



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 102

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

March 2022



EDITORIAL

This atmospheric view of Pittville Gates from the north side was sent to us before Christmas by the late James Hodsdon, with a note to say that it is a watercolour painted in 1961 by Walter Monckton Keesey, a Birmingham-based architect and draughtsman who retired to Cheltenham in 1957. He was for a while president of the Cheltenham Group of Artists, and at an exhibition after his death in 1970 the Cheltenham Art Gallery bought two of his paintings, one of which showed a corner shop in St George's Place. He certainly did more Cheltenham scenes, and James wondered where they might be. Has anyone come across any of them? We'd still like to know.

Kath Boothman

March 2022

Cheltenham LHS

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's AGM will be held on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7.00 pm at St Luke's Church Hall., St Luke's Place, Cheltenham. (See agenda enclosed with this Newsletter.) The Mayor, as President of the Society, will chair the meeting.

Election of Officers and Committee 2022-23

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2021 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they so wish. Nominations are invited for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and for committee members. If you would like to nominate someone or be nominated yourself, either for one of these posts or as a committee member, please contact the Secretary Alison Pascoe (email cheltlocalhistory@btinternet.com or telephone 01242 519413) for a nomination form.

After the AGM business is concluded **Martin Boothman** and **Peter Barlow** will give a talk entitled **Early Gloucestershire Vehicle Registrations**.

SUMMER VISITS

You are invited to take part in the following visits with the Society. **IN ALL CASES PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR PAYMENT AND A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.** There will be a priority booking period for members only until 11th April and, as places are limited on these visits, you are advised to book early to be sure of getting a place. If you wish to bring a non-member as a guest, please indicate this on the form when booking your own place. If there is any availability after 11th April, places will be offered to non-members in order of application. If you find that you cannot attend a visit for which you have booked, please inform Sue Brown (01242 231837) or another committee member of your cancellation, so that someone else may have the opportunity to take your place. If you don't let us know that you cannot attend, we shall expect you to pay the cost.

Wednesday 1st June at 6.30 pm and Wednesday 15th June at 6.30 pm **Curry and Colonels—a walk exploring Anglo-Indian connections**

Phil Collins will provide a fascinating insight into the lives of Anglo-Indian returnees to Cheltenham by telling anecdotes and stories of the Empire. The walk starts outside the Municipal Offices and will include the homes, spas, theatres, gentlemen's clubs and architecture that made Cheltenham a favourite retreat for ex-colonials.

Wednesday 6th July at 6.30 pm and Wednesday 20th July at 6.30 pm **Surviving and Lost Industrial Sites in Cheltenham**

Amber Patrick's walk will start at the Bayshill Inn, where the River Chelt comes out of its underground run. It takes in sites such as the Crescent Bakery, the

location of St James' Station, the former market and the remains of the gas works, ending at the site of the Cheltenham Original Brewery on the High Street.

Wednesday 17th August leaving Royal Well at 9.15 am, returning about 4.30 pm
CHASTLETON HOUSE and STOW-ON-THE-WOLD



Our visit will start with a private guided tour of Chastleton House, near Stow, a National Trust property built in the early 17th century by a prosperous wool merchant. It is somewhat unusual in that it has remained essentially unchanged for nearly 400 years as the wool trade declined and the family's fortune thereby diminished. As you can see, the house is on four floors so reasonable stair-climbing ability is useful.

In the afternoon, members of the Stow-on-the-Wold Civic Society will provide a guided walk around the town. Stow's location at the junction of main roads through the Cotswolds, including the Fosse Way, has secured its importance as a major market town for at least seven hundred years. Wool was, of course, a major source of wealth, with over 20,000 sheep typically being sold at a twice-yearly market.

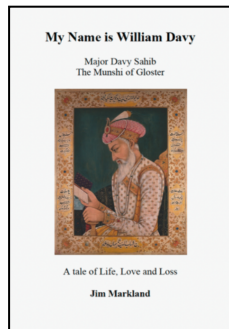


NEW PUBLICATION

My Name is William Davy **Gloucester's 18th Century Persian Scholar** by Jim Markland

The tragic tale of a young man who ran away from Eton to the West Indies, later joined the Bengal Army, became fluent in the Persian language and found favour with the Mughal Emperor. Eventually he was chosen to be Persian Secretary to the Governor General, Warren Hastings. Sad to say, his career was dogged by a serious lawsuit and then by ill health, and he died at sea on his way home to England, where he had a young family in Gloucester. His heart is buried in the Cathedral cloisters.

The book is available from Gloucester Cathedral Gift Shop, price £8.



EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2022-23

We are continuing to hold evening meetings at St Luke's Church Hall, at 7.30 pm on Wednesdays rather than Tuesdays. For the benefit of members who are unable or reluctant to attend in person, talks will be recorded and can be viewed online for up to four weeks after the event.

Wednesday 21st September:

Tim Brain—the Gloucestershire Regiment in Europe 1944 and 1945

Wednesday 19th October:

Neela Mann—The Masons, the Mercers and a Mariner: some 17th Century Trading Tokens

Wednesday 16th November:

Steven Blake—John Bellamy (1808-93), a Gloucestershire Travelling Showman

Tuesday 6th December:

David Aldred—Cheltenham's Lung: the long making of Cleeve Common

Wednesday 18th January 2023:

Louise Ryland-Epton—VCH Leckhampton

Wednesday 22nd February 2023:

David Elder—Cheltenham's Poet Laureates

Wednesday 22nd March 2023:

Polly Baynes—The History of the Cheltenham Charity Organisations

Wednesday 19th April 2023:

Robert Rimell—Winston Churchill Memorial Garden

MORNING LECTURES 2022-23

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke's Church Hall. A donation of £3 from all attending is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no extra charge) from 10.00 am and lectures begin at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the hall is limited and is on a first come, first served basis. If you need to reserve a space please contact the Secretary, Alison Pascoe (01242 519413).

Tuesday 4th October:

Jim Markland—Cheltenham's East India Company Physicians

Tuesday 7th February 2023: TBC

Tuesday 4th April 2023: TBC

LOST OR STRAYED!

A set of laminated A2 display panels on the subject of Trade and Industry in Cheltenham and Leckhampton, which were shown in the Local Studies Centre a few years ago, have gone missing. I should like to be reunited with them to use again at the GLHA Summer Afternoon on 25th June. If anyone knows of their whereabouts, please get in touch.

Eric Miller (ehmiller@talktalk.net)

REVIEWS

On November 17th at St Luke's **Steven Blake** gave us a talk entitled **The Perils of Speculation in Regency Cheltenham: the Rise and Fall of the Honourable Miss Monson**. Steven said that when Katherine Monson appeared in the bankruptcy court on February 22nd 1829 it was the last chapter in a remarkable 20-year career as a builder. Born in 1754 as the daughter of the second Baron Monson, she grew up at the family home, Burton Hall near Lincoln, moving to Cheltenham in her twenties. She was well provided for financially. The 1802 Directory shows her living at Croft House, near where Monson Avenue is now, renting from a former bricklayer called Edward Leyton who, in partnership with a plasterer called Keyt, had become a builder. Cheltenham was growing rapidly at the turn of the 19th century and there was something of a mania for building. Fields on the north side of town were being divided into plots: Steven showed a map of the narrow strips that were being offered for sale. Leyton had bought land in 1785 and Miss Monson followed suit in 1804, buying the land next to Croft House. She also built and rented out two cottages. In 1805 she started a more ambitious project, a house for herself on a 2-acre site, named St Margaret's. (Later it would be the booking hall of the Black & White coach company, until it was bombed in 1940.) By 1808 she was a noted member of Cheltenham society. In 1813 she spent £1500 on more land. There she built St Margaret's Terrace, which was to be her one surviving legacy. Like all her ventures it was a precarious speculation, each house in turn being mortgaged to pay for the building of the next, always with further borrowing besides. In 1823 there were repeated complaints about a brick kiln on her land, where she made her own bricks, and she was fined twice but resisted all efforts to make her stop. By this time she was nearly 70, still very much 'hands on' and, with her social rank and strong personality, a formidable adversary. In 1824 she bought 8 acres in Whaddon, where she dug clay for bricks and built cottages. Steven listed other speculations all over the town, which took her ever deeper into debt. Her family, however, knew nothing of this. Cheltenham's long building boom came to an end in 1825, property values collapsed and then Miss Monson was in trouble. There were court cases, she had to hand over properties to her creditors, in 1828 she auctioned off most of her household effects and in June 1829 she was declared bankrupt. A nephew who had tried to help her blamed her lawyer, but it was really the result of her own misguided speculation. The newspapers loved it. All her remaining possessions, including her own house St Margaret's and the brickyard, were sold and she went to live in France, supported by her family. A decade later she came back to Cheltenham to live quietly in North Villas with William Halford (her former clerk of works) and his wife until she died, aged 89, in 1843. She was buried at Holy Trinity, the funeral expenses being paid by her Monson relatives. Although little else that she built survives, St Margaret's Terrace alone is a handsome legacy to the town. In an age when very few women ventured into property development, Katherine Monson deserves to be remembered as a pioneering woman builder



St Margaret's Terrace

For those members who were unable to attend the AGM on 7th December 2021, summary reports are printed below. If you did not have a copy of the accounts and would like one posted to you, please telephone the Treasurer on 01242 231837, or else e-mail suebrown@waitrose.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 7th DECEMBER 2021

Alison Pascoe, standing in for Sue Robbins the Acting Chairman, welcomed the Mayor Cllr Steve Harvey, who had agreed to be President of the Society for his term of office and to chair the meeting.

Election of Officers and Committee

Nominations from the floor were invited for the vacant position of Chairman, and David Elder was nominated and seconded.

The following were elected:

Chairman: David Elder

Treasurer: Sue Brown **Secretary:** Alison Pascoe

Committee: Anne Bateman, Chris Bentall, Kath Boothman, Colin Nyland, Oliver Pointer, Sue Robbins, Maggie Winterburn, Joanna Vials

Acting Chairman's Report (summarised): Sue Robbins reported that as the Covid-19 pandemic had made face-to-face meetings impossible, from October to March six 'virtual' meetings were held using Zoom technology. From the beginning of the 2021/22 season there was a mixture of online and face-to-face meetings, which would probably continue. To help keep in touch with members, 'snippets' of local history had been emailed to them throughout the year. She thanked the contributors, and Alison Pascoe for organising it. The St Andrew's Local History Afternoon, due to take place in June 2020, had had to be cancelled, but its theme of 'Trade and Industry' would be taken up at the GLHA's Summer Afternoon in July 2022. The Society would celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2022 and plans were being made to celebrate in style. Much useful contact with the wider public was through research, and many thanks were due to Jill Waller who dealt with enquiries. The Society produced three Newsletters during the year, containing summaries of lectures, information on local events of historical interest and some feature articles. There was also an annual Journal of longer articles, researched and written mainly by members. Published in April, it was free to members and could be purchased by the general public. She thanked the editors Kath Boothman and Julie Courtenay for keeping up the high standards of their publications. Although access to Gloucestershire Archives was severely restricted and the Cheltenham Local Studies Library closed during the year, Society members continued to be involved in research projects, notably in connection with Volume 15 of the Victoria County History (VCH) series. Preparatory work continued on Charlton Kings, together with the cataloguing of various collections in the Gloucestershire Archives. The project to catalogue the Miles Scrapbooks was now complete, and as a fitting climax to five years' work a plaque honouring Alfred Miles would be erected in 2022. She thanked Sally Self for organizing

much of the volunteer work. The results of this and other projects were on the research page of the Society's website, as were some of the recordings made by the Oral History Group. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of Cheltenham's twinning with Göttingen, the Society produced a presentation of Cheltenham in 1951, 'Then and Now', which could be viewed on the website. Oliver Pointer had taken over the sales of donated books from Heather Atkinson, who was thanked for looking after it for the past several years. The titles available were now listed on the website, which had attracted a wider audience and resulted in increased sales and more donations. Despite the lack of face-to-face meetings, the Society had continued to attract new members and total membership now stood at 341. She thanked the Committee for their help and support in a challenging year.

Treasurer's Report (summarised): Sue Brown said that the Society had had a successful year despite the challenges, and its finances were sound. Both the 2020 and 2021 accounts were examined on 21 July 2021, last year having been delayed because of the pandemic. This year the Society had net income in the general account of £339.59 and net payments of £43.99 in the restricted funds. Subscriptions were slightly down on 2020 but the situation was still very healthy. As in previous years, Gift Aid was a valuable addition to the funds. Total donations for the year amounted to £189.09 of which £130 was from people who had asked for help with research. The Journals continued to sell to non-members, the net cost to the Society this year being £1,099.60. Not surprisingly, sales of Society publications were rather curtailed, but proceeds from sales of donated books increased from £185.85 last year to £338.44 this year due to online sales. Because the pandemic had restricted the Society's usual activities, fees for speakers (£240) were less than in 2020. The cost of using Zoom during the latter part of the year was £63.39. The Newsletter had cost less since fewer had been printed, and the hand-delivery of Journals and Newsletters had substantially cut postage. Website costs this year included the creation of the new oral history page. The Society had contributed £200 towards the purchase at auction of a 1743 enclosure map for Prestbury. A donation was made to the Mayor's Charities, partly as an appreciation of the free use of the Council Offices for our evening meetings. The Peter Smith Award for 2020, which would normally have been presented at the 2020 AGM, had been awarded to Heather Atkinson at the first 'live' meeting on 17 November 2021. The bank balance as at 31 March 2021 was £10,047.72 of which £8,997.72 was in the unrestricted fund and £1,050 in the Peter Smith Award Fund.

Address by the Mayor, Councillor Steve Harvey (summarised): The Mayor said that unlike his predecessor Cllr Whyborn, who had not liked history at school, he himself had taken A-Level history and loved delving in archives. He felt very honoured to be Mayor because it gave him the status of 'first citizen,' who could deputise for the Lord Lieutenant, the Queen's appointee. He applauded the Society's efforts to make Cheltenham's history better known, supported the move to put up statues of women and welcomed the use of modern technology in historical research and record-keeping. He intended to join the Society and pledged to help it in any way he could, perhaps for example by recommending it for a community grant. He hoped 'live' meetings could start again soon.

After the AGM on December 7th **John Putley** spoke on the theme of **Gloucestershire Christmas**. He said that midwinter festivals in Europe went a long way back, reflecting people's need to celebrate the turn of the year with its prospect of new life and the end of winter's privations. When days were short and livestock was safely indoors it was a good time to enjoy some leisure. Such festivals were occasions for charitable acts, succouring the poor who might otherwise not survive the winter. The landed gentry traditionally gave food to their estate workers and local villagers: he showed a record from 1872 of the beef, plum pudding and other victuals handed out by the Codringtons of Dodington. The Gibbons of Staunton gave their poor dependants calico for clothing one year when cotton was in short supply. In the middle ages midwinter was a time for the Feast of Fools, presided over by the Lord of Misrule - an old custom of which crackers and paper hats are perhaps the last remnants in our culture today. The



A Victorian Christmas card

first mention of Christmas in Gloucestershire appears in a 13th century Latin document concerning a grant of land *ad natalem Domini*, ie at the nativity. The use of winter evergreens for decoration goes back centuries: in the 1600s many churchwardens' accounts show money being spent on holly to decorate the church. In 1828 a man was punished for stealing Colonel Berkeley's holly. Christmas trees were introduced in the 19th century, and growing them to sell became so profitable that timber growers were alarmed when artificial trees were introduced in the 1960s. Feasting was always part of the celebrations and could take place any time between Christmas Eve and Twelfth Night. In Europe the special meal often included fish, but here poultry and game were favoured, especially geese and capons. Turkeys were first brought to this country by William Strickland of Bristol in 1524 and there is evidence that they were bred here in the 18th century, but they did not become popular Christmas fare until much later. The yuletide boar was an ancient customary feast, which in later years became just a boar's head and survives today only as the joint of ham often served to accompany cold turkey. Alcoholic drink, principally ale, was always part of the Christmas festivities: John showed old illustrations and advertisements. Like the drinks, music in the form of carols was something that belonged primarily to everyday life but was adapted for the festive season. Some carols were local, or even had variations within the county. 'The Holly and the Ivy', for example, a very old song, had its own tune in Gloucestershire. Christmas cards were invented in 1843 by Sir Henry Cole, a civil servant, and soon became popular. It was the Victorians, too, who started the practice of exchanging presents at Christmas. The concept of Father Christmas as a person began in the 1600s, but Santa Claus is a modern import from America based ultimately on the Dutch St Nicholas. The old customs of wassailing—groups going door-to-door, rewarded with food and drink for singing carols—was widespread in Gloucestershire, while traditional folk plays performed by mummers, which used to be part of the festive entertainments, can still be seen in some places in the county today.

At the morning meeting on January 19th **Simon Ridley** took as his theme **Bells and their Ringers: A History of Cheltenham's Unseen Music**. Simon said he was the 5th generation in a bell-ringing family, having started at the age of 11. He now led the team at St Mark's, managed two other teams and taught new ringers. It was an ancient art, and though not seen as a young person's hobby it was increasingly popular. He defined the three ways of ringing, playing video clips to demonstrate. The European way was to swing the bells by means of electric motors. Then there was the carillon, in which the bells were hit by hammers controlled by a keyboard. The third, the British way, was change-ringing. Developed in the 17th century, it was a kind of folk-music and generally left few written records. Bells marked the hours of the day in medieval monasteries and served as a curfew signal in towns and villages. Often bells for a village church were cast in a pit dug in the churchyard, though by the 16th century some towns had proper foundries. After the Dissolution more lay people got involved and more elaborate hanging systems were invented. He showed a picture of Fabian Stedman, who published the first book on change-ringing in the 17th century. The principle of change-ringing was that the bells were first rung in size order, starting with the smallest, then the pattern was varied using mathematical models of almost infinite variety. One pattern, learned by all ringers, was called 'Stedman'. He and his assistant, using handbells, demonstrated how only 4 bells could produce 24 changes. With 6 bells 720 changes could be rung, which took 25 minutes, and many churches had more than 6 bells. Simon



The recast Minster bells ready for hanging

showed examples of the 'peal boards' sometimes put up in churches to commemorate an exceptional performance. Ringing became very popular, notably in London, in the 17th and 18th centuries when many ringing societies were formed and bigger and better bells were cast. By the 19th century it was declining as the societies degenerated into drinking clubs, but the Oxford Movement inspired some clergy to revive it. Many places around Cheltenham still have rings of bells. The Minster has had bells since the mid-13th century. In the 1820s eight new bells were made and a ringing society called The Painswick Youths, great rivals of the Cheltenham ringers, came and played over 5,000 changes on them. Painswick and Cheltenham at that time each had 10 bells. All the Minster bells were re-cast in 2017, and as Simon demonstrated by playing recordings, the new ones sound much better than the old. He then told us about other local churches. In Charlton Kings there is evidence of bell-ringing from the 16th century. A ringing society formed of local tradesmen was founded in 1864, and there is still an active band of ringers. At St Peter's, Leckhampton, the first 5 bells were cast in 1611 and there are now 8. His own grandfather launched an appeal in 1971 to have the bells re-hung, and with his family (the Taylors) rang 5040 changes in 1974. The five bells given to St Mark's by a local benefactor in 1884 fell out of use in the 1980s but were recast in 2007 and now have keen ringers again. St Christopher's, Warden Hill, has the lightest ring in the world, a set of little bells cast originally for a private house in Kent. Bell-ringing thrives, Simon said, but he would like to train more ringers.

For the morning meeting on February 1st we had **Liz Davenport** telling us the story of **Woodchester Mansion, an Unfinished Masterpiece**. Liz said the house, built in the Gothic Revival style in the 19th century, would remain forever unfinished because its owner William Leigh had run out of money and died before it was completed. It stood in a valley originally called Spring Park, which had belonged to the Catholic Maltravers family until the Dissolution. The crown gave it to the Huntleys, who sold it to Sir Richard Ducie in 1631. He enlarged the existing small country house, but by the time his descendant the second Earl Ducie put it up for sale in 1843 it was in poor condition. William Leigh bought



Spring Park Mansion, as it was then called, for £170,000. He was the well-educated only son of a wealthy Liverpool merchant and was married to Caroline Cotterell, fifth daughter of a baronet. They had two daughters and two sons, one of whom died in infancy. From 1837 to 1843 Leigh was involved in a scheme to send young settlers to South Australia and also invested in land there, which was to provide a source of income in later years. In 1844 he converted to Catholicism and had the idea of founding a Catholic community at his new property, with a church and a priory as well as a family house. The architect Pugin was invited to renovate the existing Georgian house, but Pugin disliked Georgian architecture and recommended demolition. His designs for a new house with a chapel proving too expensive, however, he resigned in 1846. Leigh then hired a local architect, Charles Hansom (1817-88), who was a Catholic, to design and build the new complex. The chapel and priory were ready by 1853 and Dominicans moved in, making the place a centre of learning for Catholic priests. By 1853 Leigh had spent £20,000. He mortgaged some of his land and sent his son Willie with his agent Peake to Australia in the hope of raising more money. Liz showed a sketch by Willie of a camp on Kangaroo Island off South Australia, where they had briefly been shipwrecked. Sales of land in Australia paid for the building works over the following years. Leigh met a talented young local architect called Benjamin Bucknall, who was interested in medieval architecture, and had him apprenticed to Charles Hansom. Bucknall took over the project in 1860. He was an admirer of the French architect Viollet-le-Duc, and many features, such as the gargoyles on the south front of the house, the tierceron vault in the chapel and the fine stone carvings of flowers used as roof bosses, reveal his influence. Liz gave us a guided tour of the interior, showing many photographs of the empty unfinished rooms: the stone bath in the bathroom, the wishbone-shaped arches on the top floor, the brewery now occupied by a colony of bats. William Leigh died in 1873, but the money had already run out in 1866 and his son Willie and granddaughter Blanche both in turn found completing the house unaffordable. It passed through various hands until Stroud Council bought it in 1988, by which time it was Grade I listed, and set up the Woodchester Mansion Trust which now, through its eight Trustees, looks after it. It offers training in heritage skills, while conservation work, necessarily grant-funded, is ongoing. Woodchester is open at weekends from 1st April, and volunteer helpers are always needed.

On Wednesday February 16th **Mike Bottomley** gave us a lively illustrated talk entitled **Katherine Parr, Gloucestershire's Queen: the Life, Loves and Times of the Last Wife of Henry VIII.** Mike explained that when working as a tour guide at Sudeley Castle he had realised that Katherine Parr was much more than the middle-aged widow who nursed Henry in his last years. Dressing himself up as Miles Coverdale, the Protestant cleric who became Katherine's almoner at Sudeley, he told us about her life. The Parrs were a wealthy but not a noble family from Kendal in Cumbria. Katherine however was born in 1512 in London, where she grew up in a loving family and was unusually well educated along with her siblings, probably because her widowed mother was anxious to find good marriages for all her offspring. At the age of 17 Katherine was married to Edward Burgh of Gainsborough Old Hall in Lincolnshire. When he died three years later she married John Neville, Lord Latimer, who owned many properties including Snape Castle in Yorkshire and had teenage children, with whom Katherine got on well. After ten years Neville died and Katherine was left a very rich widow. Now for the first time she had control over her own affairs. Mike showed the first of several excerpts from a film about Katherine made at Sudeley a few years ago. She went to court to join her brother William and sister Ann, who had been maid of honour to all Henry's queens. There she met the dashing Thomas Seymour, whose success and popularity as a courtier owed much to the fact that his sister Jane had given Henry a son. They were mutually attracted, but when Henry proposed to Katherine she felt she had to accept him for her family's sake. Thomas went abroad and Henry and Katherine were married quietly in a private chapel at Hampton Court in July 1543. Mike showed a filmed re-enactment of the ceremony, noting that her promise to be 'bonaire and buxom at bed and board' was not part of the modern marriage service! Henry showered Katherine with gifts and evidently came to respect her intelligence and judgment, since when he went to war with France the following year he left her as Queen Regent in his absence. She invented a device for herself with the Tudor rose and the motto 'To be useful in all that I do'. She had a deep interest in religion, employed scholars to help her study, and wrote prayers and tracts, notably 'Lamentations of a Sinner', thus becoming England's first published female author. Henry, who had remained Catholic at heart, did not share her views, and she had a narrow escape when detractors at court accused her of radicalism. Henry would have had her arrested if she had not reached him in time to mollify him. Henry died in 1547 and was buried next to Jane Seymour at Windsor. Thomas Seymour reappeared, and within a few weeks Katherine was meeting him clandestinely. Mike quoted a letter in which she said 'I am and will be your loving wife'. Within a few months they were married and settled at Sudeley, where Katherine gave birth to a daughter, Mary, in September 1548 but died within days of puerperal fever. The baby was fostered by a friend of Katherine's but, since her fate is unknown, probably soon died. Thomas left the scene, and at Katherine's funeral in Sudeley chapel Lady Jane Grey was chief mourner. Miles Coverdale took the service, the first royal funeral ever to be held in English. So ended Katherine Parr, the last and, Mike thought, the best of Henry's six queens.



FEATURE

Mary Delany, a View of Cheltenham Church and Lady Stapleton's House, 20 August 1755



Shortly before his death, James Hodsdon obtained from the National Gallery of Ireland a copy of this ink, graphite and wash drawing of St Mary's church and the Great House, which he had not seen before. James had planned to publish it in this Newsletter, which is now being done in his memory.

Mary Delany (1700-88) was born Mary Granville, and was married (unhappily) at the age of 17 to an ailing 60 year old. After his death in 1725 she was able to widen her

social circle and to develop her skills in, amongst other things, drawing, paper-cutting and the study of botany. In 1743 she married an Irish clergyman, the Revd Patrick Delany, a far happier match that lasted until his death in 1768. Four years later she began to create the series of artworks for which she is best remembered: 985 hand-cut paper collages of plants and flowers that are now in the British Museum. Mrs Delany was an avid letter-writer, and her published correspondence includes a letter written to her brother on 9 August 1755, the day after her arrival in Cheltenham to 'take the waters'. In it she wrote: 'we have got a charming lodging and a room at your service, if you will make us a visit, at Mrs Hughes's near the well. I begin with one glass tomorrow morning.' Perhaps Mrs Hughes was the wife of Thomas Hughes, the lessee of the well, on whose arrival and early career in Cheltenham James wrote an article in our Society's Journal for 2017.

Sadly, no other letters are known from her stay in Cheltenham, but that is clearly when this drawing was made. It shows the church and Great House from the fields to the south of the town, probably from the Church Meadow, the site of which is now occupied by the Royal Well Bus Station. The church (now Cheltenham Minster) is, of course, still there, but the site of the Great House is now occupied by St Matthew's church. Surprisingly, the house is still described as 'Lady Stapletons', even though Lady Frances Stapleton, who had built it c1739, had died nine years before Mary Delany's visit, by which time it was owned by her grand-daughter, Catherine Stapleton, and leased as a lodging house. Absent from the drawing is the two-bay wing to the east of the main house that is included in the depiction of the Great House in Thomas Robins' 1748 view of the town (illustrated on the front cover of our November 2021 Newsletter). The omission is probably due to perspective or artistic license.

Steven Blake

Photo © National Gallery of Ireland (NGI 2722.578)

*OBITUARY***Dr James Hodsdon FSA (1947-2022)**

We were shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden and unexpected death, on 20 January, of James Hodsdon, a long-standing member of this Society.

James was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, raised in Surrey and studied Arabic at SOAS and at the University of St Andrews, where he obtained his PhD. In 1971 he moved to Cheltenham to take up a post at GCHQ, where he worked until his retirement in 2009. From childhood, James had a keen interest in family and local history – and in particular the origin and meaning of names – and in 1988 he contributed his first article to our Journal, on the early history of King's Road, where he and his family were then living. Five years later, in 1993, he joined the Society and in 1996 he became editor of the Journal, a role he filled until 2002. James contributed a further 13 articles to successive Journals, as well as many notes to our Newsletters. He was also co-author (with Carolyn Greet) of *Cheltenham Revealed: The Town and Tithing Plan of c1800*, published by the Society in 2012.

James's involvement with local history and heritage went well beyond the Cheltenham Local History Society. At one time or another he served as Secretary of the Gloucester & District Archaeological Research Group and of the Cheltenham Civic Society, and, between 2011 and 2014, as Chair of the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives. He was a 'driving force' behind the creation, in 2010, of the Gloucestershire County History Trust, serving as its Chair from 2014 onwards and overseeing the fund raising and many of the practicalities for the VCH publication, *Cheltenham Before the Spa*. James chaired several of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society's Committees, and was General Editor of the Society's Record Series between 2010 and 2020. He also contributed two volumes to the series: *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham* and *The Court Books of the Manor of Cheltenham 1692-1803*. His other publications on the history of Cheltenham included booklets on the Pittville Gates and the history of the spa waters and an article on Captain Henry Skillicorne in the *BGAS Transactions*. In 2018, his academic achievements were recognised by his election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

All who knew James admired his scholarship and organising abilities, enjoyed his sense of humour and liked and valued him very much. He will be greatly missed by his friends and colleagues in all the organisations in which he was involved, and this Society sends its sincere condolences to his wife Judie and to all his family.

Steven Blake

*SOCIETY NEWS***New members**

A warm welcome is extended to the following :

Martin Jones and Hazel Doherty	Angela Swann	Christine Collie
Elizabeth Jack	Judy Shaw	Richard and Rosa Stanbury
Jason and Heather Goss	Rob McCausland	Katy Bleasdale

Society Update*Congratulations!*

The Peter Smith Award goes each year to a member who has given outstanding service to the Society. Because no AGM was held in 2020, the awards for 2020 and 2021 were both presented by Steven Blake at the AGM held on November 17th 2021.



Heather Atkinson (left), who received the 2020 Award, looked after the donated bookshop for 10 years, served on the Committee (and has recently re-joined



it), and has led Heritage Open Days walks, given talks and written Journal articles.

Jill Barlow (right), who received the 2021 Award, is a founder member of the Society. She served as Secretary and Membership Secretary, contributed Journal articles, edited two volumes of the Record Series and founded the Latin Group which has transcribed and translated many Latin documents from the Archives.

VCH News

In spite of the much-regretted death of James Hodsdon the work on Cheltenham's 'Big Red' book goes on and will continue. While the Gloucestershire VCH management structure has been modified with Dr Nicholas Kingsley now taking overall charge in place of James, that for Cheltenham will continue to be overseen by Jan Broadway, with John Chandler as general editor for the County.

The VCH volunteers have been assisting Louise Ryland-Epton with research on Leckhampton. This has included a field trip to the Victorian Rectory to pace out and understand the lay-out of the building and the glebe lands from the early maps and terriers. John Chandler has restarted the research on Swindon Village, much of which is already in draft form. As for Charlton Kings, preliminary work has begun on early wills from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury held at the National Archives and the large Archive deposit for the Prinn, Hunt and Russell family has been completed. The next cataloguing task at the Archives will be all the uncatalogued deposits relating to Charlton Kings. The cataloguers' present task is dealing with a second deposit by Winterbotham and Gurney, solicitors. This includes the development of the Marle Hill estate and information on the development and then demise of the Webb Brothers' Battledown brickworks. With Covid restriction coming to an end we hope to make good progress after a frustrating two years.

Sally Self

FEATURE

In Memoriam: The Collector of Boggley-Wollah

Regency Cheltenham was the recipient of a procession of visiting Anglo-Indians. At the time a sojourn in the Spa was simply the 'done thing'. Returnees thronged to the town to take the waters, to rendezvous with friends, to be entertained, to be seen or, just maybe, to find a spouse. Some never left. Whilst many, even those of great distinction, have been quietly forgotten, one name in particular has made an enduring mark, that of Joseph Sedley HEICS,

Joseph Sedley: a *nabob*, wealthy, vain and socially inept...one who might well have lamented to the Calcutta Gazette that his kind were held in such low esteem 'back home'. Joseph Sedley: who cut an unforgettable image, shirt frills protruding from a colourful large-buttoned waistcoat that failed to flatter the pudgy, corpulent frame beneath, and who came to Cheltenham to be besieged by an Irish Widow. 'Jos' Sedley was of course a character in William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. He was the Collector of Boggley-Wollah.

The name Boggley-Wollah is a play on Bhagalpur (or Bhaughulpour or Baugle-pour or Boglipour), a river station on the southern banks of the Ganges in the state of Bihar. Thackeray was particularly well placed to write about India. Although



William Hodges RA

he came to England from Calcutta at the age of six, shortly after his father died, the family's extensive connections with India continued. Whilst there may not have been a real-world Collector of Boggley-Wollah, there was indeed a Collector of Bhagalpur. He was Augustus Cleveland, the son of John Cleveland of Tapeley, Devon and Sara Shuckburgh of Longborough, Gloucestershire; and he was the very antithesis of Joseph Sedley. Cleveland, a Writer in the East India Company's Bengal Establishment, arrived in India in July 1771 at the age of 17. Well-connected as he was, promotion came rapidly. By 1779, at the age of 25, he was the Judge Magistrate and Collector of Bhagalpur and Rajmahal. The immediate locality was described by the landscape artist William Hodges (best known as the artist who went with Captain Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific), who spent four months there as Cleveland's guest:

'The situation of the Resident's House ... is on a very elevated spot: it is on the banks of a nullah (water course), forming a large island ... On the other side is a beautiful park-like country.... The place owes its principal beauty to the good taste of Mr Cleveland.'

The house itself was large and beautiful with an Italianate columnated façade and



An illustration from
Vanity Fair

was probably erected by Cleveland's predecessor, James Barton. Now known as *Ravindra Bhawan*, it was far grander than anything that then existed in Cheltenham. In those days Bhagalpur saw much river traffic, and the Collector provided a hospitable roof for many a passing traveller. Warren and Mrs Hastings and Sir Elijah and Lady Impey counted amongst his guests.

Augustus Cleveland's reputation would not, however, derive from his hospitality but from his being the first administrator to establish friendly relations with the lawless Pahari tribes of the Rajmahal Hills, who hitherto had brought mischief and misery to the plains.

Alone and unarmed, Cleveland went into the forested area known as the *Jungle-terry* and succeeded in winning over a deputation of tribal chiefs. Having an intimate knowledge of the lives and conditions of the Paharis, Cleveland treated them kindly and showed respect for their customs and practices whilst introducing changes in their socio-economic conditions. The Paharis readily reciprocated, collaborating and showering on him their unstinted faith and love. Amongst

A View in the Jungleterry, by William Hodges

other programmes, Cleveland enlisted the tribes to form a Corps of Hill Rangers cantoned in Bhagalpur. They are commemorated in one of William Hodges' paintings: 'The Camp of a Thousand Men formed by Augustus Cleveland three miles from Bhagalpur, with his mansion in the distance'.



A Village in Bhagalpur, by William Hodges

In 1783 the artist, returning to Bhagalpur from a lengthy journey up-country, was dismayed to find Cleveland, his friend and patron, gravely ill on 'the bed of sickness'. The reason for Cleveland's illness is not clear. Whilst it is far from unlikely that he had succumbed to some tropical malaise, there is also a suggestion that there may have been an attempt on his life by one Baba Tilka Majh. We are left to guess.

Some months later the East Indiaman *HCS Atlas*, an early ship of the season, bound for the Cape, was loading in the river. Amongst those embarking were Augustus Cleveland and Mrs Warren Hastings. Both were leaving Bengal for the sake of their health. The unfortunate Cleveland, however, was to expire even before the ship left the Hooghly (Hugli) river. Mrs Hastings, seeing an opportunity to have Cleveland buried on land, arranged for his remains to be preserved in a barrel of spirits and sent back to Calcutta on the pilot boat. His body was interred at South Park Street Cemetery, where a memorial to him was placed by Warren Hastings. The barrel lies beneath the memorial, which records that:

He accomplished, by a System of Conciliation, what could never be effected by Military Coercion. He civilized a Savage Race of Mountaineers who for Ages

had existed in a state of Barbarism... To his wise and beneficent Conduct the East India Comp. were indebted for the Subjecting to their Government the numerous Inhabitants of that wild and extensive Country - The JUNGLETERRY.

IN HIS PRIVATE STATION,

By the amiableness of his Deportment, the Gentleness of his manners, And the goodness & generosity of his heart, He was universally admired, beloved & respected by all who had the happiness of knowing him.

A second memorial was erected to Cleveland at Bhagalpur by the order of the Governor-General and Council of Bengal. Lord Hastings observed that it was hardly necessary because:

The reverence which at an early age Mr Cleveland had created for himself in the minds of the natives will not suffer his name to sink into oblivion. The natives (also) raised a memorial to him at the other end of town. It contains a small chamber into which they often go to pray.

Augustus Cleveland was sorely missed by the Paharis that he had befriended. The memory of 'Chilmili Saheb' was preserved in legends that expressed profound gratitude to their benefactor.

That Cleveland's connection with Gloucestershire, let alone Cheltenham, is to say the least tenuous, is not important. What is significant is that the real Collector of 'Boggley-Wollah' was not Thackeray's Cheltenham clown but a man who genuinely benefitted the society in which he found himself. In truth, there were many such people working in the East Indies: builders, doctors, teachers, cartographers, administrators, keepers of the peace. How ironic it is then that, today, society remembers an immortal, fat, self-centred, fictional *nabob* and knows little of those real people who strived hard to better the lives of those they had responsibility for.

There is a movement today to shine more light on Britain's Colonial history. For better or worse it is an opportunity to rediscover many of the fascinating stories from that era. While it is certainly true that much of British history happened overseas, and at sea, it is also true that a surprising amount of it, just like 'Jos' Sedley, washed up in Cheltenham. We can't pretend that Cheltenham didn't have its odd *nabob*, rogue or even opium trader, but it certainly also had its own 'Clevelands', highly regarded and even revered.

Cheltenham's Regency houses and the numerous memorials scattered around the town's churches and graveyards are a silent testament to some of those people, as are the registers of its famous schools. Unfortunately, buildings have been lost and many memorials have fallen into disrepair. More than a few, when considered a nuisance, have been boxed in or somehow hidden away, relocated to a dark corner of a crypt, repositioned to great height or, at worst, sent to a crusher. Notwithstanding all this, many clues remain for those who care to look. And we should look, for there are people who deserve to be remembered.

Let the facts speak for themselves.

Jim Markland

FEATURE

Reading Between the Lines: The memorial to Katherine A'Court (c1745-1776) in St Mary's Church

Part 1

This two-part article is by way of tribute to the late Roger Jones, who, when pointing out the memorial to Katherine A'Court during a Heritage Open Days tour, suggested that the wording of the epitaph deserved further investigation. Part 1 of my findings covers events to 1777, while Part 2 will continue the story, including a 1786 George Romney portrait and a pseudonymous 'letter to the editor', which accused Katherine A'Court's relatives of 'notorious misrepresentation' and required further 'reading between the lines'.

Katherine A'Court's memorial in St Mary's church, Cheltenham, tells a sad tale:

To the Memory of KATHERINE the Wife of William P. A. A'Court of Heytesbury in the County of Wilts, Esqr, Who departed this Life on the 23d day of Sepr 1776 in the 32d Year of her Age. The strictest Honour and Virtue, Elegance of Manners, Integrity of Heart, and Delicacy of Sentiment, Endeared her to a Select Circle of Friends and Acquaintance. She was Cherished as an only Child by an Indulgent Father; Beloved from Infancy by a Tender Husband, In whose Arms She died an unnatural Death, Effected by Poison, Administered by the Hands of a Cruelly Wicked Livery Servant, Whose Resentment, at being detected in Theft, Prompted him to Perpetrate this Horrid and Execrable crime.

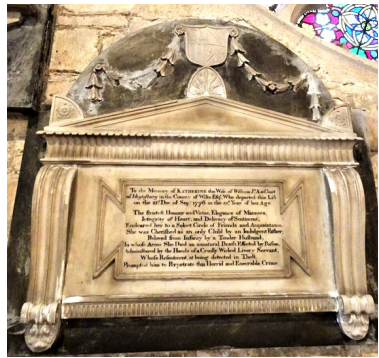
Katherine was buried in St Mary's graveyard soon after her death, although it is less certain when the memorial was commissioned and erected.

Katherine's 'Indulgent Father' was Lieutenant-Colonel John Bradford, a career army officer and regimental agent who, by 1768, was attached to the 11th Foot regiment, in which Colonel William A'Court (her father-in-law) also served. The memorial's descriptions of Katherine and her father suggest that her mother died either in childbirth or when Katherine was young. When Katherine married William A'Court junior in 1769, she and her father lived in Rathbone Place, off Oxford Street. John Bradford, then in his early sixties, supplemented his army income with payments from former commanding officers Sir Robert Rich and Sir Archibald Douglas, who both appointed him their executor and quasi-guardian of their sons.

William A'Court's family were West Country gentry, with landholdings and family connections in Somerset and Wiltshire. After young William's grandfather, Pierce A'Court (c1677-1725), married Elizabeth Ashe, daughter of a wealthy London family who owned Heytesbury Manor, he (Pierce) was 'brought in' by the Ashes as the second Member of Parliament of their 'pocket borough', where voters occupied burgage properties owned by the Ashes. After



Pierce A'Court died, some A'Court family properties were sold to clear his debts, but by 1750 his eldest son, another Pierce (William's uncle-cum-godfather) had inherited a life interest in Heytesbury through the Ashe line. Pierce duly added 'Ashe' to his name and offered the second Heytesbury parliamentary seat to his younger brother, William's father Colonel A'Court.



Katherine A'Court's memorial

Pierce, an equerry to George II, enjoyed his bachelor life in London, but took a keen interest in William's education and upbringing and suggested that William (an only child) would, along with Charles Penruddock (a cousin on the Ashe side), be a co-heir to his estate. But in 1762 Pierce married Janet Browne, his long-standing, well-connected mistress, and after that he paid less attention to his godson's future. In 1765 William left Eton but, rather

than go to university as Pierce had done, he joined the army, where his father could assist his advancement. After Pierce died in September 1768 William learned that, through a recent codicil, his uncle had left Janet a life interest in Heytesbury and given her the power to sell estate properties to clear his considerable debts. When William's father challenged the codicil on grounds of Janet's 'undue influence' over his ailing brother, Janet began selling vote-conferring burgage properties to the Duke of Marlborough. To make matters worse, one of Charles Penruddock's relatives claimed that the timing and nature of William's parents' 'clandestine' marriage at the Fleet Chapel rendered him quasi-illegitimate and thus ineligible to co-inherit Ashe property.

In September 1769, as the Wyndham-Penruddock case against William and his parents meandered through Chancery, William (now a Captain in his father's regiment) married Katherine Bradford in a straightforward Anglican ceremony at St Mary le Bone, the Bradfords' parish church. As William and Katherine had no home of their own and William might have to serve abroad, Katherine continued to live mainly with her father in Rathbone Place, in preference to crowded, sometimes squalid army quarters. By 1774 Colonel A'Court and Janet had settled their case and Janet had remarried, re-established herself in London society and been widowed again. As the Wyndhams' Chancery case remained unresolved, William still had a chance of inheriting Heytesbury or other Ashe property, so it seemed desirable that he and Katherine should produce an heir as soon as possible.

In May 1776 the twice-widowed Janet married a third, much younger husband, with whom she mainly lived in London. In early September, the still-childless William and Katherine, together with John Bradford and Joseph Armstrong (a



A View of St Mary le Bone Church.
Engraving by J. Goussier.
St Mary le Bone Church
Image courtesy of Dominic Winter Auctioneers

livery servant hired by William for the occasion) travelled to Cheltenham, where they settled in at the Swan Inn, opposite the famed Plough Inn. On 6 September John Bradford returned to London, staying with a friend on the way. On 16 September, three days after he got home, he received a letter from William reporting that Katherine had been vomiting and unable to keep food or medicines down, but that Dr Clarke had attended her and felt she was in no danger. Two days later another letter arrived, saying that she now had burning sensations in her stomach – but that another doctor said she would recover. On 20 September an express letter brought news that Katherine's condition had deteriorated – but that yet another doctor, after changing her medication, expected a full recovery. Bradford left immediately and travelled by chaise to Cheltenham, where he found her in a sorry state. Shortly after his arrival, she began fitting; doctors came and purged her and applied poultices, but nothing reduced her only-too-evident suffering. Early on Monday 23 September, Katherine suffered a major fit and died.

Before her illness Katherine had complained about Armstrong's behaviour towards her and accused him of stealing. The morning after she died, William dismissed Armstrong and told him to pack immediately. Soon after Armstrong left on foot for the Frog Mill, near Andoversford, to catch the Gloucester-London coach, Dr Clarke arrived and told William that Armstrong had apparently bought arsenic and complained to others about Katherine. John Bradford immediately set out with friends in a chaise-and-four, caught up with Armstrong in Andoversford and captured him. Without mentioning arsenic, Bradford insisted Armstrong return to Cheltenham to answer questions about some missing silver plate.

The state of Katherine's stomach after so much medicine and purging meant that doctors could not conclusively identify the cause of her death. But after several witnesses confirmed that Armstrong had purchased arsenic, a full search of him and his possessions revealed a small package of the poison, as well as clothes and other items stolen from William and previous employers. Armstrong's sometimes contradictory accounts of events and explanations for his actions failed to convince Cheltenham's constables, or the magistrate who charged him with two counts of Petty Treason – murdering his master's wife and stealing from his master – both punishable by death. Armstrong claimed he had not acted alone, but as he named no accomplices, it was he alone who went to Gloucester prison to await trial at the Oxford circuit assizes in March 1777.

In February 1777, while a prosecution team was preparing for Armstrong's trial, William's mother died. On 23 March, following an eight-hour trial, a jury found Armstrong guilty of having murdered William's wife by poisoning her. With no need to try him for theft as well, the judge immediately condemned him to death by public hanging. While Armstrong was in Gloucester jail awaiting his fate, he obtained a strap and hanged himself in his cell – but as public hanging was considered a deterrent to potential criminals, his body was moved to Cheltenham to be gibbeted and displayed near the scene of his crime.

Within six months William had lost both his wife and his mother. But news of a legacy from Bridget Ashe, an unmarried cousin, and the appointment of his own father as Bridget's executor suggested that William's run of misfortune and sadness might be nearing its end.

Anne Strathie

BOOK REVIEW

'He Went About Doing Good': The Life of Dr Edward Thomas Wilson of Cheltenham,
by David Elder

Walking down Cheltenham's Promenade you pass under the steadfast gaze of the town's most famous hero, Edward Wilson the naturalist, artist and Antarctic explorer who died on Scott's ill-fated mission to the South Pole. Now thanks to this new book by local historian David Elder we have another member of the Wilson family to admire. That is Edward Wilson's father whose heroics might have been on a more domestic scale but, as this informative and fascinating biography informs us, his efforts to improve conditions for the people of Cheltenham deserve to be long remembered.

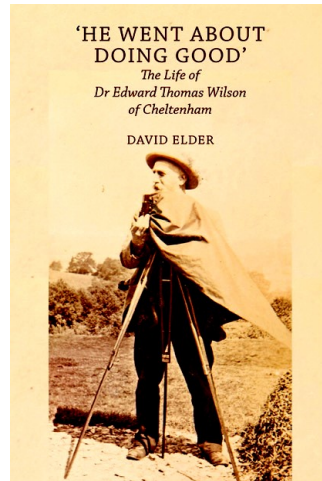
Dr Edward Thomas Wilson, known to family members as 'ETW', came to Cheltenham to work as a Physician at the General Hospital in 1859 and began a life-long mission to improve the health of the population, which, through his pioneering work in medical statistics, he proved to be amongst the worst in England. That this was occurring in a town built on its reputation as a spa infuriated him all the more, and using the drive and passion so typical of the Victorian age, he pushed forward a number of proposals to improve the situation.

Clean drinking water, sanitation, district nurses and vaccination programmes - all of these he argued for and sponsored, sometimes frustrated by financial constraints and scientific ignorance. His crowning glory was the Delancey Isolation Hospital, which rivalled anything in the country through its specialist wards, providing treatment for major diseases. It considerably reduced the death rates in the town. As the title of the book, taken from his gravestone at Leckhampton, states: 'He went about doing good'. The writer also tells us that, apart from healthcare, 'ETW' involved himself with similar passion in the political, cultural and social life of the town as well as finding the time, along with his equally energetic wife Mary, to lovingly raise a large and lively brood of children, including the aforementioned Antarctic hero.

David, with this authoritative, detailed and entertaining account, has done a great service both to Cheltenham history lovers and anyone who admires those eminent Victorians and Edwardians who dedicated themselves to the improvement of the lives of those less fortunate.

Mike Bottomley

Published in 2022 by The Hobnob Press. Price £15.99 directly from the author or from Cheltenham Local History Society.



BOOKS FOR SALE



News from the CLHS Donated Books 'Shop'

With longer days and warmer sun encouraging us out-doors to explore, some books to guide your travels; all as new, unless stated otherwise:

David Elder, Cheltenham Heritage Walks (2014) £5.00

Carolyn Greet & James Hodsdon, Cheltenham Revealed: The 'Town and Tithing' Plan of c1800 (2012) £2.50

Elaine Heasman, Walk Around Historic Cheltenham (2005) £3.00

Aylwin Sampson & Steven Blake, A Cheltenham Companion (1997) £2.50

Peter Ryland & Nancy B Pringle, illus by Peter Reardon, Cheltenham Walks and Rides: Six short tours in Cheltenham (1971), slight discol within £1.00

W L Cox, illus by Richard M Bryant, Prehistoric and Roman Sites of the Cheltenham area (1972), rubbed to corners, clean within £1.00

AA, Walking in the Cotswolds (2006), sl worn dust wrapper, else near mint £3.50

Aylwin Sampson, Town Walks in the Cotswolds (1992) £1.50

Philip Moss, Historic Gloucester: An Illustrated Guide to the City & its Buildings (2009) £5.00

Gerry Stewart, illus by Genny Proctor, The Gloucestershire Way: A 100 mile walk through Gloucestershire (1996), some use, otherwise good within £3.00

Gordon Ottewell, Gloucestershire Countryside Access, Exploration, Walks, Nature and Local History (no date [c1990]) £3.00

Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology - Ray Wilson et al, Exploring Gloucestershire's Industrial Heritage (2005) £2.00

Peter Fleming & Kieran Costello, Discovering Cabot's Bristol Life in the Medieval and Tudor Town (1998) £4.00

Adrian Room, Dictionary of Place-Names in the British Isles (1988), vg in dust wrapper, slight discol within, £6.00

And for the armchair travellers amongst us:

Richard West, An English Journey (1981) in dust wrapper £2.50

J B Priestley, intro Margaret Drabble, English Journey ... 1933 (Folio Society, 1997) in slipcase £8.00

Paul Theroux, The Kingdom By the Sea: A journey around the coast of Great Britain (1983) vg dust wrapper, clean but slight discol within £3.00

Janet & Colin Bord, photographs by Jason Hawkes, Prehistoric Britain from the Air (2004) £4.00

For many more books of local historical interest, our Spring 2022 list is available to browse at www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk, on the Library and Bookshop page of our website. If you have books on Cheltenham you would be happy to donate, we would be very grateful to receive them.

Oliver Pointer

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

Gloucestershire Local History Association

LOCAL HISTORY DAY

*Saturday 14 May from 10.30 am
to 5.00 pm
at the Oxstalls Business School,
Gloucester*

Open to all, admission FREE

There will be a programme of talks,
and refreshments will be available.

Local History SUMMER AFTERNOON

*Saturday 25 June, 1.30—5.00 pm
at St Andrew's Church,
Montpellier Street, Cheltenham*

On the theme of
TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Booking forms will be emailed to
members at the beginning of May.
Hard copy, if required, available from
Sue Brown (01242 231837).

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NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the July 2022 issue by
Monday 6th June 2022
to the Editor: Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End Cheltenham GL50 2QA
Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: kboothman3@gmail.com

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

QUERY CORNER

A DOWTY CONUNDRUM

George Dowty (1901-1975), aeronautical engineer, industrialist and founder of the Dowty Group of Companies, set up his first company in 1931. To complete his first order, six internally sprung undercarriage wheels for Kawasaki, Dowty rented a mews loft in Lansdown Terrace Lane, Cheltenham, for a few months, from June 1931 to the end of October 1931. All the published Dowty literature and biographies give the address of this first workshop as No 10 Lansdown Terrace Lane, where an actual number is given in the text. This includes *The Dowty Story*, by L T C Rolt, publ. Newman Neame, 1962, and Dowty's autobiography, *Sir George Dowty: In His Own Words*, Hobnob Press, 2020. (In his foreword to the autobiography George Dowty admits that, although he had kept comprehensive records, he was able 'where necessary' to refer to the books written by his friend L T C Rolt.) A Civic Society blue commemorative plaque attached to No 10 Lansdown Terrace Lane records Dowty's brief occupancy of that building.

However, there is a discrepancy when it comes to the illustration of the mews loft Dowty rented. A photograph first appears in a 1952 booklet celebrating the 21st anniversary of the Dowty Group, 1931-1952, and in *Flight and Aircraft Engineer* magazine, 30 May 1952. No number for the building is mentioned in either publication. The photograph also appears in a 1956 Dowty Silver Jubilee commemorative booklet, and L T C Rolt used the same, or a similar, photograph, in his 1962 history. CLHS member Ian Gower, with some research by Jill Waller confirming his observation, has identified that this 1952 photograph is of No 7 Lansdown Terrace Lane. None of the mews buildings in Lansdown Terrace Lane is in its original form, and No 7 is almost unrecognisable today. However, a closer look at the photograph shows conclusive proof that the illustration is of No 7, as the number six can be seen on the neighbouring premises. (The lane has never been renumbered.)



Without further evidence either way, it will remain a mystery whether Sir George Dowty started his business at No 10 or No 7 Lansdown Terrace Lane. If any readers have any comments, evidence (such as a handy rent-book from 1931), or would like more details on what is already known, Ian Gower

would like to hear from them. Please email him at gower4321@gmail.com.

Jill Waller Photo courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives, Ref. D8347/DGL/20/1/148