



# Cheltenham Local History Society Journal 15 1999

Articles and other contributions appropriate to the Society's interests are welcome for possible publication in the Journal and should be submitted to the Hon Editor:  
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Cover illustrations by Aylwin Sampson (clockwise from top left): the Radley gazebo; summer-house at 65 Shurdington Road; the 'Tower Coal Office' at Montpellier; and the ornamental bridge at Karenza. (See continuation of Follies article on p. 16)

# Nineteenth-Century Motoring in Cheltenham

DEREK COPSON

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## **Before the Horseless Carriage**

THE FIRST self-propelled vehicle to appear in Cheltenham was introduced by Sir Charles Dance in 1831, and was in fact the one of the first anywhere in the UK. Although Richard Trevithick had built a road-going vehicle in 1804, it was not a success and he quickly turned his attention to the railway. In the late 1820s Sir Goldsworthy Gurney built a series of steam drags (steam-powered units which pulled carriages) several of which plied between Bath and London. In 1830 Sir Charles Dance acquired at least one of Gurney's drags. He modified the boiler to increase reliability and started a service between Cheltenham and Gloucester. The first coach ran on 21 February 1831 and continued until 22 June, making on average four journeys a day. During this time a distance of 3,640 miles was covered and 4,000 paying passengers were carried. Many free rides were given to friends and local worthies. The service came to an end following a series of broken axles, due, it was said, to the people of Churchdown placing stones across the road, but more probably caused by what is now known as metal fatigue. Shortly after this the Cheltenham Road Bill was promoted which placed very heavy tolls on steam carriages when compared with their horse-drawn equivalents. The service was not resumed and the vehicles were presumably broken up.

Mechanised road transport development was effectively halted for all but the most ponderous steam vehicles by the notorious 'Red Flag Act' of 1865. This restricted speeds to 2 mph in towns and 4 mph in the country, and required three men to accompany a vehicle, one of whom was to walk in front carrying a red flag. The need for the latter was withdrawn in 1878 but drivers were still being prosecuted for its absence in the early 1890s. Sporadic attempts were made in this country to build motor cars but with no commercial success, being hampered by the 1865 Act, a very well developed railway system and the rather conservative British character. The Santler brothers of Malvern built a number of steam- and petrol-driven cars in the late 1880s and early 1890s, one of which still exists and is the oldest roadworthy British-made car. It is not known whether the Santlers ever ventured as far as Cheltenham.

## **Overseas Developments**

The commercially successful motor car had its origins in Germany with the independent developments of Daimler and Benz in 1885. Things really started to move ahead when various French engineers took over in about 1892. The French took the new development to their hearts and there was an explosion (sometimes literally) of Gallic enthusiasm for the new device. In Britain we had to make do with the bicycle, which had enormous popularity in the 1890s, not least in Cheltenham - but that is another story.

## **Almost a Cheltenham Car Industry?**

Unlikely as it may seem, Cheltenham almost became a centre of the early car industry. In 1895 an entrepreneur and financier of questionable methods, by the name of Henry Lawson, began to buy up as many motor-car related patents as he could, mainly from

Overseas, with the intention of creating a monopoly - the British Motor Syndicate, later the Great Horseless Carriage Company. He paid prodigious sums for many inventions, some totally farcical, but to a large part succeeded in exercising control over the early industry in this country. During the course of the year Lawson, based in London, began to seek premises to manufacture motor cars. The first site he visited was the Trusty Engine Works, close to Lansdown Station, Cheltenham. It was probably not big enough for his grandiose plans and he eventually went to Coventry where he bought a large redundant woollen mill. Coventry was the centre of the cycle industry, then undergoing a depression owing to cheap American imports. A pool of skilled labour was readily available there; recruiting his projected workforce of several thousand in the Cheltenham area would have been extremely difficult. Interestingly, when the Trusty site came up for sale again in 1908 it was advertised as 'suitable for car manufacture'. Did someone remember Lawson's visit?

### 1896 - Freedom

The first recorded instance of a car in this area is that of Hon Charles Rolls who drove from London to his home at Llangattock, Monmouth in March 1896. He was descending Birdlip Hill in his Peugeot, in the dark, when it ran away with him, crashing into a wall and almost writing off both himself and the car. Repairs were made to both on the following morning and the journey completed.

In August 1896 the Locomotives on the Highway Act was passed and on 14 November became law. This gave motorists some of the freedoms they sought. Most importantly the speed limit was officially raised to 14 mph, although the Local Government Board, ever wishing to exert its influence, reduced it to 12 mph. The need for additional persons to the driver was also done away with. The event was celebrated by a 'Motor Tour' from London to Brighton organised by the Motor Car Club, captain of which was none other than Henry Lawson. About 35 vehicles took part, whilst another 30 or 40 attended - a fair proportion of the cars in the country, estimated at no more than 100.

The London to Brighton Run was greeted with rapture by the Cheltenham papers, who vied with each other to present the most positive picture of what was a fairly disastrous event. The weather was dreadful, the lead car and several others broke down, and several participants were found to have taken their vehicles by rail to a station just outside Brighton!

'That lumbering machine - the Law - has at last set free for the streets and roads the mechanised motor. Grandchildren will need to visit the Natural History Museum to see what a horse looked like.' (*Cheltenham Examiner*, 18 Nov 1896)

'Carriages without horses shall go. A new era in the history of locomotion'. Interestingly the *Echo* names the hotel at the start, the Metropole in Westminster, as the Metropole Motel - predating the OED's first record of 'motel' by some 30 years (*Gloucestershire Echo*, 14 Nov 1896).

'Liberty for Moto-cars Thirty Miles an Hour. A startling prophecy. ... last Saturday ranked with George Stephenson and his first locomotive ... The occasion was too momentous for the fog to spoil. Electric power was preferred. Oils and Steam had much to say, and said it aggressively.' (*Cheltenham Free Press*, 21 Nov 1896)

The *Cheltenham Looker-on* of 21 Nov 1896 had an editorial worth repeating at some length. 'Motor cars are the topic of the hour, or it may be fairly said, of the day, for only the fringe has yet been touched. There is no concealing the fact that the public outside the circle of enthusiastic promoters of the new locomotion are a little disappointed with the trial that took place last Saturday .... At a country house, recently, situated in what is generally known as 'The Midlands', when the guests arrived for shooting, everyone, lady and gentleman, brought a bicycle, and the aggrieved footman reported that twenty-seven machines were handed over to his care, all having come part of the way by road, and being in the very worst condition. The affrighted mistress of the house, not being prepared to find another domestic on such short notice, telegraphed to Coventry for two cleaners to be sent down by the first train. How will it be when several motors come, say next year, and there is no skilled mechanic attached to the establishment?'

Newspapers in other parts of the county seemed less enthusiastic. The *Gloucester Journal* (21 Nov 1896) described the Run as 'A melancholy fiasco .... The horse has a long lease of life ahead of it' - possibly seeing it as a threat to the thriving carriage and wagon industry in the city? The *Stroud News* failed to mention the Run. Ironically Stroud was to have the only motor industry in the county, the Hampton and Baughan cars being built there in the 1920s. Other cars were made elsewhere in Gloucestershire, but either as experiments or in only very small numbers. Cheltenham may not have had participants in the Motor Tour but it did have a mini-Motor Tour of its own, as described below.

One vehicle to pass through Cheltenham before the end of 1896 was a Thorneycroft Steam Van, on its way from London to Cardiff, where it became the first motor vehicle in Wales. Some idea of the trials and tribulations of these pioneers can be gauged by the rate of progress:

Day 1: London-Oxford	8 hours
Day 2: Oxford-Gloucester	9 hours
Day 3: Gloucester-Newport	8 hours
Day 4: Newport-Cardiff	4 hours.

Little wonder that all early car deliveries were by rail. The van was photographed by a Mr Burge in Northleach (*Echo*, 1 Jan 1897), but its progress through Cheltenham went unremarked.

A garage, which would have been one of the first in the west of England, was advertised regularly in the local papers from November 1896 onwards, though it may never have opened for business. It was to be called the Montpellier Motor Cycle and Engineering Works, [Montpellier] Spa Road. The advertisements (example opposite) appeared fortnightly before disappearing in September 1897. The only car to be advertised for sale in Cheltenham prior to 1901 was a new one, built to Benz's system by the British Motor Syndicate (Henry Lawson again!), on view at Walton's Livery Stable, Cheltenham (*Examiner*, 2 Jun 1897). This is possibly the car owned by Arthur Dale of Leckhampton Hill.

It's a -----

A theme occupying the minds of many journalists was the most appropriate name for what was variously described as the automobile, motor car and horseless carriage. 'Automobile' was objected to on the grounds that it mixed Greek and Latin origins, and 'to

automobile' made rather a clumsy verb. The following suggestions were mooted in local newspapers of 1896: *autocar*, *auto-car*, *autokinon*, *automotive*, *car*, *go car*, *horseless*, *horseless carriage*, *light locomotive*, *mobus*, *mote*, *motor*, *moto-car*, *mover*, *self-propelled* or quite simply, *mo*.

#### Horatio Pilsbury Fernald

Fernald was Cheltenham's motoring pioneer; he was a dentist of American origin, and partner of Col Rogers at Alma House in the 1890s. The *Free Press* (28 Nov 1896) reports thus: 'but the light motor of the future is going to be electric - clean, noiseless and smellless. Many Cheltonians have seen, during the past fortnight, a specimen of the petroleum motor, and fairly successful it seems to be. I, for one, have not noticed anything more than a slight pumping noise, and a slight, very slight, sensation of smell; not half so bad as descriptions of the machine elsewhere. Still, the advantages of electricity are manifest. There is a plentiful supply in Cheltenham, we shall probably see electric cabs here before very long.'

THE MONTPELLIER

**MOTOR CYCLE AND  
ENGINEERING WORKS,**

SPA ROAD, CHELTENHAM,

The Largest Building in the West of England, will  
SHORTLY BE OPENED for a GRAND  
EXHIBITION of

**Motor Cars, Cycles, Electrical  
Machinery, &c.,**

OF THE LATEST DESIGNS & PATTERNS,

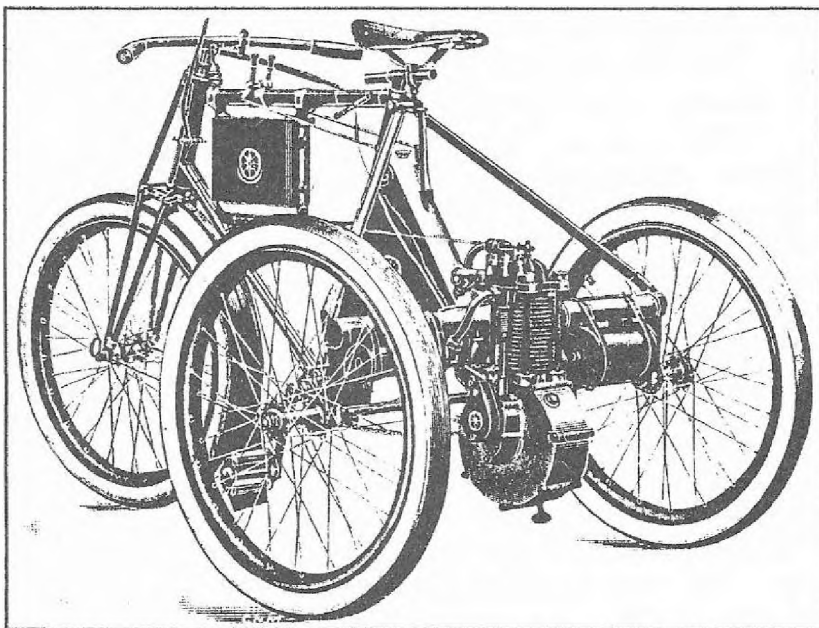
Both Stationary and in Motion.

Further Particulars duly announced.

The owner of this 'petroleum motor' remained a mystery until the chance discovery of an advertisement in *The Autocar* (26 Dec 1896): 'For sale, a 'De Dion and Bouton' motor tricycle; new only two weeks ago. Apply H P Fernald, Alma House, Cheltenham'. Given a delay in inserting the advertisement, this could well be Cheltenham's first motor car, possibly the first in the county and one of only a handful in the country. The De Dion tricycle was one of the most reliable and fastest motors of its time, the company had used it in continental races to great effect. The British agency for De Dions was held by none other than Henry Lawson in London. Whether Fernald acquired it through him or on one of his continental trips is not known. The seriousness with which the De Dion was taken in Britain can be judged by an article in the *English Mechanic and World of Science*, which places a description of the De Dion alongside that of a luminous cat for scaring mice.

Fernald had had quite a varied life before he arrived in Cheltenham. Born in 1842 in Frankfort (now Winterport), Maine, USA, he was the youngest of three sons of Hiram

Fernald, blacksmith, and his wife, Abigail. At 18 he enlisted in the 7<sup>th</sup> Maine Volunteer Infantry of the Federal Army to fight in the Civil War, his occupation being given as a farmer. He was wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness, Virginia, on 5 May 1864 and officially transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Veteran Infantry but is described as 'absent wounded'. He then took a degree in dentistry at Boston, Mass in the 1870s, moving to Dublin in 1879 to study further. Col



*1896 De Dion Bouton tricycle of type owned by Fernald*

Rogers also studied there, which may account for Fernald's arrival in Cheltenham. He seems to have been a man of tremendous energy, the Cheltenham newspapers recording his departure for Berlin, Stockholm and other Continental destinations at various times. He retained US citizenship to the end of his days, in spite of spending 44 years in this country. In an obituary in the *Echo* (14 Oct 1923) he is described as the 'father of Cheltenham motoring', his American ancestry being given as the cause of his 'receptivity to new ideas'. One of his hobbies was photography but, sadly, none of his photographs appear to have survived. Undoubtedly Fernald continued with his motoring exploits in the years leading up to 1900 but no details have come to light. By 1901 he owned seven cars. He was one of a group of local enthusiasts instrumental in bringing the 1,000 Mile Trial of the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland (ACGBI, from 1907 the RAC) to Cheltenham.

### **ACGBI 1,000 Mile Trial**

By the end of the 19th century the motor car was firmly established, albeit only amongst those who could afford it. Early motoring was never cheap, a reasonably powerful car would cost several times the average working man's annual wages in upkeep alone. Tyre bills alone often exceeded £150 per year. A £300 car would cost almost as much again to run per annum and, such was the rate of development, the depreciation on cars was massive. Some idea of the status of motorists can be judged by the comments of the ACGBI on the compulsory registration of cars, a subject being debated at the time. 'Registration is unnecessary', it was stated. 'You can tell the identity of any motorist by the uniform of his chauffeur and the crest on the door.'

In 1899 a trial of 1,000 miles was devised to take place in the last year of the century, 1900. Its purpose was to demonstrate the reliability and practicality of motor cars in the most populous areas of England and Scotland, particularly to the local press. The start was to be in London and a circuit undertaken via Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Carlisle, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham and back to London. Initially the

Bristol to Birmingham route missed Cheltenham, following what was later to become the A38. Local motorists petitioned the ACGBI for a lunch stop in the town and the organising committee saw no reason why this could not be arranged. A local committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr Fernald, with F M Bostock, an architect, as secretary. Other members included three engineers, Messrs Meats, Peach and Courteen, and a member of the town council, Mr S Dix.

The Winter Gardens were hired for the day and the *Echo* printed admission programmes at 1s, all profits to go to the Transvaal War Fund. The official stop of two hours had, according to the *Echo* programme, been extended to three and a quarter, a rather bad omen for what was to follow. The official drivers' handbook (from which this illustration is drawn) lists places in Cheltenham where lunch could be had - at prices from 3s to 1s. The Queen's headed the list followed by the Plough, Cox's, Royal, Lamb, Tate's, Lansdowne and Great Western. How many drivers actually got any lunch is not recorded for things seem to have become a little chaotic. Few cars arrived in Cheltenham

1,000-Mile Trial. 597

**CHELTENHAM,**  
**WEDNESDAY, 25th APRIL, 1900.**

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A THREE-HOURS  
**EXHIBITION**  
OF THE  
**MOTOR VEHICLES**

TAKING PART IN THE  
*1,000-Mile Trial organized by the Automobile Club of Great Britain & Ireland*  
WILL BE HELD UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF  
**THE MAYOR OF CHELTENHAM,**  
IN THE  
**WINTER GARDENS,**  
 From 11.30 a.m. to 2.45 p.m.

---

ADMISSION - - - - - ONE SHILLING.

---

**THE PROFITS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE TRANSVAAL WAR FUND.**

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*Committee for Local Arrangements:*

Dr. H. P. Fernald.	Mr. A. Meats.	Mr. F. Norman.
Mr. C. Wright.	.. Courteen.	.. F. J. Bennett.
.. W. Watts.	.. Morgan.	.. Stephenson Peach.
.. S. Dix.	.. Clark.	Dr. Abbott.

Mr. F. M. Bostock, 38, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham, *Hon. Sec.*

on time due to breakdowns and the poor state of the roads, though one or two arrived early and tried, unsuccessfully, to leave early. Those who found their way to the Winter Gardens were besieged by enthusiasts, over 600 people paying to see the cars. Some latecomers did not get to Cheltenham until well after 3 pm, by which time the first cars were due to leave. Such was the enthusiasm, if you read local reports, or incompetence of the local committee, if you read national reports, that the cars did not start to leave until after 4. As a result the tea stop in Worcester was missed by many and cars arrived in Birmingham after dark. A number of photographs survive of the cars in the Winter Gardens and on the roads nearby.

A reporter from the *Examiner* (2 May 1900) travelled in one of the cars from Bristol to Cheltenham. Initially he had an unfortunate choice of car, a Phaeton by the London Motor Van and Carriage Company. It would not start and was withdrawn from the Trial. However the driver of a New Orleans came to his rescue and the journey started. His report waxes positively poetical about the joys of motoring, something he had not previously experienced. Starting: 'The car had become perfectly quiet inside [the engine stalled] and had to be stirred up with a handle like that of a barrel-organ. At first only a reluctant 'phit-phit' was the response, but after repeated applications something within began to purr. [There was] an outburst of activity in the machinery; the gentle tremor was followed by a jarring bump-bump, and without regard to dignity we descended to watch from a safe distance. No explosion followed ... A whole array of handles and taps was in front of [the driver]. He gave a few pulls at a sort of beer-engine affair and did things to the taps, and the car seemed to leap into the air. This happened two or three times before the vehicle made a start and we were really off.'

Once on the open road high speeds were achieved; the Gloucestershire Constabulary were obviously otherwise occupied for the day. 'On the down grade [of a hill] it was necessary to hold on tight. It would be useless to guess at the maximum pace reached. The noise of the wind rose to a shriek in the ears, the dust struck the face with the force of a sand-blast, and it was practically impossible to open one's eyes ... while everything behind was blotted out by the cloud of dust we raised'. It is unlikely that the car achieved more than 20 mph, even on a down grade. Our intrepid journalist was hardly generous to those less fortunate than himself. 'We soon began to pass broken-down cars and to experience a new joy in life. Seated on a car bursting along at 15 or 16 miles an hour how exhilarating it is to wave one's hand and to cheerily pass the time of day to other automobilists whose cars have broken down! The cordiality of the greeting is quite one-sided, however. ... At Berkeley Road one motist informed us that he had just sustained his second puncture - both from big hob-nails ... Perhaps some of those yokels who lined the road could have explained where the nails came from ... At every field-gate, finger-post and turning were knots of people discussing the 'new-fangled contraption' passing before them ... The village schools had taken a holiday, and apparently associated the event with a patriotic demonstration, for they were usually armed with little national flags.' The arrival in Cheltenham was rather an anti-climax and the enthusiasm of our journalist evaporated. 'Once inside the Winter Gardens we retracted a promise to continue to the day's end [to Birmingham], and after partially thawing, retired to nurse an incipient cold'.

In spite of its name, the New Orleans was from an Anglo-Dutch concern of Orleans Road, Wimbledon, London. It was, in fact, a rebadged Belgian Vivinus car, itself a version of the French Roger. Very few cars were of truly British origin at that time, the great majority being French or German cars bearing the badges of British companies.

### **Councils, the Law and other matters**

County and borough councils were seemingly unmoved by the passing of the 1896 Act. Glos. County Council merely noted its passing. The only comments passed were that the increase in traffic 'would result in drains being all broke through' and a query as to whether steam driven motor cycles were covered! Cirencester RDC obviously misunderstood the term 'light locomotive' (motor car) and referred it to the railway at Kemble.



The police saw the motorist as an ideal target for their attentions; for the first time they could legitimately persecute the rich. Stories of court cases abound in the papers, including a Liverpool motorist who was fined in 1897 for leaving his car outside a shop. 'Motors are not designed to go shopping in', commented the magistrate. The famous motor racing driver, S F Edge, was fined for speeding even though he proved that he was not in the area at the time. The magistrate considered that, since he was driving somewhere else, he was probably speeding somewhere else!

Cheltenham motorists were either a law-abiding group or had the police on their side. The only court case to arise in the period concerned a Bristol motorist, Richard Howard, who, in March 1899, was fined £1 and 8s costs for 'driving furiously in a motor car' in Pittville Street. Witnesses said that they saw the car coming at a furious rate down Pittville Street, slow for the corner, then increase its speed down the High Street. The streets were crowded at the time and the car must have been going at 10 mph. In case this sounds faintly ridiculous it must be remembered that the car would have had very little in the way of brakes, the tyres were narrow and solid, and the wood-block road slippery with the inevitable horse dung. Cyclists and the pushers of prams fared less well than Cheltenham motorists, frequently ending up in court for the most trivial offences.

As the century came to a close the town's first motor-related fatality was recorded on 31 August 1900. A pleasure coach and four, the *Royal Mail*, was returning from a outing to Tewkesbury. As it passed the Hunting Butts near Cheltenham Racecourse it met a car being driven by Mr Baring Bingham of Rosehill, Evesham Road. The horses shied at the car and the driver was thrown off his seat, they bolted and then backed the coach into an embankment throwing several passengers out. A Mr Thomas Bugbird, aged 77 of Alington House, St Margaret's Road, appeared to have escaped with a bad bruising and went home. He was later taken ill and died of a haemorrhage that evening. Several other passengers received severe injuries. The inquest accorded no blame to either driver but recommended that motorists take extra care until horses become used to motor cars.

So, with the motor car becoming established as a small part of daily life, the way was prepared for the expansion of motoring which was to come in the twentieth century.

*I would like to thank the staff of Cheltenham Reference Library, Gloucestershire County Records Office, Maine State Archives, National Motor Museum Library, Royal Automobile Club Library and Veteran Car Club Library for their considerable assistance. Also thanks are due to my enthusiastic friends who have given help and encouragement, and who know far more about history and/or early motoring than I do.*

[This is an interim document in a longer study and I would be interested to hear of any references to motoring activities in the Cheltenham area before 1906. Please contact Derek Copson, Widecombe, Harp Hill, Cheltenham GL52 6PU; tel. 01242 510653 or e-mail [derekcopson@compuserve.com](mailto:derekcopson@compuserve.com)]

# The Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution, 1833-60

JEAN LACOCK

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SOCIETIES FOR the promotion of literature and science were set up in many British towns in the late 18th century onwards. In this movement, Cheltenham was relatively early but its 'miniature association' was short-lived.



An established spa resort, Cheltenham had much to offer its visitors, who came seeking health and amusement. As the town grew, there were those who considered it a place of idleness and frivolous pursuits, with little to offer residents of culture and intellect. Dr Edward Jenner [left] had complained in 1805 of a 'great dearth of mind in Cheltenham'. Several years later, in the winter of 1813, he invited a group, mainly of doctors, to his home - 8 St George's Place - to set up a literary and philosophical society. Early support necessitated moving the meetings to the Assembly Rooms, where Dr Charles Parry, Dr John Baron and Dr Henry Boisragon read papers and led discussions. Dr Jenner was appointed president and Thomas Morhall, the town surveyor, secretary. Membership was between 30 and 50.

The *Cheltenham Chronicle* in January 1814 welcomed the formation of the society as 'an event that in every point of view, cannot fail of adding celebrity to our town'. Yet, in retrospect, Dr Boisragon was to speak of the 'apathy and frigid indifference' of former days. After the death of Jenner's wife Catherine, in September 1818, the widower retired to Berkeley and his Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Society lapsed. Dr Baron later claimed Jenner had outrun the spirit of the age and stated that the society had not met the encouragement expected of residents.

In after years, several similar attempts were made. The 'Cheltenham Athenaeum' was projected in 1820-21. A prospectus and rules were shown to those known to be friendly to literary pursuits. About 30 were prepared to pay 10 guineas as shareholders and signed a draft of regulations. However, the project never matured and no meetings were held. In the summer of 1825, a time when there was a movement nationally towards Mechanics' Institutes, one was founded in Cheltenham, even though the town was regarded as having a smaller proportion of mechanics and artisans than almost any other town of equal size. The aim was to instruct members 'in the principles of the arts they practise and the various branches of science and of useful knowledge', by lectures, the foundation of a library of reference and circulation, and a museum of models and machines. For an annual subscription of 12s 6d, the working classes and those favouring their improvement could attend meetings held in the house of Mr Hollis, gunsmith. Dr J Chichester was very active in the Institute's

formation and was supported by 'several ingenious and intelligent mechanics'. Again there were not more than 50 members, and the Mechanics' Institute died in about a year, according to Henry Davies in the *Cheltenham Annuaire*, or five to six years in the recollection of Dr Thomas Wright. It was the forerunner of the Cheltenham Mechanics' Institute of 1834-42.

Elsewhere, literary and philosophical societies were being founded. The Bath Literary Institute held its inaugural meeting in January 1825 and by May the members of Bristol's Philosophical & Literary Institute were being lectured on geology. Cheltenham with a population of nearly 20,000 that year was still without. So, in 1832, a stranger to Cheltenham, Dr Robinson, having moved into St George's Place, attempted to form a scientific institute by calling a meeting. E G Wells in his *Cheltenham Magazine*, February 1837, recalled being present with others who subscribed one guinea to be there and then considered his scheme impractical. Henry Davies described how residents most disposed to such an institution felt no confidence in Dr Robinson and his judgement of the town's wants and needs, and the most advisable course towards an institute.

However, 'stimulated by the practical censure of their inactivity', several long-term residents talked among themselves and their friends. These preliminaries led to a meeting on 23 January 1833 at the Imperial Pump Room, where Henry Davies of Montpellier Library addressed a small gathering on the advantages of literary and philosophical institutions. Support grew. Early in February, some 50 to 60 gentlemen formed the society and on 21 February, the rules and regulations were agreed, and officers and committee were appointed. Five years later in the Queen's Hotel, on the site of the Imperial Pump Room, where the Cheltenham Literary & Philosophical Institution (CLPI) had begun its meetings (held free of charge courtesy of Messrs Jearrad), Henry Davies was honoured and toasted as the main instigator. Replying, he stated that on that first occasion the gentlemen had considered Cheltenham not only not-intellectual but anti-intellectual. 'They had to strike the iron not just when hot, but till it was hot.' Their enthusiasm prevailed. The founders invited Dr Henry Boisragon - nearly 20 years since the inauguration of Jenner's society - to address them at the first monthly meeting. His remarks concerning 'watering place imbecility' and the 'grovelling appetite for sensual indulgence and the languid ennui of tasteless and vapid pursuits' castigated Cheltenham. He accepted the fact that the town could not compete with a university city in embracing the sciences - then called philosophy - or with London in stimulating fine arts. Large wealthy manufacturing towns, such as Manchester and Liverpool, would lead in engineering, 'dynamic' science, mechanical and chemical arts. Towns like Bath and York would easily turn to antiquities, literature and archaeology. However, he declared, Cheltenham had educated visitors, opulent residents, men of talent, of moral respectability, of scientific and literary taste; some with special interests and knowledge. He suggested geology, mineralogy, chemistry, botany and astronomy would be locally appropriate, useful and best suited for particular study.

The Lord Bishop of Gloucester, commenting in 1836, considered Cheltenham had good reasons for being able to maintain a literary and philosophical institution, instancing an extensive population of fortune and education, able to purchase the amusements science and literature could offer; visits by the great and distinguished; residents with leisure (since not all their time was given to mercantile activities) and a large staff of medical men, always foremost in the pursuit of science. The *Cheltenham Journal* in March 1833 reported general

and generous support, lively interest at a favourable time, with many members of distinguished talent. The intention was to draw heavily on them, by their sharing their knowledge at monthly meetings from September to May annually and at occasional *conversazioni*, when there would be displays, short talks, discussions and sometimes experiments. The institution hoped to afford specialist courses and lectures. To fulfil its aims, the institution would need a lecture room, a reading room where English and foreign journals would be available, a laboratory with 'philosophical' apparatus for the use of lecturers and members, a library of reference (and perhaps later of circulation) and a museum of natural history, antiquities, and works of art and science.

One of the highlights of the life of the CLPI was the opening on 30 August 1836 of a purpose-built establishment in the Promenade, 'a structure of bold and classical appearance, having a handsome portico'. Illustrations and detailed descriptions of the building, modelled on the Temple of Theseus and supported by six fluted columns and designed by R W Jearrad are to be found in guide books. In 1833, the institution was financed by the sale of £10 shares and by annual subscriptions of two guineas and one guinea. Management was in the hands of a council, consisting of a president, two vice-presidents, an honorary secretary, a treasurer and 15 committee members, of whom 10 were to be proprietors (shareholders) and five ordinary members. It is fortunate that after a while, someone decided to keep documents in a tin trunk, duly painted with the words *Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution*, and that these papers can be examined in the Local Studies section of Cheltenham Reference Library. The collection includes printed annual reports, many receipts, some accounts and minutes, besides abstracts concerning the title to the land on the east side of the Promenade, a trust deed, and details of closure and release. As it does not include seven of the first nine annual reports, information about early years has to be gleaned from newspapers, town guides and other publications of the time. This problem has contributed to some misapprehensions found in references to the institution.

A minor one is the assumption that Dr Boisragon, who was so prominent, was the first president, whereas it was Sir George Whitmore. Dr Boisragon was president from 1834-39. The fact that he gave the inaugural lecture and was actively involved in the early years, and had been a member of Jenner's society, which had had a similar title and activities, has led to the belief that the Institution was a resurrection - or even a continuation - of the earlier society. It is clear from speeches and accounts given by founder members that this is not the way they saw it, but as a new venture, a further attempt to establish a much needed institution at a time and in circumstances more favourable than 1813. From among themselves they chose the Rev G Bonner and William Ingledew to be Vice-Presidents, Henry Davies to be Hon. Secretary, and William Ridler Treasurer. The first council included Dr A Cannon, Dr W Conolly, A Eves, R W Jearrad, Dr W Kay, S Moss, J Packwood, R C Sherwood, T Spinney, Rev J Thomas, Dr W Thomas, and R Winterbotham. Also active were R Comfield, J S Cox, E Byam, Dr Bernard, and Dr McCabe. The Institution was intended by spreading knowledge 'to improve the moral and intellectual character of man' and so to have an effect on the tone of general society and on the public mind. To do this, it was considered important to have as members the local nobility and gentry, the upper classes, whose support was expected, as well as townsmen, the middle classes. The ability to buy a share and/or pay the annual subscription determined that membership was restricted. One's position in the social hierarchy obviously counted a great deal. Lists at times clearly

show a differentiation between members warranting 'Esq' or 'Mr'; trade was acceptable - within limits!

Over and over again one reads of disappointment at the level of support by the nobility and gentry, in spite of some success. Sir George Whitmore's presidency ended after a year as he prepared to leave the town. The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol was a patron and attended the opening of the building and was much in favour of the Institution (even though he disagreed with Dr Boisragon's attack on the universities as hindering scientific knowledge). Members of the nobility are listed as patrons, including Lord Sherborne, Lord Dunalley and Lord Segrave, who took the chair at a lecture by Dr Boisragon, his friend of 30 years. After he became Earl Fitzhardinge in 1841, he is still listed as a patron. Lord Northwick paid a two-guinea subscription for 1839-40, when he was engaged in creating his picture gallery at Thirlestaine House, and was still a patron several years later. That the council sought such involvement by the nobility is clear. At the 1840 AGM, the Rev Jenkin Thomas however urged the members not to look for titled names but to choose as president 'a gentleman with whom they could cordially cooperate'. Presumably the hope was that patrons would help the finances. Earl Ducie, patron of the 1841 Exhibition, as was the Duke of Beaufort, was looked to for assistance in troubled years later. However, the Institution was well supported by a large group of doctors, surgeons and ministers of religion throughout its existence. The incumbent of Cheltenham, the Rev Francis Close, was an honorary member from 1844-48 but only after discussion as to whether the honour was for the man or his office. He was said never to be in the Institution but he assured members in November 1846 that it was his more important duties that prevented him from attending lectures and he did address them on 'Literature and the Fine Arts considered as legitimate pursuits of a Religious Man'.

Membership lists were published in the annual report booklets, giving names and addresses and the class of membership. Checking these against Rowe's 1845 guide, directories and newspaper accounts reveals many well-known figures and shop-owners among the members. There were town commissioners such as Ingledeu, Lingwood and Monro; barristers and solicitors (eg Gael, Pruen and Winterbotham); borough surveyors (Merrett and Dangerfield); the Master of Ceremonies (Kirwan). Not surprisingly, magistrates are also listed (Gyde, Tartt), as are bankers (Addams) and retired army and naval officers, as well as architects (Jearrad) and other developers (Henney, Pearson Thompson). Members include those involved with schools and colleges (Bellairs, Bromby and Humphreys). There were the owners of the town's libraries and newspapers (Davies, Williams and Rowe), artists (Cafieri and Marklove) and a goodly number of shopkeepers whose names ring bells, such as Debenham, Freebody, Lance, Jessop, Martin, MacDougal, Marshall and Shirer. Hotel keepers and purveyors of wine were especially useful for annual dinners. Some of the town's Jewish population are represented (Abraham and Alex) as well as men of the railway, with a station for an address!

Lectures were the main activity of the CLPI. The original intention was to have eight or nine annually, plus *conversazioni*. This became a minimum. Not only is it possible to list the titles from 1833 to 1860 but in many cases to read accounts of them in the newspapers of the day. On many occasions lectures were printed in full, sometimes in serial form. One can certainly test contemporary knowledge and thinking on a large number of subjects. The

lecture programme relied heavily on the services of members and other local enthusiasts and less on paid lecturers due to the recurring problem of limited resources. This was both a strength, due to knowledgeable and talented members with a wide variety of interest, and a weakness when others were poor speakers or chose uninspiring subject matter. In April 1836 the *Cheltenham Magazine* prospectus, listing the three institutions of that time, the CLPI, the Athenaeum and the Mechanics' Institute, claimed they had drawn on previously dormant talent, from men of research who had produced original ideas in scientific matters. However at times, newspapers dismissed lectures as indistinct, dull or desultory!

Nearly 600 lectures, besides talks at *conversazioni*, were mainly on scientific, literary or fine arts subjects, plus historical or biographical ones, with occasionally more bizarre offerings. As one would expect, the predominant scientific concerns were chemistry, physics, biology, botany, mineralogy and geology. Literary authors and their works, oratory and elocution, music, painting, sculpture and architecture were well represented. Education, transport and public health also appeared. Nineteenth-century developments such as steam power, aerial navigation, the daguerreotype and the electric telegraph are not surprising. Nor are capital punishment, wit, humour and women in society. Phrenology (the investigation of a person's character by feeling the bumps of the head), mesmerism, dreams, autography (character reading through handwriting), idolatry, the sanitary advantages of baths and Egyptian embalming, with actual mummy unwrapping more unexpectedly enliven the list of subjects.

At all times members and lecturers were supposed to avoid politics and religion as improper and inappropriate. Occasionally the CLPI was able to call on the 'master spirits' of the age. Members of the British Association for example travelled from their meeting in Bristol to celebrate the new building and sometimes lectured. The Institution was involved when after repeated attempts by Cheltenham the British Association was persuaded to hold its annual conference in the town in 1856. Professor Ritchie of the Royal Institute lectured on electricity and magnetism (1853), and Mr Impey Murchison, president of the Geological Society of London, explained local geology and the origin of the mineral waters. Certainly members were introduced to many ideas and experiences. Within a few weeks of its foundation, the Institution was shown a model of a steam engine (made by Mr Merrett, the town surveyor), observed it in action and had the principles explained by J T Cooper, an analytical chemist from London and inventor of the hydro-oxygen microscope. Merrett's plan of Cheltenham was on view, as was Volta's electric lamp. Members could study an 11-year meteorological observation chart made by S Moss, or examine a stethoscope. Such activities were usually part of the *conversazioni*, though sometimes lectures included demonstrations and experiments. The prime example of this kind of instruction and amusement was the 1841 Exhibition of Works of Art and Science [see *Journal* 9].

For 21 years, members could attend these lectures, even when there were difficulties with the reading room, laboratory, library and museum. In spite of having a mission to fulfil, the services of many members, a purpose-built meeting place in the Promenade Villas and being set up at what seemed an opportune time, the CLPI had 'a chequered existence' - a description from the *Cheltenham Looker-On* of September 1860. In December 1900, the *Examiner* in its sketch history of the century judged it to have had a 'tolerably flourishing existence'. This was far from the early high hopes. The Institution's problem was financial.

Income from annual subscriptions and lettings barely covered expenditure; interest payments led to debt, a series of crises and the eventual impossibility of continuing. There can be no doubt that lack of money killed the CLPI. Organised as a private joint-stock institution, it originally sold shares of £10. Then in 1836, 240 building shares were raised, again at £10. The second group of proprietors were to receive 5% annually and the council planned to buy back these shares in time. In spite of nearly all the building shareholders foregoing their interest in 1838, the council could not keep up payments, so in 1841 about half the building shares were converted into proprietary shares, paying no interest but giving membership privileges. Shares were now the old £10, £20, £35 and £50. The institution had a mortgage of £1,250 at 5% to cover the deficit of building shares. The problem continued, with the council struggling to live within income, pay the interest, and also redeem debts left from earlier years. Persuading creditors to forego payment and receiving a few legacies and donations helped, as did giving old iron pipes and heating apparatus to the decorator for the £8 of his papering and painting bill! Repairs and alterations done in 1837-38-39 were paid for in 1843-44, a not uncommon occurrence with old debts. To solve the problem, the CLPI needed to attract a larger membership. The reasons for its failure to do so can be found expressed in editorial comment, reports and letters in newspapers. It was not always sweetness and light behind the classical facade in the Promenade.

*Part II will examine the CLPI's spasmodic role in the life of early Victorian Cheltenham.*

#### Sources

CLPI: annual reports, accounts, minute books, rules, deeds etc, at Cheltenham Reference Library.

Local newspapers and magazines, including *Cheltenham Chronicle*, *Examiner*, *Free Press*, *Journal*, *Looker-On*; *Bath & Cheltenham Gazette*, *Cheltenham Magazine of Science, Literature and Miscellaneous Intelligence*, *Hale's Musical Record*.

Local guide books and directories

Nineteenth-century histories and biographies



The Institution, Promenade Villas (Henry Davies, *A View of Cheltenham*, 1843)

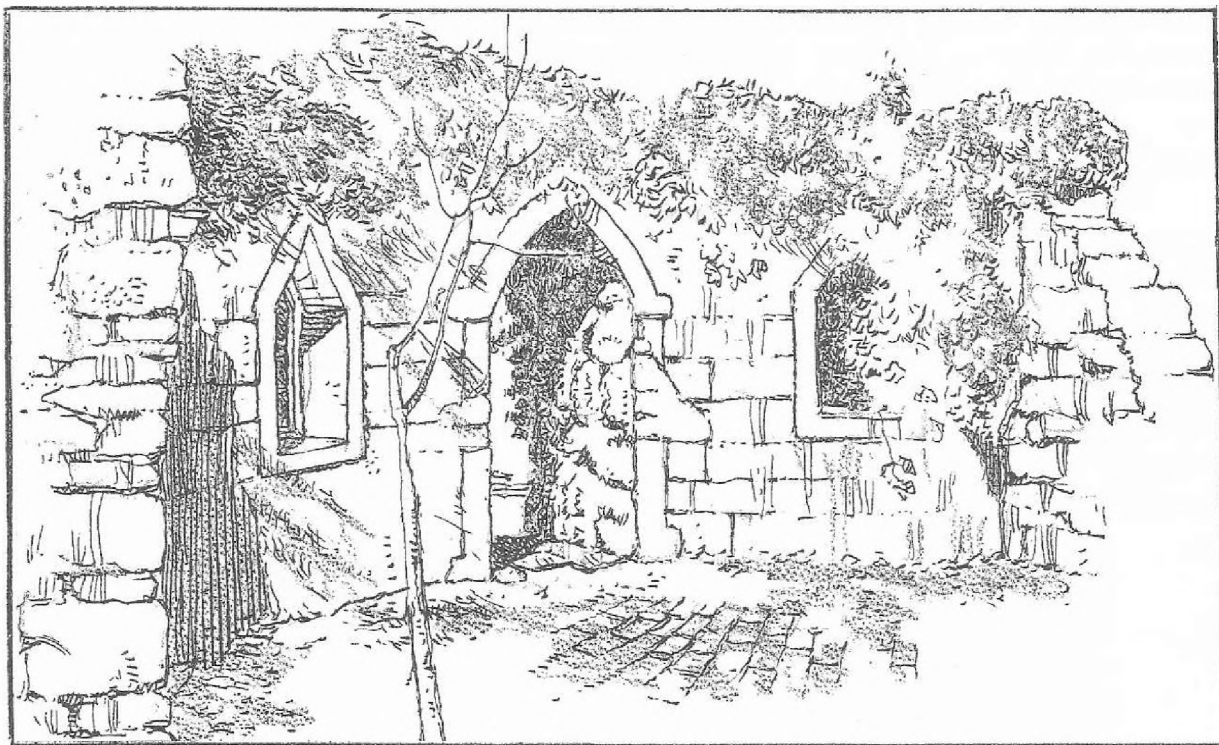
# The Follies of Cheltenham (Part 2)

OLIVER BRADBURY

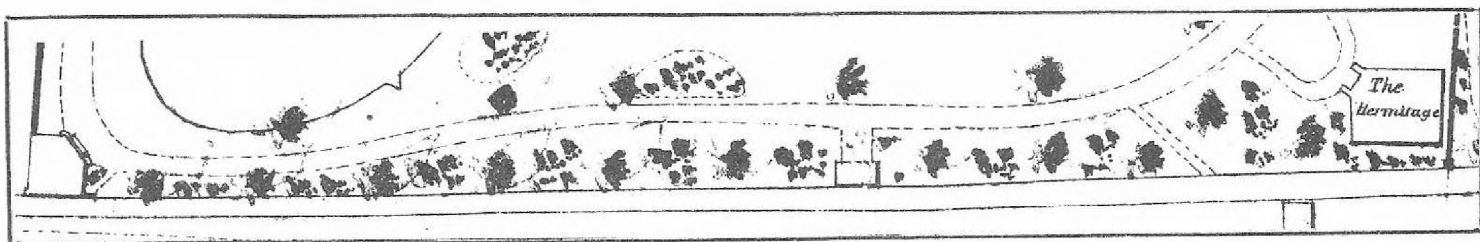
PART ONE of this article, in *Journal 14*, documented some of the more unusual domestic buildings of the town. Part two covers a number of non-domestic categories: grottoes, summer-houses and gazebos; pagodas; and miscellaneous structures.

## Grottoes

### 1. Karenza, off Clare Place



What appears to be Cheltenham's sole surviving grotto lies within the Cheltenham College grounds. It is not on Merrett's 1834 map, but does appear on the 1855-7 Old Town Survey (OTS), where it is called 'The Hermitage' - the only garden building to be named on the survey [see map extract below]. It is depicted as a little rectangular building with a projecting angled entrance in the south-east corner of what was then known as Clare Villa. The house appears Victorian, but is in fact Regency in origin and is possibly on the 1820



(south end of garden at Clare Villa/Karenza, 1855-7)



map; it is definitely on the 1834 map, as 'Clare Villa', being renamed Karenza in 1867. The house has an ashlar-faced, two-storey, canted bow (not on the OTS), but perhaps dating from the renaming period. Standing in the bow at first floor level and looking out to the left or right one would see a grotto or summer-house in each corner - an arrangement unparalleled in Cheltenham. All that remains of the grotto is a sham wall facing Karenza. A few years ago there was a rear brick wall with a back entrance with unglazed windows on either side, but this wall has since been removed. Picturesque ivy has recently been encouraged to grow over the grotto facade which is deeply encrusted with tufa and vermiculated limestone - the archetypal grotto ingredients. The interior wall indicates a central Gothic doorway which is deeper than the facade wall thus corresponding to the projections marked on the OTS. On either side of this door are two pointed arch windows. The floor of the interior is lined with bricks, and there appear to be gaps under the roofline indicating supports for a previous roof. The condition of this ruin has recently been stabilised with the erection of a metal barrier around the outside.

## 2. Grotto, Thompson's Walk

Gell & Bradshaw's 1820 *Gloucestershire Directory* lists a grotto in Thompson's Walk, associated with one James White, 'toy and fancy man'. This is very probably to be equated with the grotto marked on the 1820 map as a small circular structure at the north-west corner of Montpellier Gardens, roughly on the site of the later Montpellier Arcade. It had disappeared by the time of the 1834 map, presumably redeveloped as the Montpellier shopping area grew. No depiction is known.

## 3. The Grotto, 24 Moorend Park Road

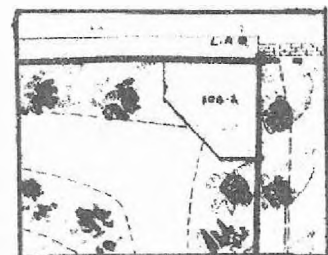
The first mention of this structure - seemingly a house with grotto features - is in the 1834 *Cheltenham Annuaire*, where it is the residence of Revd J C Hawkins. On W Croome's 1835 *Plan of the Parish of Leckhampton*, it is labelled plot no. 295 and is marked 'house, lawn etc', the building being of an irregular shape situated in a large corner plot. In *The Cheltenham Looker-On* for 5 June 1886 the property was advertised for let as a 'charming Detached COTTAGE RESIDENCE, beautifully situated at Leckhampton'. There is no known visual depiction of the building; it was still listed in directories up to 1940, but has since been demolished.

## Summer-houses & Gazebos

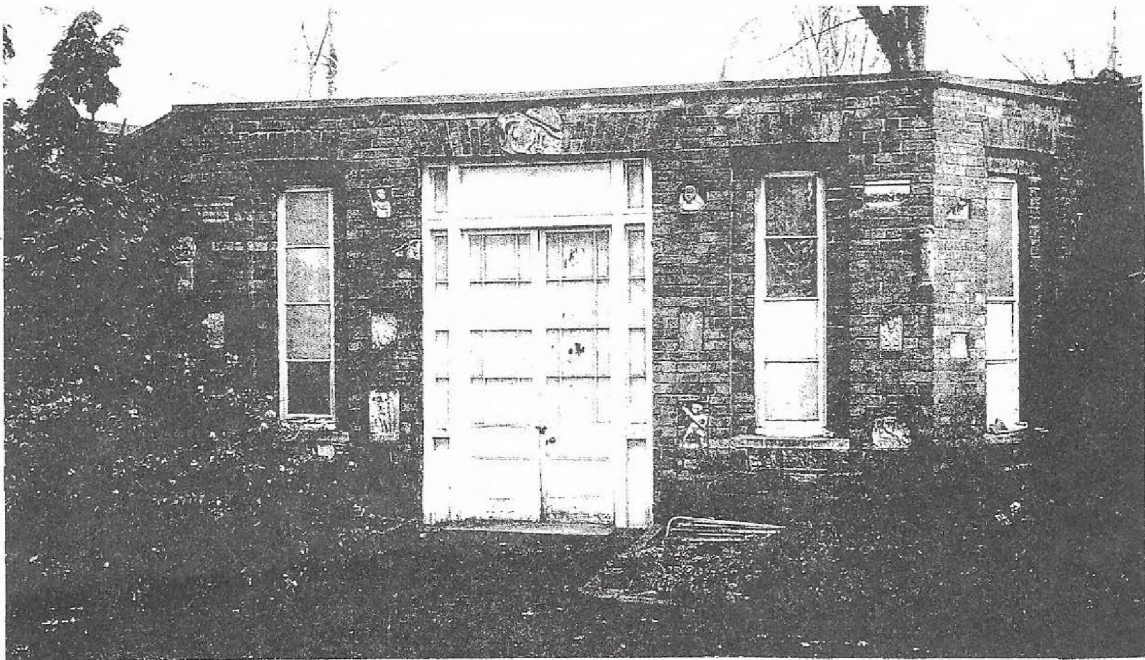
It is debatable what differentiates a summer-house from a gazebo so I have combined the two into one section for convenience. On the 1855-57 OTS a few large properties have what appear to be a summer-house or gazebo within their grounds. Later maps suggest some proliferation as the century progressed, but today there are few, even in the larger properties where they might be expected.

### 1. Thirlestaine House, Bath Road

Behind Thirlestaine House in the corner of the garden is a brick summer-house occupying a triangular site where the boundary wall meets at a right angle [*OTS extract right*]. The front is three bays wide with a central door flanked by side lights. Either side of the door are narrow recessed windows with unusual convex glazing. The outer bays of the summer-house are canted and continue the



narrow windows. What makes this building truly unusual is that it is studded all over with genuine Roman fragments of some archaeological interest. They were probably collected by the second Lord Northwick on his Grand Tour from 1789-1800<sup>1</sup>, and possibly taken back to Northwick Park, Glos. He moved to Cheltenham in 1838, and we can surmise that the summer-house was built shortly after (it is not on the 1834 map). According to Dr Peter Higgs of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, the fragments are typical of smaller pieces collected on the Grand Tour, and appear to be from Roman sarcophagi, friezes, reliefs, and other architectural elements. The interior is an anti-climax, with a much cracked flagstone floor, and the empty roof-trusses of perhaps a skylight. It is now used as a gardener's shed. No reference to this intriguing building has been found in Cheltenham collections; any clues to the specific origins of the Roman fragments probably lie in the Northwick Collection at the Worcester Record Office.



**The Summer-house, Thirlestaine House**

## 2. Tudor Lodge, The Park

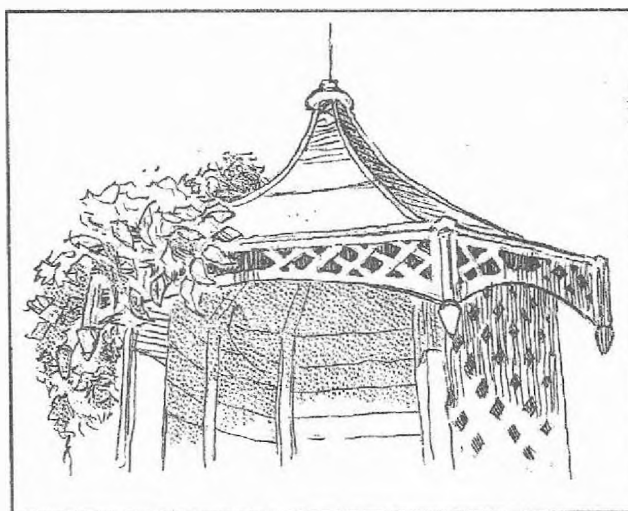
A ground plan included in Victorian sale particulars<sup>2</sup> shows a summer-house in the garden of Tudor Lodge, surrounded by various winding paths, trees, and shrubs. The summer-house was rectangular, perhaps with a porch facing the house. It is not marked on the 1855-7 OTS, possibly reducing the likelihood that it was designed by Tudor Lodge's architect, S W Daukes. When the summer-house disappeared is not known; remains of the foundations are believed to survive in one of the gardens of the present Tudor Lodge flats.

## 3. Alstone Lawn, Gloucester Road

Alstone Lawn was a large Regency house built by about 1810. In the grounds to the north-east of the house was a rustic summer-house which can be seen in Henry Lamb's 1820s lithograph [see this *Journal*, p. 46]. In this print, it appears to be of one storey, perhaps hexagonal, with an open veranda, and a central entrance. The roof, which might be thatched, is supported by log-like rustic columns. Though this part of Cheltenham is not on the OTS, the building's existence is confirmed on the 1887 OS. Alstone Lawn was demolished by the early 1920s and the grounds later built over.

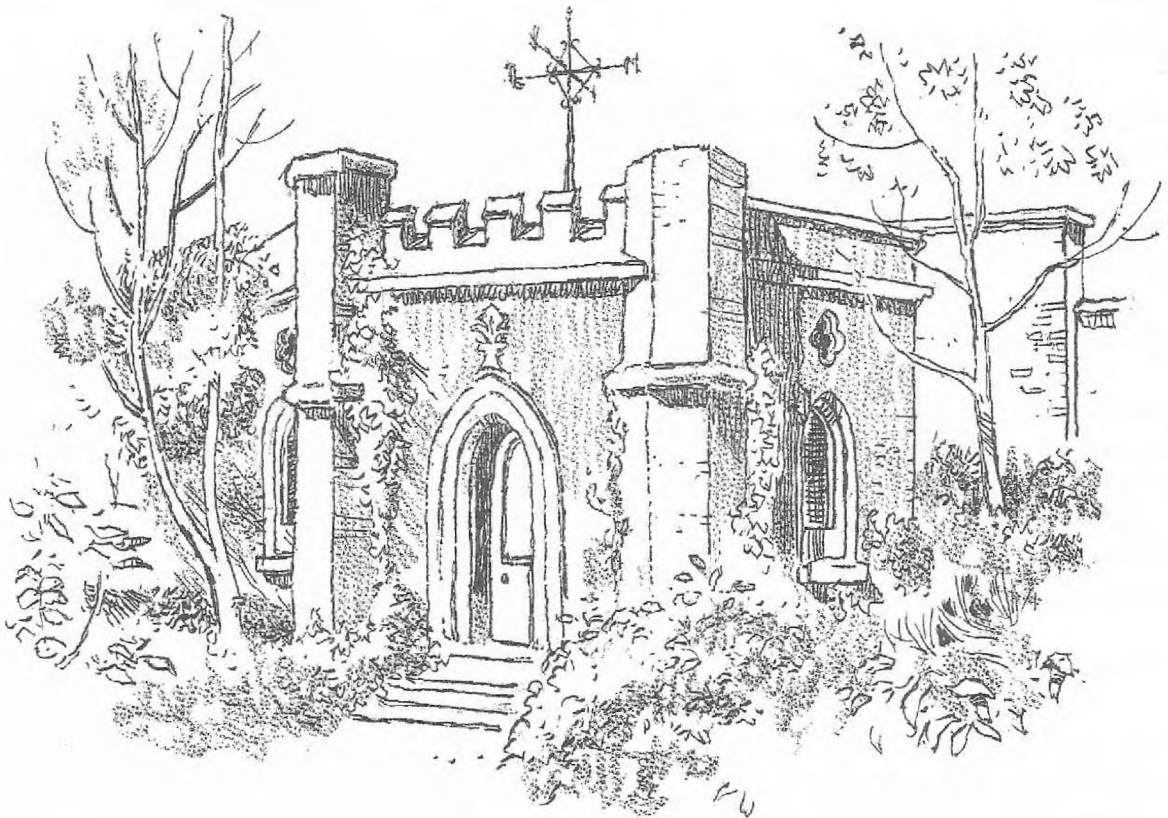
## 4. Stanmer House, Lypiatt Road

This gazebo is situated halfway along the boundary wall of Stanmer House. It is clearly not contemporary with the neo-classical house (c.1832) as it is not on the 1855 OTS, but it is on the 1887 OS map. It is an octagon and has a pointed roof similar to that of the gazebo at Radley (see below), though this one is entirely wooden without windows, and open to the elements. The entrance occupies one facet of the octagon whilst the others are faced with latticework batted onto a tongue-and-groove inner construction. The roof canopy overhangs (like Radley) the core of the summerhouse with an elliptic arch floating over each facet. The interior is plain - the floor is planked and there is a continuous low-level bench which terminates with a charming bow section on either side of the entrance. Even the bench supports are decorated with concave curves. Perhaps the most unusual aspect of the gazebo is the internal roof construction. The tongue and groove slat construction of each facet ascends between curved ribs towards the apex like a spider's web. This point is marked by a rather fierce looking inverted pinnacle. The wooden surface perhaps still retains its old 'crackle' paint. The gazebo, now a garden shed, is looking a little sorry for itself, but is essentially intact.



## 5. Karenza, off Kew Place

In the opposite corner to the grotto, described earlier, is what might be described as a summer-house [see *map extract, foot of p. 16*]. It is Gothic-revival, and likely to be contemporary with the grotto - both are on the 1855-7 OTS. Like the grotto it is three bays



wide with a central pointed-arch door, and windows either side. The entrance is approached by steps which lead into a functional interior with a fireplace in the opposite wall. The only ornament (executed in render over a brick shell) are the Gothic door mouldings terminating in a crocheted finial flourish in relief. On either side of the entrance are buttresses. The plain Gothic windows are symmetrically placed within the canted side elevations. The summer-house is currently used for storage, and is picturesquely surrounded by trees and shrubs. The grounds of Clare Villa/Karenza had several other features: the *Cheltenham Looker-On* of 1 July 1882 mentions 'a very fine Ornamental Aviary, Summer Houses, also an Ornamental Lake' - this last recently filled in.

**6. No. 65 Shurdington Road (cover illustration, top right)**

This summer-house formerly belonged to Painswick Lodge, a house marked on the 1855-7 OTS. The grounds have since been subdivided and the structure now belongs to No. 65 Shurdington Road. The summer-house first appears on the 1884 OS. It sits where the boundary wall meets at a right angle. It is octagonal with wooden sides save for two open facets facing the garden. The two open facets are arched and filled in with decorative ironwork screens incorporating various motifs like arabesques. Each corner of the octagon has a delicate column with a miniature capital supporting the curved lead roof. The roof is ribbed and converges into a graceful hump.

**7. Radley, Pittville Crescent (cover illustration, top left)**

Radley is a bungalow built on ground once belonging to an extant house called Scoriton (formerly Fernlawn) in Pittville Crescent. Scoriton once boasted 'one ornamental octagonal and two rustic summer-houses'<sup>3</sup>; only the octagon survives, in the south-east corner of Radley's garden, and is Cheltenham's most elaborate extant gazebo, situated on a gentle

mound surrounded by mature trees. It is first marked on the 1884 OS map. It is a substantial wooden structure of nine sides over a cavity, and currently painted in two tones of light blue with windows on five sides. The leaded roof slightly projects away from the main body of the gazebo, but then tapers sharply back towards a pointed top. Amongst its most charming features are the long windows and the half-panelled front door. The non-glazed areas of the gazebo are constructed of vertical planks. The interior is well lit with a high ratio of window to wall. The sides are filled with strips of red 'flashed' glass with blue corner squares believed to be original. The floor is planked and ceiling flat and plain. The gazebo was restored in 1979-80, but nearly two decades on would now benefit from renewed attention. Despite a mid-to-late Victorian date of construction it exudes a lightness of touch more Regency than Victorian.

A further fine gazebo survives at St Edward's School, Charlton Kings.

### Pagodas

The town has had at least two Chinese-style pagodas in public places, but like so many wooden summer-houses their life-spans were brief.

#### 1. The Park/Jessop's Gardens

This pagoda would have been set up in its first location, The Park, in about 1831-3, when the zoological gardens were laid out by Thomas Billings. The only known depiction is as a background detail in a plate of the 'Lodge Gate Park Estate' in Johnson's 1845 *Cheltenham & Gloucestershire Guide*. The zoo was never a great success, and the assets were dispersed, among them the pagoda, purchased by 1845 by Jessop for his famous gardens on what was later part of the St James's Station site. Rowe describes it in its new location thus: 'a very handsome Chinese Pagoda, two stories in height ... the various compartments are stocked with fancy fowl, pheasants, peacocks, and &c., and in the upper room are several very rare varieties of foreign birds'. Rowe's engraving (reproduced in *Journal* 10, page 11) shows a resemblance to Johnson's view - both structures are cruciform with canted centres, and pointed roofs, but there are differences in detail: Rowe shows lattice sides whereas Johnson shows solid sides. The pagoda survived until at least 1855-7 (OTS), but probably not the continued expansion of St James's Station, and other difficulties which led to Jessop's bankruptcy in 1858.

#### 2. Montpellier Gardens

This hexagonal pagoda, erected by R W and C Jearrad<sup>4</sup> in about 1830, was designed as a bandstand (discussed in *Journal* 13). The earliest illustration is that at the title page of Davies' 1832 *Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham* (reproduced in Bryan Little's *Cheltenham In Pictures*, 1967). This roof has undulating facets with flourishes at the end of the ridges which terminate in bell shapes. In the middle of the pagoda is a section offering more shelter from the elements. There is a Gothic shape window with leaded lights, but the rest of this section is ambiguous in purpose. There is a smaller first-storey section set back from the ground-floor shelter, with a series of small vertical leaded lights, under a pointed, faceted roof terminating in a flagstaff. The Jearrads presumably designed and built it when they laid out Montpellier Gardens after Papworth's more complex 1825-6 scheme had been abandoned. It represents their eclectic approach to Regency architecture which encompassed virtually all the styles of the day (Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, and Italianate).

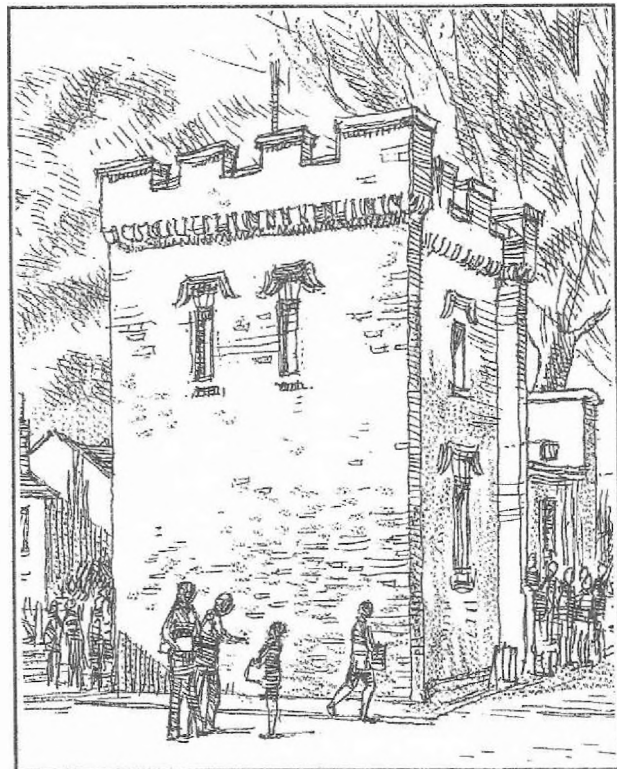
### Miscellaneous

#### 1. Spa Well/Tower Coal Office, Montpellier (cover illustration, bottom right)

This small Gothic octagonal structure stood near the current Midland Bank building at the top of Montpellier. Something on this spot is marked on the 1834 map, next to the words 'Montpelier Gate', and it appears unambiguously as an octagon marked 'Spa Well' on the 1855-7 OTS<sup>6</sup>. It is possibly the little Gothic octagon in the background on the far left of an engraving of the Montpellier Pump Room in S Y Griffith's *New Historical Description of Cheltenham* (1826). From 1871 onwards, it served as the 'Tower Coal Office', and was pictured in the *Echo* of 28 June 1967, described as a 'small self-contained office which stood in Montpellier until shortly before World War I'. It appears to have been of stone with a central Gothic window within one of the facets. One facet housed a clock protected by a decorative gable. The most unusual aspect of the octagon was the crenellated parapet, the spaces between the crenellations being filled with blind perpendicular Gothic arches of alternating heights. The right side projected slightly, indicating perhaps an entrance. The octagon in Griffith's view appears to be the same size as the one reproduced in the *Echo* with a crenellated parapet, but has two Gothic openings. Curiously, the octagon is omitted in the 1838 edition of Griffith. Gothic octagons were quite a common building type in 19th-century Cheltenham - for instance the nearby Octagon Turret, Montpellier Field (see *Journal* 13, p. 43); the College's former armoury, on Sandford Road; and Thomas Fulljames's demolished Gothic Cambray Spa of 1834 in Oriel Road. (The 1967 *Echo* goes on to say: 'One of these decorative and formerly popular bijou coal order offices still exists in Cheltenham, in Royal Well Road, but is now used as a barber's shop.' We may note here that this small building, last used for a sandwich business, was dismantled by the borough council in 1998 to make way for traffic improvements; it is intended that it should be re-erected on a suitable site.)

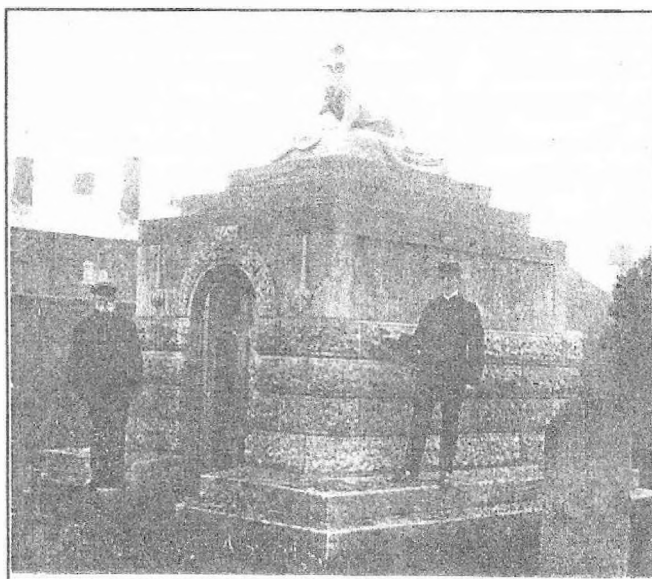
#### 2. Kew Place 'Castle'

This brick folly is at the back of Thirlestaine House in the former kitchen gardens, abutting the Kew Place boundary wall. It is not on Merrett's 1834 map, but is on a pre-1840 diagram of the layout of Thirlestaine House, so probably forms part of Lord Northwick's post-1838 works. It has four buttressed sides; a crenellated brick parapet projects from a brick modillion cornice. The corners of the parapet project, particularly the south-west corner which is curved and supported by a moulded base. The castle is illuminated on three sides with slits and small windows, all with moulded hoods. All the castle's decoration is executed in brick. One can only speculate as to its original purpose - was it a garden shed, a summer-house or a Gothic eye-catcher from the neo-classical Thirlestaine House?



### 3. Howling dog burial vault, formerly in St Mary's Cemetery

This funeral monument has been well covered by the local newspapers over the years, starting with the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 15 Oct. 1861: 'A monster vault is being erected in the Cemetery by Mr. Darby, the cost of which, we hear, will be nearly £1,000. It will be nearly 12 feet in depth, and over it will be erected a large room, having a window towards Bayshill and a large doorway facing High-Street. The walls are about nine feet high, and are of carved stone, and the figure of a dog cut in stone will be placed over the building. The cost of the carving alone

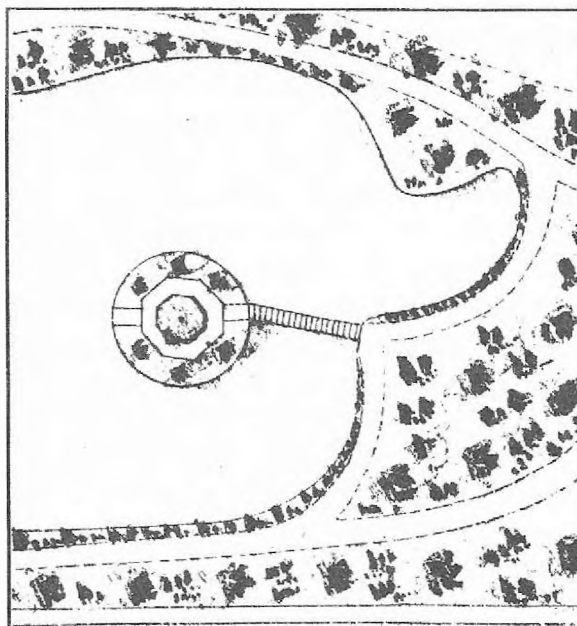


has been upwards of £100, and the vault when completed will no doubt form one of the most striking objects in the cemetery.'<sup>3</sup> The March 1936 *Cheltenham Circular* published a letter from a W L Brown who stated: 'The tomb was built by my grandfather, John Brown, for a gentleman who was a great dog-lover, and who intended his pet to find a last resting place in the family vault. It was pointed out to him, however, that this was contrary to the rules of the Church, and he then decided that a carving of the dog should be made and placed on the tomb. Shortly after the work was completed, the dog died, and his owner in great grief departed for Italy, where all trace of him was lost.' The accompanying photograph from the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 31 Oct. 1908 (by courtesy of Cheltenham Library Local Studies Collection) shows the scale of the vault. The base consisted of two steps, above which were four bands of vermiculated rustication around the chamber which continued into the arch above the entrance. The carved stone inverted torches on either side of the arch are unusual<sup>5</sup>. The sides of the vault had a recessed panel above the rustication. The top has diminishing steps leading up to the howling dog sculpture. This extraordinary vault would not look out of place in Highgate Cemetery, London, but was unparalleled in Cheltenham. Regrettably this powerful tomb with hints of a neo-classical mausoleum was demolished when the former St Mary's Cemetery was razed for the Churchill Memorial Gardens in 1965.

### 4. Lake House/Southwood Regency footbridge, Thirlestaine Road (cover, bottom left)

In the grounds of Southwood (formerly Lake House), a property of Cheltenham Junior College, is an exquisite Regency footbridge. Exactly when the footbridge was erected is difficult to determine. 'Lake House' appears to be on the 1820 and 1825 maps of Cheltenham before it acquired its lake, which first appears on the 1834 map, though no bridge is shown. The bridge connects an island (which is marked) to the lake edge, but perhaps it was deemed too insignificant to be included on the map. It is marked on the 1855-7 OTS [see overleaf] with what appears to be a gazebo/summer-house on the island. There was also another gazebo/summer-house on the lawn nearer the house, and both are still on the 1887 OS map. According to Verey, Lake House was built by the landscape gardener and architect Richard Varden, and it was probably he who embellished the grounds. The bridge is a petite, very narrow, delicate construction of wrought-iron. It is elliptically shaped and

supported at either end by spandrels filled with a petal motif. The ends are approached by three stone steps supporting handrails which terminate in delightful curved banisters. The handrails flow into railings on each side of the bridge. The railings are vertical rods with mid-way lead star flourishes. At intervals between the rods are sections filled with a curved diamond shape ending in flourishes. The fragile railings are in turn supported by three twin scrolls on both sides of the bridge. The area around the lake near the bridge appears to have been landscaped with a mound, and rock-work. If the bridge's ironwork is contemporary with Southwood's ironwork (there are similarities) then the bridge must be c.1820 (working with Amina Chatwin's *Cheltenham's Ornamental Iron-work*), but why then one wonders is it not marked on the 1820 map? This bridge must surely be one of Cheltenham's unsung gems.



*All the sketches are by Aylwin Sampson.*

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Worcester Record Office, 705:66 4221/22
- <sup>2</sup> GRO D4858
- <sup>3</sup> Sale particulars, G H Bayley & Son, 28 October 1909
- <sup>4</sup> J Lee, *A New Guide to Cheltenham and its Environs*, 1834
- <sup>5</sup> An earlier example of inverted torches can be found on the memorial to Lady Stanhope at Melton Constable, Norfolk, 1812
- <sup>6</sup> Noted as 'Tower Well' in *Journal* 13, p. 45

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Ken Pollock, Dr Steven Blake, Roger Beacham, Dr Nigel Temple, Sue Illman, Mrs Gent, Sue Thompson, Tim Pierce (Hon Archivist, Cheltenham College), Raymond Preston, Catherine Johns, and Dr Peter Higgs of the British Museum.

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- Hodsdon, James, *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, BGAS, 1997
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# The Grovefield Estate and its houses

PHYLLIS WHITE

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AT THE BEGINNING of 1830 when the attention of most prospective house-purchasers was firmly focused on the Regency town itself, a couple of miles south-west of Cheltenham someone was quietly erecting a very desirable residence, not as part of an estate, but set in 74 acres of its own parkland. Little interest seems to have been shown in this out-of-town property, Grovefield House, and even the historians of the day have nothing to say about it, so it is fortunate for us that the circumstances of its building necessitated an almost immediate sale, advertised prominently [*see over*]. However, within 30 years virtually all trace of Grovefield House would vanish.

Research shows that in fact there was a sequence of at least four houses here: an early 18th-century dwelling; and in the 19th century a farmhouse, a mansion house 'fit for the residence of a gentleman's family', and the present Arle Court (the second house of this name). Over the years, the area and the estate have borne several different names.

## The Manor of Redgrove

The small manor of Redgrove, like its neighbour Arle, is not named in Domesday. Though C S Taylor in his *Analysis of the Domesday Gloucestershire* (1889) suggested that both were identifiable in the Domesday survey, this is not supported by more recent Domesday scholarship. However, by the mid-12th century the manor of Redgrove is known to have been given, together with other lands in Cheltenham, to Llanthony Priory in Gloucester by Walter de Hereford, who was Lord of the Manor of Cheltenham 1154-56, and the son of Miles of Gloucester, the founder of Llanthony<sup>1</sup>. The priory kept these Cheltenham lands until the dissolution of the monasteries, when Redgrove was leased to William Lygon of Arle for 6s per annum. In 1608 a later member of this family, John Lygon, was lord of the manor of Arle, and the small manor of Redgrove was absorbed into that of Arle. After this both the name and boundaries of Redgrove fall out of view, not being revived until the early 19th century.

## The Grovefield Estate

Grovefield, part of the manor of Redgrove, lay in the extreme south-western corner of the medieval hundred of Cheltenham. The earliest evidence of the name so far found is in the Cheltenham Manor Court Book of April 1597<sup>2</sup>:

*ARLE. At this court the Lord by his Steward with the assent and consent of all the Tenants of Arle and Alstone hath granted Licence unto Arnold Lygon Esq., his heirs and assigns to enclose and keep in severall all that ground called Grove Field in Arle, during all such time he the said Arnold Lygon his heirs and assigns shall forbear to enter common with the Tenants of Arle and Alstone otherwise than to drive and redrive his or their sheep to and from the fold. Provided that if the Tenants of Arle and Alstone shall enclose any part of their grounds then it shall be likewise lawful to and for the said Arnold Lygon his heirs and assigns to enclose these accordingly.*

**DESIRABLE  
RESIDENCE,  
NEAR CHELTENHAM.**

TO BE SOLD BY

**A U C T I O N E E R**

BY

**MR. WILLIAMS,**

At the **ROYAL HOTEL**, in Cheltenham,  
On **Tuesday**, the **First Day of May, 1832,**

*Between the Hours of Three and Four in the Afternoon,*

*(Subject to such Conditions as shall be then produced.)*

**ALL THAT MESSUAGE,  
MANSION,  
Or DWELLING HOUSE,**

With the convenient **Out-Buildings, Yards,  
Gardens and Premises attached thereto,**

CALLED

**“ GROVE FIELD, ”**

TOGETHER WITH ABOUT

**74 ACRES of Useful PASTURE LAND.**

LYING AROUND THE SAME.

The above Premises are Freehold of Inheritance, and are situate about Two Miles distant from Cheltenham, on the High Road to Gloucester and are Tithe-free.

They are fit for the residence of a Gentleman's Family, and will be Sold by Order of the Mortgagees in Possession, under the Power of Sale contained in the Mortgage Deed.

*Possession may be had immediately.*

For further particulars apply to Messrs. **PRINCE, KELL, and HOWARD**, Solicitors, Essex Place, Cheltenham.

J. J. Hadley, Printer, Journal Office, Cheltenham.

This early reference clearly applies to an area of land rather than a building. The estate was among various former properties of Llanthony Priory given in 1616 by James I to the mayor and burgesses of Gloucester for the maintenance of the inmates of St Mary Magdalen Hospital there<sup>3</sup>. On 20 September 1737 Samuel Leech, a yeoman of Hayden Farm, Boddington, was granted by them a 31-year lease of 'all that messuage or tenement, cowhouse and one yard of land called by the name of Redgrove in the parish of Cheltenham' (already suggesting some interchangeability in the names). The lease had previously been in the possession of Richard Lane, also a yeoman of Hayden, and still had four years to run. Included in the lease were some 50 acres of land in the vicinity, the rental for the whole being £14 per year plus 'one couple of fat capons or 3s. 4d. in money at Christmas'. The farmhouse was 14 yards long by 5 yards broad, the cowhouse being 15 by 17 feet. By the early 1730s, then, there was a farm at Grovefield.

In 1759 the lessee may well have been John Guise (presumably of Highnam and son and heir of Henry who already had property in Arle), followed by a Mary Hemming of Gloucester, whose will was proved there in 1767. In March 1766 John Delabere and Thomas Hughes had an interest in the property but whether this interest was personal or professional, both being Cheltenham solicitors, is not clear.

Isaac Taylor's 1777 map of Gloucestershire shows a small house and the word 'field' on the site. By 1784, when William Pearce of Hayden Farm died, describing Redgrove as 'my' manor, Gloucester must have ceased to own the estate. In 1813, when his son William attempted to sell it, it was designated a 'freehold manorial estate'. William Pearce senior had been baptised at Staverton on 19 February 1730, the son of Thomas Pearce and his wife Ann. He married Edith the daughter of Thomas Buckle, vicar of Staverton 1730-1758, at Staverton on 29 January 1759, their three sons and four daughters being baptised there also. His will, proved in July 1784<sup>4</sup>, shows him to have been a very wealthy owner of land in the area. His daughter Mary (wife of Robert Morris) received his leasehold estate at Brickhampton in Churchdown, and his eldest son Joseph his estate at Staverton with two messuages, plus pasture ground called Bamfurlongs and an estate in Badgeworth - and £200 in money when he became 21. His third son Thomas received pasture ground called Sturmes Field and Orchard, a close called Hartlebury's and two sellions of arable in Arle Field belonging to it, and land in Boddington, plus £500. To each of his daughters Sarah and Martha Pearce he left £1200 with interest, when they became 21.

His bequests to his second son William are of greater interest: he received 'All that my Manor called Redgrove in the parish of Cheltenham commonly called Grovefield Farm together with all the appurtenances thereto belonging, and the little piece of arable nearby called Abells'. William also received a 'messuage in Haydon with orchard and pasture ground and six acres of arable land in Staverton fields, being Marchants lands in Bunhills fields, plus £500 with interest at age 21.

William Pearce junior was baptised at Staverton on 15 July 1771; he attended Worcester College Oxford, gaining a BA in 1792 and MA 1795. In 1813 - the same year he became vicar of The Leigh - Redgrove Manor was put up for sale. The lots described in the *Gloucester Journal* of 22 November were firstly the freehold manorial estate of Grove Field otherwise Red Grove (substantial brick-built house; 6 inclosures of orchard, meadow

and pasture totalling 56 acres; a piece of arable of 22 acres; a ring-fenced coppice wood of 6 acres; and the 'manor or reputed manor of Red Grove, attached to this estate'). The further lots (in Hartlebury's Ground, Sturmy's Piece and elsewhere) suggest that perhaps Thomas Pearce had disposed of his inheritance to his brother.

However, this sale does not appear to have been successful, as the property was still in his hands when he died in 1825<sup>5</sup>. The estate was presumably let, as Pearce himself did not live there: in 1817 he was given licence<sup>6</sup> to reside outside The Leigh, because there was no suitable house there, and moved to Staverton House, opposite the church. He seems not to have married; his will mentions only his nephew Major William Pearce, the main beneficiary, his sisters Sarah and Mary, and nephews, nieces and Godchildren. Major Pearce was to retain ownership of Staverton House, but lost no time after the death of his uncle to arrange the sale of Grovefield, as appears from the will of Samuel Beard Nicholls, a yeoman of Haydon (and Stonehouse): 'And whereas I have lately contracted to sell to Captain Pritchett an estate called Grovefield situate in the parish of Cheltenham and which I lately purchased of Major Pearce and which sale I direct my said wife carry into effect under the direction of my friend Mr Chadborn and for that purpose I give and devise the said Estate Messuage farm lands and premises unto and to the use of my said wife Hester and to her heirs and assigns for ever<sup>7</sup>'. Nicholls died young, in October 1826, aged 37, and by January 1827 James Pritchit was the owner of Grovefield.

The 1830-34 Arle and Alstone Inclosure Award<sup>8</sup> clearly shows Grovefield - both house and estate - as the property of James Pritchit but his name is not included in the Arle land tax returns<sup>9</sup> until 1830-32 inclusive, the amounts mentioned being 12s 0d and £5 0s 6d as proprietor and occupier of both. The Rev. William Pearce was also paying the same amount up to 1827, when the occupier was a Samuel Gill, so it seems more likely that this amount referred to the farmhouse and land, rather than for a mansion house called Grovefield.

In the records of the Churchwardens of Cheltenham Parish for 1827-30<sup>10</sup>, under Arle tithing, 'Pritchett' is assessed for land at £15 0s 0d and building at £15 0s 0d, but as this is identical to the amount paid earlier by Samuel Beard Nicholls, this could suggest that Grovefield House was already built by the time of Pritchit's acquisition.

### James Pritchit

His origins are obscure, although it appears he was a Warwickshire man; in July 1817 he was gazetted as Captain in the Warwickshire Militia, having appeared in Army Lists from 1814 as a Lieutenant on half-pay. On 26 March 1821 he married Lucy Sandys Lechmere of Hereford, at which time he was described as being of Cheltenham, aged 25 and upwards. Their first two children, James and Lucy, were baptised in Coventry. Lucy died young, and was buried in the recently-consecrated Holy Trinity church, Cheltenham, where her father had purchased a catacomb, large enough to take 15 coffins. A daughter Ann was baptised in Cheltenham in 1826, suggesting the family was by this time resident here. Though his children went on to respectable careers, Pritchit became insolvent (the circumstances remain mysterious despite considerable research), and he was forced to sell Grovefield to settle his debts. He may, like his contemporary, John Gregory Welch of Arle House, have been forced to take refuge abroad, returning after the sale when his debts were settled.

Whether James Pritchit was the person responsible for building Grovefield House still cannot, in the absence of documentary evidence, be confirmed, but he had Cheltenham connections when he married in 1821, and it seems he may have returned to live at 7 Berkeley Place (built c. 1826), a property he apparently still owned in 1834. It is interesting to note that his wife's father died at Hereford in 1822, and her mother in 1829. The Lechmeres of Fownhope Court, Herefordshire, were a family of substance, and Lucy Pritchit was a beneficiary from both her parents' wills. It may well have been this money which enabled James to build Grovefield House, in about 1830, but to date the only certainty is that he was the owner of the land on which it was erected.

Grovefield must have been a very desirable property, and the only likely drawback to a potential purchaser might have been its situation, Regency Cheltenham being the place to be. The Cheltenham and Gloucester Turnpike Road, running along the north side of the estate, may have caused some concern, although the vendors described it as an advantage!

Unfortunate though its circumstances were for James Pritchit and his family, the sale provides us with a useful description of Grovefield. The first auction, in May [*see sale notice, p. 26*], appears to have been unsuccessful, and the house was readvertised five months later in the *Gloucester Journal* of 15 October 1832, with additional emphasis placed on its surrounding 'Woods, Plantations, Fish-pond, Timber', and abundant game. The outcome of this sale is recorded in the diary<sup>11</sup> of John Prince, senior partner in Prince, Kell and Howard, solicitors of Cheltenham. On 16 October 1832 he writes 'A fine day. Went to Gloucester on business. At Auction of Grovefield. No sale. At home afterwards.' An earlier entry shows that the firm had been involved with Grovefield for some months. On 16 March 1832, he records: 'A very wet and windy day. Busy all the morning at Grovefield (rec'd possession from the Sheriff and Chadborn). At the office the evening. A wet night.' (This probably refers to John Chadborn, a Gloucester solicitor, who was one of the beneficiaries of the will of James (Jimmy) Wood, the Gloucester banker who died in mysterious circumstances. Chadborn himself was found hanged in 1839, in a shed at the bottom of his garden.)

John Prince's connection with Grovefield seems to have ended shortly after this. A somewhat eccentric character, in 1833 he suddenly abandoned his law practice in Cheltenham, uprooted his (unwilling) wife and family, and transported them to Canada, where he threw himself into public life, as judge, politician, entrepreneur, and colonel of the Third Regiment of Essex Militia. In spite of this he disliked Canada intensely and often talked of suicide, and was eventually deserted by his long suffering wife and children. He died there of alcoholism in 1867, in a Regency-style cottage which he had built himself, facing away from the road, in order to escape from humankind.

The involvement of the Sheriff of the County in the sale of Grovefield House suggests that there may have been some unusual legal difficulties attached to it, a theory borne out by another advertisement, which appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* of 15 March 1834, offering Grovefield for sale 'By order of the Assignees of James Pritchit, an Insolvent Debtor, and with consent of the Mortgagees'. The announcement [*extract opposite*] gives a good description, internal and external, of Grovefield House, which far from being 'newly erected' was then at least three years old, although possibly never having been occupied.

### Grovefield House and estate after 1834

A brief entry in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 27 March 1834 notes: 'A few days since, the Estate of Grove Field was purchased by W Merryweather Esq, of Kempsey, who intends to reside there'. Merryweather seems however to have succumbed to the charms of Regency Cheltenham as in 1842 he is listed at no. 42 Lansdown; Grovefield had perhaps already been let for some years when it was advertised in the *Cheltenham Looker-On* of 13 Oct. 1838 as being to let 'furnished or unfurnished, from year to year, or a term of years', together with its 74 acres.

Lot 1. **A**LL that newly-erected MANSION-HOUSE, called GROVEFIELD, situated in the parish and within two miles of the town of Cheltenham, with Coach House, Stables, Farm Buildings, Pleasure and Kitchen Gardens, and about 74 Acres of Orcharding, Meadow and Arable Land.

The Mansion comprises spacious entrance hall, 10 feet wide, a drawing-room, 20 feet by 18 feet; breakfast-room, 20 feet by 14 feet; dining-room, 20 feet by 16 feet; library, 16 feet by 15 feet; and all 14 feet high. The rooms are fitted up with elegant marble chimney pieces and handsome grates. A geometrical staircase, with Spanish mahogany hand-rail, lighted from an oval dome, richly ornamented, leads to the bed-rooms; two of which are 20 feet by 18 feet, and 10 feet high; and the whole of which, 8 in number, are cheerful and lofty. There is a back staircase to the servants' bed-rooms. The domestic offices are, a kitchen, housekeeper's-room, butler's pantry, servants' hall, larder, scullery, brewhouse, dairy, coal and wood house, and dry wine and beer cellars.

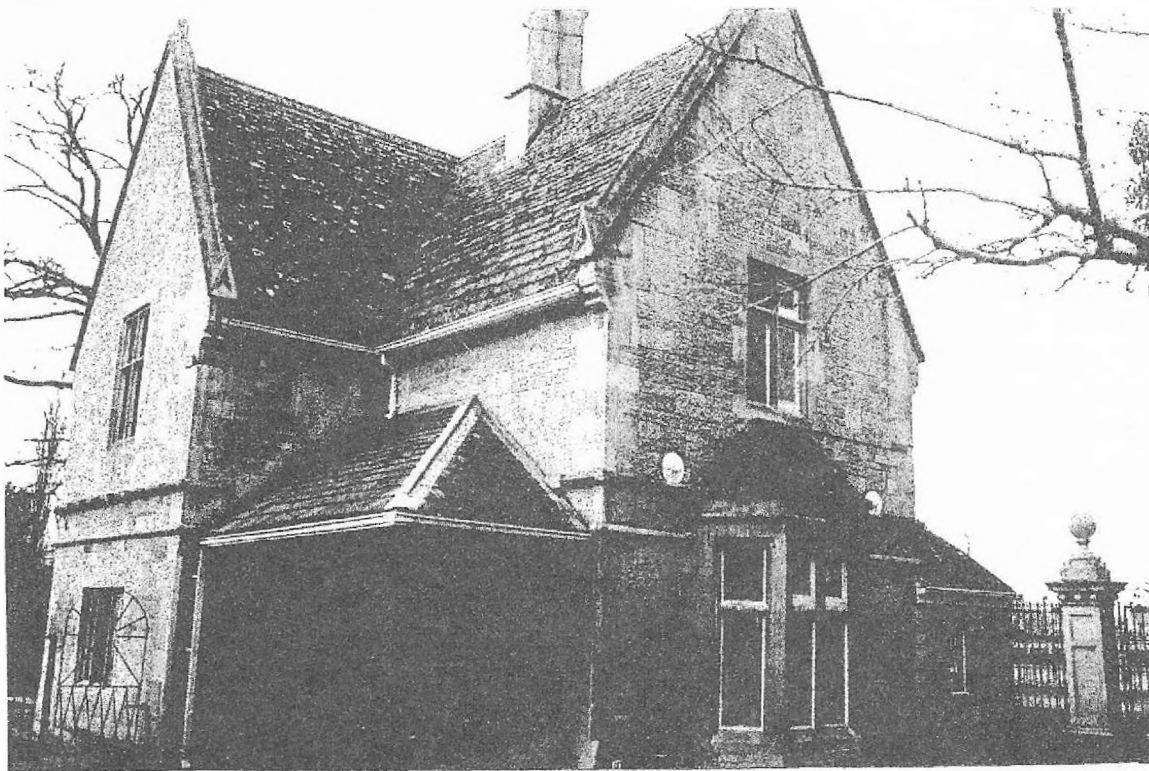
Detached from the Mansion are, a double coach-house, three stalled stable; with servants' room over; a range of cattle sheds, nearly 50 feet long; extensive piggery; cider mill, cider house, and other convenient buildings. The property is in a ring fence; Freehold of Inheritance; Tithe-Free; and Land-Tax redeemed.

The local advantages of the Land, and the situation of the Mansion, are pre-eminent. The Cheltenham and Gloucester Turnpike Road bounds the Estate on one side, and from which there are back and front roads; and the Mansion and Buildings are sheltered on the North by a fine growing Coppice of about 6 Acres, whilst from the front, the park-like and handsomely Timbered Grounds, and the distant Hills, afford a delightful prospect. At the principal entrance are Iron Gates, and a Gothic Lodge, neatly fitted up. The Pleasure Grounds are tastefully laid out; the Orchards in full bearing; and the Garden is well-stocked with wall and other Fruit Trees.—Possession may be had immediately.—The Timber and Fixtures will be Sold with the Estate.

By 1841 Grovefield was in the ownership of Richard Roy and Eliza his wife who retained it for the next nine years, but not, it would seem as residents. A valuation by Richard Hall in March that year of 36 acres comprising Great Grovefield, Pease Furlong, Horse Close and Little Fields, including the timber on the property, amounted to £2496 15s 9d. This was sold to Richard Roy by the trustees of Thomas Packer Butt. The 1841 Census shows only a male and female servant and their son living at Grovefield House, although the *Cheltenham Annuaire* for that year lists R[ichard] Roy under Detached House and Resident Gentry. By 1843-4 an E L Thomas is shown as occupier. Roy, from a London family of some consequence, was described in his obituary (*Cheltenham Looker-On*, 29 March 1873) as having been a close friend of Pearson Thompson, and at one time a holder of considerable property (some 530 acres) in the town. The *Looker-On* of 23 October 1847 claimed that Roy had once contemplated making Grovefield his permanent residence, and 'with this view, had purchased largely of the surrounding properties'. Grovefield House and the estate had belonged to one owner for the longest period in its history when - because of circumstances the press appeared reluctant to detail - in 1847 Roy decided to leave Cheltenham and sell.

The advertisement in the *Looker-On* of 25 September emphasised the grounds, and mentions for the first time two lodges: 'GROVEFIELD ESTATE OF 70 ACRES, with its most delightful and attractive residence, long considered one of the pet abodes of this much-

sought vicinity, commanding extensive views, surrounded by plantations, shrubbery, and ORNAMENTAL PARK-LIKE GROUNDS, approached by two lodge entrances of elegant design\*.



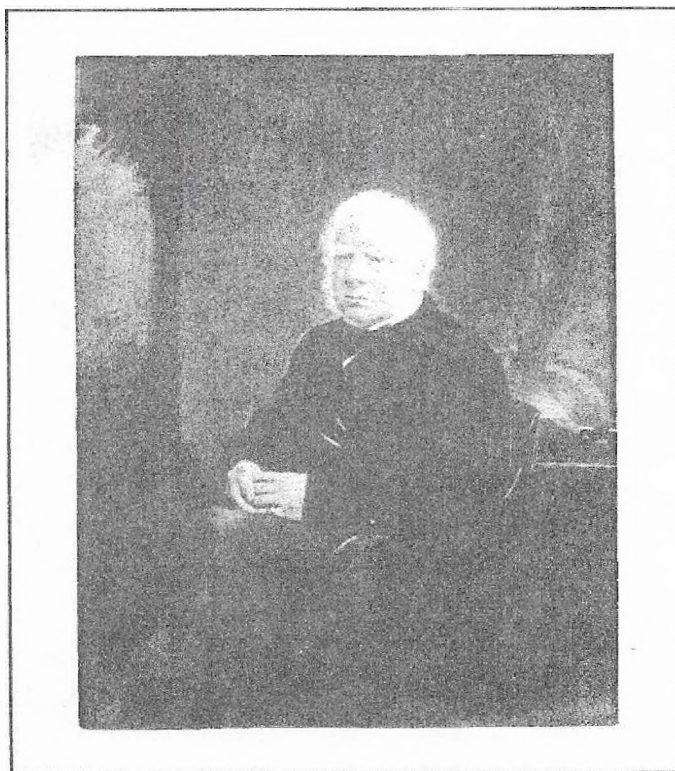
One of the Grovefield (now Arle Court) lodges (1993)

By 23 October the *Looker-On* was able to report: 'The Grovefield Estate which, with other properties of R. Roy. Esq., were sold by Mr. Robins, at the Queen's Hotel, on Tuesday and Wednesday, was purchased by W. P. Butt. Esq., of Arle, for six thousand pounds; generally considered a fair, though by no means an extravagant price. The lot consisted of an excellent residence, with seventy-four acres of land surrounding the house, which has two approaches, one from the Gloucester turnpike-road, and another from Cheltenham, *via* Hatherley Lane, now an excellent carriage drive, which is turnpike free. Mr. Butt purchased four other lots of land immediately adjoining the Grovefield allotment, thereby considerably enlarging the original demesne. Having bought the property with a view to immediate occupancy, it is said that Mr. Butt has, since the sale, availed himself of the option given to the purchaser of taking the furniture at a valuation'.

William Packer Coulston Butt was the eldest son of Thomas Packer Butt, a wealthy clothier from Chalford, Glos, and his second wife Ann Coulston. T P Butt had purchased the Arle Court Estate in 1795 and died at the old Arle Court in 1828, leaving the majority of his wealth and property to his eldest son. Whether W P C Butt was contemplating matrimony when he purchased Grovefield House is not known, but sadly before he could take up occupation he was taken ill with tuberculosis and in March 1848 he died at his mother's home - Arle Villa - now known as the White House, being the offices of the Tungum Hydraulics Company, on the corner of Village Road and Kingsmead Road. In accordance with his father's will all the wealth and property amassed by him passed to his brother,

Thomas Packer Walter Butt, who became the next owner of Grovefield House.

In the 1851 census, Grovefield House is listed as the residence of T P W Butt and family - but in the 1861 census it has disappeared from the record. In its place stood the Butts' new home, the second Arle Court, on which work began in 1855. The *Cheltenham Looker-On* of 13 June 1857, reporting on that year's exhibition at the Royal Academy, noted among other things of local interest that 'Mr T Penson has an elaborate drawing of Arle Court, the handsome medieval mansion now erecting on the site of Grovefield, as the residence of T P W Butt'. But a mystery still remains: was Grovefield House, built less than 30 years previously, really completely demolished, or was it partly incorporated in the new building? There is no final proof of this, but the dimensions of the main reception rooms of Arle Court today match exactly those of Grovefield as detailed in the sale particulars of 1834, and there are many other similarities which can be associated with Grovefield.



Thomas Packer Walter Butt, 1823-1900

The later history of Arle Court, under the Dowty Group and now as the home of the Cheltenham Studios, is another story.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> PRO SC2/175/25 m3
- <sup>2</sup> GRO D/855 Cheltenham Manor Court Book 1597 p. 18
- <sup>3</sup> GRO GBR J1/2023 C.1737
- <sup>4</sup> GRO Will 1784/96
- <sup>5</sup> Will PROB 11/1699 (1825)
- <sup>6</sup> GCL Hockaday Extracts, Staverton
- <sup>7</sup> PRO Will PROB 11/1718 (1826)
- <sup>8</sup> GRO Q/R1/41 1830-34
- <sup>9</sup> GRO Q/Rel Land Tax 1830-32
- <sup>10</sup> GRO P.78 CW 4-9
- <sup>11</sup> Cheltenham Local Studies Library - 63G No R3674

My thanks to Messrs Ticehurst, Wyatt & Co for permission to use the Butt Family Papers (GRO D 2025). Also special thanks to the former Dowty Group plc.



# A 1787 Map of Cheltenham

JAMES HODSDON

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THERE IS no printed map of Cheltenham before 1806, and surveys of the expanding town in the immediately preceding decades are surprisingly few. Coates's road-plan of 1776 shows roads between Arle and Pilford, but little realistic detail of the urban area. Any fresh information is therefore welcome, and with this issue we bring to wider notice a hitherto unpublished late 18th-century partial survey of Cheltenham, adding to our knowledge of this period. These notes provide some background - and perhaps a stimulus for further research.

## **The map itself**

The document is a single sheet of vellum, 26" x 32½" (65 x 82 cm), with the survey drawn in ink, properties being highlighted with a colour wash. The full title is 'A Survey and Terrier of Houses and Lands in Cheltenham and Swindon in the County of Gloucester Belonging to the President & Scholars of Corpus Christi College Oxon 1787'. Being prepared with one main aim - to show the Cheltenham and Swindon village properties of the college - it does not include every feature of the town as it was in the year before George III's historic visit to the spa. Nevertheless, it is the earliest surviving plan of the town at relatively large scale, giving what appears to be an accurate survey of the line of the High Street, and several of the turnings off it, and it locates and names several landmarks in the town. To make the best use of space, the surveyor compresses the scale for some of the outlying properties, and - for one of the key central properties - provides enlarged detail. It plots 33 properties in Cheltenham and another 4 in Swindon; the accompanying terrier tabulates details of the properties (see below). The surveyor is named at the foot as **J Dance**, of Stanway, Glos. Of him, nothing further has come to light.

The immediate cause of the survey being done in this year is unknown; there may be some connection with the passing of the Paving Commissioners Act in 1786, and the increased rate demands this brought. The general rising fortunes of the town were probably in themselves a good enough reason to review the estate and tidy up the records. This map appears to have been the first systematic redocumentation of the estate in many years, and the boundary markers detailed in the terrier are all ones newly placed during the survey. Several old marker stones were omitted from the count in the terrier.

## **Richard Pate and Corpus Christi College**

The major economic event of the English Reformation was the dissolution of the monasteries. But other church assets also were requisitioned by the crown, among them the chantries. These institutions, within or attached to churches, were originally set up for the saying of prayers in perpetuity for wealthy individuals. Over time, some also became the focus for local schooling. Richard Pate, being a member of the Chantry Commission, was able to assess the position of Cheltenham relative to other towns. He concluded that although the chantries had provided some form of grammar education locally, Cheltenham was among several towns now in want of a proper school. Pate himself funded the actual building of a

new school in the High Street, in 1572. However, it needed income if it was to survive. This came from the Crown: Elizabeth I acceded to a request from Pate, and in 1586 granted back all the seized Cheltenham chantry properties, not to Pate himself but to his nominated trustees, Corpus Christi College, Oxford - his *alma mater*. Thus, the very same properties which since time out of mind had provided the income for the chantries and their priests were now providing more direct benefit to the town. The college was to administer the estate, and apply the bulk of the proceeds to the benefit of the school - a set proportion having been deducted for expenses and indeed for Corpus itself, as Pate's thank-offering to his old college. While modified over time, this robust arrangement survives in easily recognisable form today. Although the grammar school has latterly been state-funded for all its basic educational needs, a proportion of supplementary income still comes from the Pate Foundation. The properties are still managed by the college, through a local agent in Cheltenham. The property portfolio has changed somewhat over the years but over half the holdings are still much as shown on this map - a remarkable continuity both of land and of purpose, maintained for half a millennium and more<sup>1</sup>. Many of the estate properties carry the distinctive College badge, showing a 'pelican in her piety'.

The properties listed in the foundation grant of 1586 form two groups, corresponding closely to the holdings of the two chantries, of St Mary and St Catharine - both of them attached to the parish church. The acreage and location details in the foundation grant are insufficient to allow full matching with present-day properties without more research, but one or two can be firmly linked - for instance Walnut Tree Close, a St Mary's chantry property, named in the 1586 grant, and which is now the west side of Ambrose Street.

Up to about 1800, the foundation estate was remarkably stable, and the properties marked on the 1787 map all appear to be part of the original grant. With inclosure and the rapid Regency development of Cheltenham, there was pressure to realise the increased value of certain sites, and several were sold off in the 19th century. The disposal that caused most remark was the 1811 exchange of the original Pate's Almshouse plot - a prime High Street location opposite the fashionable Assembly Rooms (since replaced by Lloyds Bank) - for land in Albion Street owned by the banker Thomas Smith<sup>2</sup>. Other sales have occurred from time to time since - for example the Old Swan site, sold in 1923 to a brewery [*Journal* 13, p. 13]. Where the circumstances are known, this is recorded below, but further research would be needed to document and explain all these transactions.

The leases were originally mostly of the beneficial type: the tenant leased at a given rent for a term of years, but was free to improve the property and increase his income thereby. The college reaped the benefit at the next leases, in the form of increased rent. For the first 200 years, improvements appear to have been modest: in 1576, the recorded rent for the half-acre Walnut Tree Close was 16s, and by 1787 it had risen to just £1 11s 8d - scarcely double.

The terrier accompanying the survey was kept in use for some time to record changes observed on periodic visits by the college President to view the Cheltenham estate, which then and now formed a unique type of holding. There are a few pencil additions to the map, recording changes up to about 1811.

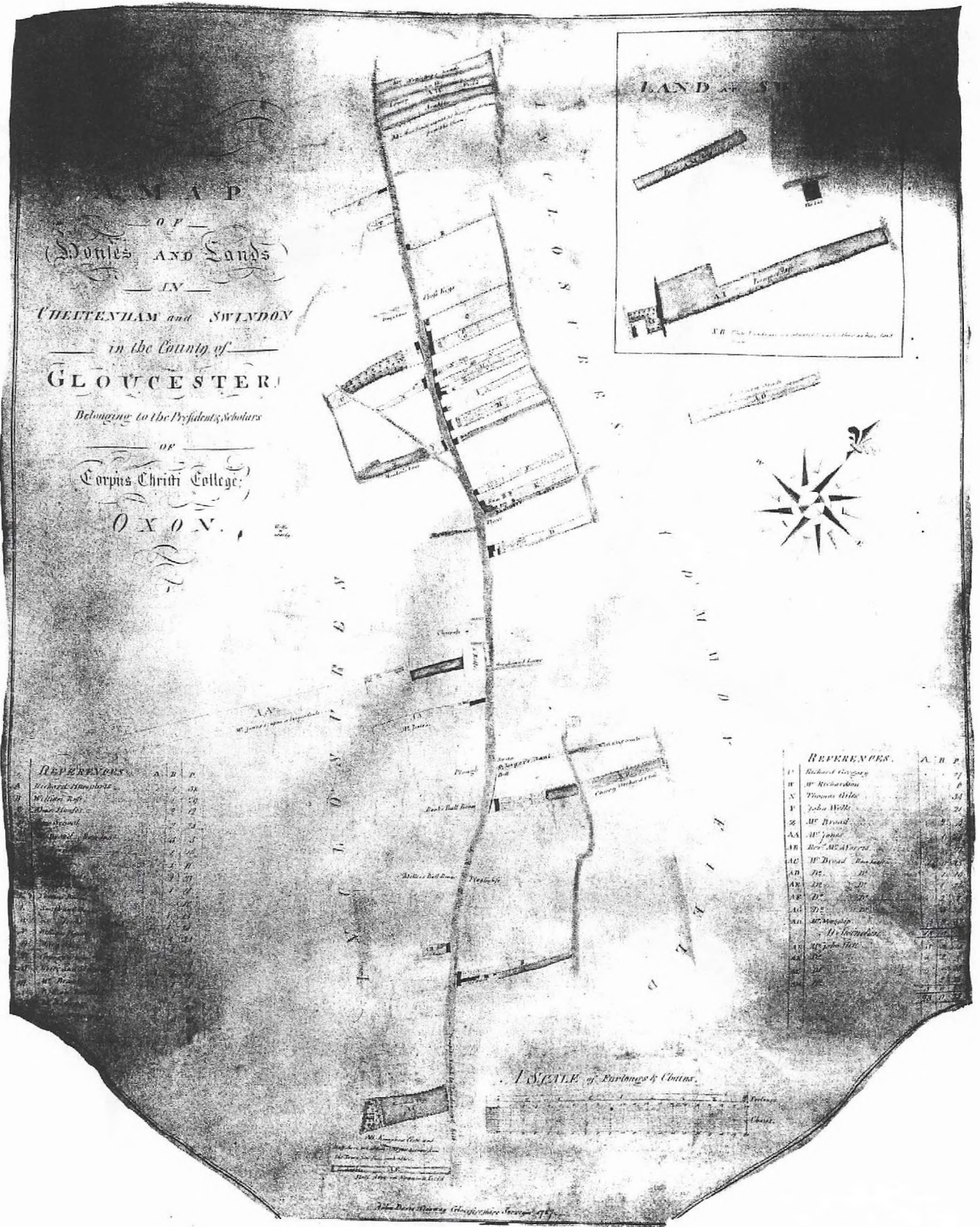


Fig 1. J Dance's Survey of the Pate's Foundation properties in Cheltenham and Swindon Village, 1787  
 (Copyright Corpus Christi College, Oxford; reproduced with permission)

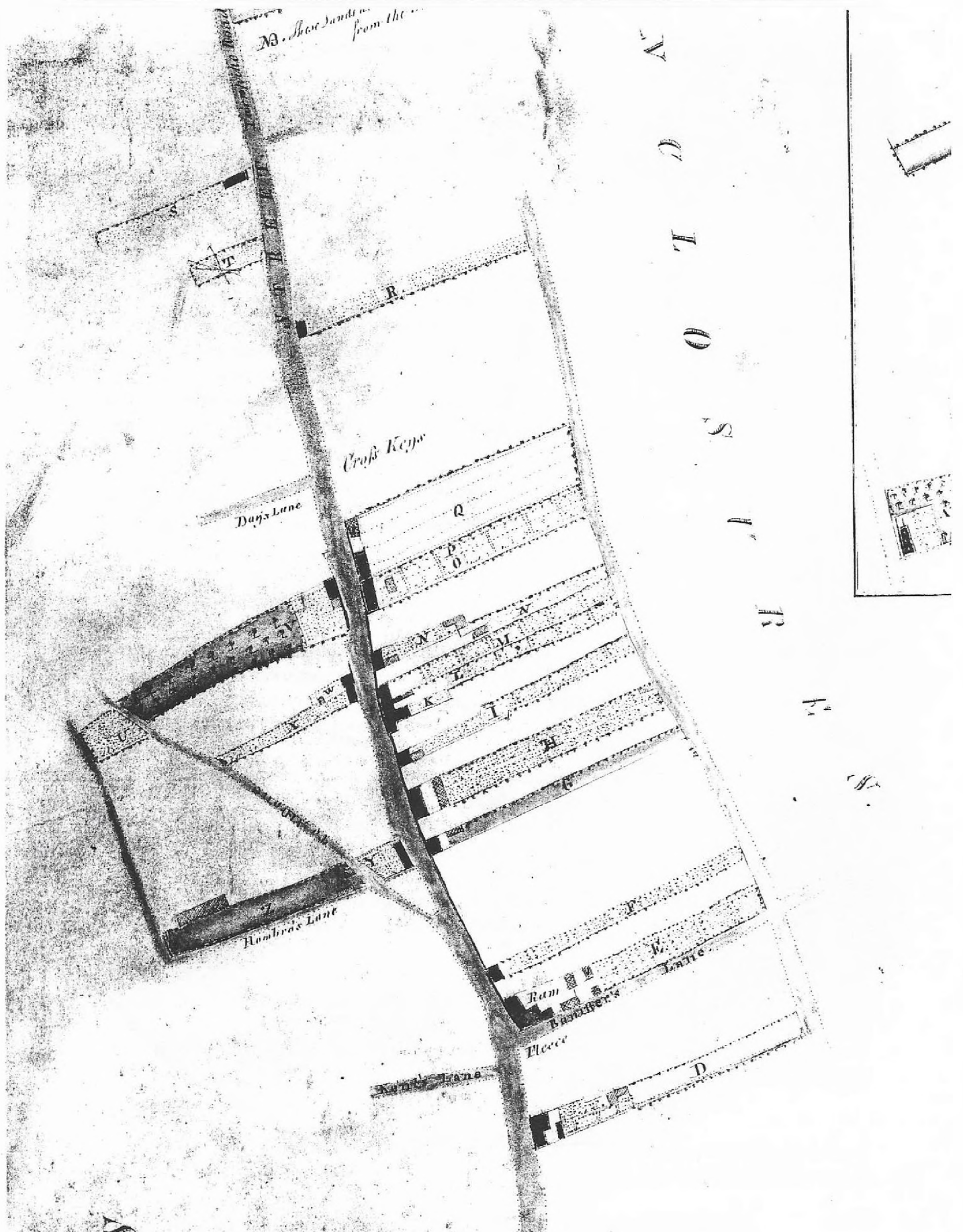


Fig 2. Detail: High Street west of the parish church

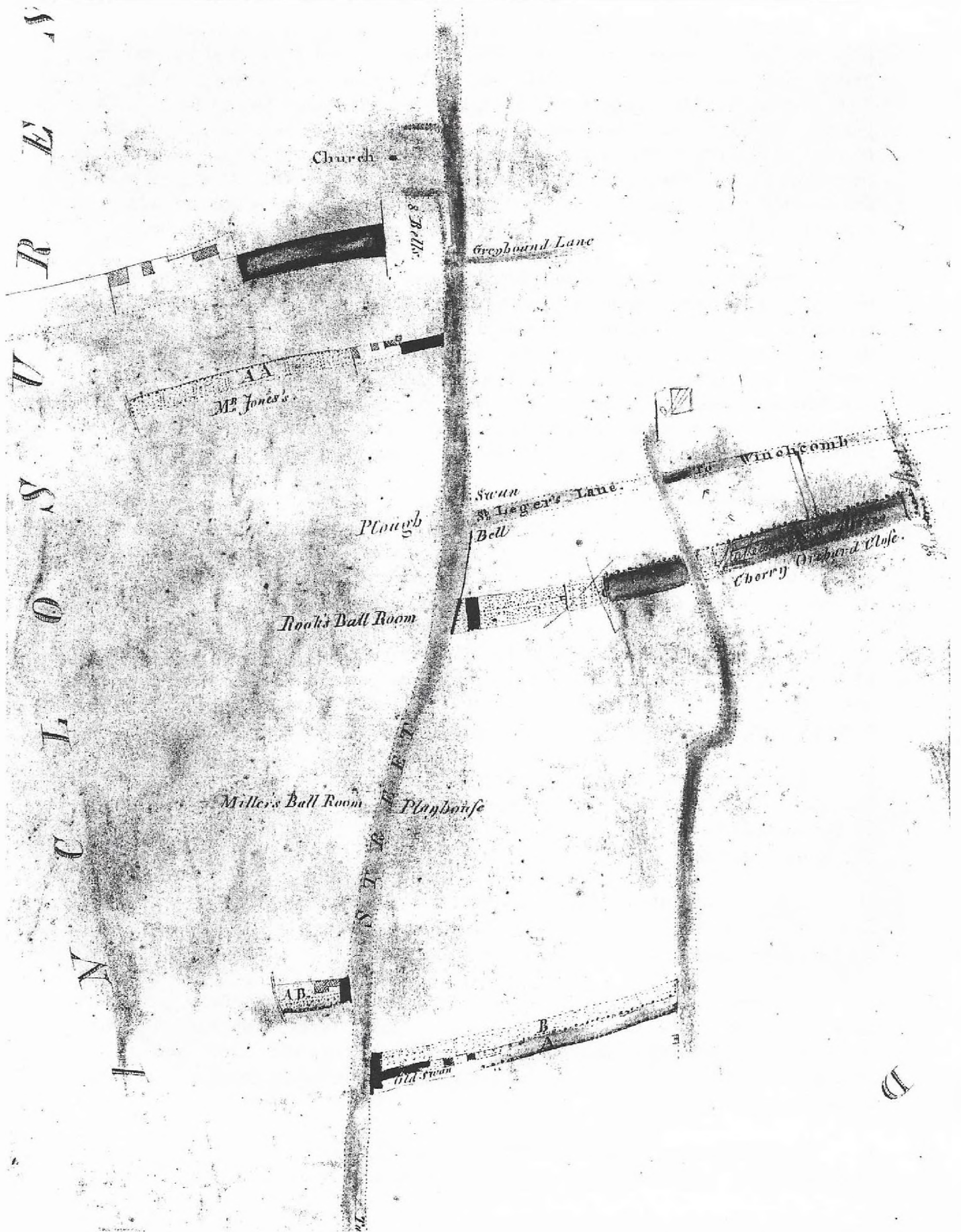


Fig 3. Detail: High Street east of the parish church

Named features include **Pubs and Inns** (Cross Keys, Eight Bells, Plough, Swan, Bell); the **Parish Church** (note also the Meeting House - a building marked near to plot Z); **places of entertainment** (Rook's Ballroom, Miller's Ballroom, Playhouse, Wells). The several **turnings off the High Street** all now have different names: Day's Lane (now Grove Street); Hambro's Lane (now Ambrose Street); Kent's Lane (now St George's Place); Banister's Lane (now Henrietta Street); Greyhound Lane (now North Street); St Leger's Lane (now Winchcombe Street); road 'to Alstone' (now New Street). **Other features of note** are the meandering back road, implicitly continued into present Swindon Road, and the accurate depiction of the varying street width, with a marked narrowing near the Eight Bells.

The listing below sets out the information given in the terrier accompanying the map, identifying the properties in today's terms where possible, with additional comment where appropriate. The details are here reproduced in a slightly compressed format. Appended to the original terrier are observations made on later views up to about 1800. Some of these comments are included in the notes below. The standard format is: the **property description**; **boundaries**; **area** in acres, roods and perches; **annual rent**; **trees** (if any); presence of **boundary markers** (merestones); **lessee** and **tenant/occupier**. In most cases the properties extended the full length of the former burgage plots; this is not always so today.

#### North side of street

A. House, garden & close; bounded by John Cook SE and William Rose NW; 0a 1r 38p; rent £6 10s 0d; 6 ash, 27 elm, 1 walnut; 1 merestone. Lessee Richard Humphris, who appears to be also the occupier. *Now no. 37 High Street (once Old Swan Inn, now O'Hagan's); sold by CCC in 1923 to Cheltenham Original Brewery Co.*

B. House & garden; bounded by Richard Humphris SE, and -- Yatman NW; 0a 1r 29p; £4 10s 0d; 13 elm; 4 merestones. Lessee William Rose, 'now Lawrence'. *Now no. 39 High Street (model shop); plot still extends back through St James' St car park - let to Cheltenham Borough Council. 1797 note: 'lessee now Freeman; new-built lodging house & warm baths'.*

C. Almshouses, and attached garden/orchard; other part of garden/orchard let to Mr Delabere; bounded by Delabere (freehold) SE, Ballenger and Pope NW; 0a 1r 14p, and 38p; £1 7s 3¼d, and £0 19s 2½d; 4 merestones. *Almshouse site disposed of 1811; now part of Beechwood Place site - opposite Lloyds Bank.*

D. Grammar School; bounded by Mrs Garner [*ie Gardner, of the brewing family*] NW; 0a 2r 24p; £2 11s 10d; 4 elm, 3 sycamore. *Site now occupied by supermarket; grammar school left for Princess Elizabeth Way in 1965.*

\* E. Ram Inn; bounded by Banister's Lane [*ie Henrietta St*] SE, and William Hooper NW; 0a 3r 5p; £7 10s 0d; 19 elm, 6 walnut. Lessee Mr Broad; occupied by William Benfield. *Now nos. 271-7 High Street (block of four shops between Henrietta Street and car park). Pelican on no. 271. 1794 comment: 'very dilapidated'. (The Ram does not seem to have lasted much beyond this date.)*

F. House & garden; bounded by William Hooper SE and Mr Draper NW; 0a 1r 16p; £4 0s 0d; 1 elm. Lessee Mr Broad; occupied by William Garn. *Separated from property E*

by one plot; now a slice of the Henrietta Street car park. 1800 comment: 'a new house'.

G. House etc & part of a close; bounded by Mr [Robert] Cox (freehold) SE, and Miss Cox NW; 0a 1r 11p; £3 15s 0d; 2 merestones. Lessee Mr Cox, occupied by William Greening. *Plot now forms part of Normandy House site. Probably the Mr Cox and Miss Cox ('No. 102') listed in 1800 directory. Previously leased to Giles Cox, maltster.*

H. House & garden; bounded by Miss Cox SE and John Everis NW; 0a 2r 23p; £8 0s 0d. Lessee Mrs Carpenter; partly occupied by Edward Leighton. *Now nos. 317-21 High Street (health food restaurant; pizzeria; vacant); garden now site of St Paul's St South, east side, rebuilt by CCC as semi-detacheds, 1930s.) Pelican plaques on shops and houses. 1794 comment: 'house lately burnt down; preparations for rebuilding'. 1800: 'rebuilt'.*

I. House & garden; bounded by John Everis SE, and Edward Mills NW; 0a 1r 18p; £5 10s 0d; 3 merestones. Lessee Joseph Brimyard. *Now nos. 327-9 High Street (1 unit, Vietnamese restaurant; garden now site of St Paul's Street South, west side. Pelican plaque. 1794 comment: 'new built, excellent order'. Later lessees were Revd Wallett, W H Jessop.*

K. House & garden; bounded by Edward Mills SE, and Smith & Baylis NW; 0a 0r 10p; £3 15s 0d; 2 merestones. Lessee and occupier Thomas Brown. *Now nos. 335-9 High Street (2 units Balti restaurant, 1 vacant). 1800 comment: 'dilapidated'.*

L. House & garden; bounded by Thomas Brown SE, and -- Jenks NW; 0a 1r 15p; £5 10s 0d; 7 elm; 2 merestones. Lessees and occupiers, Messrs Smith & Baylis. *Now no. 341 High Street (unoccupied shop) and part of No. 50 Swindon Road. Listed in 1800 directory as Smith, builder etc, 'No 110'. 1800 comment: 'rebuilt'.*

M. House & garden; bounded by Smith & [John] Baylis SE and Nelos [*other deeds show that Thomas Snelus is meant*] & Hyatt NW; 0a 1r 25p; £5 10s 0d; 4 elm, 1 walnut. Lessee and occupier Jenks (lately John Cook). *Now nos. 343-5 High Street (aerial shop), and part of No. 52 Swindon Road. Listed in 1800 directory as Jenks, pie-man, 'No 112'.*

N. House & garden; bounded by William Nelos and Jenks SE, Mr Pope NW; 0a 1r 24p; £4 4s 0d; 1 elm, 1 walnut, 2 merestones. Lessee William Hyatt, occupier William Nelos. *Now nos. 351-3 High Street (florist, boat-chandler) and part of no. 54 Swindon Road. 1794 comment: 'new buildings being erected in garden'.*

O. House & garden; bounded by Mr Pope SE, George Okey NW; 0a 1r 9p; £4 0s 0d; 2 elm, 1 walnut. Lessee and occupier Mary Okey. *Now nos. 361-7 High Street (domestic appliances, vacant, insurance, charity shop) - directly opposite Devonshire Street.*

P. House & garden; bounded by Mary Okey SE, Wilce & Harman NW; 0a 1r 9p; £4 0s 0d. Lessee and occupier George Okey. *Now nos. 371-5 High Street (printers, microwave repair, pizzeria). 1800 directory lists George Oakey, shoemaker and constable.*

Q. 4 houses & garden; bounded by Geo Okey SE, Edward Wood & James Everis NW; 1a 1r 19p; £8s 0s 0d; 1 elm, 5 walnut. Lessees Messrs Wilce & Harman (late Bliss);

occupiers Edward Auteris, James Shipway, Elizabeth Nicholls, Abraham Wells. *Now nos. 379-81 (Widdows Motors). Whole plot formerly bracketed both sides of what is now Milsom Street. Property alienated 1810, and Milsom Street laid out soon after - see Gazetteer.*

R. House & garden; bounded by John Finch SE, Mr Broad (freehold) NW; 0a 1r 5p; £3 10s 0d; 4 merestones. Lessee Mr Broad, occupier Sparrow. *Formerly nos. 433-5 High Street, latterly redeveloped as Churchill Court flats at beginning of Poole Way.*

#### South side of street

S. House & garden; bounded by Mr Dobbins NW, Joseph Ballinger SE; 0a 1r 1p; £4 0s 0d; 7 elm; 4 merestones. Lessee William Benfield, occupier Elizabeth Dowdeswell. *Estimated site just short of present Gloucester Road junction; sold by CCC many years ago.*

T. Garden; bounded by William Benfield NW, Joseph Ballinger SE; 0a 0r 20p; £0 9s 4d. Lessee Mr Nettleship, occ. Sparrow. *Perhaps on line of railway; sold off many years ago.*

U. Garden; bounded by Mr Belcher NW, Widow Gregory SE; 0a 0r 27p; £0 12s 3d; 3 elm. Lessee Richard Gregory, occupier William Mustin. *Now nos. 1-4 Knapp Road.*

V. House, garden & orchard; bounded by Richard Wood NW, Richard Newman SE; 0a 3r 20p; £6 0s 0d; 17 elm. Lessee Richard Gregory, occupier Samuel Townley. *Now nos. 352-60 High Street (5 shops between Devonshire Street and Elmstone Street). 1811 survey (CCC Maps 44) shows Devonshire Street now laid out, along centre of plot.*

W. [Richardson's College (*see next entry*)]; bounded by Mr Richardson (freehold) NW, Thomas Giles SE; 0a 0r 6p; £2 0s 0d; 3 merestones. Lessee and occupier Mr Richardson. *Now no. 340 High Street (neighbourhood resource centre).*

X. House & garden; bounded by Richardson's College and his freehold land NW, William Meakins SE; 0a 0r 34p; £3 3s 0d. Lessee and occupier Thomas Giles. *Now nos. 336-8 High Street (now houses, but formerly pub?). Little is known of Richardson.*

Y. House & garden; bounded by Meeting House Close NW, Hambro's Lane [*Ambrose St*] SE; 0a 0r 21p; £4 4s 0d; 1 ash, 2 walnut; 2 merestones. Lessee & occupier John Wells. *Now no. 306 High Street (wholefoods). Pelican plaque.*

Z. [Meeting House] Close; bounded by Meeting House NW, Hambro's Lane SE; 0a 2r 4p; £1 11s 8d; 1 ash, 20 elm, 3 walnut. Lessee Mr Broad (part of 'Ram lease'), occupier Thomas Collett. *Now built on as west side of Ambrose Street. Identical with 'Walnut Tree Close', listed as one of the former St Mary's chantry properties in 1586.*

AA. Undefined property; bounded by Mrs White NW, Mr Jones (freehold) SE; 0a 1r 23p; £25 0s 0d; 1 merestone. Lessee & occupier Mr Jones. *Site frontage now approximately that of W H Smith, nos. 192-4 High Street; formerly developed as Arched Buildings, the most valuable commercial site in the estate, hence the high rent and enlarged detail on the map (just left of 8 Bells). 1794 comment: 'an excellent house'.*



AB. House & garden; bounded by William Gregory NW, Trueman SE; 0a 0r 23p; £4 4s 0d; 2 merestones. Lessee Rev Mr Morris, occ. Hooper. *Now 64-6 High Street (estate agent).*

AC. Kingsham Close (meadow land); bounded by John Cook NW, Mr Ellis SE; 1a 0r 15½p; £2 14s 10d; 2 elm, 17 willow, 1 poplar. Lessee Mr Broad ('Ram lease'), occupier Samuel Jordan. *Now site of Corpus Street and the adjacent villas on London Road.*

AD. Kingsham Copse; 0a 1r 16p; £0 17s 6½d; 4 oak, 1 ash, 15 willow. Lessee Mr Broad ('Ram lease'). *Now equates to foot of Corpus Street, near River Chelt.*

AE. Half-acre in Naunton field shooting from the Turnpike Road E&W, the 6th ridge from the Fourshooter; bounded by Mr Whithorne SE, Mr Hunt S; 0a 1r 26p; £0 4s 2d; 4 merestones. Lessee Mr Broad ('Ram lease'); occupier Mr Hunt. *Perhaps identical with the half-acre of arable listed in 1586 among former properties of St Mary's chantry.*

AF. Part of Cherry Orchard Close; bounded by Mr Wood SE, Mr Stone NW; 0a 2r 8p; £1 18s 4¼d; 5 merestones. Lessee Mr Broad ('Ram lease'), occupier Mr Cook of the Bell. *Now equates to Haines & Strange car dealership between Albion Street and Fairview Road.*

AG. A green ley in Cockham Slade on the E side next to the hedge; 0a 3r 29p; £0 13s 11½d; 3 oak, 2 ash, 2 elm. Lessee Mr Broad ('Ram lease'), occupier Mr Beale. *CCC deed Fe 10/1 shows it abutted Wyman's Brook at its north end; the 1787 survey seems to displace it slightly. Identified by the same name in 1586 grant, part of former St Catharine's chantry holdings. 1800 comment: 'now laid down as garden ground, very improved state'.*

AH. Four ridges lying together in the Common field below the town; bounded by Mr Critchet's close SE, Mr Sergeant NW, Mr Chester's headland NE, turnpike road SW; 3a 2r 37p; £5 11s 10½d; 7 merestones. Lessee Mr Nettleship, occupier Thomas Forty. *Present equivalent uncertain.*

**Total acreage in Cheltenham 18a 0r 0p; total rental value £146 7s 3½d.**

### Future research

Publication of this map and terrier will, it is hoped, provide some solid reference points for those trying to locate early High Street properties - a sometimes frustrating process when early deeds define by neighbouring owners rather than an absolute position. As the study of the Old Swan Inn site (*Journal* 13) showed, the Pate properties have long and sometimes complex histories - most awaiting investigation. A further interesting project would be to make firmer equations between the properties identified here, and the rather casual list in Pate's original grant - and thus to reconstitute the precise holdings of the two chantries.

### Sources

The primary source was the map itself (CCC Maps 42) and the terrier (CCC Fe 10/2), supported by several lesser deeds in the Fe series at Corpus Christi College. My thanks to Mrs Christine Butler, College Archivist, for her considerable assistance; to the College for permission to reproduce the map; and to Richard Wright of Bayley Donaldson for practical help in identifying the property sites. **Notes:** <sup>1</sup> See G Hart, *History of Cheltenham*, pp 53-4; and A Bell, *Tudor Foundation*, ch 3. <sup>2</sup> Hart, pp 156-7.

# The Winchcombe Fire-Engine

MICK KIPPIN

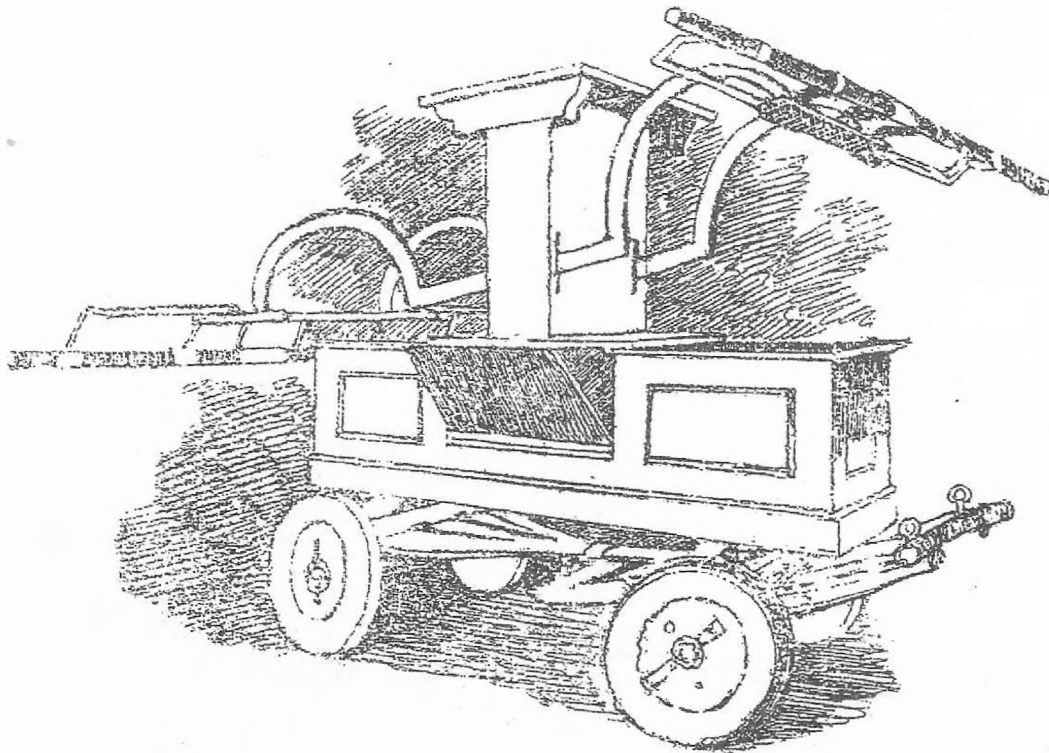
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*(As there is no local history publication for Winchcombe, we are extending our usual catchment area to enable this account by one of our members to be shared with others - Ed.)*

AMONG THE many and varied treasures and historical artifacts at Sudeley Castle is an old, hand-operated fire-engine, bearing the maker's name, 'Phillips, London', and the additional inscription 'Winchcomb / By Voluntary Contributions / 1789'.

An old fire-engine indeed! It was already 15 years old when it came to Winchcombe, having been built in 1774 by Phillips of London, who had been manufacturing such appliances in this Country since about 1760, after their introduction from Holland: if engines of this type had been available in 1666, the Great Fire of London might not have been the disaster it was. At the time the standard fire fighting equipment was the 'squirt and bucket'. Even after the Great Fire, these were still considered sufficient: in 1667, the Common Council ordered that the four districts into which London was divided were to procure sufficient 'brazen hand squirts and leather buckets'. So the people of Winchcombe were very astute and forward-thinking when, after launching a public subscription in 1789, they purchased a Phillips engine the following year.

The fire-engine would have been dragged manually to the scene of the fire and then pumped by six men, three on each set of handles. Another fireman would have stood on top to direct the jet of water onto the fire. It is possible that the nozzle on top of the engine is a later addition; it is not present in the 1893 sketch in the *Winchcombe & Sudeley Record* (*opposite*), and in a picture of a similar Phillips engine from Malmesbury in Wiltshire, the nozzle is of a completely different design. Extracts from the parish records relate how its use was managed at a time before there was a proper fire service. At a parish meeting on 9 February 1790 it was decided that 'the Fire Engine would be paid for and kept in repair at the expense of the Parish, and that the care thereof be vested in the present churchwardens and their successors for the time being'. As a result of this meeting the new machine was housed in the Church, where it was to remain for the next 56 years. That the churchwardens should have been placed in charge is not in fact surprising: fire-fighting in the 17th and 18th centuries was legally the duty of the parish authorities. By an Act of Parliament of 1707 the churchwardens were obliged under penalty to ensure that a large engine, a hand engine and a leather pipe were kept in good repair. In 1821 a Winchcombe parish meeting decided that '... the Engine should not be permitted out of the Parish unless a carriage is provided for its conveyance to the place required, and application be made to the Churchwardens'. This suggests that the wheeled carriage it is now on did not come as part of the original machine. This idea is supported by the minutes of the meeting of 17 December 1830 when there was some discussion about the Parish providing a suitable carriage for the fire engine and also the need to appoint proper persons to take on its care and management instead of the churchwardens. No decision was made and the meeting was adjourned until 21 December.

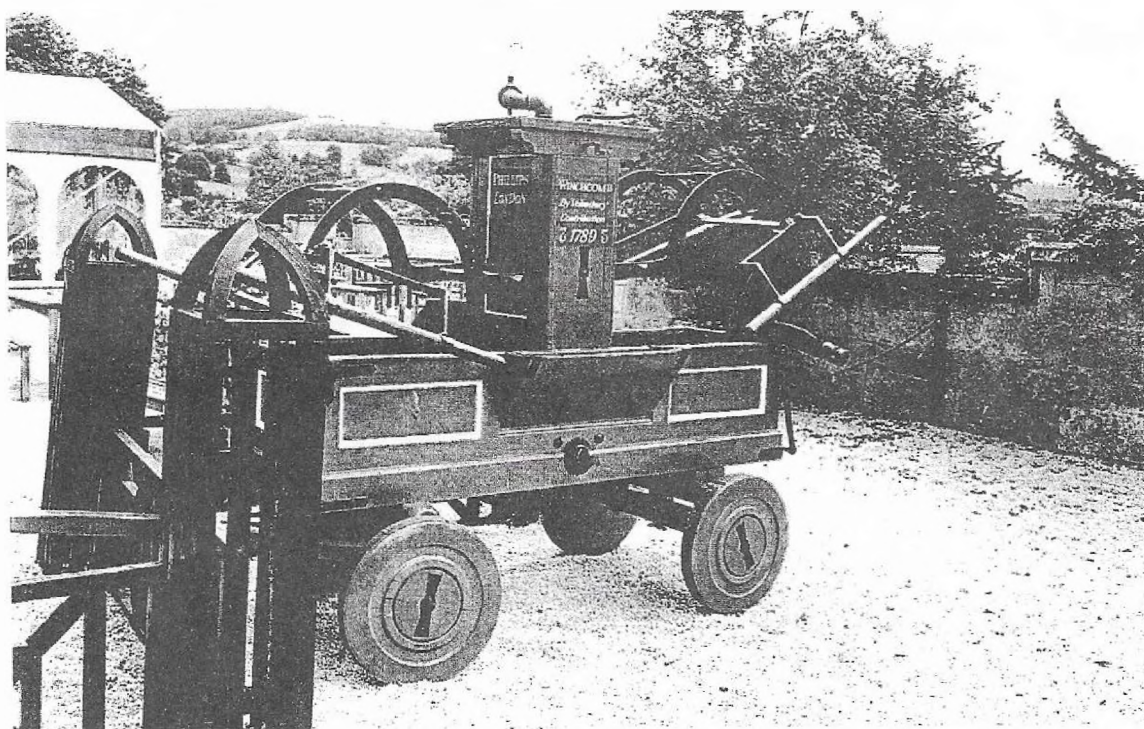


The question of a carriage carried on into 1831 until the meeting of 16 May when it was finally decided that no carriage would be purchased, but that the one currently hired from Mr William Townsend would continue to be used. Eventually, in November 1841, Thomas Haslam was appointed Superintendent of the fire-engine and volunteers were to be sought to assist him. Although this might seem like the start of an embryo fire service for Winchcombe, the engine was still housed in the church; it was not until 1846 that the parish discussed the possibility of moving the engine to the Booth Hall. This plan was agreed upon and the fire-engine was finally moved out of the church. The last reference in the Parish Books is on 3 March 1854, when it was resolved to raise £50 by voluntary subscription to provide new hose and gear and to repair the engine. A public meeting was held in Winchcombe Town Hall at 24 July 1858 'to take into consideration the present very defective state of the fire-engine, and to adopt measures for rendering it efficient'. In 1891 the Phillips engine was pronounced too antiquated for any further use either to the parish or to the public. It was therefore suggested that it should be presented to Sudeley Castle and added to the collection of local objects of interest. In her diary for 5 May 1891, Mrs Dent wrote: 'The old fire-engine from Winchcombe was presented to me, 100 persons subscribed 1/- each, and it is lodged in the stables as a curiosity - it is 100 years old'.

The following year (1892) Winchcombe bought a new fire-engine, this time something which looks a bit more practical (at least to modern eyes). Merryweather's 'Metropolitan Fire Brigade' had a 30hp steam pump engine which was capable of throwing 300 gallons of water per minute and was drawn by a pair of horses. A fire brigade was created to manage its use; the fire sergeant was paid £5 a year, and each of his five assistants 10s. Compare

this with Cheltenham, which has had a fire service since 1813, but which did not acquire a Merryweather engine of this type until one was presented to the Brigade by Mrs Theobald in October 1904.

The final word must go to a report of the first recorded fire in Winchcombe. This was on 15 October 1091, when lightning struck the church, filling it with a thick, suffocating, obnoxious smoke. It was not dispersed until the monks had made the circuit of the monastic buildings, sprinkling all with holy water, chanting psalms and carrying the relics of saints!



The Winchcombe Fire-Engine at Sudeley Castle today

#### Sources

Mrs Emma Dent, *Annals of Winchcombe & Sudeley*

Mrs Emma Dent, Diaries

*Winchcombe & Sudeley Record*, January and February 1893

I am particularly grateful to Lady Ashcombe and to the Administrator of Sudeley Castle, near Winchcombe, for allowing me access to the original material; I would also like to thank Mrs Roberta Prince of the Athelstan Museum in Malmesbury and Mr John Liffen of the Science Museum's Fire Fighting Collection for their help and assistance.

# Alstone Lawn: a noble residence

JILL WALLER

'ON APPROACHING the Gloucester road from Christ Church the eye is met by a noble residence surrounded by stately trees, and forming a picturesque termination to the view from a declivity of the hill on which the sacred edifice is placed.' Thus wrote John Goding in his 1863 *History of Cheltenham*. Alstone Lawn was one of the largest residences in Cheltenham, a mansion set in grounds of just over 7 acres on the south-west corner of the Alstone Lane-Gloucester Road junction (see extract from 1885 OS map below).

I have not yet been able to establish exactly when Alstone Lawn was built, or by whom, but the earliest occupants traced are the Sealy family. A search of the Cheltenham Manor Court rolls<sup>1</sup> shows that a William Sealy was gaining copyhold possession of land in Alstone between 1805 and 1816, apparently consolidating an estate. In October 1808 he made arrangements to settle the property on future heirs, and in May 1809 a wife, Elizabeth Greville, is mentioned. Sealy may thus have had Alstone Lawn built at around this time, having recently married. No such large house is mentioned in the Manor Court rolls, but later deeds<sup>2</sup> (1853) show part of the estate to be freehold and thus not subject to the court.

In 1811, Thomas Henry Sealy was born at the house<sup>3</sup>. He was to be a much-celebrated writer and poet in early Victorian times. Goding likens his writings to Goldsmith and Charles Lamb, his best-known works being 'The Porcelain Tower' and a volume of poems entitled 'The Little Old Man in the Wood'. As a young man Sealy travelled Europe before settling in Bristol where he was editor of the *Western Archaeological Magazine* for some years. He also founded a weekly newspaper, the *Great Western Advertiser*, which unfortunately brought him financial ruin, with losses estimated at £12,000. His health suffered following this disaster and he died in 1848, aged 37 years. Although his name is now largely forgotten, even in literary circles, Thomas Henry Sealy was still mentioned in Cheltenham guidebooks into the 1920s.

The next owner of Alstone Lawn was William Hinds Prescod, a Jamaica





Henry Lamb Lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

ALSTONE LAWN, NEAR CHELTENHAM, THE SEAT OF W.H. PRESCOD ESQ. <sup>RA</sup> 4753

(reproduced by courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum)

planter, and his wife Mary. The property is marked with his name on the 1820 Post Office map of Cheltenham, although the siting is inaccurate. In the mid-1820s Henry Lamb produced a lithograph of the property which shows an impressive mansion surrounded by well-stocked gardens. Prescod was a great friend of L C Fulwar Craven of Brockhampton Park, and was evidently quite conspicuous in Cheltenham at that time, driving about in a blue or yellow chariot<sup>4</sup>. He and his wife had no children, but they adopted Mary Gurney, the second daughter of a near neighbour of theirs. Mary's natural parents, William and Mary Gurney, lived at Maryville, a stone-built house just west of Alpha House in St George's Road. The house is still extant and, like Alpha House, is now part of the Spirax Sarco complex.

William Hinds Prescod died in 1848, leaving Alstone Lawn to his wife and adopted daughter, Mary Prescod Gurney. In 1853, the latter married Fenwick Bulmer de Sales La Terriere and the couple lived at Alstone Lawn following the death of Mary Prescod in 1860. Fenwick came from quite a distinguished family: his paternal grandfather Pierre de Sales was a doctor, manager of a forge business and general entrepreneur, who emigrated from Albi in France to Quebec. Fenwick's maternal grandfather was Sir Fenwick Bulmer, who had been the King's physician. The 1861 census return for Alstone Lawn shows a family of considerable wealth, the live-in servants listed including a nurse, cook, butler, groom (plus family), housemaid, under-nurse and under-housemaid as well as a gardener and his family living in an entrance lodge on Gloucester Road.

The La Terrieres were a great sporting family. Fenwick won the Oxford University Steeplechase in 1842 on a mare called Lancashire Witch<sup>5</sup>. He was prominent in the New Club and an active member of the Cotswold Hunt - when he died on 10 February 1897 aged 74, he was their oldest member<sup>6</sup>. The La Terriere family lived life to the full and it is interesting to note in the *Cheltenham Examiner* that, in spite of Fenwick's death, his daughters Ada and Mabel still appear in the list of guests at the 'Batchelor's Ball' that week!

Fenwick's brother, William La Terriere, who lived for a time at Marlborough Hill Cheltenham, was also quite a sportsman. It is likely that he was instrumental in introducing Fred Archer to Newmarket, and so launched the meteoric, if short, career of Cheltenham's most famous jockey<sup>7</sup>. William also married a daughter of William Gurney, Elizabeth Sarah, who was seven years younger than her sister, Mary Prescod Gurney. The marriage was not to last however, and on 22 August 1868 the following notice appeared in the *Cheltenham Looker-On*: 'I, WILLIAM LA TERRIERE of No 10, PITTVILLE LAWN, CHELTENHAM, hereby Give Notice that my wife, ELIZABETH SARAH LA TERRIERE is now living apart from me, and has sufficient income for her maintenance and that I will not be answerable for any debts she may contract, or to any person who may maintain and support her. And I further Give Notice that I withdraw all authority to the said Elizabeth Sarah La Terriere in any way, and at any time hereafter, to pledge my Credit to any person or for any purpose whatever. Dated this 18th day of August, 1868, WILLIAM LA TERRIERE.'

Mary Prescod de Sales La Terriere died at Alstone Lawn on 11 September 1911, aged 80, leaving three daughters and a son<sup>8</sup>. She had lived in the house all her married life and for most of her childhood. Alstone Lawn was not lived in again. It was put up for auction the following year but failed to sell.

On Sunday 21 December 1913, Alstone Lawn was the target of a suffragette arson attack<sup>9</sup>. Flames were spotted coming from the roof of the empty house at 5 a.m. and the fire brigade immediately summoned. Every member of the brigade turned out in response and the blaze was soon brought under control. The wooden staircase in the centre of the house was completely destroyed and a hole about 10 feet across was left in the roof but the rest of the house was undamaged. It soon became obvious that the fire was no accident: suffragette literature was found scattered about the grounds, paraffin had been splashed near the seat of the fire, and paraffin-stained prints of stockinged feet were found leading from an open conservatory window to the centre of the house. Later that morning two young women were arrested along the Tewkesbury Road - suspicions had been aroused as their clothes smelt strongly of paraffin. They were not local girls, but had arrived in Cheltenham on the train from Birmingham the afternoon before the fire. The two women proved uncooperative when taken into custody. The police had to remove their boots which they then refused to put back on. They refused to give their names, and so were named 'Red' and 'Black' on the charge sheet, and hardly spoke except to complain of 'man-made laws'. A remand was requested for the prisoners at Court and, when asked if they had any objection, one replied 'Only that we don't approve of this court at all. We don't see why men should try us in the least. There are no women to try us.' One 'Hear, hear!' was heard somewhere at the back of the court. The women were subsequently taken by train to Worcester Gaol to await trial, where they were reported to be on hunger-strike.

Following the breach in the roof of Alstone Lawn, it seems likely the property was left to decay. The 1923 OS map shows that the house had been demolished and the area was being used as allotments. On 28 January 1933 the estate was sold by the La Terriere trustees to the Borough of Cheltenham<sup>10</sup>. Later that year the development of Pates Avenue was begun on the site, to house families displaced by the slum clearance scheme of Swindon Place/Swindon Passage<sup>11</sup>. In 1934 plots were sold on which the shops on the corner of Alstone Lane were built. The houses along Gloucester Road, Nos. 101-139a, were built over the next few years, costing £550-£650 to buy. There is now no trace to be seen of the impressive and noble residence that was Alstone Lawn. However, at the southernmost corner of what was the Alstone Lawn estate, beside an old turning from Gloucester Road towards the Vineyards, there is part of an old brick wall with a curved ramped coping at one end. Is this perhaps all that remains of the original estate boundary wall?

### Sources

- <sup>1</sup> GRO D855 M25, M41 and M42
- <sup>2</sup> Title deeds kindly loaned by Peggy Ashton of Neuvelle Hair, 97 Gloucester Road
- <sup>3</sup> John Goding, *Norman's History of Cheltenham*, 1863
- <sup>4</sup> Edith Humphris & E C Willoughby, *At Cheltenham Spa*, 1928.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 16 Sep 1911 - obituary of Mrs Mary Prescod de Sales La Terriere
- <sup>7</sup> E M Humphris, *The Life of Fred Archer*
- <sup>8</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 16 Sep 1911
- <sup>9</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 27 Dec. 1913; *Cheltenham Examiner*, 25 Dec 1913
- <sup>10</sup> Title deeds
- <sup>11</sup> Maggie Blake, *CLHSJ* 7, 1989, p35; James Hodsdon, *Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, 1997.



# A Possible Portway into Cheltenham

TERRY MOORE-SCOTT

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THE GENERALLY accepted understanding of the term 'portway' is of a road or track, often of ancient origin, leading to a market town. It could only arouse interest therefore to discover that at least as early as the start of the 19th century a field in the northern part of Leckhampton parish actually bore the name 'Portway Piece'.

The field name occurs as 'Portway Piece or Meerstone' in Croome's 1835 Survey of Leckhampton parish<sup>1</sup>, designating a strip of land lying just west of the then newly-laid out Park Estate<sup>2</sup>. The same field exists on Crow's 1746 plan of William Norwood's estate in Leckhampton and also on the plan produced by Pinnell in association with the 1778 Leckhampton Inclosure Act, although in neither case is it called 'Portway Piece'. It continued to exist as an enclosed parcel of land well into the 20th century before finally being submerged under Gloscat's extension car park.

The use of the term 'portway' here may best be explained by the fact that the field lay at the junction of two field paths or tracks, one running in from the south as an extension of today's Farm Lane and Kidnappers (formerly Green) Lane in Leckhampton, and the other coming from the south west and originating in Shurdington (fig. 1).

The Leckhampton track appears on Pinnell as a well-defined field road leading north to 'Portway Piece' from the vicinity of the old Leys Farm where it would have connected with what is now Farm Lane<sup>3</sup>. In this way, it would have provided access for a number of the farms in the south-west section of Leckhampton parish. The track then crossed what is now the Warden Hill estate, its alignment is still preserved by a public footpath running from Hampton Villa, through the housing estate. Past OS maps show how this path was carried by a bridge over the old Cheltenham-Banbury railway line which, before its dismantling in the 1950s, traversed this part of Leckhampton parish.

The second of these tracks is shown arriving at Portway Piece as a single drawn line described on Pinnell's map as a 'footpath from Shurdington'. The western section of this track still exists as a public footpath crossing the fields from Shurdington, passing to the west of Chargrove Farm and on towards Warden Hill where it is now lost under housing estate. It crossed the northern sector of Leckhampton parish, ran along the southern edge of 'Portway Piece' and continued on through what later became The Park.

The Leckhampton track, having circled around 'Portway Piece' field, appears to have ended there. The Shurdington track, on the other hand, continued on eastward across the fields, finally turning to the north and leaving Leckhampton parish at Westall Brook near to today's Tivoli. Undoubtedly this is the same footpath that later linked up with Merestones Road where until relatively recent times a sign existed bearing the words 'Footpath to Shurdington'<sup>4</sup>. As fig. 2 shows, its progress from there across the Park may just be traceable

as a regular line of trees drawn in by Merrett which closely replicates the alignment of the pathway depicted on Pinnell's much earlier map.

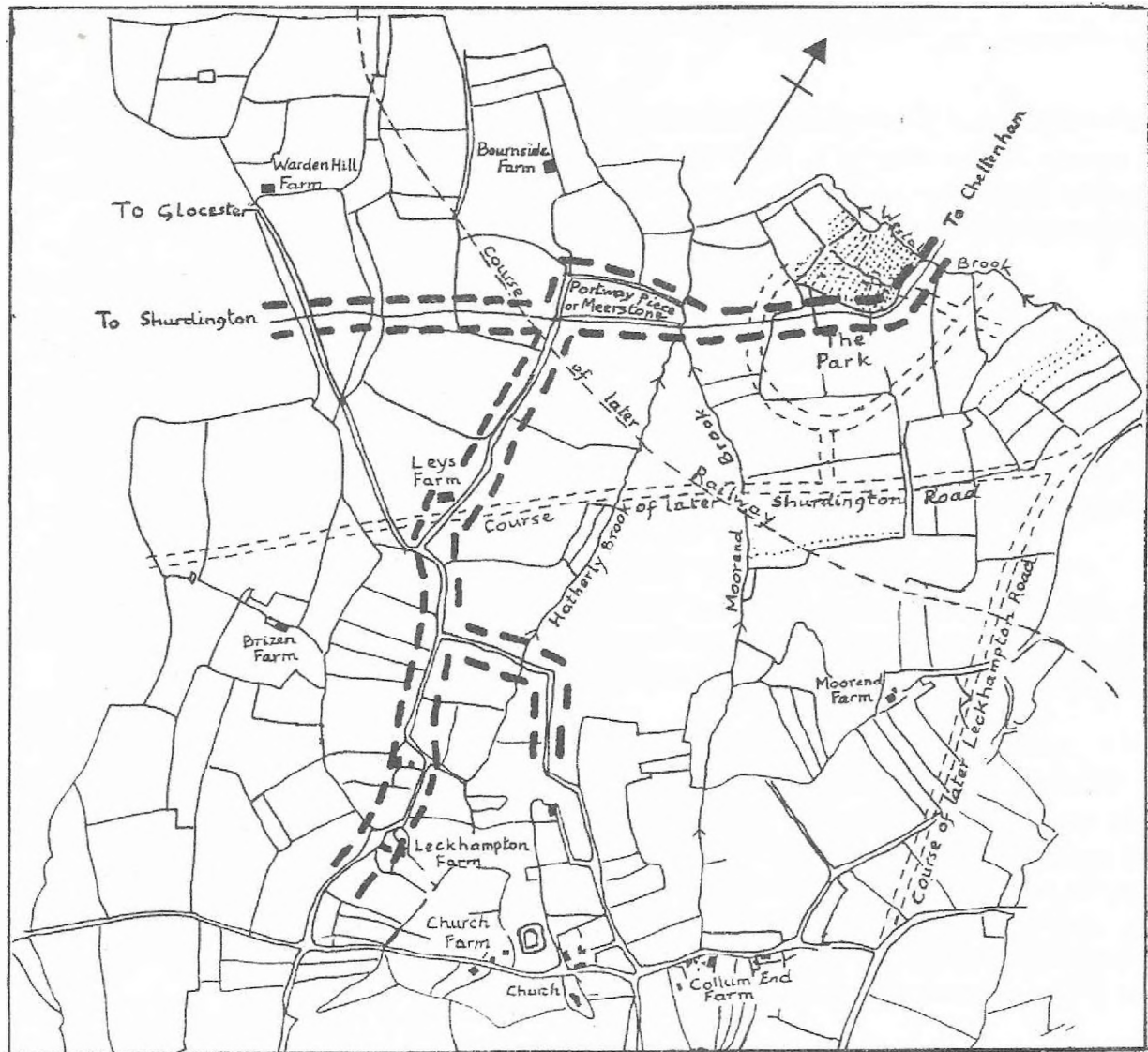


Fig. 1 'Portway' routes into Cheltenham through northern part of Leckhampton (map based on T Pinnell's 1778 plan of Leckhampton)

If this was the route of a portway to the market in Cheltenham<sup>5</sup>, we should expect to see it continue in the direction of today's town centre. That it does just this can also be shown. At the Westall Brook crossing, the track would have engaged with what today is called Tivoli Lane. This is an ancient lane which originally ran down to Westall Brook and which was according to the 1851 census, lined by a number of cottages including four known as "Field Cottages"<sup>6</sup>. The direct continuation of Tivoli Lane towards the town centre follows a familiar course, first as a public footway linking Andover Road with the southern end of Lypiatt Road and then as Lypiatt Road itself<sup>7</sup>. Thereafter, the route proceeds down



Fig. 2 'Portway' route through The Park and Tivoli (detail based on Merrett's 1834 plan of Cheltenham)

Montpellier Street (originally Old Well Lane), across Royal Well and along Clarence Parade, ending up near to both the old market house and the later market house just beyond.

For many centuries, the market was important for the economy of Cheltenham itself and for the surrounding rural areas. All the farms round about would have conveyed their produce into town along traditional routes of which there must have been quite a number. However, the route described here, serving farms in Leckhampton and Shurdington, seems to be the only one for which a description 'portway' has been recorded.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> GRO Pl68a VE1/2.

<sup>2</sup> From Croome's survey, we also know that the tenant of "Portway Piece" at that time was a T Billings, doubtless the Thomas Billings who bought the Park Estate in 1831 (James Hodsdon, *Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, 1997, p. 132).

<sup>3</sup> The site of Leys Farm is now occupied by Hampton Villa on the Shurdington Road. From this same point a second track led off to Gloucester.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara King, *A Cheltenham Century 1839-1939*, in *Journal* 14 (1998), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> The existence of a market in Cheltenham dates back to 1226 when the first writ granting the right to hold one market each week was made to the hundred and manor of Cheltenham by Henry III.

<sup>6</sup> Brian Torode, *The Story of Tivoli*, 1998, p.31.

<sup>7</sup> Lypiatt Road (previously Suffolk Lawn) was once part of an old turnpike route to Painswick, although the turnpike engineers appear to have eschewed the old alignment, preferring the road to swing to the south and continue on along Painswick Road itself. Hodsdon, p.105.

#### Book Review: VICTORIAN LEGACY by Stanley Rudman

This comb-bound A5 book is a full guide to the numerous and striking wall memorials, mostly Victorian, in Christ Church, Cheltenham. The commentary extends beyond the purely biographical to include some analysis of the social setting of this church, part of the expansion of the original Thompson developments at Lansdown. Some 80 memorials are transcribed and annotated; clear photographs by Kenneth David complement 13 of them. The author and his collaborators have done well to track down useful detail on the great majority, and the new research helps correct previous accounts in respect of the Gordon, Webster and Whish memorials. Most touching perhaps is the story attached to the 1878 tablet to Gertrude Penny, drowned at the age of 15 when a Thames pleasure boat sank. The memorials reflect the district: mostly well-to-do, with a remarkably high proportion of Indian service connections.

The book packs a great deal into its pages - sometimes a little too much for ease of consultation; in any reprint, a formal title page, page numbering and a fuller index should be considered. Nevertheless, a welcome addition to the historical coverage of this part of Cheltenham, of particular value to anyone with a direct interest in those commemorated.

# A Wife for Sale

MIKE GREET

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EVEN THOSE who have read Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge* with its fictional account of Michael Henchard's sale of his wife may be surprised to learn that real wife sales were attempted in Cheltenham in 1825 and 1830<sup>1</sup>. The first attempt was later successfully completed at Gloucester. A poem by Isaac Bell, 'On J Barnes selling his wife at Glo'ster: a fact' provided the first evidence I came upon<sup>2</sup>. It reads as follows:

*"Within the course of my short life,  
I oft have heard that care and strife  
Attend on almost all that's married,  
And that is why so long I tarried;  
For surely one would be to blame,  
Just to run headlong in the same,  
Without some future prospect bright,  
To cheer one in old age's night;  
When the meridian sun is gone  
Of youth, which with such ardour shone,  
As to give life to all the frame  
That's bounding after lover's fame;  
Yet sometimes dark and cannot see  
A yard or two beyond the knee;  
For when bewitch'd by that blind boy,  
We think that nothing but real joy,  
Will follow him who is firmly tied  
To a young smiling lovely bride;  
But listen while I here advance  
A truly curious circumstance;  
'Tis of a man not far from here,*

*Who loved not his wife 'tis clear;  
For he to market went one day,  
To sell, or give his spouse away;  
But there he could not gain his end,  
It was such funny goods to vend;  
But being on his purpose bent,  
To Glo'ster market next he went;  
Where in a halter there he led  
His loving wife: to me he said,  
He sold her after some suspence,  
For the small sum of eighteen-pence,  
Including one full quart of ale,  
And one full pipe - why, what a sale!  
It is degrading on my life,  
Thus to have parted with his wife;  
And yet some tell me, who well know,  
The law allow'd him to do so;  
Then if the law at this connives  
It follows all may deal in wives,  
And on our hands they'll ne'er get stale,  
They are prime commodities for sale."*

The *Cheltenham Journal* of 7 March 1825 provided further detail. 'On Thursday last (3 March) a woman of the name of Barnes was exhibited for sale in this town; but being considered a 'bad lot', no purchaser was found for such a bargain and she was driven home, with other unsaleable stock (it being market day) unsold. A similar occurrence took place in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham a few weeks since when the enraged populace took the rope from around the woman's neck, and tying the husband to a sign-post pelted him well with rotten eggs &c. to the no small satisfaction of the rustics assembled upon the occasion.'

Another sale was attempted in Cheltenham in 1830<sup>1</sup>. The *Chronicle* of 25 March 1830 reported a 'DISGRACEFUL OCCURRENCE. On Thursday last (18 March) whilst the corn market was crowded with respectable farmers a fellow dishonoured the name of civilized man by offering his wife for sale. We understand a sweep offered sixpence by way of joke: but the purchase was not absolutely made as the woman, who had been inveigled into the market

and a halter thrown round her neck before she was aware, fled from the scene of degradation, and her husband had some difficulty in escaping the chastisement of the pump. The police, however, were speedily on the look out to prevent a recurrence of the auctoon or its consequences'.

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup> Dates of the sales are given in *Wives for Sale* by S P Menefee (1981), which details over 300 other instances in the Appendix. It shows the Barnes sale was also mentioned in Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, 12 March 1825, and that of 1830 was in the *Times* of 30 March 1830. Other sales in Gloucestershire took place between 1760 and 1841. Another at Gloucester in 1838 is reported on p. 139 of Roy Palmer's *Folklore of Gloucestershire*, 1994. <sup>2</sup> From *Poems on Various Subjects* by Isaac Bell (S C Harper), Cheltenham, 1833, pp. 15-6. For Bell see 'Isaac Bell: Cheltenham's Gardener-Rhymer' by Mike Greet in *The Local Historian* Vol 17, No. 3, August 1986, pp. 163-8.

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### Recent books and articles on the history of Cheltenham

List compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

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- Anon, *A history of Thirlestaine Hall*, published by the Chelsea Building Society, 1998. 13pp. No price. A well illustrated booklet on the Chelsea's Cheltenham headquarters.
- Bradbury, Oliver, 'Rock House, Vittoria Walk, Cheltenham', *Follies* 9.4 (Spring 1998), pp.18-19. Additional information and photographs of one of the town's most unusual houses (now demolished), an account of which was included by the author in a recent issue of this Society's *Journal*.
- Bradbury, Oliver, 'Richard Hulls of Chipping Campden's work for John Rushout, the 2nd Lord Northwick, 1769 - 1859', *Campden & District Historical and Archaeological Society Notes & Queries* 2.5 (Autumn 1998), pp.51-2. Includes evidence for Hulls' work at Thirlestaine House in Cheltenham's Bath Road.
- Members of Cheltenham University of the Third Age, *The Chelt. A survey*, published by Cheltenham U3A. 40pp. £3.00. An account of the historical references to Cheltenham's river and a survey of its present condition and features from its source to its junction with the River Severn.
- Paget, Mary (ed.), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Bulletin*, 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* 39 (Spring 1998) includes articles on the Lord family of Lillybrook, the Pates family, memories of East End, the work of the architect John Middleton at Charlton Kings, along with some oral history transcripts, previously unpublished photographs and newspaper extracts relating to Potter family marriages in the 19th century. *Bulletin* 40 (Autumn 1998) includes articles on rival railway lines to Cheltenham, the Tucker family at Ham House, the demolished Moorend House and its occupants, Charles Smith, a local hurdle maker/carpenter and Job Nash, a local man who emigrated to Australia, 1863.
- Rudman, Stanley, *Victorian Legacy*, privately published. 108pp. £6.50. Full transcriptions of the memorial tablets in Christ Church, with notes on those commemorated, including many details on the history of the church and its surrounding area.

- Southern, Sue (compiler), *The way it was. Memories of St Paul's and St Mary's*, published by the College of St Paul and St Mary Old Students' Association, 1998. 209pp. £10.00. An outline history of the colleges and old students' memories, with many illustrations.
- Swindon Village Collection 2* (1998), published by the Swindon Village Society. 64pp. Unpriced. Articles on the history of Swindon Hall, Swindon Village School, 19th-century drawings of St Lawrence's church and memories of Swindon Village by five residents.
- Torode, Brian, *The story of Tivoli 'near this town'*, privately published and available from 23 Arden Road, Cheltenham GL53 OHG. 1998. 96pp. £5.99. An account of the development of the area between Lansdown and The Park.

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### GRO: 1998 Accessions for the Cheltenham area

JULIE COURTENAY, Senior Cataloguer

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MOST OF the new arrivals in 1998 were relatively modern records. However, the project to catalogue the Cheltenham Borough Archive is due to be completed by the end of 1999. Sections describing the earliest activities of the Commissioners (from 1786) are already available in the Searchroom. *Please note that some of the following records may not be readily available to researchers, either because they have not been catalogued or are in need of repair. Records less than 30 years old also may be closed to researchers.*

Archdeaconry of Cheltenham: addit. recds of visitations 1920s-90s (GDR, acc 7885 & 8108)  
 \*W L Barrow of Cheltenham, architect: additional records c.1953-78 (D7684, acc 7844)  
 Bubb family records: property, Charlton Kgs/Badgeworth 17th-19th cents. (D6622, acc 7921)  
 Cheltenham Council of Churches' Peace and Development Group: minutes and other records 1976-94 (D6050, acc 7941)

Cheltenham Free Church Federal Council: minutes 1932-82 (D8011, acc 8011)

Cheltenham District Coroner: inquest files 1996 (CO7, acc 8014)

Chelt. & Glos. Centre of the National Trust: minutes, newsletters 1964-96 (D7918, acc 7918)

Cheltenham Hospital and dist. health auth. reports etc 1960s-90s (HA, acc 7839 & 7868)

Everyman Theatre: additional records 20th cent. (D6978, acc 7862)

Leckhampton Parish Council: council minutes 1894-1990 (P198a, acc 7899)

Winterbotham family of Cheltenham: additional family records including poems by James B Winterbotham 1863-1912 and family trees 19th-20th cents (D5731/3, acc 8010)

#### Schools records include:

Brookfield School: governors' minutes 1993-98 (S78/19, acc 7933)

Charlton Kings Sec Sch: school mags. 1962-78 (not complete set) (D7952, acc 7952)

Cleeve View Infants School: governors' minutes 1993-98 (S78/22, acc 8068) and admission register 1986-94 (acc 8104)

Elmfield Junior and Infants School: managers' minutes 1968-75 (SM78/11, acc 7990) and Infants School admission register 1963-86 (S78/15, acc 8103)

Hester's Way Inf & Jun Schools: governors' minutes 1991-97 (SM78/15, acc 7847)

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School: governors' minutes 1994-97 (S78/14, acc 8067)

Lakeside Primary School: governors' minutes 1993-96 (S78/23, acc 8075)

Pittville School: prospectuses and parents' handbooks 1986-98 (S78/21, acc 7987)

Westlands School: governors' minutes 1990-98 (S78/2, acc 7932)

**Deeds include:** 3 North Hill Mews, Pittville Circus Rd 1844-1921; Granville Cottage, 118 Swindon Road (1883)-1980s; 22 Church Road, St Mark's 1851-1907; 49 Tivoli Street and Westall Cottage 1839-1950 (D5907, acc 7966); building ground, part of Brick Kiln Close (1739)-1836 (D8025); 27 King Street (1811)-1984; 65 Bath Road 1827-81 (D6791, acc 8050); Palgrave Lodge 1835-1904 (D8053)

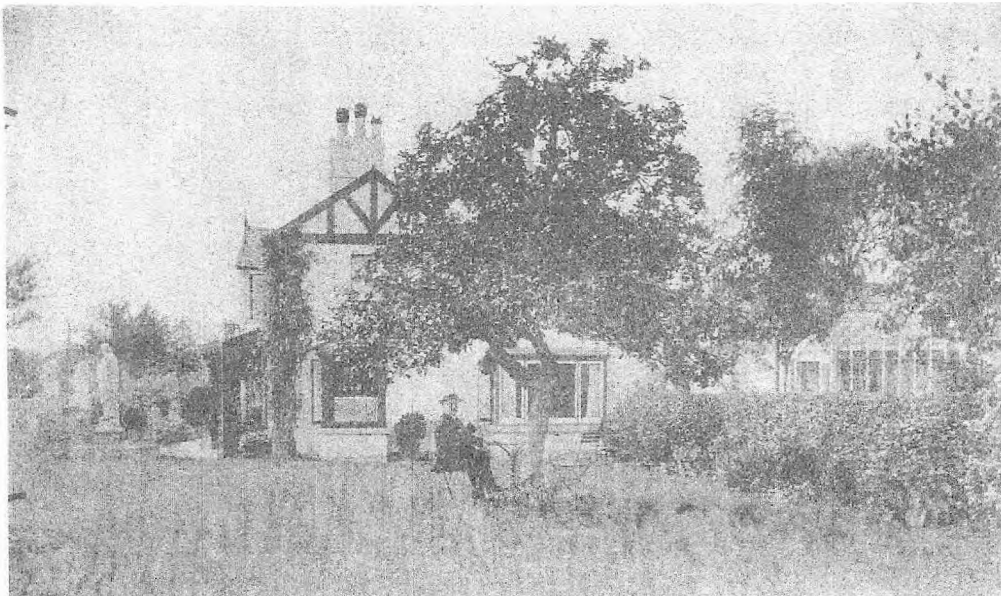
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### ADDITIONS AND AFTERTHOUGHTS

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**CLC** Mary Paget has sent a footnote to Barbara King's account 'A Cheltenham Century' (*Journal* 14), pointing out that Ladies' College girls were not in fact forbidden to use public transport: she writes 'I was a day girl from 1923 to 1931 and for my first year, before I had an adult bicycle, used the trams daily. Even boarders could be taken on trams provided they were accompanied. I used to 'chaperone' a girl older than myself when we had her out to tea ... It was the Junior boys of Cheltenham College who in the 20's were given a map of streets and shops they might not enter! and that prohibition was strictly enforced.'

**Marle Hill Court** Further to the account of Marle Hill Court in the same *Journal*, Pat Pearce has kindly brought several photographs of the building to our attention, and we are pleased to reproduce one here. Taken about 1913, it shows the former farmhouse in its later guise as the residence of R W Boulton, monumental sculptor, who is seated in the centre of the picture, with some of his statuary just visible at left, in front of the house.



**Exotic counterparts** Roger Beacham sends notes of recent sightings of Cheltenham comparisons - pre-war Tangier was reportedly described by Cecil Beaton as an 'oriental Cheltenham' (travel article, *Sunday Telegraph*, 20 Dec 1998), while British Malaya, it is said, was often described as 'Cheltenham on the equator' (book review about a 1911 murder in Kuala Lumpur, *Sunday Telegraph*, 17 Jan 1999). Any more to report?