Divisional Executives for Education. She was a member of the Burnham Committee (set up to recommend teachers' salary scales) and chairman of the governors of Pate's Grammar School. Clara remained a governor of Pate's up to 1966. In a letter of condolence following Clara's death in 1967, the then retired headteacher of Pate's Junior School pointed out that Clara had had to fight against the Ministry of Education for the school's creation in 1946 and that she had looked on it very much as her child'. Another letter from the Principal of the College of Art said that had they not had Clara's support in the early days the new college would never have been built. His view was that Clara was the one person who had done most for education in Cheltenham in this generation.

In the late 1920s, when her household of nieces and nephews returned to their parents, Clara moved from Cranley Lodge to 'The Garden House' which she had had built to her own design on land nearby. Subsequently, she moved to an apartment in Pittville Lawn before the onset of Alzheimer's disease which meant, sadly, that she had to spend her last days in a nursing home.

Clara occasionally reflected that she would be the last by the name of Winterbotham in Cheltenham - with her brothers all dying early or unmarried only her youngest sister survived her. Perhaps now is the time to re-appraise the role of 'Cheltenham's First Lady' and place her at least alongside her more illustrious counterpart, Miss Beale, in the annals of the town. However, even at this stage there is still more to glean from the local press and other archive sources to do full justice to her contribution to Cheltenham.

## Notes

The main part of the family's archive was given to Gloucestershire Record Office in 1994 by Clara's nephew, Cyril Hooper, who now lives in Ludlow. It comprises letters, scrapbooks, photographs, sketches and other personal mementoes (GRO reference D5731). Mr Hooper also kindly sent me some of his own recollections of his childhood in Cheltenham in the 1920s which have been added to the archive at the GRO.

Other records have been dispersed among museums or are still with family members: Mr Hooper gave Cheltenham Museum a lovely collection of photographs including a set of small hand-coloured portraits made in 1855 of the main family members. Letters and medals of Cyril Winterbotham, who served with the Gloucester Regiment in the First World War, are now at the Regimental Museum in Gloucester. Some more recent correspondence is still with the family although letters written while Cicely Hooper was in Kenya have been given to the Church Missionary Society Archives.

Cheltenham Borough Council's own archive is a prime source for Clara's official duties. It too is held at the GRO and will be more readily available to researchers in 1999 when a full catalogue is due to be completed.

- <sup>1</sup> GRO D729: Transcript of recollections by William Winterbotham
- <sup>2</sup> Steven Blake, *The History of the Pittville Estate* (quoting from the *Cheltenham Chronicle*, November 1825)
- <sup>3</sup> Local directories; and see also GRO D2202 for records of the Winterbothams' solicitors' practice.
- <sup>4</sup> Blake, *op. cit.*
- <sup>5</sup> Information supplied by Cheltenham Ladies' College archivist.
- <sup>6</sup> Cheltenham Library holds a copy of *For Remembrance: Soldier Poets who have Fallen in the War* (printed for private circulation only) which was presented by Clara in 1927
- <sup>7</sup> Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government* (OUP)
- <sup>8</sup> Cheltenham Museum: collection presented by Cyril Hooper.

*We acknowledge with thanks the generosity of Mr Hooper in meeting the cost of preparing for publication the photograph accompanying this article.*

# The Follies of Cheltenham

OLIVER BRADBURY

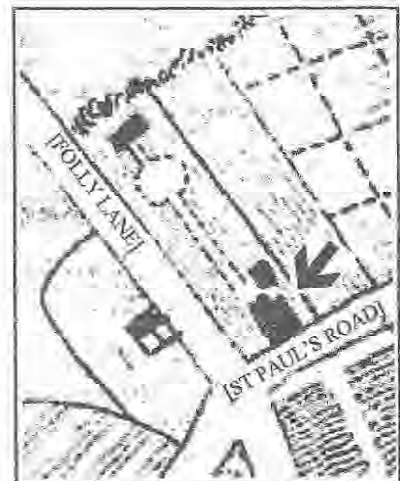
*'Among the eccentricities (if they may be so called) are various specimens of rustic work, and all apparently in excellent taste. As to the wood work, it has but two principles, equal size in the meshes (if reticulated) and utter extinction of the smallest approach to formality. The rest is imitation cottagery. A very ingenious clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Ferryman, unrivalled in this respect, and in his primrose and flowery banks which have the rare quality of being utterly divested of formality, has erected a cottage on the Bath road, entirely in this style. Buildings of this kind are not frequent, indeed they are considered toys; but as places of temporary residence, and not requiring heavy sacrifices in the construction and outfit, they are undoubtedly eligible.'*

T D Fosbroke, *Account of Cheltenham*, 1826

ONE DOES not normally associate Cheltenham with follies, and it is arguable that there has never been a true folly (i.e. a truly useless building) in the town. Nevertheless the term can reasonably embrace lesser degrees of architectural eccentricity, and this article is about the unusual buildings of Cheltenham. In this part, six dwelling-houses are considered, in chronological order as far as this can be established; only one of them still survives. The first existed by 1806, and most of the rest had come into being by the 1820s; it is perhaps not surprising that a boom period such as this was in Cheltenham should include a higher number of unusual houses. Several of the stylistic variations of Regency architecture are present: Wilkinson's Folly, Ivanhoe and Lansdown Castle belong to the Gothic revival, The Rock House has much of the grotto about it, while The Hermitage falls into that 'artfully rustic' category known as the *cottage orné*. Part Two (next year) will look at the history of a number of 'non-residential' follies - grottoes, summer-houses, gazebos, pagodas and other structures. Some have been mentioned before in various publications, but this article attempts to bring them all together, and to illustrate several for the first time.

## 1. Cook's Folly

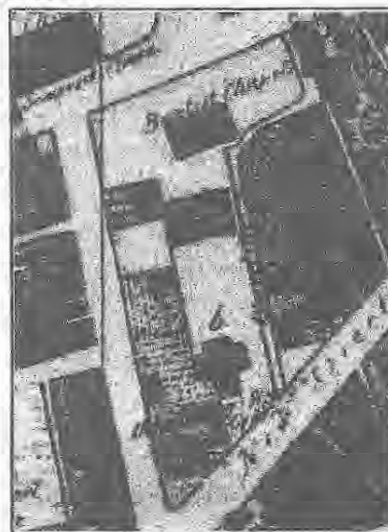
This building stood somewhat to the east of the angle formed by today's St Paul's Road and Folly Lane. On the 1806 map, it is marked simply 'Cook's'; the house-name is noted for the first time in 1811, when 'Mr Cook, Folly' was charged a Poor Rate of 3s 9d (GRO P78 OV 1/1 Div 3, p. 47). The first useful indication of its plan is on Griffith's 1825 map; the 'Post Office' map of 1820 is here almost certainly erroneous, showing a misplaced Ashgrove Cottage. The 1825 map, on which the inset map is based, shows a nearly square block with a small extension to the north, and a fairly large ornamental garden, also to the north. The plan evidence gives no clue as to why the building was labelled a folly. The surname Cook(e) is not rare, but it is conjectured



that the owner was the Thomas Cooke who was town surveyor 1786-95. The original house-name is still listed in the 1844 Directory, but seems to have fallen into disuse soon after. A building on this site can be traced on maps up to 1926, when council development of the area was starting, though continuity of the structure with Cook's house is uncertain.

## 2. Wilkinson's Folly (later known as The Castle), Chapel Street

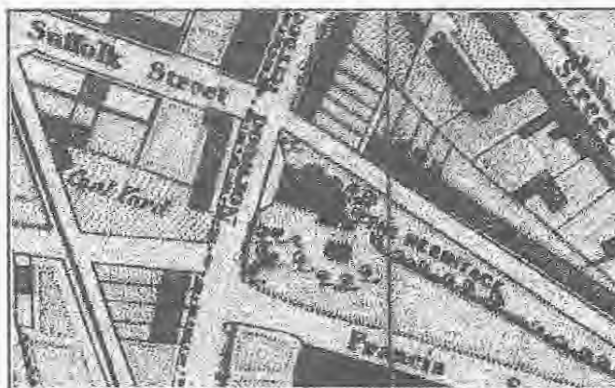
This cruciform building, probably of about 1814, is named in the key to the 1820 map. On the inset, it is the building marked 'h', between the north end of Chapel Street and what is now Ambrose Street. It appears again, though unnamed, on the 1825 map, but the site had apparently been redeveloped by 1834. In the absence of other buildings of any size in Chapel Street beside the chapel itself, Wilkinson's Folly was very probably the 'valuable Castellated House or Building in Chapel Street with a large piece of ground in front, and a neat Gothic Cottage built at the end thereof' advertised in 1821 (*Chronicle*, 22 March). Both properties were put up for auction in 1828 (*Cheltenham Journal*, 22 December), the house by then 'being usually known as The Castle'. They were leasehold (held under the trustees of the Baptist chapel), with some 14 years of the term expired in 1828, indicating a building date around 1814. Its history is



otherwise unknown; no other reference by name has yet come to light. The only Wilkinson in the 1820 Directory is Mrs E Wilkinson, 'Mistress of the Sherbourn Spa'.

## 3. The Hermitage, Bath Road

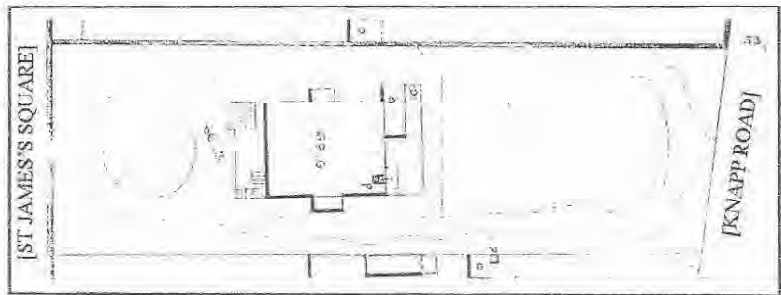
This was the home of J B G Ferryman, and was originally known as Ferryman's Cottage. Its grounds were bounded to the north side by the line of what is now Hermitage Street, and to the south by Francis Street (see inset detail from Merrett's 1834 map). From its alignment, one may deduce it was probably built not long after the new road to Bath was opened, in the early 1820s. As there is no known visual depiction of the house it is difficult to determine exactly what was



unusual about it. However, Fosbroke's description (see introductory quotation above) suggests rustic woodwork, and its plan was a large house with a bow to the north opposite Norwood Terrace situated in a large garden of a tapering shape. An advertisement in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 11 September 1826 describes it thus: 'That Elegant FREEHOLD RESIDENCE, called THE HERMITAGE, now in the occupation of J B G Ferryman, Esq ... It consists of a beautiful Cottage Ornee, built in the rustic style ... is secluded from the public eye by the most luxuriant shrubs and plantations.' The Hermitage disappeared sometime between 1834 and 1855-57, the site giving way to Victorian terraced houses.

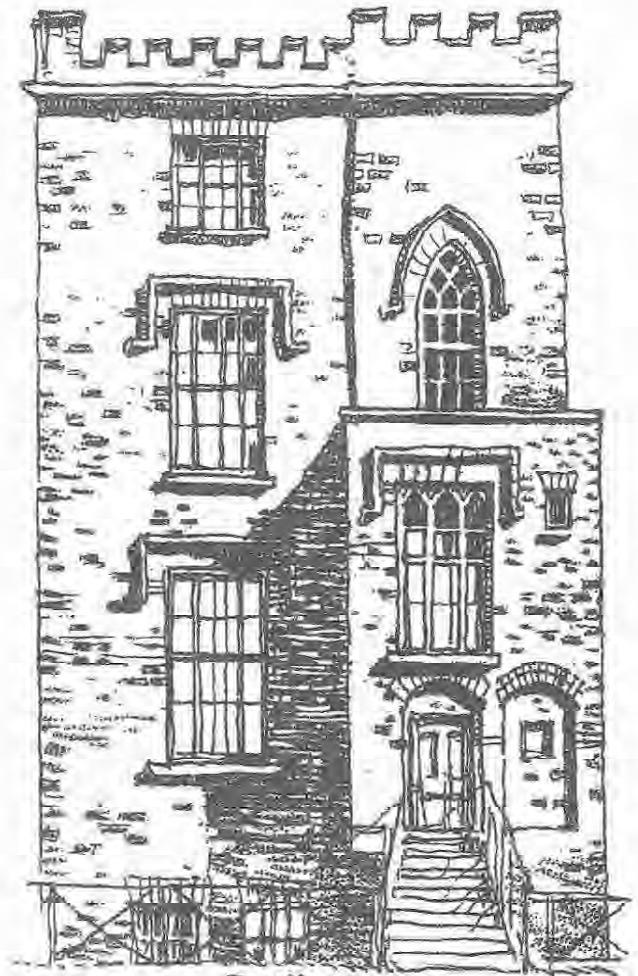
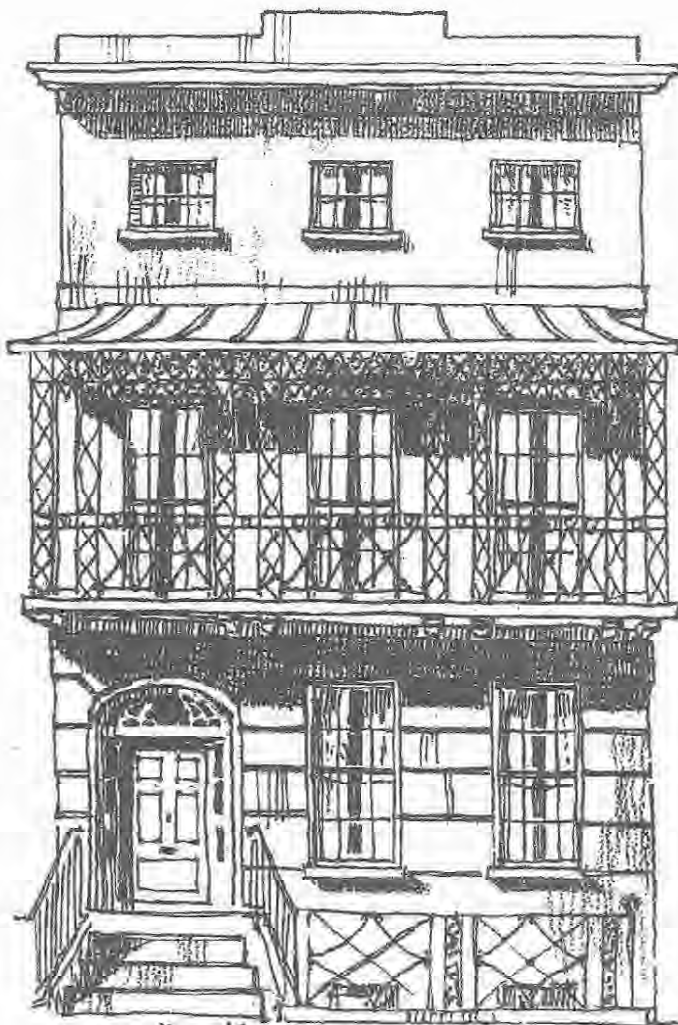
4. Ivanhoe, St James's Square

Ivanhoe lies on the north side of St James's Square. It appears at first to be a conventional, attractive Regency house with a stucco façade, and a fine ironwork veranda, built between 1820-25 (it is marked on the 1825 map). It is not clear when it acquired its present name, but



Ivanhoe in 1855-57 (from Old Town Survey)

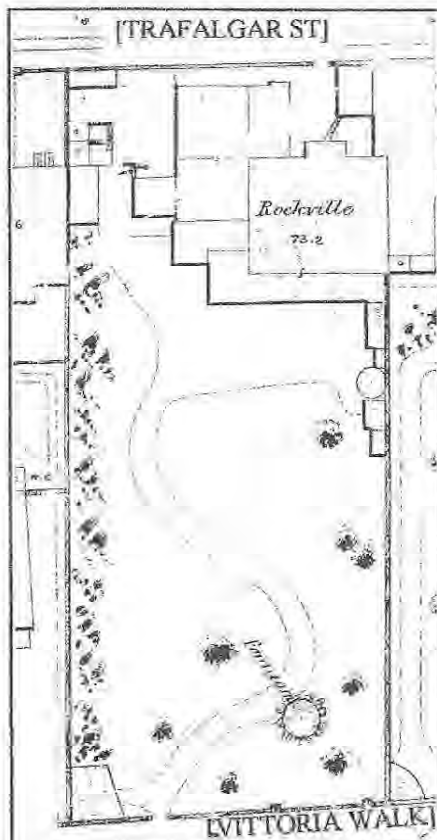
Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* appeared in 1819, which would fit neatly with the other evidence. What makes the house unusual is its combination of a neo-classical front with a brick Gothic rear (visible from Knapp Road). The 'Gothic' was more pronounced before Ivanhoe lost the castellated parapet which complemented the Gothic landing window. The contrast is clear in Aylwin Sampson's sketches below, which recreate the original front and rear elevations, shorn of recent additional wings. No other Cheltenham building combines classical and Gothic, and the only precedent which comes to mind is J B Rebecca's Castle Goring, Sussex, built between c. 1795-1815, combining the Greek and Gothic Revival albeit on a grander scale. The castellation may have been influenced by that of nearby Wilkinson's Folly.



### 5. The Rock House, Vittoria Walk

Although now largely forgotten and surprisingly undocumented, The Rock House must stake a claim to be Cheltenham's most idiosyncratic building - see Aylwin Sampson's cover illustration. With frontages on both Vittoria Walk and Trafalgar Street, it was directly north of Nelson Cottage; its site is now occupied by Nos 8-12 Trafalgar Street. Verey describes the exterior thus: 'a cottage orné built of tufa, vermiculated coloured rocks, and shells, of three storeys, with a coved eaves cornice, is said to have been occupied by Nelson's Captain Hardy'; in fact, the rock decoration extended to the interior as well (see below).

Recent study of the deeds puts the origins of The Rock House at around 1820. As 'Waterloo Cottage', it is marked on the 1820 map (but not on the 1819 map) as the southernmost of a terrace of three. Waterloo Cottage is listed in the *Annales* until 1840 (though no occupant is listed 1837-40), and then in 1842 it appears under a new name, 'Rockville', occupied by a Captain W H Dwarris: the deeds show he acquired it in 1840. The implication is that Dwarris took over an empty Regency house and within a year or two had it remodelled into something unparalleled in Cheltenham. The 1855-57 Old Town Survey (see extract) suggests the structures attached to the main house were at that time slightly different from those seen later. By 1917-18 'Rockville' had been renamed 'The Rock House', and is listed under Trafalgar Street rather than Vittoria Walk.



'Rockville', 1855-57 (OTS)

The suggestion that Captain Hardy (later Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy - 1769-1839) actually lived there may have been fuelled by the name Trafalgar Street, and the presence of a Nelson Cottage nearby, but is otherwise unsubstantiated. However, there is some evidence of a less direct connection. The National Monuments Record has three photographs labelled Rock House. Two are of an interior grotto labelled as a 'conservatory' with a lady posing inside. One is endorsed 'The Rock House Cheltenham Oct. 1919', and adds 'This conservatory is lined with tufa rock brought back as ballast by Capt. Hardie (*sic*) on his last voyage. The Rock conservatory constructed from the ballast of Capt. Hardie's ship on his last voyage back from the S. Seas. This was Nelson's Hardie'. If this is accurate, the ballast must have been in storage for a while, as Hardy's duties on the South American station ended in 1826. The third photograph is something of a mystery: it shows a two-storey house (the central block of Rock House had three), five bays wide, with a full-width ground-floor garden veranda. It is a Victorian photograph with five people posing like stone on a croquet lawn. Conceivably this earlier photograph shows the house prior to a late remodelling, but this is not at all certain.

Who designed The Rock House for Dwarris? We don't know; if as seems likely it acquired its distinctive appearance in 1841-2, it could perhaps be an example of the work of

T Newman, listed as a grotto builder in the 1843 directory.

The façade was clad in a chocolate-coloured rock, speckled with a contrasting lighter coloured rock, and conches, all very much like the internal lining of a grotto in reverse. A prominent white, wooden, dentilled cornice made an unusual contrast to the rich cladding. The roof had fish-scale tiles, and four prominent chimney stacks covered in the same cladding. There was a lower three-bay wing clad in the same, and a smaller extension (perhaps a conservatory) with a pointed roof of three or four gables again in fish scale, and ornamental barge board eaves. The first floor windows of the main block were attractively glazed with small multiple panes, and had distinctive arched lintels picked out in the lighter coloured rock. The grotto-like cladding was continued on the sides of the building and extensions, and on the rear elevation with the white cornice (not continued on the sides) which actually touches the neighbouring building. This elevation was perhaps slightly more conventional with at least six symmetrically-placed windows. A 1975 photograph by the late Robert Paterson (GRO) indicates a small, narrow yard at the rear of the building. Indeed, maps and photographs indicate that the main garden lawn was to the front of the house set back from Vittoria Walk.

If the exterior was extraordinary then the interior was bizarre. The only documentation is in the National Monuments Record photographs of the conservatory, which show a grotto room with asymmetrical openings and arches. Like the exterior there were conches and fossils set into the ballast. Even the window glazing bars are constructed of the ballast. Above a door (conventional early Victorian in design) there appears to be a skylight or

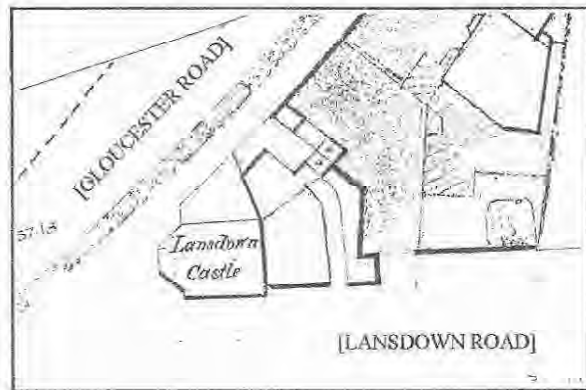


*National Monuments Record - reproduced with permission*

a large fanlight casting an ambient glow, and next to it a wall mounted mirror. The floor had conventional terracotta tile-work softened with a rug. At the time of the 1919 photograph (previous page) the room was furnished with three or more chairs, a fern, and flowers in the windows. In 1928, sale particulars mentioned the 'Lounge Hall with tile floor and glazed roof, stone grotto-work walls and door to garden', besides characterising the whole house as 'a picturesque erection with walls ornamented with rock-work' (GRO D4858 2/2/1: 1 March 1928; Engall, Cox & Co). Dr Nigel Temple recalls the building as having 'a dark ground floor room with walls and ceiling encrusted with shells'. Regrettably this eccentric building was demolished in the spring of 1978. It had been derelict for most the 1970s, and latterly had squatters living in it. Arguments presented for its preservation (eg, article in the *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 6 January 1973) failed to prevail.

#### 6. Lansdown Castle, Lansdown Road

This was built in the 1850s, and is marked on the 1855-57 OTS (inset). It was a rectangular two-storey building filling an irregularly shaped site between the Lansdown and Gloucester Roads (now a patch of grass next to the traffic lights). It had a three-bay front set back behind a single-storey shop front, and abutted a neighbouring house. The other two exposed elevations were two bays wide only. All the windows were mullioned and had a hooded drip mould above them.



The parapet was battlemented with projecting crenellated corner turrets on moulded bases. The overall construction was presumably brick covered in render. Its original purpose is unclear - its site would suggest a toll house (it was near a tollgate). It became the rear premises to a grocer's in c.1870, and then a tobacconist's prior to demolition in c.1972. It is pictured in Steven Blake's *A Pictorial History of Cheltenham*, 1996, where he writes that it was the inspiration for Holst's early operetta of 1892, titled 'Lansdown Castle'. At least two other views of the castle exist (both of the front), and are in the Cheltenham Museum collection.

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks for help with this article are due to Roger Beacham, Dr Steven Blake, Tony Davy, James Hodsdon, Christine Lowe, Maureen Lockwood, Eric Miller, Ken Pollock, John Randall, Dr Nigel Temple, and Amy Woolcott.

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# A Cheltenham Century 1839-1939

BARBARA KING

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BY 1839 when the *Cheltenham Examiner* made its first appearance, the once 'merriest sick resort on earth' was well on its way to becoming, in Tennyson's words, 'a polka, a parson-worshipping place'. The Duke of Wellington, whose last visit had long been made, had attracted to the town many military men, some of whom had served under him at Waterloo, and many of these remained as permanent residents. The Victorian age as we understand it had scarcely begun. The young queen had been on the throne for only two years and had not yet married her beloved Albert. But in Cheltenham there was already more than a hint of that rigid respectability, that dedication to self-improvement and family life which was to set the tone for years to come. Much of the credit for this change must be given to the man whom Tennyson was to dub (somewhat inappropriately) as the 'Pope of Cheltenham', Francis Close. Since his arrival in the town in 1824, Close with his evangelical zeal, his crusades against gambling, intemperance, horse-racing, the theatre and Roman Catholicism was well on the way to altering completely the character of the town. Yet it has to be admitted that but for Francis Close Cheltenham might well have reverted to being a little market town of no special significance remembered only for its brief moments of glory as a glittering spa. For along with his less attractive attributes as a narrow-minded and illiberal social reformer Close also possessed an enthusiasm for education and thanks to his support Cheltenham College (for the sons of gentlemen) was opened in 1841 and the ancient grammar school founded in 1574 was rescued in the nick of time. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Samuel Codner, an evangelical merchant who founded the St Paul's Training College for elementary school teachers in 1847 and was very active in setting up schools for the poorer (though still respectable) inhabitants of the town. And later, in 1853, he was president of the original foundation which led to the setting up of what was to become Cheltenham Ladies' College.

By the 1850s, the *Examiner's* pages are filled with reports of church and chapel events: sermons (verbatim) by Francis Close and others, missionary meetings and teas, meetings of charitable societies for the relief of the poor, for the propagation of the Gospel and so on. There was a growing interest in science (as there was nationally), and evening classes for working men at the Cheltenham Athenaeum (in Crescent Terrace) which also possessed a library and other facilities for its members. By now, there were numerous other private establishments in the town for the education of those not privileged enough to be pupils at Cheltenham Collage. All these are advertised, most as being for the sons (and daughters) of gentlemen. Despite Close's efforts, interest in racing had not diminished and events at Prestbury Park continued to attract large crowds. He had been no more successful in stemming the tide of progress on the railways and throughout the rest of the 19th century their presence is an important factor in the town's life.

Close departed for Carlisle in 1856 amid grief and mourning especially among the ladies of his parishioners. He left behind him a town whose pattern was set for many years to come - a staid god-fearing town where everyone knew their place - had not 'God made

them high and lowly/and ordered their estate'? Yet behind all this smug respectability there lay another Cheltenham. Its activities were mostly confined to the denizens of the Lower High Street and the streets leading off it, and their lives can be followed in the *Examiner* through the reports of the Magistrates and Police Courts and the weekly meetings of the Board of Guardians. In the former two there is an endless procession of petty thieves, drunk and disorderly women and so on. In the early 1840s some of these miscreants were still being sentenced to transportation and there were few acquittals - as late as 1873 two girls aged 10 and 11 were charged with 'purloining one haddock of the value of 4d, from the shop of Mt John Barnett, 82 High Street'. The two were let off but only on condition their mothers gave them a sound whipping. One is inclined to think that the inmates of the Workhouse (of whom there were never fewer than 300, it seems) were better off than those outside, judging by the amount of food and drink that was consumed there - at least they had regular meals and reasonably warm clothing.

Throughout this period Cheltenham had, to its credit, paid great attention to the health and hygiene of its inhabitants. The handsome new General Hospital in Sandford Road was opened in 1849, to be followed by the Delancey Fever Hospital in Leckhampton, a hospital for sick children and an ear, nose and throat hospital. One hangover from the old spa days meant that there was no shortage of doctors (no fewer than 80 in 1844) and there are frequent reports on the comparative good health of the town. It must be said also that indexing the *Examiner* becomes something of a chore when its pages are filled with endless reports on debates over sewage, the disposal of it, the cost of same, etc - all very important and laudable but of interest only, surely, to the dedicated sanitary engineer.

So, by the end of the century Cheltenham had settled into its pattern of life which was to last for almost another 40 years. It had finally been incorporated as a borough, after much debate and with many misgivings on the part of some diehards, in 1876. Eleven years later it was granted a coat of arms with the motto below it *Salubritas et Eruditio*. It was then a town of some 49,000 inhabitants, with 14 or so Anglican churches, each one built in an area appropriate to the class of its population, Non-conformist chapels of every persuasion, a synagogue and a Roman Catholic church. Electric light had come in 1895, somewhat late in the day. The Prince of Wales, soon to be Edward VII, had visited the town in 1897 and his sister, the Empress Frederick of Germany, made a private visit to the Ladies' College in the same year - but the latter of course was not a public occasion. These, so far as I know, were the last visits of royalty of any kind to Cheltenham until Queen Mary the Queen Mother came over from Badminton from to time during World War II.

Though *Salubritas* took first place on the motto, it was *Eruditio* that really gave Cheltenham its reputation during the years that followed and in particular the erudition represented by the Cheltenham Ladies' College. I spent most of my adult life denying that I had been a Cheltenham Lady: of late years, the reaction of strangers on hearing that one is a Cheltonian is a knowing 'Ah! GCHQ!' - though that establishment has kept itself to itself with as much, if not more, determination as did CLC until comparatively recently. Cheltenham was now trying to sell itself as a place of quiet retirement, and a conference town (it already had a Winter Garden and was soon to have a Town Hall), with its high-class shops and exclusive Promenade lined with magnificent chestnut trees where only the socially acceptable might go. In 1905 it did at last provide itself with a school for girls where the

daughters of tradesmen, office clerks and so on might go. The County High School for Girls which very soon (in 1907) changed its name to Pate's Grammar School for Girls was an almost instant success and was to go from strength to strength.

With the new century and the new king, times were changing and Cheltenham to some extent with them. Despite all the concerts, balls, garden parties, pageants and the like, there was still desperate poverty and degradation in the poorer parts of the town - a fact noticed by Josephine Butler when she briefly came back to live in the town in 1902 and spoke bitterly of the conditions she observed: 'low class brothels and slums which would be a disgrace to London or New York'. She blamed it all on the 'correct evangelical protestants' - Francis Close again! The town's population fell for the first time and in 1901 there were 800 unoccupied houses, and visitors were slow to arrive. From this plight it was perhaps reduced by the outbreak of war in 1914 when many of those unoccupied houses were taken over by Belgian refugees or converted into hospitals for the wounded. The war may also have led to a very limited degree of relaxation in the rigid rules which divided the gentry from the lower classes. Death made no distinction between a young officer and a humble private and the loss of a son or brother was equally tragic for a woman, whatever her social standing. In Kipling's words (in another context), 'The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skins.'

The 1914-18 war changed life in Cheltenham to some extent but not, I think, so greatly as did its 1939-45 successor. Although the 1920s and 30s were troubled times generally, and Britain like everywhere else felt their effects, Cheltenham remained 'a charming town', still with its rigidly defined class system, its exclusive shops and schools and still with its mistrust of anything verging on High Church practices. And those appalling slums noticed by Josephine Butler still remained, making the approach to the town via Tewkesbury Road and the Lower High Street a sight completely at odds with the image of 'the garden town of England'. Dr Garrett, sometime medical officer of health for the 'Borough Beautiful' (his words) writing in 1919 of Cheltenham and its delights admits of these deficiencies but dismisses them as having only 'the import of a small mole on a soft cheek'. However, the good doctor had already, in 1918, recommended that there was a need to build 100 new houses to accommodate those displaced by the demolition of the town's worst dwellings. In 1920, the Council, in the face of the newly-formed Middle Classes Union who protested loudly at the cost, authorised the building of an estate at St Mark's and in 1921 the first houses were handed over. Each house cost between £946 and £949 and was built on the 'Worker's Cottage' design originated by the Garden City movement. These were 3- or 4-bedroom houses with bathrooms and all the usual up-to-date amenities. But, as might have been forecast, they were reserved principally for returning ex-servicemen and key workers at H H Martyn & Co and other local firms. The rents were far too high for most of the slum dwellers, who remained in their squalid surroundings at the lower end of town.

Apart from this blot on the landscape, the Cheltenham of my childhood was a very pleasant place to live. The *Salubritas* still lived on in the pump rooms of the town hall and while the elderly invalids took the waters, the young sought their learning in the numerous educational establishments of the town. Up and down the Promenade beneath the chestnut trees, past the Winter Gardens and the Fountain (which in my memory seems always to have been playing) cycled the Grammar School boys in their mortar boards and the Pate's girls in

their hats and gloves. The College girls remained in their Victorian fortress in Montpellier Street, forbidden to travel on public transport or even on foot where they might come into contact with the lesser breeds.

No Cheltenham child of those years can have been ignorant of the military history of the Victorian period - from the Crimean guns at the top of the Promenade down to the Great War and the Boer War memorials. All these reinforced the common image of Cheltenham as a town of retired military men and Empire-builders, all fiercely patriotic and comfortable in their belief that the town, its tradespeople and its labourers existed for their benefit and their convenience. The old days of the fashionable spa had long gone - Pittville pump room was falling into disrepair, likewise the Rotunda - though it was still to continue in use as the occasional venue for meetings and concerts. The great houses, built to accommodate large families and armies of servants, were falling into disrepair or converted into small 'private' hotels or apartments, many occupied by the widows or spinster daughters of the military. Yet two relics of the town's fashionable era did remain - and have rightly been dwelt on in the guide books ever since - its parks and gardens, with their wonderful trees, and its broad Promenade lined on one side with elegant shops - notably Cavendish House, first opened by Messrs Debenham & Freebody in the 1820s. Much has been made in recent articles of the fact that the Promenade was regularly patrolled by the guardians of its exclusivity with orders to warn off the improperly dressed or the undesirable. I must admit that as a child in the 1920s and 30s I never heard or saw such beings - and I was a tradesman's child and grammar school girl. But then, I was always hatted and gloved, as was any child of respectable parents in those days, accompanied by my mother or other female relative similarly attired, and while we did not regularly visit Cavendish, we did make occasional purchases there and, more often, at Pantoys (a kind of miniature Hamley's), at Maison Kunz (wonderful cream horns for Sunday tea), Dale Forty for sheet music and gramophone records, Banks for books, and Dowlings, next to the Cadena Café, for chocolates, individually selected, lifted with shining brass tongs and placed in an elegant cardboard container to carry home.

Cheltenham continued to be well supplied with doctors, provided one had sufficient means to pay for them - otherwise it was a case of the 'Panel'. The General Hospital, supported by voluntary contributions, still had an air of charity about it. In the 1930s my mother sat every Monday evening in St James's parish house, 'Acton' in Suffolk Square, receiving weekly contributions of 2<sup>d</sup> or 3<sup>d</sup> on behalf of the hospital from those parishioners provident enough to foresee that they might at some future time be in need of its services. Solicitors, too, abounded - many of the same names which are scattered through the pages of the *Examiner* - Pruen, Winterbotham, Jessop and the like. Private schools still had their place and fulfilled a need for those of the lower ranks of society (tradesmen again!) whose daughters would not be accepted at CLC but who hesitated to send them to Pate's which was by now admitting on scholarships children who had begun their education at an elementary school. Mine was The Hall in Montpellier Parade (now part of Eagle Star), advertised in a 1920s guide-book as a 'high-class school for girls' run by Miss Drake and Miss Harris - of whom the female impersonators Hinge and Brackett might have been the reincarnation. It took small boys and girls up to the age of 16 but I left when I was eight, my parents having overcome their scruples about my encountering the unknown at the age of 11. I have to admit that when I first reached the senior school at Pate's there was still (in the 1930s) a certain element of snobbery in our attitude towards the 'scholarship girls', although this soon

disappeared as the years progressed, and these girls turned out to be much cleverer on the whole than the fee-payers. Lest I grew up with a Gloucestershire accent I had elocution lessons at the Hall - with Madame Ethel Irving, mother of the late Charles, and dancing classes at her studio in Bath Road, later with Evelyn Courtney in Andover Road, Tivoli.

Despite its staid reputation Cheltenham did at this time have a reasonably active social life with its tea-dances at the town hall (fancy-dress ones for the children at Christmas), grander ones for the higher ranks - Hunt Balls and Hospital Balls. The town hall in fact was in almost constant use - for concerts of classical and popular music, Grammar School speech days, and exhibitions, mainly of the missionary kind, to which we were taken from school. Church and chapel life still played a large part in the life of most Cheltonians. The two 'High Church' places of worship - St Stephen's and All Saints - were still regarded with some suspicion and the shadow of Francis Close still hung heavy over the town. The Opera house was a venue for touring companies with a varied programme of Shakespeare, Ben Travers farces, popular drama and musical comedies - *No, No, Nanette* interspersed with Gilbert and Sullivan from the Amateur Dramatic & Operatic Society. From the early 1920s there were the cinemas - there was in fact already one cinema in Cheltenham which opened in North Street just after the outbreak of the 1914 war but closed in 1931 owing to the shortage of silent films. Next on the scene was the Daffodil in Suffolk Parade ('Only in Cheltenham', remarked a Geordie friend of mine visiting the town in the 1940s, 'would one find a cinema named the Daffodil'). Much has been made of its double seats, but I feel pretty sure that this was not the only cinema in Cheltenham with such a facility. As I lived in Suffolk Parade, the 'Daff' was an ever-present part of my childhood and its clientele must have been from the start of a more refined kind, situated as it was in the Montpellier area, well away from the High Street. The Palace, opened a year later in 1923, was not nearly so highly regarded. The Coliseum which had been run as a theatre for music-hall also was later to show films as were the Winter Gardens and the Opera House. The wireless was becoming increasingly popular although by no means a universal household object. We had one (constructed by my father from a kit) and I remember that on days of great sporting events the sitting room would be filled with friends and neighbours listening to the 'running commentaries'.

Public transport in the 1920s was still confined to the trams although by late in the decade motor buses in the shape of the Black & White Luxury Coaches were beginning to rival the railways. Cheltenham still had its four stations and all were well patronised - St James's for the Cheltenham Flyer, for Kingham or Honeybourne where one changed for Oxford; Lansdown for Gloucester, Bristol and the south coast, for Southampton (the Boat Train) and all stations north via Birmingham; Leckhampton and Malvern Road (handy for shopping trips to the Bon Marché at Gloucester). Many shops now had their motorised delivery vans but smaller concerns had their errand boys on bicycles and coal and milk were still delivered by horse and cart. And although cars and bicycles (especially the latter) were now to be seen on the Promenade there were still wicker-work bath chairs pulled by old men who looked scarcely less decrepit than the chairs' occupants, while by the fountain were drawn up two or three open carriages, waiting to convey those exhausted by the rigours of a morning's shopping back to the leafy squares and crescents of Montpellier or Lansdown.

So the town passed through the immediate post-war years, still seemingly set for ever in the public mind as a home for retirement, full of generals, colonels and lieutenant-colonels,

but this was not an entirely true image. As did the rest of the country, Cheltenham suffered from the years of the Depression - tradesmen suffered from the failure of the upper class account customers to pay their bills, there were bankruptcies and unemployment was rife. From 1932 the Grammar Schools were forced to impose a means test on the parents of scholarship winners and although the full fees remained very modest (£4 10s per term), some fee-payers were forced by their parents' straitened circumstances to withdraw. As the country struggled from crisis to crisis the town carried on - still trying to sell itself as the Garden Town of England or the Gateway to the Cotswolds. Visitors were more likely to be respectable church, chapel or similar groups on their annual outings from Wales or the industrial midlands, or parents visiting their offspring for half-term at the colleges. There was little expansion beyond the existing boundaries of the town - a guide entitled 'Walks Round Cheltenham' describes country walks - one, in particular directs the reader through the Park and down Merestones Road, where a nameplate bore the words 'Footpath to Shurdington' thence through a swing gate into a field and a path by the hedge leading to the railway bridge. This particular walk is one of my earliest memories and that field full of moon-daisies, buttercups and the like was one whose passing I still lament whenever I catch sight of Merestones Road today. Some private building went on and the council built houses at Pilley and Whaddon. But the Tewkesbury Road with its gasworks and its slums still afforded a most uncharacteristic approach to the town.

Elections which had been lively affairs in the earlier days of Victorian Cheltenham were tame in the 1920s, borough elections even tamer. The Conservative MP Sir Walter Preston seems to embody all the qualities associated with the town - staid almost to the point of complete inarticulacy, he seems hardly to have spoken at Westminster save to ask for a window to be opened. At the general election of 1935 he was re-elected with a comfortable majority but his Labour opponent managed to attract 7,784 votes to his 18,574 - a considerable narrowing of the 1931 Tory majority of 17,000. But then, this time the Labour candidate was a young attractive female - the Hon Elizabeth Pakenham, no less, incontestably a lady and married to a scion of the noble Irish family of Longford with its connections with the Duke of Wellington. There are photographs of her in the *Graphic* as she walks about the town, holding by the hand her little four-year old daughter Antonia, or chats with her supporters in the two Labour wards. In her autobiography published in 1986, Lady Longford describes in some detail and with humour those days in, as she puts it, 'the home of the lost colonels'. Her chief emphasis was on education and nationalisation of the railways - not, as she admits, a policy likely to appeal to a town priding itself on its exclusive Ladies' College and its then famous Cheltenham Flyer. Yet to her surprise her red-rosetted car was greeted by the College pupils 'with a tentative cheer'. At the grammar school she was booed. Perhaps the cheer from the College boys, at least, may have been due to the fact that at their Junior School was teaching at the time one C Day Lewis, the future poet-laureate. He was one of her active supporters.

*Editor's note: This article, which was to have been part of a fuller account of the century ending on the eve of the Second World War, was unfinished at the time of Barbara's death. Even so, her characteristic style, with personal recollections setting off the historical account, is immediately recognisable and will be recalled by all who heard her speak at the Society's evenings. Some minor corrections apart, the draft is otherwise as Barbara left it.*

### Barbara King 1922-1996

Cheltenham, the Pate's Society and the Cheltenham Local History Society were fortunate that Barbara chose to return in 1985 to the town of her birth and to devote much of her time to researching its history and encouraging others to do so.

Besides being our Chairman from 1992-95, she was a committee member for seven years and one of the *Cheltenham Examiner* indexers from the start. In 1990 she published her history of Pate's Girls' School. The Society is delighted to be able to commemorate her enthusiasm, deep interest and affection for Cheltenham by the inclusion in this issue of the following special section of photographs and illustrations. We are grateful to Barbara's family for the generous donation that has made this possible.

Readers of the *Journal* now and in the future will continue to remember her.

### GENERAL NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

One of the Society's aims is to make material to do with Cheltenham's history more widely available, and this is very much the case with the following fourteen plates. Nearly all the images are published here for the first time; the few exceptions have appeared only in formats that are now scarce.

They illustrate many historic aspects of the town, from the grand to the humble. It is particularly pleasing and fitting to be able to start the sequence with a view of The Old Farm - a building with links back to the era before the town's fame as a spa resort, and one of the oldest surviving photographs of any subject in Cheltenham. Several of the illustrations show sites where urban development and redevelopment continue, among them The Old Farm again, The Priory, the Union Workhouse, and Warwick Buildings.

Unless otherwise stated, the accompanying notes are by Steven Blake.

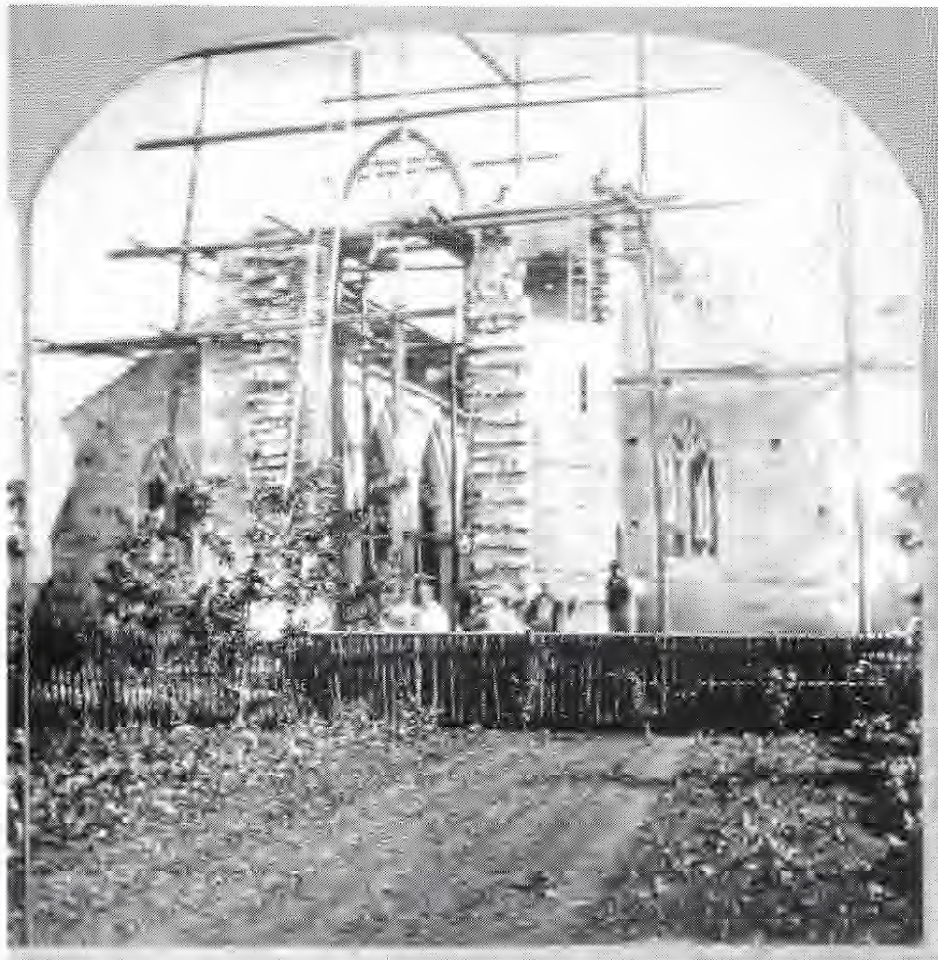




### The Old Farm, St George's Place, about 1860

This early stereoscopic photograph shows the Old Farm in St George's Place. It was the home of the Skillicorne family from the time of Henry Skillicorne's move to Cheltenham from Bristol in 1738 until the early 19th century, and reminds us how close to the centre of town farming activity once was. This photograph was taken from the roadway of St George's Place, more or less outside St Matthew's church. The Old Farm was demolished in about 1869 to make way for St Mary's Hall (later known as Shaftesbury Hall), the female department of St Paul's College. Its location is marked with an arrow in the detail from Merrett's 1834 plan of Cheltenham, reproduced here. The photograph has been copied, for the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums' photographic archive, from an original in the possession of Mrs J Griffith.



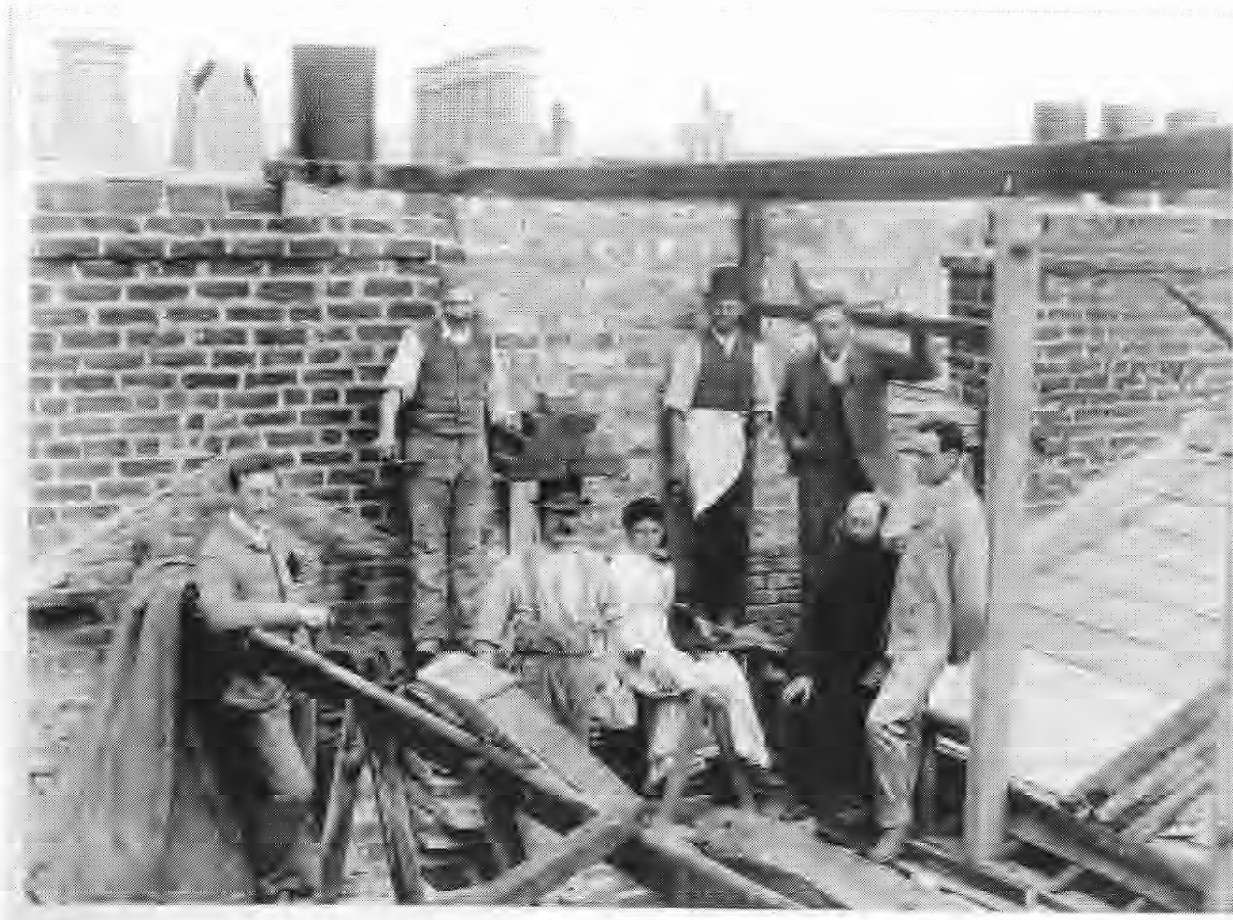


### **The building of St Mark's church, 1861**

This is one of two early stereoscopic views showing the building of the nave and chancel of St Mark's church in 1861-2. This view is looking east from the future site of the tower and spire which were added in 1864-6.

St Mark's, built to serve the area to the west of Lansdown station, around Libertus Road, was the earliest of the five Gothic Revival churches designed for Cheltenham by the architect John Middleton.

The other stereoscopic view, showing the building of the chancel from the east, is included as illustration 61 in Steven Blake, *Cheltenham: A Pictorial History* (1996). Both were copied, for the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums' photographic archive, from originals in the possession of Mrs J Griffith.



### **The building of a billiard room at 2 Royal Crescent, 1887**

The Revd John George Derrick, who was Chaplain to the Cheltenham Workhouse between 1887 and 1907, lived at 2 Royal Crescent from 1887 until his death in July 1907. In addition to his wife and three children (including the writer Freda Derrick, author of several books on the Cotswolds and elsewhere), the household also included students from the Anglican Training Institution, usually known as St Paul's College. In 1887-8, in order to provide the students with the chance to play billiards (and perhaps therefore to keep them off the streets of Cheltenham), the Revd Derrick had a billiard room added to the top storey of his house. This photograph, taken at that time, shows the Revd and Mrs Derrick, with three College students and three workmen - two of them evidently amused by the feat of the third, who is balancing ten bricks on his hat.

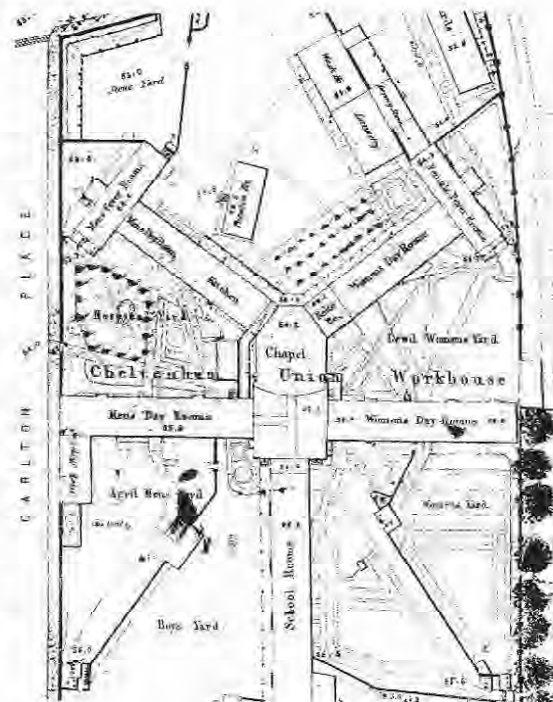
Reproduced by permission of Freda Derrick's Trustee, Philip Smith

Steven Blake & Sylvie Pierce



### The 1841 Cheltenham Union Workhouse

This photograph of the original Union Workhouse building in Swindon Road was taken by Steven Blake of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum in 1978. Looking south, it shows the central octagon (which once contained a chapel) and two of the lateral wings of the building, the layout of which is seen in the plan from the 1855-7 Old Town Survey, reproduced here. More buildings were added close to the original Workhouse from the 1880s and in 1948 the buildings became St Paul's Hospital. By the late 1970s the original building had been vacated and was demolished in stages thereafter. The Hospital closed in 1997 and all but the late 19th-century chapel (which replaced that in the octagon) has now been cleared away.





### St James's Square, about 1900

This photograph, one of a number taken as publicity for the Cheltenham removal company, Barnby Bendall & Co., shows their Depository on the north side of St James' Square. The square, one of the great unfinished developments of the early 19th-century town, was laid out from 1808-9 on land owned by William Read, and was designed by the Bath architect, Charles Harcourt Masters (responsible also for Royal Crescent, begun 1805-6). Of the planned 65 houses, only a handful were ever built. The handsome No 1 (with balcony) stood at the intended square's north-east corner. On the 1855-7 Old Town Survey it is shown as the office of the French vice-consul; perhaps there was some connection with the Catholic chapel that stood opposite, on the corner of St James's Square and Manchester Street, a site now occupied by St Gregory's Roman Catholic church. The adjoining house (here marked 'Depository') was added after 1855. Both houses are now occupied by Gas night club.

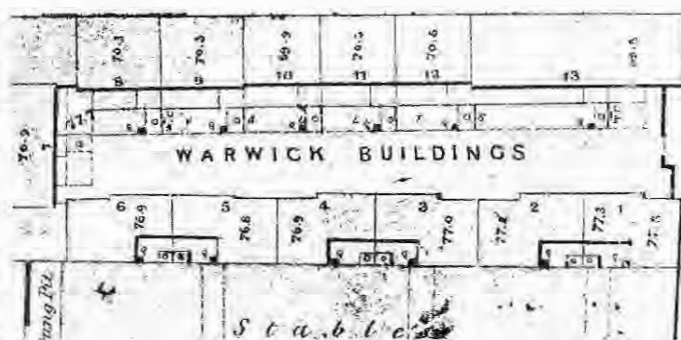
Also seen in the photograph is the 1820 Bethel Baptist Chapel in Manchester Street, now the Christadelphian Hall, and a good example of one of the town's 'dragon & onion' electric street-lights.

Steven Blake & Oliver Bradbury



**Warwick Buildings, Winchcombe Street, about 1935**

This photograph shows a group of 13 early 19th-century houses on the west side of Winchcombe Street, just north of the former Humphreys' Livery Stables, until recently Cheltenham's Indoor Market. The houses were cleared as slums in 1935-6, their site serving for many years as a small car park until the redevelopment of the entire Indoor Market site in 1997-8. The map, part of the 1855-7 Old Town Survey, shows their original layout. The photograph suggests Warwick Buildings was once an attractive cul-de-sac, enclosed by railings and with iron bollards preventing vehicular access; the tall house at the western end has a fine ironwork porch. On the north side of the courtyard, the array of materials on the pavement indicates a builder's premises - probably those of J Baker & Sons, recorded at No 68 Winchcombe Street in 1935.



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Steven Blake & Elisabeth Gemmill



### The corner of Market Street and Park Street, about 1958

This photograph shows Nos 1-7 Burton Terrace, at the corner of Market Street and Park Street, shortly before their demolition in 1958; according to a note pasted to the back of the original, 'all seven houses are very damp'. The sharp angle formed by these houses can clearly be seen at the foot of Park Street on the 1834 map (right); like Park Street itself, the terrace went up during the 1820s building boom. This, like the photograph opposite, is one of a large collection transferred to Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums by the Borough Council's Environmental Services section in 1995. Many of them were pre-demolition records of the town's poorer properties. The site of Burton Terrace is now marked by a small public garden.

To the left of the houses, behind a low wall, may be seen the former New Burial Ground, now the Winston Churchill Memorial Garden.





**The Portland Tabernacle, about 1965**

This building, which stood on the east side of Portland Street until its demolition to make way for the Northern Relief Road in about 1980, was built for Robert Hughes as a private house in 1818-19. Originally called Seymour Hall, by 1895 it was known as Handel Hall. In 1897 it became the Portland Tabernacle, and later the Portland Street Church of Christ. Describing it, the late David Verey said '... has a charming but ungrammatical neo-Greek panelled façade of three storeys and three bays, the upper windows round-headed. Good wrought iron balcony on the first floor'. Its date and various architectural devices suggest the architect was George Allen Underwood, a pupil of Sir John Soane, who worked in Cheltenham between c. 1817 and c. 1823. The balcony is a virtual facsimile of balconies designed by Soane for his town house in London. The blank panels above the first floor windows echo those above the second floor windows on the east elevation of the nearby St Margaret's Terrace, another possible Underwood design. This photograph was taken by the Cheltenham architect Robert Paterson, and is reproduced from a print in the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums collection.

Oliver Bradbury





**The 2nd floor landing skylight at The Priory, London Road, about 1967**

Possibly replacing a slightly earlier house on the site, The Priory was probably built before 1820, for C H Marshall, then Cheltenham's Master of Ceremonies. The design was perhaps by Underwood, as noted opposite a pupil of Soane and working in Cheltenham from 1817 onwards. The dome and entrance vestibule are indicative of Soane's influence. Below the domed skylight, the photograph shows part of the 'elegant staircase with fancy iron balustrade and mahogany continued rail and oak stairs' mentioned in sale particulars in 1828 (*Chelt. Journal*, 20 Oct.) - stairs the Duke of Wellington would have used when he stayed there in August that year. Latterly suffering a succession of institutional uses, The Priory was demolished in 1967. The office block that replaced it has in turn been razed (spring 1998) to make way for a residential development, 'Wellington Place', intended to recreate the aspect of the original Priory.

Oliver Bradbury



### **Cranley, Wellington Square, about 1900**

Cranley (also known as Cranley Lodge), which stood at the north-west corner of Wellington Square, is one of the few early 19th-century houses at Pittville to have been demolished.

Originally known as 'The Aviary', it was one of three built on the north side of the Square by a widow, Eleanor Wallace, and her daughter Elizabeth. The other two houses, a pair of semi-detached villas originally known as Laurel Lodge East and West, still survive as Percy House and Laurel Lodge respectively; part of Laurel Lodge West may be seen in the far right of this photograph. The Wallaces purchased the site of the three houses for £550 on 24 February 1827 and agreed to complete the houses, which they had already begun, by June 1829. This house was therefore among the earliest to be built on the Pittville Estate.

Later in the century (certainly after 1855) the house was considerably altered by the addition of an extension on its west side and by an additional storey in a mock Tudor style, totally out of keeping with the existing building. Both these additions are shown in this photograph. The house was demolished in 1986 and replaced by modern apartments.

This is one of a collection of photographs formerly in the possession of the Winterbotham family, who lived at Cranley between c. 1880 and 1927. The photographs were given to Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum by a descendant, Mr Cyril Hooper, in 1993.



### **The demolition of houses in Pittville Street, August 1954**

This black chalk drawing by the artist Philip Smith is one of a series made during the demolition of the mid-1820s houses on the west side of Pittville Street during August 1954. They were replaced during 1955 by the present block of shops.

Philip Smith was born at Cheltenham in 1924 and attended the Grammar School and School of Art & Craft. Although he lived and worked at Wallasey in Cheshire from 1950 until his retirement in 1982, he often returned to Cheltenham and sketched the town and its buildings.

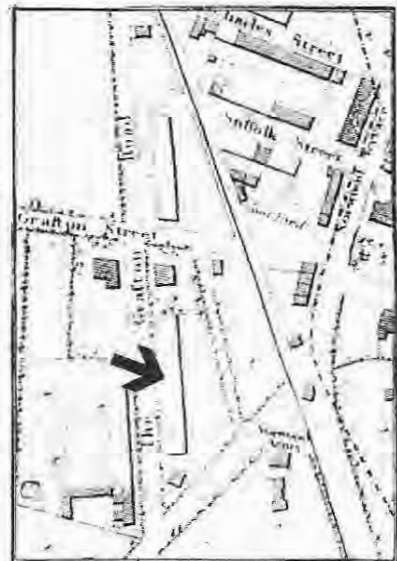
This drawing is reproduced with the artist's permission.



**Backs of slums in Edward Street and Norwood Road, about 1936**

Another photograph from the collection transferred to Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums by the Borough Council's Environmental Services section in 1995, showing the rear of houses due for slum clearance at the Shurdington Road end of Edward Street and Norwood Road. The photograph is taken looking north from the rear of a short block of shops and houses on Shurdington Road, now Nos 1-15.

The houses pictured were probably built in the 1830s; Merrett's 1834 map marks the site of intended building (here marked by an arrow) at the southern end of Grafton Road - now Edward Street. The houses on the right, fronting Norwood Road (then carrying the Leckhampton quarry tramroad), appear to have been just slightly later.



Although typical of the many pre-demolition photographs taken in Cheltenham (and indeed in most English towns and cities) during the 1920s and 30s, this particular image is enlivened by the striking 'Fry's Cocoa' sign on the wall. Today, recent residential developments cover the sites of each of the terraces shown here.

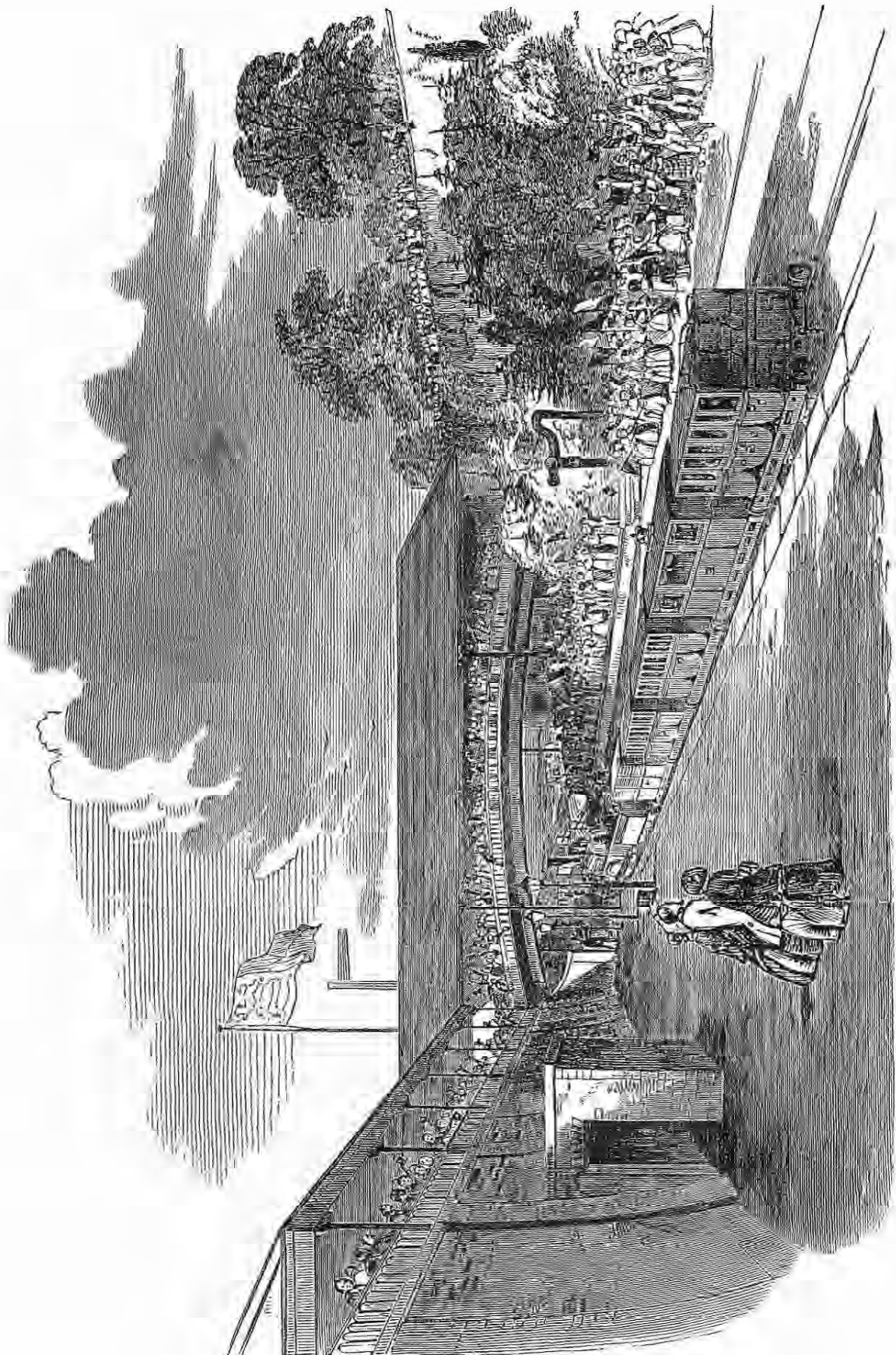


**Bath Road: William Newman in the doorway of his new shop, 1911**

William Newman, previously a printer, began his ironmonger's business in the Bath Road in 1905. He was related to Mr Smith, the Leckhampton builder, and this connection may have provided part of his trade. The first shop was at what is now No 163 Bath Road, at the corner of Upper Bath Street, in premises now occupied by a launderette. The business moved over the road to what was then No 37 Upper Bath Road (today No 180 Bath Road) in 1911, the year this photograph was taken. The family sold the business in 1980; however, trade continued there under the Newman & Son name until very recently, when the business was merged with a near-neighbour of similar long standing to become Newman & Bloodworth.

Reproduced from a photograph in the possession of Mr and Mrs L Jewell, who also supplied the material for these notes.

James Hodsdon



THE ROYAL TRAIN LEAVING THE CHELTENHAM STATION.

**'The Royal Train leaving the Cheltenham Station', 1849** (Notes by Eric Miller)

THIS SURPRISINGLY rare print, taken from the *Illustrated London News* of 6 October 1849, shows Queen Victoria's train leaving Cheltenham Midland station the previous Saturday (29 September). It is not difficult to recognise the layout of what is now Cheltenham's sole remaining station. The woodcut was 'engraved from a drawing by Mr George Bonner of Cheltenham' - doubtless the G F Bonner who practised as a wood engraver at 95 Winchcombe Street<sup>1</sup>.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and their five young children were in fact passing through Cheltenham on their way to Osborne after one of their first visits to Balmoral<sup>2</sup>. The *Illustrated London News* and the *Cheltenham Looker-On* of the same date both describe each leg of the three-day journey in some detail. The royal party were on the move for up to 12 hours a day, with numerous stops to be greeted by loyal citizens.

When the train reached Cheltenham, according to the ILN 'the whole population of the place appeared to be on the railway, the embankments for more than a mile being densely crowded with spectators. There was no stoppage at this place, but, through the kindness of her Majesty, the train was allowed to proceed at a very moderate speed for some distance.' This contrasts with what occurred in September 1852, when according to the *Looker-On* the Queen's passage northwards through Cheltenham proved a sad disappointment to the thousands of loyal subjects who crowded the Lansdown station. The royal train passed through at such a pace that it was almost impossible to catch a glimpse of who was on board. Among those disappointed were the pupils of the grammar school, attended by a band of music, who were drawn up in array at Williams's coal wharf at Alstone. A stop at Gloucester was necessary because of the change of gauge and the Queen transferred to the saloon of the Great Western Company, in the charge of that company's secretary, manager and deputy chairman Viscount Barrington, MP. 'Loyal addresses from the clergy and corporation were gratefully received ... amid the enthusiastic acclamation of the spectators, the bells of all the churches in the city ringing merry peals, and salvoes of artillery being fired from an adjoining battery.'

The royal carriage shown here must have been that built in 1843 for the London & Birmingham Railway. It was a saloon 13ft long, 7ft wide and 8ft high inside, having a domed roof surmounted by a large crown containing a ventilator. The saloon consisted of a central compartment with a throne and end vestibules for guards. There was no corridor, and if the Queen wished to summon or dismiss her ladies-in-waiting, the train had to be stopped and the attendants were helped to and fro by way of the track<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Edwards New Directory for Cheltenham*, 1850. Edwin Lee's *Cheltenham and its Resources*, 1851 contains two illustrations of Pittville Park, signed 'BONNER'. (I am indebted to Roger Beacham, Cheltenham Reference Library, for assistance in finding these references.) <sup>2</sup> The royal family began to visit Balmoral in 1847. Prince Albert bought the estate in 1852 and the present castle was built 1853-56. <sup>3</sup> See *Railway Carriages in the British Isles from 1830 to 1914* by Hamilton Ellis, 1965. Ellis recommends that the dimensions be treated with reserve.

# Edward Bedford of Prestbury: A Vicar in Difficult Times

BERYL ELLIOTT

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THE ENGLISH Civil War and the ensuing Commonwealth period disrupted many of the established routines of civil and religious life, the extent of the upset often masked by the very deficiencies in record keeping which were part of the disruption. In Prestbury today, the list of vicars in the church porch presents a smooth progression from Richard Murralle, appointed 1633, to Willoughby Dixon in 1653, and on to Edward Bedford in 1665. Yet Murralle, who was also curate-in-charge of Charlton Kings, had been forced to give up the living of Prestbury in 1646, when pluralism was abolished<sup>1</sup>; it is not known who, if anyone, was in charge of the parish in the next seven years. Dixon, appointed three years into the Commonwealth, must have been sympathetic to the new regime, and perhaps had little liking or respect for the traditions of the established church; in this light it is perhaps not surprising that he failed to add his name to the list of incumbents on the flyleaf of the parish register. Edward Bedford came to the parish five years after the restoration of Charles II. Signing his name in the front of the register must have been one of the first things he did on taking up his cure. One might perhaps have expected him to make good the omission of Willoughby Dixon, if only for the sake of completeness. He didn't. To judge by the parish register there had been no incumbent between Murralle and Bedford.

Bedford had been educated at Oxford, gaining his B.A. in 1658<sup>2</sup>. So he was probably born around 1638, and passed his boyhood years during the Civil War. When he came to Prestbury in 1665 he would have been in his late 20s, almost certainly taking up his first post as vicar after a curacy somewhere else. He must have been newly married when he arrived, for his first son, Edward, was born in November of that year. Two more sons followed, Henry and Richard, and then five daughters, Mary, Elianor, Elizabeth, Susannah and Margaret. As they grew up, all three boys in turn went to Oxford. Around the time the younger ones were there, in 1688, another Bedford graduated from the University; this young man was the son of Richard Bedford, vicar of Tiddenham, a village on the north bank of the Severn, a few miles from Chepstow. These could be the nephew and brother of Prestbury's vicar; the date would fit, and the fact that Edward's youngest son was also named Richard is a shred of favourable evidence.

Bedford seems to have settled down happily. If he had indeed seen Willoughby Dixon's tenure of the parish as an unfortunate interlude, then he was soon successful in restoring stability and proper order after the upsets of the previous years. He saw out in Prestbury the whole reign of Charles II and James II, and was still there when the Glorious Revolution brought William and Mary to the throne. He died in 1699<sup>3</sup>, after 34 years in the parish.

Prestbury parish records<sup>4</sup> were well maintained in his time, and formal as they are, they convey a clear impression of the man. He signs his name 'Ed: Bedford, Minister'. Calling himself minister rather than vicar shows him as a man of his time, a good protestant



churchman. Just occasionally, in the last two years of his life, he calls himself 'vicar' and even 'cler' for clerk or cleric, as if he was getting uncertain of the best term to use. The signature shows a firm clear hand, an educated man, well-used to writing. We find him year by year, presiding at the parish Vestry Meeting on the Tuesday after Easter, when the record of the past year's expenses was accepted, new officers for the coming year elected, and any important decisions taken - perhaps for major repairs to the church fabric.

His signature also turns up quite often as the witness to a will; usually the familiar writing shows that he has written the whole document, according to the instructions of the testator. On one or two occasions he also carries out the inventory of the deceased person's goods, notably for an old woman who had died intestate; usually though that is a job for the deceased person's friends and colleagues. There is one sad episode when we find him listening to the spoken testament of a dying man when there was no opportunity to write, and by the time he has drawn up a written document the man is dead<sup>5</sup>. (The will proved legally binding, as a 'will nuncupative.')

So, he was available to his parishioners when they needed him. His family seem to have shared something of the role too; his wife Anne witnesses the will of one old woman, Amy Baker the midwife. In this instance the minister himself was not called on to write the will, but it certainly wasn't because Mistress Baker lacked confidence in him; she left him 'one broad piece of gold' to preach her funeral sermon. That funeral sermon is a rare glimpse of what actually went on at church services; it fits this period, when the sermon was generally the high point of a service. Communion was a rare event, as the churchwardens' accounts confirm. They show when wine was bought: a quart each for Michaelmas, Christmas and Whitsun, and 3½ quarts for Palm Sunday and Easter Day together.

Outside church, we get some idea of Edward Bedford's lifestyle from the inventory of his goods after his death. In many ways he lived like the better-off yeomen: he had nine cows, a flock of sheep and three pigs, standing corn in his field, two horses and a colt in the stable. There was wheat in the barn, cheese in the garret, and fitches of bacon in the kitchen. But his house was unusually well furnished. Few local yeomen then would have owned a chest-of-drawers, and probably none of them could have matched the eight leather chairs in his main hall. He had moreover a library worth £25 - about twice as much as all his furniture (tables, chairs, beds and so on). Books were an important part of his life.

Bedford's will adds little more to what we know of his possessions, but it is revealing in other respects. To begin with, we glimpse something of his character and state of mind. At that date people rarely made a will until they were seriously ill, and wills are regularly prefaced with a phrase like 'being sick in body but of perfect memory and understanding'. Bedford, writing in March 1697, says he is 'under some indisposition and infirmity of body, but thanks be to God, no way disturbed in my intellectuall, but having my sense and memory clear, perfect right and well as ever.' Is it reading too much into that to see an aging man reluctant to admit how ill he was? Perhaps it is unfair: he can't have been much more than 60, and he was to live for another two years. Yet he does seem - even more than most writers of wills - particularly concerned to maintain his mental clarity.

By the time he wrote his will, Edward Bedford and his wife Anne had one surviving son Henry, then aged 28, and four daughters, Eleanor, Elizabeth, Susanna and Margaret, all

between 16 and 21. The parish register does not record the deaths of Mary or the two other sons, so it could well be that they all died away from the family home. The records of Oxford alumni make no mention of Edward after his matriculation (the formal acceptance of a student as qualified to study), so he probably died before taking his degree. Richard gained his B.A. in 1688, but no more is heard of him after that.

Henry Bedford, the surviving son, went to Oxford when he was 15, gained his B.A. three years later, then M.A. after a further four years. He found employment first as a schoolmaster in Thornbury, was ordained at Uley, where he presumably served as curate, and in 1696 was licensed as rector of Little Sodbury near Chipping Sodbury in the south of the county<sup>6</sup>. Edward lived to see him married, to Elizabeth Cox of Little Rissington. This match reinforced existing links between Bedfords and Coxes; one of Henry's sisters was already married to a Cox, and had two sons. Two other sisters were to make comfortable matches. One married into the Pates family, and Susanna married William Willis of Stroud, a saddler (but a comfortably off one); her wedding, the year after her father's death, was in Gloucester cathedral. There is a puzzle about the remaining daughter, Elizabeth. Edward left each of the four girls £100, to be paid at her marriage, or on her mother's earlier death, but in Elizabeth's case the will speaks of 'money she shall have of me ... or of her mother ... towards her setting up her trade', to be taken out of her £100. Elizabeth was the second daughter, so it was not a question of her being the only one left to be provided for. It seems possible he did not expect her to marry. Did she suffer from some physical disability? She was well educated, as we shall see later, so it wasn't a question of mental handicap. And what 'trade' was suitable for a vicar's daughter around 1700?

As well as making financial provision for his wife and daughters, Bedford left to his wife Anne her own choice of twelve books in English from his library, for herself or her daughters. (So he read in other languages, presumably Latin, and perhaps others.) He named Anne as his sole executrix, and she was to inherit the bulk of his estate for her lifetime 'in consideration of the ... Confidence I repose in my beloved wife' to enable her to make provision for her children. He emerges as a loving family man, and one who treats the women of his family as intelligent and responsible people.

It's worth noting that in the record of Oxford alumni both 'our' Edward Bedford and his first son are marked as 'ser'; presumably an abbreviation of 'servitor', that is to say a student of limited means, partly supported by the college in return for waiting on the fellows and gentlemen commoners at table. By the time the two younger brothers went to Oxford the family finances seem to have been easier, for they are not so designated.

We haven't quite finished with the will yet. It also tells us something about Bedford's circle of friends. There is 'my dear friend William Johns' also a priest, in Stroud. It is likely that here again there were ties of family as well as friendship. Johns's own will, of 1721, makes bequests to the eight children of 'my Kinswoman Susannah Willis and her husband William Willis'. There is no doubt that this is Edward Bedford's daughter, for she gave all her children familiar family names, ending with a last little boy christened Bedford. 'Kinsman' - or 'kinswoman' - was and is an imprecise term, but a probable explanation is that before her marriage Edward Bedford's wife Anne had been Anne Johns, very possibly William's sister. At any rate William Johns is to assist Anne in administering the will, and

he also turns up acting as trustee in the marriage settlement of young Henry Bedford<sup>8</sup>. The other trustees in that settlement were Thomas Cox, of Little Rissington (i.e. a relation of another of the sons-in-law), and William Bagehott, the 'squire' of Prestbury. Bagehott had been a child when Bedford came to Prestbury, and was in his mid-40s at Bedford's death. His son Thomas, later the Revd Thomas Bagehott, was Bedford's godson, and received a legacy of 10 shillings, 'to buy him a silver spoon or some such remembrance of me.'

Although wills are not usually good sources of information about the possessions of the deceased, an exception could be made for the wills of widows. An elderly woman, the main family property already passed to the younger generation, may well have the time and the inclination to ponder and settle just how she wants her personal treasures to be disposed. So, seven years after Edward died, Anne Bedford, living out her widowhood in the home of her son Henry in Little Sodbury, came to write her own will. Her various grandchildren were to receive individually: 'the silver tankard', a silver spoon each, a silver bodkin, two flaxen aprons, and, puzzlingly, 'the two pieces of hempen cloth'- this to a grandson. To her daughters she left her best clothes ('my riding gown and a pettycoat she gave me ... my new shute ... my silk hood ... my child's mantle'.) She also left each of the first three daughters a book, identified by title and author. Eleanor was to have 'Moses choice', Susanna 'Baxter's rest' and 'the countess of kent's manuel'. Elizabeth, the one I speculated may have been disabled, was to have 'Reynolds upon Hosea'; there was certainly nothing lacking in her intelligence or education, if she was expected to profit from a commentary on one of the minor prophets. Anne's second choice for Susanna was a popular cookery book, 'A True Gentlewoman's Delight', by Elizabeth de Grey, Countess of Kent, which ran to at least 19 editions between 1653 and 1687. The other books, devotional works or Bible commentaries, must surely have been among those Anne had inherited from her husband's library. 'Baxter's rest' can be positively identified: 'The Saint's Everlasting Rest' was the work of the Nonconformist clergyman Richard Baxter; after serving as a chaplain for the Parliamentary army in the Civil War, he was appointed a royal chaplain at the Restoration; but after the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1685, he left the Church of England, fell foul of Judge Jeffries and spent 18 months in prison. Out of favour and out of fashion though he was, the Bedfords had not changed their allegiance to his views.

Confirmation of Bedford's protestant leanings comes - yet again - from his will, in the wording of the preamble. At this date wills regularly started, after the clause identifying writer and date, with the solemn bequest of the writers soul to God, with an affirmation of faith in ultimate salvation. Bedford writes, 'I give bequeath and comitt into the merciful hands of God the father of spirits my immortall Soule which I received directly from him, believing and assuredly hoping that I shall obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life thro the ever enduring mercies and free Grace of God in and by my only mediator Advocat and Redeemer Jesus Christ who was Delivered' (here is a hole in the parchment) 'for my offences, and raised again for my Justification.' The choice of words, the soul received *directly* from God, Christ the *only mediator* (i.e. not through a priest), the emphasis on *free Grace* and *Justification*, are all marks of Protestant theology.

Bedford had been almost 20 years in Prestbury, living as far as we can judge on good terms with most of his people, when in 1685 he was summoned before a diocesan court on a charge of failing to conduct services according to the rubric. Now, such charges are

actually quite rare at the time, so this must have been more than a minor infringement. Just what had the vicar done to get himself into so much trouble? The record of the case begins normally, in Latin, but after the formal opening the clerk has lapsed into English for the essential details - perhaps another hint that this was not a routine matter. Bedford was charged that 'within the space of three months last past & especially upon or about the third day of May instant (you) did neglect your ministerial duty in omitting the general thanksgiving and the prayers appointed to be read after the sermon, to the scandall & offense of good Orthodox churchmen then in your congregation.'<sup>7</sup> The General Thanksgiving is not a regular part of the service, it is used only on special occasions of gratitude or rejoicing. The 3rd of May that year was the second Sunday after Easter - nothing special about that. So why the fuss?

1685 was the year that James II came to the throne. Charles II had died at the beginning of February, but James's coronation wasn't until 23rd April, the Thursday after Easter (given the need to avoid celebration during Lent, St George's Day must have seemed an auspicious choice of date). Isn't it very likely that special prayers, and the General Thanksgiving, should have been decreed for the inauguration of the new reign? The 'three months past' over which Bedford was accused of neglecting the proper prayers takes us back to the point of James's accession. John Evelyn's diary gives a good picture of the mood in London, as James's actions made it clear that though he was bound to tolerate the established church, he would reign as a Roman Catholic monarch. Already on 5th March Evelyn writes, 'to my grief, I saw the new pulpit set in the Popish Oratory at Whitehall for the Lent preaching ... the Romanists swarming at Court with greater confidence than had ever been seen in England since the Reformation, so that everybody grew jealous as to what this would tend.' At the coronation itself, Evelyn observes 'the solemnity magnificent ... The Bishop of Ely preached; but, to the sorrow of the people, no Sacrament, as ought to have been.' Whether the ordinary people in Prestbury were as indignant as Evelyn's London friends is open to question. But for their minister it was too much to bear. He was not thankful for the accession of a 'papist' monarch, and he could not encourage his congregation to be so.

Did he think his omission would go unnoticed? Surely he was aware on that Sunday, of the presence of those 'good orthodox churchmen' in the congregation. Just how much did he think he risked? In the event, the court's decision was merely that he should be censured by the Ordinary. Whatever that entailed, the trouble passed over, and he was able to continue at Prestbury for the rest of his time. He must have endured some anxious weeks though, and perhaps after that he contrived to keep some of his opinions to himself.

### References

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# Marle Hill Court Remembered

BARBARA WEEKS

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*Mrs Weeks, whose family was evacuated to Cheltenham at the start of the Second World War, now lives in Lydford in Devon. Making a sentimental journey to Cheltenham in April 1997, to escape the rain she visited the Art Gallery and Museum, where she picked up the Historical Gazetteer. Reading the entry for Marle Hill Court prompted many memories, a selection from which is reproduced below. Mrs Weeks's recollections are prefaced by some background on the house itself.*

MARLE HILL Court stood just west of Folly Lane and east of the Honeybourne line cutting, near the ridge, on land close to today's Pentathlon Way. It had started life as a farmhouse, *Chestnut Farm*. This farm appears to have been created from part of Prestbury's Westfield in the latter stages of enclosure. It is absent from the 1842 map of enclosure awards, but was well established by 1867, when it was put up for sale after the death of its owner, William Moles (*Examiner*, 24 April and 21 August). It was then a freehold estate of some 60 acres, with two cottages in addition to the farmhouse itself and outbuildings. It is shown on the 1884 Ordnance Survey. It seems at some point to have become part of the Marle Hill estate: when, in 1896, with the old Marle Hill mansion then entering a long period of decline, the estate was broken up and auctioned off [GRO D1388 SL8], the farm was one of the lots. It was a 'Compact Freehold Agricultural Property known as The Chestnut Farm', a fraction over 31 acres with frontage onto what became Swindon Lane, and another access from Folly Lane. The house was 'a substantial brick-built house, with slate and tile roof of superior character'. Downstairs was a square entrance hall, a large sitting room, a breakfast room, a 'good' kitchen, a scullery and a dairy. There were six bedrooms above, five of them with fireplaces. The farm buildings, set round a large yard, included a cider house, larder, fowl house, loft and granary, open cart shed, two WCs, a four-stall stable, a large barn, cow house, boiling and root houses, three piggeries and a six-stall cow shed.

Either at this sale or soon after, it became the property of Richard William Boulton, who renamed it *Marle Hill Court* and developed it as his residence. The cutting of the Honeybourne line through the middle of the farm's land in the first decade of this century doubtless reduced its viability for agriculture. Boulton ran a well-known local firm of monumental masons and ecclesiastical sculptors; his only daughter, Phyllis Ruby Pamela, married Arthur Nathaniel Price [in July 1931; wedding photo in *Graphic*]. Boulton died in 1935 (his name is now commemorated in a road off Swindon Lane), and the Prices evidently inherited the house and outbuildings.

Mrs Weeks's family moved to Marle Hill Court at the end of June 1942, when she was six years old. They had earlier been at 1 Priory Parade in London Road and then at Butlers Farm, Colesbourne, where her father, who worked for a food distribution company, was modernising the farm to help with the war effort. Mrs Weeks recalls:

'When the war came the Prices split Marle Hill Court into flatlets and bedsits for the many evacuees who came to Cheltenham. They had other property in Cheltenham which they converted in a similar way. We were a motley selection at Marle Hill but we were very happy there. We lived in the barn and a couple of cowsheds, gas lit, black cooking range, one cold tap and a shared loo round the corner. It was very much in the country, with the town looking quite distant over fields and allotments. We saw the bombing of Brunswick Street from there, or rather my father did, Mother and I were sheltering under their huge old brass bedstead.

Mr Price was very kind. His wife had the business head, and used to make him go round and tell the tenants that the rent had to go up and he used to be almost in tears about it. He would avoid upsets if at all possible. On one occasion the pig farm that was just across Swindon Lane from Marle Hill Court had been stewing up swill with a particularly awful smell. The weather was very hot and the wind brought the smell of the swill into the houses night and day. The farmer had taken no notice of our complaints just saying that there was a war on and his pigs needed their food. The tenants decided that the clout of the landlord was necessary and my father was chosen to ask Mr Price to do something about it. Father stopped him as he was coming up the drive on his bicycle - 'Mr Price, I want to talk to you about the smell from the pig farm -' 'Ah, yes', said Mr Price, 'Isn't it wonderful!' and he drew a long appreciative breath! Father was completely floored and nothing more was done.



*Mr Price at Marle Hill Court; the author is to his left (short sleeves).*

The railway line ran beside the house and we watched and waved to trainloads of servicemen. In the corner of a field between the railway and Swindon Lane there was a tiny wooden chapel where services were held every Sunday [the forerunner of St Nicolas's Church - see below]. Across the field by Folly Lane was a large market garden run by Mr and Mrs Eggleton; we used to walk across the field footpath to buy our vegetables and in the fruit season my mother used to join the Land Girls and pick. We left Marle Hill to live at Prestbury just before Christmas 1943.

Mrs Price died of cancer before the end of the war. My father and mother grew quite fond of Mr Price, and he used to come and see us quite often - my mother swore it was the only time he ate a proper meal. He had become quite obsessed with saving his wife's money so that he could leave it to Cheltenham Hospital to build a wing in her memory. He went everywhere on an old bike with an old haversack to carry money and shopping. He wore the same old pair of tweed breeches and much mended knee-high socks, he lived on bread and margarine except when someone gave him a meal, and the money built up. The last time my parents saw him he went to stay with them in London to invest all this money, quite a lot of it in the same old haversack - he caused quite a stir at Cox's & King's! My father spent a lot of time persuading him that he should give the money straight away, building costs were going up, inflation was stirring and think how nice it would be to attend the opening



# Cheltenham and the Indian Connection

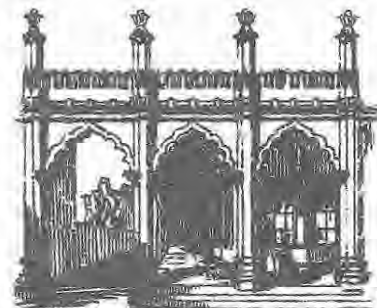
EVA BAILEY

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WHILE CHELTENHAM as a Spa was still attracting visitors, another development was taking place. Many of those who had served in India with the East India Company (EIC), the Bengal Civil Service or the Army chose to reside in Cheltenham on their return to England. One of the reasons was that Cheltenham's climate was considered to equal that of Simla, the hill station in the north-east which served as the summer capital of British India.

Those returning from India were not visitors who came to Cheltenham for the season and then went back to London or elsewhere. They formed a permanent community - a social group who settled here and worked for the advancement of Cheltenham. Every committee of importance had as a member a colonel, major, captain or gentleman from India.

In India, the British erected many buildings in English styles of architecture, including the classical. In Cheltenham, few buildings of Indian design seem to have appeared as a result of the influx of those returning from India. The Market Arcade pictured in Rowe's 1845 *Guide* [inset] has a suggestion of an Indian façade, while the Cambray Spa opened in 1834 does seem to have an eastern touch<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps surprisingly, only a few names betray any Indian link. On the Gloucester Road, there is the Calcutta Inn, existing by 1841 and still in business. In the Bath Road, there were once two villas, Malcolm Ghur and Mosquito Ghur, incorporating the Hindi word for house and presumably built or first occupied by old India hands. Some houses in Lansdown Road were once known as Mussoorie Court, recalling another hill station. Wellesley Road and Wellington Square, recalling the Duke of Wellington, who served in India from 1796 to 1805, may perhaps be claimed as further names with an Indian influence.



Cheltenham has been referred to as 'a Mecca for retired officers and gentlemen from India'. Major Agg, an early settler in Cheltenham, resided at the Hewletts on the outskirts, while in Suffolk Lawn lived what was termed 'a colony of retired East India Company officials'.

Many EIC and military officers bought land in Pittville from Joseph Pitt and on these plots some built their homes<sup>2</sup>. Lt-Col Alexander Limond was one of the earliest to do this. About 1826-7, he built Glenmore Lodge in Wellington Square for his own use. A little later, about 1832-4, Novar Lodge at the north end of Pittville Parade was built by Lt-Col William Munro of the EIC. Two houses in Wellington Square were built about the same time. They were Avondale House and Harwood House, the residences of Lt-Col Thomas Barton and Col William Larkins Watson, both of the EIC. Wellington Square were built about the same



time.

The development of Battledown as a residential estate began in 1859, and a number of returnees from India purchased land or property there<sup>3</sup>. Among them was Gen Alexander Carnegie CB, who joined the Bombay Army in 1846, served during the Indian Mutiny, and went on to give much further service to India. He lived in Battledown from 1889-93 and died in 1901.

Having retired from service in Madras and the Punjab in 1878, Maj-Gen P L O'Connell had the tenancy of Battledown Towers in Stanley Road from 1894-96. Gen George Pringle was tenant of Glendower, Battledown, from 1889 to 1914. On the other hand, Col Bruce Seton bought a lot of land on the Battledown Estate. He was born in Calcutta and lived much of his life in India while serving with the EIC and later the Indian Army.

The influx of Indian service personnel to Cheltenham was not limited to the mid-nineteenth century. Long after 1900 Cheltenham was still a desirable place for many. Those who lived in Battledown between 1913 and 1957 tended to stay for between two and ten years, though it is known that some moved to other addresses in Cheltenham. Maj-Gen Fiddes resided in Cheltenham for nearly 20 years after serving in the Bengal Army. The *Examiner* reported that he died at his home, Oakfield, in The Park on 13 April 1863, aged 81 years.

Lord Ellenborough had a house in Cheltenham as well as the property in Southam that he bought in 1831. He was appointed Governor of India in 1842 and served there during a very troubled time. Sir Charles Napier came to stay in Imperial Square in 1848. The Duke of Wellington directed him to go to India when trouble flared up in the Punjab, and people from Cheltenham gathered at the railway station to wish him farewell as he began his journey<sup>4</sup>. Sir Charles's sword and leathern shield still hang in the church at Southam and a small statue of the Duke of Wellington on horseback is also displayed there.

The Duke of Wellington himself resided for a time in Cambray - then a fashionable part of Cheltenham. The retired employees of the EIC had houses built for them in Lansdown Terrace and it is believed that Evelyn Court, Malvern Road was provided for the widows of EIC officials. It is possible to locate the homes of many returnees from India. They were scattered widely over Cheltenham and did not congregate in one district.

That the Cheltenham residents who had worked in India gave service to the town cannot be denied. Soon after Cheltenham Hospital was built, in 1848 the first House Surgeon and Secretary of the Institution was appointed. He was David Hartley who had earlier worked for the EIC<sup>5</sup>. One outstanding resident was Maj Frederick Laurence Stanley Clarke, OBE. He came from a Cheltenham family but was born in India in 1875. He moved to Cheltenham in 1915 and bought a house in Battledown. It was then that he was appointed Chief Constable of Gloucestershire, a post he held until 1937. One Cheltenham inhabitant tried to use the skill he acquired during Indian service to enhance a career in England. Capt H J W Carter is reported in the press as being a candidate for teaching Hindustani at Oxford University<sup>6</sup>.

Some residents served in several capacities and gave much service to Cheltenham. Col James Gandy Gaitskell, who lived in Waldon House on the Lansdown Road, was a benefactor to Christ Church. In 1865 he presented a font to the church and his daughter Alice was the first baby to be baptised there. Col Gaitskell was the grandfather of Hugh Gaitskell, the politician<sup>7</sup>. Col Gaitskell is often referred to in the press. He frequently attended committees, chaired meetings, wrote letters to the newspapers and one report tells of him distributing prizes at the Yeomanry Sports.

A number of those who came to Cheltenham after serving in India became town commissioners, carrying out many of the decisions and tasks today undertaken by the borough council. Many had made a fortune while abroad, but not all. Some had to survive on Army pensions. However, all needed a reliable establishment at which their sons could be educated, and in 1840 the idea of Cheltenham College was put forward. It was to be an educational establishment in which the prime consideration was to be preparation of boys for the Army and Indian Civil Service. Thirty-six shareholders formed the Committee, all of them gentlemen - no tradesmen were allowed.

Many of those involved and who worked to establish the College were Cheltenham residents with Indian connections. They included Maj-Gen Swiney who was at one time senior officer in the Bengal Artillery and Capt J S Iredale of the Bombay Native Infantry, while Capt Frederick Robertson (also Royal Artillery) was one of the early secretaries. At the new Cheltenham College, Capt Adam Durnford Gordon, who had served with an irregular cavalry regiment in India and was a very fine horseman and a noted big-game hunter, was appointed Professor of Oriental Languages.

Some of the sons of those from India became well-known or even famous throughout the world. The son of Capt Robertson, the Revd Frederick L J Robertson, served his curacy at Christ Church and eventually was held to be England's most famous preacher of the 19th century.

Pearson Thompson did much for Cheltenham. He was one of those involved in the founding of Cheltenham College and he promoted a railway line from Cheltenham to London via Oxford. He was concerned with the building of two Cheltenham churches - St. James and Christ Church, and was responsible for the Rotunda at Montpellier. It was, however, his only son who had a distinguished career in India, holding the rank of Major-General and commanding the 14th Regiment of Hussars.

A plaque on No. 19 Clarence Square states 'Charles Sturt, Australian explorer, lived here 1863-69'. Charles, who was born in India, was the son of Napier Sturt, a judge in Bengal during the time the area was under the control of the EIC<sup>8</sup>. Some sons followed their fathers by serving in India. Capt Robert Hay had at least two sons who did this. His eldest, John Monckton Hay was in the Bengal Civil Service and died in Singapore, while William, another son, served with the Bengal Artillery, dying in Punjab at the age of 55.

The unsettled atmosphere and the flare-up of war in India, particularly the Mutiny, affected those who had spent part of their lives in India and still had relatives there. The Cheltenham *Examiner* ran a feature headed 'The Bombay Mail'<sup>9</sup>. One issue included a letter

from H L Anderson Esq, Secretary to the Government, Bombay, describing Army activities in the North-West Provinces. Another report came from Nizam's territory, while yet more information was given under the heading 'Central India and Rajputana'. Lord Ellenborough commemorated the India campaigns in which he took part. In the tiny Cotswold church at Southam, he erected stained glass windows which pay tribute to and clearly show the names of Sindh and Gwalior. The windows are considered unique.

There were joyful times in Cheltenham as well as anxious ones. Like other Cheltenham residents, those who had come from India had a full social life. A dinner held by General Fiddes at Oakfield, The Park, was reported in the *Examiner*. Many similar functions must have been held by other residents from India.

In addition to his more serious interests, Colonel Gaitskell presided at a meeting of the Ball Committee in November 1875. The Zoological Gardens in The Park, which later became the Pleasure Gardens, would no doubt be enjoyed by all, as were other amenities in Cheltenham. In 1841, the Cheltenham Literary & Philosophical Institution held an Exhibition of Works of Art and Science. It was much more than an exhibition for, among other attractions, General Briggs lectured on agricultural operations in India and on cooling systems in tropical climates.

Those mentioned here form only a small proportion of the Cheltenham residents who had Indian connections. All their personalities and activities certainly had an impact on the life and development of Cheltenham. No doubt many would frequent Mr Brown's Coffee and Cigar Divan where 'the fragrance of the Indian weed' could be enjoyed with a cup of the finest coffee<sup>10</sup>.

## References

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# Hunting the Cotswold Stag

PETER SOUTHERTON

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THAT CHELTENHAM should in the mid-19th century have played host to a flourishing pack of staghounds, even though the red deer had for centuries been unknown in the Cotswolds, is hardly surprising, for Cheltenham in those days was no ordinary town. Once a genteel spa for convalescent gentry, it had developed into a resort popular for the affluent and influential. The town offered many attractions. For devotees of the turf there was both flat racing and steeple-chasing. Foxhunting, dominated by the aristocratic Berkeley Hunt, flourished. There was also a good pack of harriers. The town's landowners and tradespeople relying heavily for their continuing prosperity upon the patronage of the wealthy, any activity, especially of a sporting nature, likely to attract additional visitors during the winter months was warmly supported by them. It was at a social gathering of the Cheltenham Harriers in 1836 that someone suggested that the pack be reorganised as staghounds. The diversity of the country round about with its large enclosures and stone walls was second to none for hard riding to hounds. What more could one ask than to chase the 'antlered monarch' as in the days of Old England long past? Before long the Cheltenham Harriers had been wound up and a subscription pack of staghounds established in their place, with the Hon Grantley Berkeley, MP for Cheltenham, who was well-known throughout the county as a first-class hunting man, as Master.



There being no wild red deer in the county, Lord Segrave (later to become Earl Fitzhardinge) of Berkeley Castle, the elder brother of Grantley Berkeley, presented a dozen stable-reared animals together with sufficient hounds from which to build up a pack. The type of hunting adopted was one which came into being when large areas of the countryside ceased to be reserved for the exclusive privilege of royal hunting. The stag, kept to be hunted, not for venison but purely for the excitement of the chase, would be conveyed in a closed cart to the chosen meeting place of the hunt and there released. After a period of 'law' or delay at the discretion of the Master, the hounds would be unleashed and followed by the horsemen and occasionally by spectators in carriages and even on foot. When the quarry was finally brought to bay the hounds would be whipped off and the stag captured for return to its paddock. The chase was generally fast and furious and often lengthy; a run of twenty to thirty miles was not uncommon. Those stags who were both fast and wily came to be regarded as favourites and attracted as good a following as any champion racehorse. Not all stags however were compliant; one such when uncarted at Birdlip Hill kept pertinaciously to the Turnpike road and trotted in a leisurely manner down Leckhampton Hill and into Cheltenham town where he was captured in the High Street, recarted and returned to the kennels.

Gratuitous cruelty was never practised although, sadly, the stag did not always escape unharmed. From time to time an animal might succumb to sheer exhaustion, sustain injury attempting to jump high walls or other obstacles or drown in a stream or flooded quarry. Very few however fell victim to the hounds which would be whipped off when the stag was brought to bay. Riders and their mounts, too, were not immune from falls and spills, sometimes with painful consequences, arising usually from misjudged jumps over ditches or stone walls. The sole fatality during the whole history of the hunt occurred in 1852 when a young man, Master Findon of Prestbury, died four days after being injured falling under his horse at a gate.

The Stag Hounds began their activities in the autumn of 1837 under the Mastership of Craven Berkeley MP, with his younger brother Grantley as Whipper-In. When in 1841 he resigned the Mastership in order to devote more time to parliamentary duties the management of the pack was for a while left in the hands of a committee. This was not however a very satisfactory arrangement and in 1843 Mr Benyon Barton, best remembered for taking a nasty fall over a bull *couchant* during his first season, was appointed Master. Two years later he was succeeded by Ainslie Robinson, a very jolly man, exceedingly popular with the hunting fraternity and whose stable contained some first-rate horses.

Although the Stag Hounds were always popular they had many problems with which to contend, not least a perennial shortage of funds. At the end of only their second year, the Treasurer had to inform the subscribers that due to tardiness on the part of some of their number to remit their dues promptly and in full, the Hunt was some £200 in the red. In December 1840, the hunt was unable to go out, the stag cart having been impounded by the local carrier at whose premises it was kept, a lien against unpaid bills. Had not the Master been a man of independent means, the burden upon him whilst waiting for his money could have been more than the pocket could bear. To encourage promptness and to shame the defaulters the list of paid-up subscribers and the amount of their contribution was from this time onwards published in the local press.

In 1847 the staghounds faced the threat of extinction from a wholly unexpected quarter. Political antagonism was running high in Cheltenham and the Parliamentary elections which took place that year were fought with unprecedented bitterness. It was openly stated that if the outcome of the election did not favour the Liberal candidate, the Hon Craven Berkeley, the family would withdraw their patronage of sport in the area. This was no light matter as the loss of hunting and horse-racing which they so generously supported would seriously damage the fragile prosperity of the town. When the Conservative candidate was elected by a narrow margin, the Berkeleys received the result with bad grace and to emphasise the point Earl Fitzhardinge put into immediate effect his threat that there would be no more deer. If deer had to be bought the cost would be more than the members could possibly afford. An approach was made to his Lordship but he remained inflexible. Worse was to follow - he considered the hounds to be his property and requested their return without delay. Without stags and without dogs there could be no hunting!

Salvation was however at hand. In August, only two months before the start of the hunting season, an offer was made by a Mr Theobald Theobald, an experienced master of staghounds, to manage the hunt. He was received with outstretched arms as he was able to

offer an excellent pack of hounds, 15 red deer, a stud of 23 horses and a staff of experienced huntsmen and whippers-in. In the view of the local press '(he) appears in every respect pre-eminently qualified to conciliate all parties and to restore the harmony and good feeling which has for some seasons past sorely crippled its efficiency as a hunting establishment. He comes not knowing the definition of politics, but determined to promote good sport and good fellowship.' An agreement was immediately entered into that he should hunt the country in return for a guaranteed annual subscription of £700, a handsome but in the circumstances not excessive reward.

On a fine Saturday morning in mid-October the new pack of 22 couples accompanied by two huntsmen in scarlet jackets and caps, paraded in the centre of Cheltenham before a large concourse of people. At 11 o'clock the cavalcade of 50 or 60 gentlemen, several in in scarlet jackets, their bright colours thrown into high relief by the dark coats of the ladies who rode beside them, moved off in the direction of Shurdington a mile or two away, for the uncarting. Bringing up the rear were private carriages, flies and other vehicles, filled for the most part by ladies all in their holiday best. The deer when released from the cart made for Leckhampton Hill where for a while he was lost to view. The hounds, loosed after 20 minutes' law, held on to the scent and after a spirited run of almost an hour and a half the fugitive was captured at Coberley.

Mr Theobald proved a capable and popular Master. After a successful first season during which he provided a full programme of meetings he cannot be blamed for feeling aggrieved when the monies to finance his establishment fell short of the promised total. Taking his threat to withdraw and alarmed that they might again lose their hounds and stags, the Committee began energetically to pursue the collection of subscriptions and to enlarge the membership. The Master's remuneration being guaranteed, hunting resumed in mid-October. Whilst the staghounds continued to offer good sport, a continuing tardiness on the part of the Committee to meet his expenses confirmed the Master in his intention to withdraw from stag hunting in this area at the end of his third season. Taking advantage of the disarray within Cheltenham's ranks the citizens of Bath were quick to seize the opportunity of inviting him to add stag hunting to their city's many attractions.

A promising successor was found in Arthur Edwin Way, who set about re-establishing the pack with great enthusiasm. Unlike his predecessor, he did not have to worry about the supply of stags as Earl Fitzhardinge had by this time relented in his attitude towards the people of Cheltenham and was again ready to contribute the deer without charge.

Arthur Way was well-liked both by the subscribers and by those farmers and landowners whose property the hunt would cross. He was also strict in his insistence upon courtesy and consideration in the hunting field and was quick to take to task anyone who came to his attention for causing damage to gates and hedges or generally 'larking about'. In the spring of 1853, much to his own sorrow and to the disappointment of the hunting fraternity he was forced by increasing business responsibilities to resign the Mastership. He marked the end of the hunting season and also of his residence in Cheltenham with a farewell ball and supper for more than 500 friends, guests and principal subscribers. Held at the Assembly Rooms, the event was remembered as one of the most brilliant entertainments of the season for many a year.

With no one anxious to take upon themselves responsibility for the pack, the establishment was broken up and the hounds sold. Could prospective Masters have been aware, one wonders, that the guaranteed subscriptions pledged to Mr Way by the tradesmen of the town had been raised only with the greatest of difficulty and that to make up the amount the chairman had been obliged to pay the balance from his own pocket? There were, notwithstanding, still many sportsmen and not a few local tradespeople who wished to continue to hunt 'with horn and hound' and the search for a Master went on. Hopes were raised when Mr Swinburne Berkeley, eldest son of the Hon Grantley Berkeley, said that if a subscription of £300 or thereabouts could be raised he would gladly serve as Master. Hopes of re-establishing the pack that Autumn were however soon dashed as despite their avowed good intentions neither the tradesmen nor the gentry came forward with the necessary cash. Disappointed at the lukewarm response he declined to accept the appointment. It seemed that there would be no more stag hunting around Cheltenham.

The following spring the committee invited Captain West, a former Master of the Bath Stag Hounds, to join them in Cheltenham. Described as 'a hunting man - early to bed, early to rise and who rode his hounds right well', he expressed a wish to 'hunt the country in as good a style as it has ever been hunted in times past'



provided, of course, that he be assured of a town subscription such as his predecessors had been accustomed to receive. A mutually acceptable arrangement was drawn up and the new Master established himself at the appropriately named Hunting Butts Farm at Prestbury. Earl Fitzhardinge was pleased with the appointment and continued to keep the hunt well supplied with deer. Under the Captain's mastership the Cheltenham Stag Hounds attained their zenith, enjoying consistently good sport, large fields and a different venue for each meet. Sportsmen, it is said travelled long distances to Cheltenham just to see the hounds draw the coverts for the scent of a stag never once ever going off after a fox despite occasional attempts by spectators to distract them and set them off on the wrong trail.

The season which opened in October, 1857, however did not have the most auspicious start. A day or two before the first meeting of the season, the huntsman found to his dismay that the stags' paddock was empty. In the distance he caught a glimpse of 'Isaac Day', the most prestigious member of the herd, running off as fast as his legs would carry him. The alarm was raised and every able-bodied person in the neighbourhood called upon to give chase while the Master, at that time summering at Plymouth with his hounds, was summoned by telegraph. 'Isaac', pausing only to cool off in a brook, soon caught up with four of his companions and together they made their way towards the sanctuary of Charlton Park with its herd of roe deer. Two stags who had chosen to run in the opposite direction provided the schoolboys of Cleve with much amusement. At Swindon Village a man coming by on horseback, accompanied by a large dog, did his best to halt them but, too fast for horse or dog, the deer continued on until they were lost to sight. Captain West, to whom it was a matter of honour that the members of the stag hounds should not miss their winter's sport, enlisted as many local men as possible to help recover the missing animals. Lest he be unsuccessful, he also wrote to Lord Derby asking for the loan of four couple of his red

deer for the coming season. Fortunately the stags were all retrieved and there was no need to buy or borrow fresh animals. The first meet of the season took place only two weeks later than planned, with the Hunt parading, as was now their custom, in the open space in front of the Queen's Hotel. Their quarry on this occasion was one of the escapees which had established itself in Badgworth Woods.

The last of the escaped stags, a wanderer who had found a home among the fallow deer in Lord Somers' park at Eastnor Castle, remained at liberty until the end of November. Evicted by the gamekeepers there, he was finally captured after a chase of over eight miles across the Worcestershire countryside.

Captain West was universally admired for his qualities as Master and it was with regret that the members learned that he was to depart at the end of his third season. At a dinner given in his honour he said that he was compelled by higher duties of a domestic character to relinquish his Mastership which he would be happy to hand over to any gentleman disposed to accept the appointment and to whom he would willingly present his pack. The announcement, which took the company by surprise, was received with genuine sorrow. Later the Captain explained that when he first came to Cheltenham he had no family and that he could get by on two or three hundred pounds without difficulty but he now had three children to support, adding 'as the family grows, the stable empties'. Yet again a committee was set up to attract and appoint a successor.

The year 1858 was a time of great uncertainty for all involved in the hunting scene throughout Gloucestershire as shortly after Christmas, Earl Fitzhardinge whilst out riding at Berkeley suffered a fall from his horse. Aged 70 years and already in frail health, his condition deteriorated steadily throughout the summer and by the beginning of August he was so weak that his medical attendants prohibited visits even by his nearest relatives. The Earl died at Berkeley Castle on Saturday 10th October 1857. By the late spring of 1857, the Stag Hounds had found a new Master in Mr W H White, a gentleman well acquainted with the country and who had in previous years hunted the fox with Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds. The new season opened with a meet at Andoversford in fog so dense that one could not see above 20 or 30 yards. At first it was thought that no sport would be attempted but a number of horsemen having come along, the Master was determined not to let them down. After customary law the hounds were laid on while some half dozen of the most experienced horsemen gave chase to an invisible fugitive who was eventually captured uninjured at Cranham Woods. The next meet took place under equally unfavourable weather conditions, the atmosphere being described 'as thick as cream cheese'. The verdict upon Mr White was however favourable, it being reported that 'he promises every essential for stag hunting - is of light weight - a bold rider - and seems determined to show all the sport he can'. The Stag Hounds were however about to suffer a mortal blow.

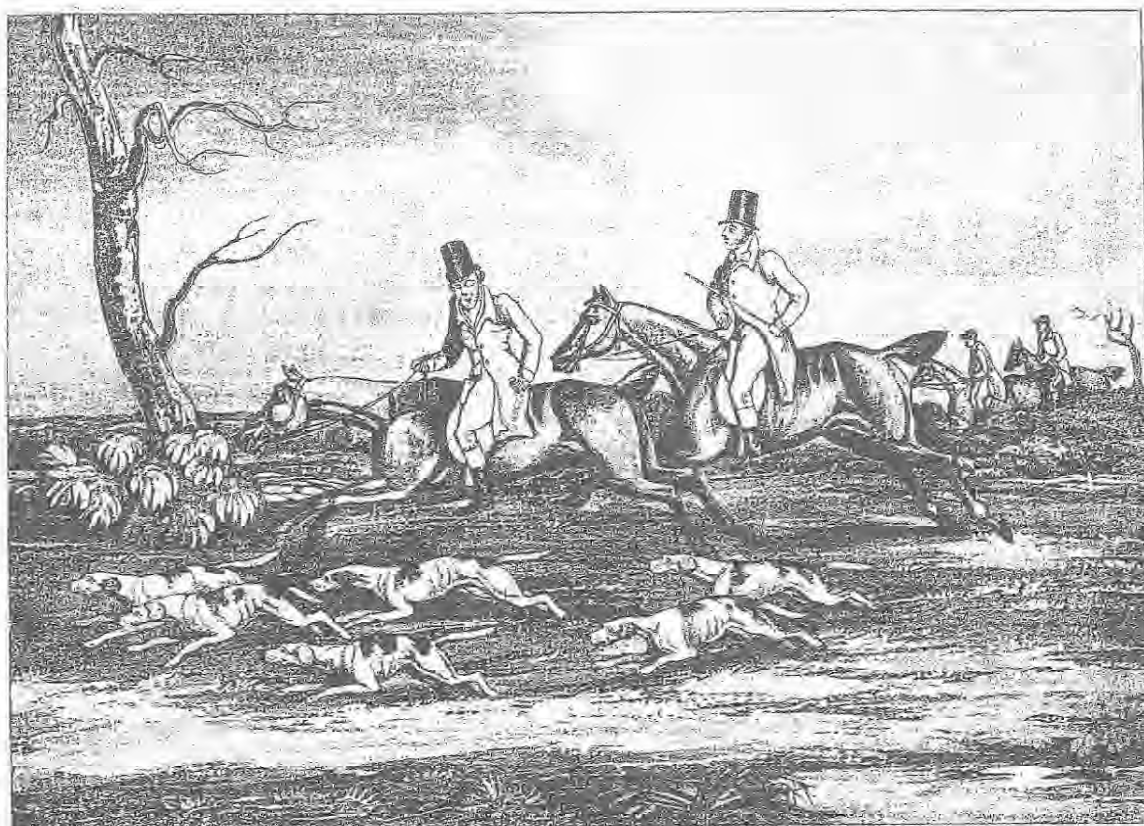
In his will, published early in 1858, it was found that the late Earl had bequeathed the greater part of his estate to old friends and former mistresses and had effectively excluded his brothers and their heirs from any share in the inheritance. The considerable wealth which they had hoped was to come their way being denied them, their lifestyle had to be amended drastically. First to go were their foxhunting interests in the Cheltenham and Broadway country. It was quite certain that the family would no longer be in a position to rear and



supply stags, with or without payment.

The withdrawal of the Berkeley foxhounds from the western slopes of the Cotswolds led to an urgent demand for a new pack to hunt the country. Following much activity, a new hunt, 'The Cotteswold', took the field that year. Even among the comparatively wealthy sportsmen of Gloucestershire the amount of money available was insufficient to support two packs of hounds. There being no dearth of foxes it was patently clear that there was no future for the Cheltenham Stag Hounds which finally disbanded in March 1858, 'after a brilliant run - though not without occasional checks - of more than twenty years'. The end came with almost indecent haste. On the day following the close of the season, with a large number of sportsmen in 'at the death, the assets of the Hunt were disposed of by public auction at the Kennels'. The horses, it is reported, all fetched a good price. There was however very little competition for the hounds which were knocked down at a bargain price of 18 guineas to the Huntsman, Charles Allen, who had remained a loyal servant of the Hunt throughout the whole of its existence.

The demise of the Cheltenham Stag Hounds left only two packs remaining in England, those of Her Majesty the Queen and of Baron Rothschild.



[An old print, reproduced in *Records of the Chase* by "Cecil" (3rd ed., 1922)]

# Behind the Eight Bells: A Glimpse of Cheltenham's Past

TERRY MOORE-SCOTT

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THE DISCOVERY of a solitary timber roof-truss embedded in a boundary wall at the rear of the Two Pigs public house (formerly Eight Bells Inn) off the High Street near St Mary's churchyard, although of no outstanding archaeological or architectural significance, nevertheless aroused curiosity at our local museum and, in turn, with this writer.

The building of a new extension behind the inn during 1997 revealed the existence of a timber roof truss embedded in a brick boundary wall between the inn's beer garden and an adjoining structure at the rear of property on Clarence Street (see illustration). Ignoring apparently later studding attached to it, the truss is of a simple, typically 18th-century, style comprising straight-cut timbers consisting of a horizontal tie beam about 7m long and about 2.5m above modern ground level, two principal rafters (with purlin slots) and angle trusses; what may be a central king post is also present. No more of the building to which it belonged appears to have survived. Nor is it obvious why the roof truss alone should have been incorporated into the later boundary wall.

An immediate conclusion is that this once formed part of the roof of a single floored structure aligned at right angles to the inn property, that is running roughly parallel to the nearby High Street. It is not clear whether what we see today was a gable end or a central bay but it seems distinctly possible that the original building, whatever its purpose, was one of those sacrificed to make way for the laying of Clarence Street in 1827<sup>1</sup>. Town maps of the time mostly lack detail of individual properties but the Postmaster's map of 1820<sup>2</sup> shows a building in this location and on the right alignment. An accompanying name or description is also present but, sadly, it is virtually illegible<sup>3</sup>.

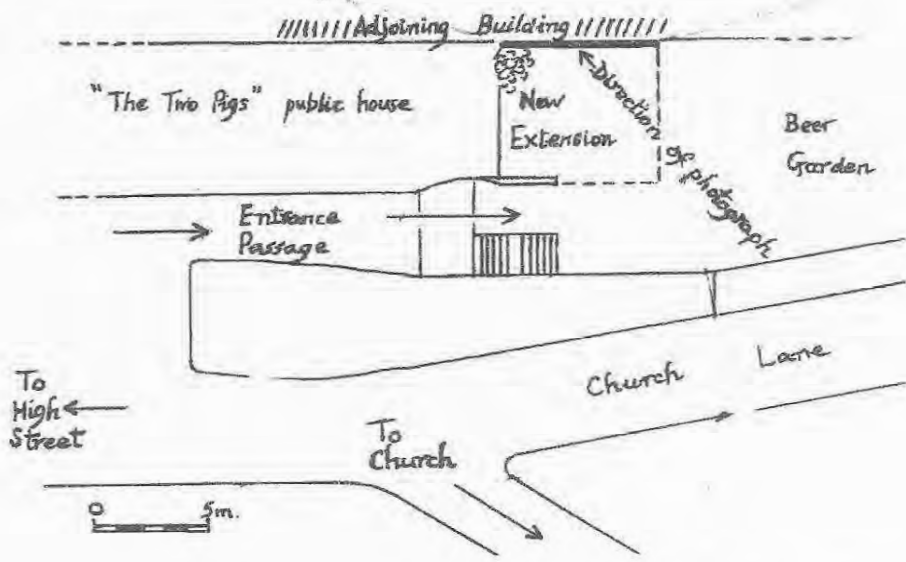
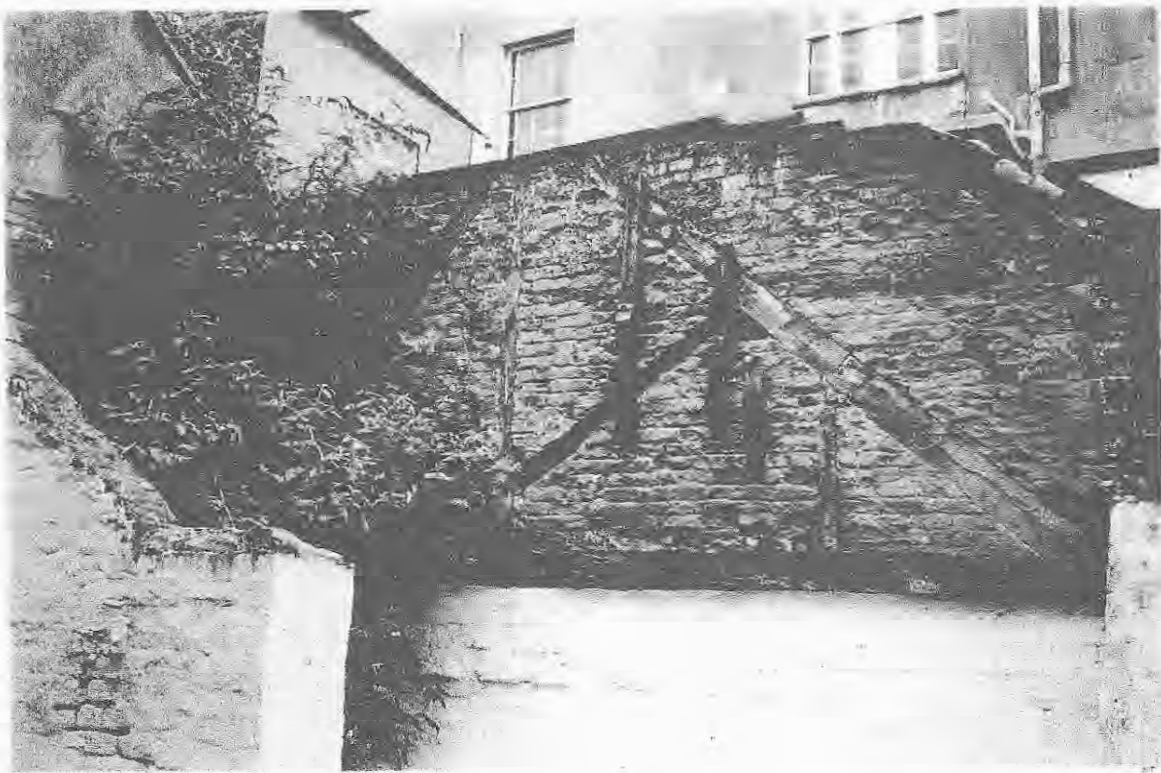
So what could the structure have been? A relatively low status building behind an inn could suggest livery stables or some other similar establishment, but nothing is listed for the location in the 1820 trades directory for Cheltenham (the earliest available). Particulars of a sale of furniture, stock-in-trade and fixtures at the inn in February 1846 indicate that it had an outer tap-room, a coachhouse, skittle alley, stables and brewhouse<sup>4</sup> but presumably by this date the building with which we are concerned had already ceased to exist. In any case, the building shown on the 1820 map extended some distance away from the inn behind neighbouring houses, possibly indicating no connection with the inn at all.

This perhaps is where we must leave the matter and, given the building's apparently modest status, there may be no great loss in that. Nevertheless, any such feature occurring in this historic section of the town merits investigation and recording, however lowly its character. This may also be said of the range of outbuildings which still stand behind the Two Pigs, bordering Church Lane opposite the parish church. One or two at least of these buildings probably featured in the 1846 sale particulars relating to the inn and both Trinder's map of 1809<sup>5</sup> and the 1820 map show structures here. Of special interest though must be the

presence, on the gable end of the tallest of the existing buildings, of an upper cruck timber roof truss which may indicate a much earlier date for that building. Is there a vernacular buildings expert in the house?!

Notes

- <sup>1</sup> James Hodsdon, *Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, BGAS Record Series 9 (1997), p 39.
- <sup>2</sup> Plan of Cheltenham, 1820, by E Cossens, postmaster; Cheltenham Reference Library.
- <sup>3</sup> The most that can be made of the inscription is that it reads 'Frith (or possibly 'Bath') R(?ow)', but neither name appears in the table of references at the foot of the map.
- <sup>4</sup> GRO D2080 C64.
- <sup>5</sup> Gwen Hart, *History of Cheltenham*, 1965.



(Photograph and plan by the author)

# Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham

List compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

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- Atkinson, Heather, *The other side of Regency Cheltenham. A history of the Lower High Street area*, Cheltenham Borough Council, 1997. 40pp. £1.00. A brief introduction to the social and economic history of the Lower High Street area, plus notes on prominent buildings, illustrated with photographs and line drawings. Based on the author's college dissertation and published as part of the Borough Council's Lower High Street Neighbourhood Renewal Area initiative.
- Bradbury, Oliver, 'Radley Gazebo, Cheltenham', *Follies* 9.2 (old series number 34), Autumn 1997, p.9. An account of a 19th-century summer house in the garden of Radley, a bungalow built in part of the garden of Scoriton, Pittville Crescent.
- Brazier, James, 'Cheltenham's forgotten war memorial painting (the 1/5th Gloucesters at Hebertune 1916, by Fred Roe RI)', *The Western Front Association Bulletin* 49 (October 1997), pp. 20-23. The story behind a painting of a battalion of the Gloucesters, including two members of Cheltenham's prominent Winterbotham family. The painting is in the collection of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums and is currently on display at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Gloucester Docks.
- Devereux, Joe & Sacker, Graham, *Leaving all that was dear. Cheltenham and the Great War*, Promenade Publications, Cheltenham, 1997. 668pp. £29.95. An introductory account of Cheltenham's role in the First World War, including its Red Cross Hospitals, is followed by some 1600 brief biographies (with photographs where available) of all those from Cheltenham and its immediate area who died on active service.
- Downing, M., 'Military effigies with breast chains', *Church Monuments* 10 (1995), pp. 7-19. The article includes references to a tomb in Leckhampton church.
- Gill, Peter, *Cheltenham Races*, Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud, 1997. 158pp. £10.99. A well illustrated history of the races and racecourse from the early 19th century to the present day.
- Greet, Carolyn, *Six years 1856-1861. The diaries of Edward Welch of Arle*, Carmichael Books, Cheltenham, 1997. 230pp. £5.00. An account of one man's war service in the Crimea and India, plus service in Canada and life around Cheltenham.
- Harrison, Miriam & Alexander, Shirley, *The Cheltenham Experience*, Reardon Publishing, Cheltenham, 1997. 32pp. £3.95. A walk around Cheltenham; line drawings.

- Hodsdon, James, *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, Bristol & Glos Archaeological Society Record Series 9 (1997), 208pp. £30.00. A comprehensive gazetteer of Cheltenham place names, past and present, including all named streets, terraces and some individual houses. Its coverage includes the whole of the modern borough and the book comes with full size reproductions of maps of Cheltenham in 1820, 1834 and 1897. [currently out of print]
- Lowton, Nicholas, *Cheltenham College Chapel*, The Cheltonian Society, 1996. 64pp. Unpriced. A detailed and beautifully illustrated history and guide to one of the town's finest Gothic Revival buildings.
- Moore-Scott, Terry & Goult, Derek, 'Brizen Recreation Field, Leckhampton Romano-British settlement', *Glevensis* 29 (1996), pp. 49-50. Evidence for a small Romano-British site at the corner of Shurdington Road and Up Hatherley Way, discovered during the course of recent development work.
- Munden, Alan, *A Cheltenham Gamaliel. Dean Close of Cheltenham*, Dean Close School, Cheltenham, 1997. 68pp. £5.00. A concise outline biography of Close, including details of his work in both Cheltenham and Carlisle.
- Paget, Mary (ed), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Bulletins*, published twice yearly. Approximately 40 pages per issue. £2.50 per issue. A wide range of notes and articles on the history of Charlton Kings, by a variety of authors. *Bulletin* 37 (Spring 1997) includes articles on Crime in Charlton, 1221, the Crump family, houses around School Road and Hearne Brook, Patronage of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Charlton Kings and Sappercombe Cottage; *Bulletin* 38 (Autumn 1997) includes articles on houses at Churchend, memories of St Mary's church choir, the Higgs family, the Castlemead area and local church faculties.
- Swindon Village Collection* 1 (1997), published by the Swindon Village Society. 58pp. Unpriced. A series of short articles, by various authors, including Swindon Village in 186 and the 1950s, Maud's Elm and Swindon Manor.
- Syed, Isabel, *Eagle Star. A guide to its history and archives*, Eagle Star Holdings plc, Cheltenham, 1997. 221pp. Unpriced. A comprehensive handbook to the Company's past, including many Cheltenham references.
- Taylor, Brian, 'St John's, Cheltenham: early years', *Gloucestershire History* 11 (1997), pp. 16-19. Brief account of one of Cheltenham's 'Regency' churches, demolished 1967.
- Trafford, Robert, *The Rev. Francis Close and the foundation of the Training Institution at Cheltenham 1845-78*, Park Published Papers (Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education), Cheltenham, 1997. 258pp. £11.99. An account of Close's life and work, focusing on his religious beliefs and educational ideas and on the early years of the Training Institution, later St Paul's College. Based on the author's Open University doctoral thesis and published to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the College's foundation.

**BOOK REVIEW by Steven Blake**

*British Spas from 1815 to the present. A Social history*, by Phyllis Hembry (edited and completed by Leonard and Evelyn Cowie). The Athlone Press, London, 1997. 292pp. £50.00.

WHEN PHYLLIS Hembry retired from her post as Head of the History Department at the Cheltenham Ladies' College, she set herself the task of producing a comprehensive history of Britain's spas, something that no serious historian had attempted since the days of Dr A B Granville's three-volume *Spas of England and Principal Sea-Bathing Places*, first published in 1841.

Her considerable research bore fruit in 1990 with the publication, also by the Athlone Press, of *The English Spa 1560-1815*, following which Dr Hembry began to prepare a second volume, to take the story down to 1914. Sadly, she died in 1992, but her drafts and research notes have been edited and revised by Dr and Mrs Cowie, as the basis of this volume. The editors have also expanded her outline notes on Scottish, Welsh and Irish spas into a further chapter and have added a final section on 20th-century spas in order to bring the story right up to date.

Like the previous volume, this book aims to be as comprehensive as possible, covering the little known 'spalets' as well as such 'giants' as Bath, Leamington and, of course, our own Cheltenham. It also seeks to put the spas into their wider economic and social context, thereby avoiding the pitfall of mere topographical description of surviving spa buildings and townscapes. It succeeds admirably in both these aims, and without doubt these two volumes will become standard texts on the subject and are a major contribution to our understanding of an important aspect of British history.

Members of our Society will perhaps turn most eagerly to the account of Cheltenham, which, in addition to its inclusion in the sections on the spas in 1815, late Victorian and 20th-century spas, is one of only three towns to warrant a chapter to itself, concentrating inevitably on the period up to 1850. Although much of the information may be familiar to anyone already conversant with Cheltenham's past, there is certainly a great deal that is both new and interesting, for Dr Hembry made wide use of newspapers, directories and census records. It includes, for instance, many valuable statistics of population and employment structure within the town, and the Cheltenham chapter covers a remarkably wide range of themes in less than two dozen pages, balancing high society and the town's élite with the economic realities of its large artisan population.

Unfortunately, perhaps during the transition from author's notes to editors' texts, a worrying number of errors (some factual, others perhaps typographical) have crept in. For example, the date of Henry Skillicorne's marriage to Elizabeth Mason is given as 1738, whereas in fact it took place in 1731, while Henry Thompson's purchase of the Montpellier property is dated to 1809, eight years later than was in fact the case. The Pittville Pump Room is said to have opened in 1820 (correct date, 1830), and Cavendish House in 1818 (correct date, 1826), while Lord Sherborne has become Lord Shelborne and Milsom Street

has become Wilson Street. Certainly there are far more errors here than may be detected in Dr Hembry's previous volume (in which the correct dates for both the Skillicorne marriage and the Thompson purchase are given) and one must assume that had Dr Hembry lived to complete the second volume herself errors such as these would have been eradicated. In short, the coverage of Cheltenham prior to 1815, in the 1990 volume, is far more accurate (and indeed comprehensive) than the account of post-1815 Cheltenham in this new volume.

Despite these reservations, this new volume is still well worth reading, and, in the last analysis, it is not the reader who 'dips' into the book, seeking information about a specific spa, who will gain the most benefit from it. It is rather the reader who has the dedication to read it from cover to cover, thereby placing the history of any individual spa town, such as Cheltenham, into its context and identifying what it is about any given place that is both characteristic and unique.

## GRO: 1997 Accessions for Cheltenham Area

JULIE COURTENAY, Senior Cataloguer

THE GRO receives about 250-300 new accessions of archives each year. Many come from local government departments but a varied range of material is deposited by private families, churches, businesses and societies. The Record Office staff are always grateful to hear of records in private hands which may be worth preserving in the archives. They can give free advice on how best to store and look after records. For further information please contact David Smith, the County Archivist, at Gloucestershire Record Office, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GL1 3DW (tel 01452 425295). Collections here marked \* are not yet readily available to researchers, because they have not yet been catalogued, they need repair, or are closed to the public for a certain number of years.

- \* W L Barrow of Cheltenham, architect: practice files and drawings 1953-78 (D7684)
  - \* Benhall Infants School: governors' minutes 1992-95 and corresp. 1983-93 (SM78/24)
  - \* Bettridge Special School: governors' minutes 1991-94 (SM78/16)
  - Boots the Chemist, Cheltenham: prescription book 1923-24 (D7700)
  - Sarah Bridges of Cheltenham, druggist: records relating to her bankruptcy 1820 (D7596)
  - \* Brookfield Special School: governors' minutes 1989-92 (SM78/16)
  - Bruton Knowles estate agents, Cheltenham office: newscuttings book 1968-76 and sale particulars 1980s (D7781)
  - Charlton Kings Urban District Council: minutes 1948-74 (DA3)
  - \* Charlton Park Estate: large additional deposit inc. deeds, surveys, maps, rentals, manor court rolls and Prinn and Russell family records mainly 17th-19th cents. (D7661)
  - \* Cheltenham Borough Council: committee mins. c.1945-92, council mins. 1984-91, charity mins. and accts. 1899-c.1970, newscuttings books 1951-68, registers of houses 1950-73 and invitations, programmes and menus for borough events 1958-80 (CBR)
- [A project to catalogue the Cheltenham Borough Council archive began in September, funded by the Council and a grant from the British Library. The catalogue should be available*

towards the end of 1999.]

\* Cheltenham Conservative Assoc: annual reports and correspondence 20th cent. (D7738)

\* Cheltenham Coroner: inquest files 1995 (CO7)

Cheltenham & District Branch of the Soroptimist International Club: records from formation of branch in 1957 to 1990 (D7762)

\* Cheltenham Magistrates' Court: registers 1985-90(PS/CH)

Cheltenham Rural District Council: committee and council minutes 1948-74 (DA/21)

Everyman Theatre: additional programmes and publicity material 1920s-80s (D6978)

Pates and Guirron families of Cheltenham: family memorabilia 1854-20th century including records relating to St John's Primary School c.1946-79 and Pate's Grammar School Old Girls' Association c.1966-86 (D7746)

SS Philip & James parish, Leckhampton: parish registers and other church records including log books, etc, of the National Schools 19th-20th cents. (P198/1)

\* Savorama of Cheltenham, timber mchts: scrapbooks and albums mainly 1970s (D3120)

\* Yeend of Cheltenham, solr.: office correspondence and other recds 20th cent. (D7821)

Deeds to various properties dating from the 18th century have been received from Willans, solicitors of Cheltenham (D5907); other deeds to particular properties include:

94 Bath Road, formerly York House, (1808)-1987 (D4376)

Montpellier Spa Road 1860-1914 (D7805)

25 St Paul's Road 1884-1985 and 'Newlyn', Pittville Circus Rd (1901)-1986 (D7685)

Waterloo Cottage (lease) 1815 (D7596)

'St Albans', Wellington Street 1827-1963 (D7818)

2 Whitehart Street 19th-20th centuries (D2079)

#### CORRECTIONS AND UPDATES

In Mick Kippin's article on **Bandstands** in *Journal 13*, one of the Pittville bandstands (left-hand illustration on p. 4) was inadvertently misidentified. The wording in brackets at the end of the second line on p. 5 should read: '(The rectangular structure marked 'Band Stand' on the 1923 OS map, in the Recreation Ground, was merely temporary and was later moved and turned into a sports pavilion; residents do not recall it was ever used as a bandstand.)'

In Phyllis White's article on the **Old Swan Inn** in the same issue, a line was omitted at the head of page 10. The page should have begun 'Less than three years later Betty Parfett was standing before the Coln St Denis altar ...'

Further examples of other **Montpelliers** (pp. 54-57 of the last issue) continue to be discovered. Cheltenham cannot after all claim the first English Montpellier. This prize goes to Twickenham's Montpellier Row, a Georgian brick-built terrace of 1720 overlooking the Thames. Second place (currently) goes to the Montpelier Tavern and Tea Gardens in Walworth, south London, of about 1770. Here was staged in 1796 a celebrated cricket match between eleven one-armed pensioners from the Greenwich Hospital and eleven of their one-legged comrades. Play was interrupted by a riot. Enough said: Cheltenham surely retains the crown for the most *tasteful* English Montpellier, if not the first ...