



# Cheltenham Local History Society

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*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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# The Cheltenham Town Survey of 1855-57

ELAINE HEASMAN

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*In this article, we give the background to this major Victorian survey, which was recently transferred to CD-ROM through the collaboration of the Society, Cheltenham Borough Council, and the Gloucestershire Record Office. In 1999, members of this Society, realising the importance of these maps and finding that they were still in daily use in their original format, felt compelled to find some means of protecting them from further wear and tear. A working party met representatives from Cheltenham Borough Council Engineer's Department to discuss the options. It was agreed that in the short term photocopies of the maps would be used where possible whilst work began to digitise and transfer the data to CD-ROMs for future use. The outcome of this partnership has been successful. Currently, CDs are available for use within the Council, and the Society is now embarking on indexing the data on the map-sheets, to be added to a future version of the CD-ROM for general use.*

## **How the Survey came about**

THE SURVEY of Cheltenham produced between 1855 and 1857 is remarkable in its scope (3,600 acres covered), the large scale of the mapping (44 feet to the inch), and the amount of detailed information contained in its 84 hand-drawn and coloured sheets, each 24 by 36 inches. Henry Dangerfield, the town surveyor under whose 'immediate superintendence' the maps were produced, predicted (in July 1854, before the surveying began) that:

*'The plan will constantly be referred to and will be useful for various purposes and it will remain after these works are completed a map of reference, all additions and alterations being made to it as they actually occur.'*

These words have proved to be true. Nearly 150 years on, the information on the sheets of the 'Old Town Survey', as it is often known, is still of immense value to the local authorities and the utility companies, and of considerable interest to both local and family historians.

The 1855-57 survey arose primarily from the pressing public health need to give Cheltenham a decent water and sewerage system. The town had far outstripped its infrastructure, and its local government was imperfectly equipped to respond. To understand the origins of the survey, we have to look back at least half a century. In 1801, there were only 3,076 people in the whole of Cheltenham Hundred. Numbers then rose rapidly, to over 20,000 by 1826, and growth continued steadily thereafter, so that by the 1851 census, Cheltenham parish alone had 35,062 inhabitants, in 6,343 houses.

Cheltenham's first Act of Parliament, in 1786, had been modest in scope: a body of commissioners was set up, to see to paving, lighting, street cleansing, and the removal of 'nuisances'. It made no specific provision for water supplies and sewerage, which at the time were essentially matters for the householder to arrange. The powers of the town commissioners were extended somewhat under the 1821 Act, as befitted a town that had become, 'on account of the salubrity of its air and mineral waters', a 'place of great public resort'. However, as the town continued to grow, this Act too became inadequate. Streets were being left unrepaired as the commissioners refused to accept jurisdiction over new roads amounting to a total of fifteen miles. For ten years from 1836, a Board of Highways, consisting of twenty ratepayers elected annually at a vestry meeting, regulated this portion of

the borough. In 1846, the legality of this board was questioned and a surveyor was then appointed annually (as had been the practice up to 1836) until the third Cheltenham Improvement Act was passed in 1852. There were many discrepancies in the rating system, some residents of the private estates such as Pittville and Lansdown being partially or wholly exempt from payment of the Commissioners' rate.

Prior to the 1830s the need for water was wholly supplied by means of private wells sunk into Cheltenham's sand beds, and the many springs were allowed to flow naturally. The great increase in population resulted in the establishment of the Cheltenham Water Works Company (by an Act of 1824, amended in 1847), whose chief operations were carried out close to Hewlett's or Agg's Hill. The wells, however, had become deficient in both quality and quantity of water available.

Until 1833, with the exception of a few ancient drains claimed by the commissioners, the only sewers for the town were the open brooks and ditches and private drains. A joint-stock company, comprising residents interested in the locality, was formed, and went to Parliament for a bill to legalise their objective. On 20 April 1833, royal assent was given to the bill, 'for the better sewage, cleansing, and draining the town of Cheltenham'. The Cheltenham Sewers Company was incorporated in 1834 (remaining until 1857) and empowered to raise capital of £7,600 and to increase it by a further sum of £5,000, and to raise £4,000 by mortgage. At a cost of £7,600 a total of 5,892 yards of sewers were executed, the main sewer in the High Street being 2,200 yards long, with 3,692 yards of branch sewers in adjacent streets.

These various improvements, managed by different undertakings, and without good coordination, inevitably became less effective over time, and disease was rife. There is much evidence in letters to the commissioners, preserved at the Gloucestershire Record Office, of the hardship and sickness caused by the general lack of drainage and bad sewerage. Dr. Hartley at Cheltenham General Hospital (then situated in today's Idmiston House in the Lower High Street, opposite Ambrose Street) wrote on 12 October 1848, drawing the attention of the sanitary committee or inspector to a pig-sty at 8 Albert Street, St. Paul's, the cause, he believed, of severe illness affecting an entire family in the street.

The defects of the 1821 Act became daily more apparent. Following a public meeting a memorial was forwarded to the Board of Health, resulting in an official enquiry held on 22 February 1849 at the George Hotel, led by superintending inspector Edward Cresy. His report, in November, ran to 46 printed pages. He found for instance that only 736 houses out of a total of 6,541 in the borough were served by the Cheltenham Sewers Company, and as a result more than 5,000 houses had no legal outlet. The houses benefiting from the sewers were in 19 streets only. The Chelt was polluted and the emptying of sewage into it from private sewers constituted a public nuisance. In summary, the increasing needs of the town 'demanded a more effectual sewerage.'

Cresy's report gave reformers the leverage they required, and it was agreed to apply for a local Act founded upon his report, with additional clauses as required by the town. Support from local people for the Act is evident in letters. Some 30 inhabitants of Bath Road sent a memorial to 'The Committee of the Cheltenham Town Improvement Bill', dated 26 March 1851, complaining of 'bad and most unhealthy state of drainage' and 'dry wells' and expressing support for the proposed Bill. (*see overleaf*)

To,  
 The Committee of The Cheltenham  
 Town Improvement Bill.

Gentlemen,  
 We the undersigned Inhabitants  
 residing in and near the Bath Road  
 desire to express our hope that this Bill  
 will pass into a Law as soon as possible  
 in consequence of the very bad and most  
 unhealthy state of our Drainage - We have  
 nothing but Dry Wells and when the rain  
 comes our premises are in a very bad  
 state indeed.

Cheltenham 26<sup>th</sup> March 1851.

Signed by about 30 Inhabitants

A Bill of 155 clauses was introduced into Parliament in 1851 and was passed by the Commons but rejected by the Lords because of a dispute over the purchase price of the sewers. In 1852 an amended Bill was presented, and passed successfully, receiving royal assent on 28 May. The Act was described as 'an Act for better paving, draining, cleansing, supplying with water, regulating in regard to markets, inter-

ments, hackney carriages, and other purposes, and otherwise improving the Borough of Cheltenham in the County of Gloucester'. Ratepayers were given the power to elect periodically 30 commissioners and the operations of the Act extended to the whole parish. The Act was put in force immediately, the first meeting of the new commissioners being held at the Public Office on 7 June 1852.

The arrival of the new Act may not have brought immediate relief, but it does appear to have raised expectations of action. There was considerable reporting of continuing problems in the period after 1852. The *Cheltenham Free Press* of 5 February 1853 quoted a report drawn up in London for the Central Board of Health, following an application from the Cheltenham Commissioners to borrow £11,000 for additional sewers:

*'Although the town of Cheltenham is exceedingly well situated for drainage, and a considerable amount of work for this purpose has been executed...much of it appears to be defective... The river Chelt running through the centre of the town from East to West, and receiving a large share of its drainage, is in an exceedingly bad state, and has long been a fruitful source of disease and injury. Along its course are three water mills, the dams of which, penning back the foul matters discharged, constitute so many huge open cesspools which in warm weather are intolerable and from which in times of flood the water and filth flow back into the houses, an evil which has occurred three times in six weeks.'*

There are many reports of flooding, the most notable being that of 26 July 1855. Described in the *Examiner* the following week as 'a visitation of a most unusual nature ...



causing widespread alarm ... and inflicting a serious amount of damage upon property in the town', the flood was said to be far more serious than one a fortnight previously during which 'the sewers recently constructed under the new Town Act [of 1852] were blown up in several places by the immense body of water which poured into them, and which their limited bore – two feet six inches in diameter – would not enable them safely to discharge'. In this later instance, the Chelt itself was 'flooded for several hours, and the whole of that portion of the town lying along its banks was laid under water'. The downpour was said to have lasted at least 20 hours. The only comparable event had been 25 years previously, 26 June 1830, the day of George IV's death. In 1830, the effects were not so disastrous, however, as water then swept through fields, not streets.

On July 26<sup>th</sup> 1855, 'the inhabitants whose houses were immediately over the Chelt, and the main sewer, had their attention called to the bubbling up of water through the floor of their lower stories.... towards six o'clock all hopes of a speedy abatement of the flood were dispelled, by the waters of the Chelt bursting the banks along its upper portion and rushing through the town in a perfect deluge, so that in a very few minutes the whole of the houses from the Bath-road to Alstone, and occupying a belt of some hundred yards in width, had their basements flooded from three to four feet in depth! The first outburst of the waters occurred in Charlton Kings...where a culvert at the upper mill blew up and a piece of made land, of very nearly an acre in extent, and used as a sort of coal and faggot wharf, was swept bodily away. From thence the torrent spread through the low-lying lands at Charlton, passed the Sandford Mill, and rushing onward through the Sandford-fields, swept over the made ground of Wood's-road in a cascade some three feet in depth, and immediately spread itself through the Mitre-fields, sweeping down fences, pig-sties, hayricks and garden produce...the torrent rolled across the Bath-road, Cambray, Rodney-terrace, and Regent-street to the Promenade, where it made a clean breach through some of the principal houses..... From the Promenade, the tide, now more than a hundred yards in width, rolled past the Royal-crescent, Bays-hill-terrace, and St. George's-terrace until it rejoined the uncovered portion of the river near Jessop's Gardens. Here the weight and impetus of the immense body of water became perfectly irresistible, and at a bend of the stream at the back of York-terrace

*it burst through the embankment, which had been somewhat weakened in constructing the new sewers, and rolled through the beautiful nursery grounds.... The wall between the gardens of Messrs. Jessop, jun. and sen. was swept away, and a large number of fancy poultry were drowned...The greenhouses, with their costly plants, were swept away.... The water lay on one portion of Mr. Jessop's grounds, upwards of seven feet in depth, and in the course of the evening a quantity of debris, consisting of bricks, gravel, and pieces of wood, was swept through the breach in the embankment into the gardens of the estimated weight of from 500 to 600 tons!.... From Jessop's Gardens the waters found an outlet through the arches of the Great Western Railway, and sweeping over the low lying lands beyond, continued their destructive course through Alstone, and there spread themselves over the face of the country for many miles.....*

*THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE  
...it is not possible to more than speculate....  
the damage altogether cannot fall far short of  
£10,000....we ought to be thankful that there  
has been no loss of life....*

*THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE  
CALAMITY...many speculations were  
indulged in...some attributing it to the  
bursting, or insufficient character of the new  
sewers' works... It was never intended the  
sewer should carry off such a quantity of  
surface water that fell... As it was, the main  
sewer assisted in some degree to lessen the  
effects of the flood, by carrying off the surface  
water in many places'.....*

The inspector of nuisances, writing to the chairman of the commissioners on 15 December 1853, calls attention to the poor state of the street in front of houses in Orchard Place

and the undrained watering place in Wellington Passage, 'opposite the Journal Office and near the Wellington Inn'.

Cheltenham  
7 June 1854

Genl<sup>l</sup>

I am a widow living at 21 St Paul's Street North and keep a lodging home by which I make my living - My well has been quite dry for the last month and I am obliged to beg water to drink of my neighbours. I am too poor to deepen my wells, the property is mortgaged I cannot pay my interest rates and taxes and I must close my home if I cannot obtain water - I have ascertained from Mr Furter that the cost of sinking my well, will be three pounds and I have <sup>not</sup> a single shilling to do the work - Trusting you will feel the hardship of my case and afford me assistance

I remain  
Yours obedt<sup>l</sup>

Elisabeth Wilkings

I am known to Mr Hunter to be the  
Mrs Smith minister of the Baptist  
Chapel and thus living in my  
neighbourhood -

In 1853, only one third of the daily requirement of water was said to be being supplied to the town and many letters refer to wells running dry or being polluted, sometimes as a direct result of work to install new sewers close by. Elisabeth Wilkings kept a lodging house at 21 St. Paul's Street North. In a letter to the commissioners dated 7 June 1854 written on her behalf she stated that her well had been dry for a month. She was too poor to deepen her wells, the property was mortgaged and she was unable to pay the interest, her rates and taxes. She needed three pounds to sink her well and asked for assistance.

Later correspondence includes reference to the Act and further activities of commissioners. On 21 February 1854, E Leonard of 6 Bath Street writes to the clerk:

'Sir, I beg to call your attention to the state of Drainage at 6 Bath Street. I do assure you Sir I (and my next door neighbours can testify to the same) that

the stench to which we are subject is most unbearable and detrimental to our health and in fact if the matter be not immediately attended to we shall not be able to live in the houses without endangering our lives' etc.

Henry Dangerfield went along to inspect, and advised the sewerage and drainage committee on 23 February 1854 that he considered the smell to be due to defective drainage, although he had not 'had drains opened to ascertain positively'. He requested authorisation before opening the drains and then 'under the 41<sup>st</sup> section of the Act' he would 'call upon the owner or occupier to remedy'.

In a letter to the commissioners dated 17 April 1854, William Grassing of Arle Cottage, Tewkesbury Road, asks for leave to put in a drain at his own expense, to empty a sewer that goes down New Street to the brook from eleven cottages in Barnett's Row [otherwise Barnard's Row, between Knapp Street and New Street]. He writes, 'Some time ago I allowed the Trustees of the school on Devonshire Street to come across land of mine into it and it would now be a great accommodation to me if the Commissioners will allow me to the same sewer myself for the use of the cottages...'. Henry Dangerfield reported regarding the cottages in Barnett's Row that 11 houses were supplied with water from one pump and had the use of two privies connected to a cesspool. The row was also badly and ineffectively paved. He could see no objection to Mr Grassing's wish to drain off the overflow from the cesspool and the surface water to the drain but stated that this must be considered 'without prejudice to what may be required in the more perfect drainage and increased accommodation and water supply needed for these houses'.

Other grievances continued to be reported. In January 1855 Hannah Ballinger Snellus wrote from Alstone Cottage, Lower Alstone, asking for a rate abatement 'for my property where I now live, it not being lighted, paved, cleansed, flagged, repaired, watered or scavenged by the Commissioners'.

Powers were taken under the Act of 1852 to sewer the entire parish, and in 1857 the commissioners were to buy the Sewers Company for £9,000, so that all drainage came under one control. The 1852 Act also gave the commissioners the power to construct water works. However, the intention of the Act was that no public body should undertake the supply of water so long as a private body could afford it at a reasonable price. But the commissioners had constructed a large extent of sewerage works and without an increased supply of water these works could not be made effective. Besides sewerage, water was essential for other purposes including domestic use, street cleaning, public baths and fountains, fire-fighting etc.

In a report of 20 May 1852 regarding the supply of water to the streets Henry Dangerfield noted that the commissioners had eight wells, and commented on their inadequacies thus:

High Street near White Hart Row	1 pump	In dry season, daily pumped out
Portland Street	2 pumps	Unfailing supply but inadequate
Albion Street near St. James Street	1 pump	Very limited supply
Old Bath Road near the Chelt	1 pump	Unfailing supply but inadequate
Bath Road near the Chelt	1 pump	
Trafalgar Lane	1 pump	In dry season, daily pumped out
Commercial Road	2 pumps	When most required, fails by midday
Westall Green	1 pump	Comparatively useless – the only water is that which drains in & is stagnant

The Scavenger [street cleaner] got an additional and limited supply from the Water Company at Lansdown and Hewlett Road.

The Water Company was considered capable of supplying about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the quantity of water required on a daily basis and the water currently being supplied was not being done so with equal pressure and sometimes the supply was laid on for little more than an hour each day. Street watering was considered a necessary luxury, presumably because of the risk of disease.

The *Examiner* of 11 May 1853 reported that shortly after 12 o'clock the previous evening, a fire had been discovered in the bar of the Full Moon Inn, High Street, by the landlord, Thomas Richards. Quickly on the scene was a man named Jones, one of the 'Fire-Brigade,' who lived in nearby Henrietta Street. With buckets of water and assistance from neighbours and police the fire was extinguished. In a letter to the *Examiner* of 1 June 1853, 'Constant Reader' bemoaned the shortcomings of the 'water monopolists'. The following is an extract:

*'Ah, the fire which broke out the other night at the Full Moon, there was no water to be obtained at any of the fire plugs for upwards of half an hour. The engines were there, the firemen were there, the neighbours were there, but the water was not there, and had not the fire been got under by means of buckets from the neighbouring pumps! the whole premises may have been burned to the ground before the arrival of the turncocks. Surely we heard something when Mr. Cresy was here 3 or 4 years ago, about the Company being obliged to supply the fire-plugs "under constant pressure"; but as this was not done, perhaps, a little "constant pressure" through the medium of your columns, may serve to remedy the evil.'*

In a report to the commissioners dated 23 June 1853, Dangerfield advised of 36,423 yards of streets said to be watered (c.280,000 square yards), daily the greatest quantity of water used was 41,800 gallons (152 loads) which equated to approximately  $\frac{1}{6}$  gallon per square yard (although some take more others get none) and he listed all presently being watered and gave recommendations of those to be watered. (After long negotiations, the Water Company consented on 26 November 1856 to lay down separate 'fire mains' along the whole of their system. This was swiftly followed, on 17 January 1857, by the laying of the first brick of the company's new 4-acre reservoir at the Hewletts, intended to hold 16 million gallons.)

The solicitor Robert Sole Lingwood, of 2 Promenade Place, Clarence Street, wrote to the clerk to the commissioners on 20 December 1853, on behalf of his tenants in Cleveland Street, who were 'distressed' for water. There used to be 3 feet of water in their well, now after 'deepening' there are only 2 inches of water and the well daily becomes dry. He is writing in winter and asks what will happen in the 'hot weather'; in his opinion, the wells have not been deepened properly and have been left 'very imperfectly'. He wants compensation. The clerk replied the next day, stating that in some cases where 'our works have reduced the water' there have been benefits and the health of some inhabitants improved due to the lowering of water levels and the removal of the risks of flooding of basements etc. However, he agrees that there would appear to be a 'wrong which must be compensated for in one way or another' and although difficult to assess how much he will arrange for a surveyor to call. On 5 January 1853 John Holloway of 11 Cleveland Street claimed that for two months, since the installation of a new sewer, he has not had a pint of water to pump.

On 3 January 1854, contractors advised that water had been delivered by cart following the lowering of the water levels which had not been part of the contract or

estimate. Included in the accounts of the Commissioners is a bill from Tomlinson, Harpur & Harpur dated 8 April 1854 for 'horse, driver and man supplying water to the inhabitants whose wells have been dry, between 7 January 1854 and the above date: 77¼ days @ 8s. 6d. = £32 16s. 7½ d.' (The same firm won the 1858 contract for Cheltenham's branch sewers.)

Also in January 1854, the clerk to the Cheltenham Union Workhouse wrote that, because of the new sewer, the wells of the workhouse had been drained and new wells needed to be sunk at once. The guardians would do the work but the commissioners were expected to pay. Another complaint received was that before the new sewer there had been a water supply but no rates had been payable. After the installation of the sewer, there was no water supply yet rates were now payable!

### **Plans for the Town Survey**

The General Board of Health, Whitehall, wrote to the commissioners in June 1854, and their sewerage and drainage committee agreed that an accurate detailed plan of the town was necessary as a 'foundation for the laying out of the most economical and efficient plans'. The plan was to 'exhibit all the details of the streets, courts, alleys and properties... show all pavements, roadways, lamps, gas pipes and gullies, channelling, water pipes...the levels and how the several portions of the town are drained, paved, channelled, lighted and supplied with water'.

At last, on 30 October 1854 the sewerage and drainage committee resolved 'that the Surveyor do forthwith proceed to the making of a general and complete Survey or Map or Plan of the Borough upon the scale prescribed by the General Board of Health'. The commissioners approved the resolution on 3 November 1854; Henry Dangerfield was to supervise the work and 'employ an efficient staff to do the work' and be paid himself for any extra labour.

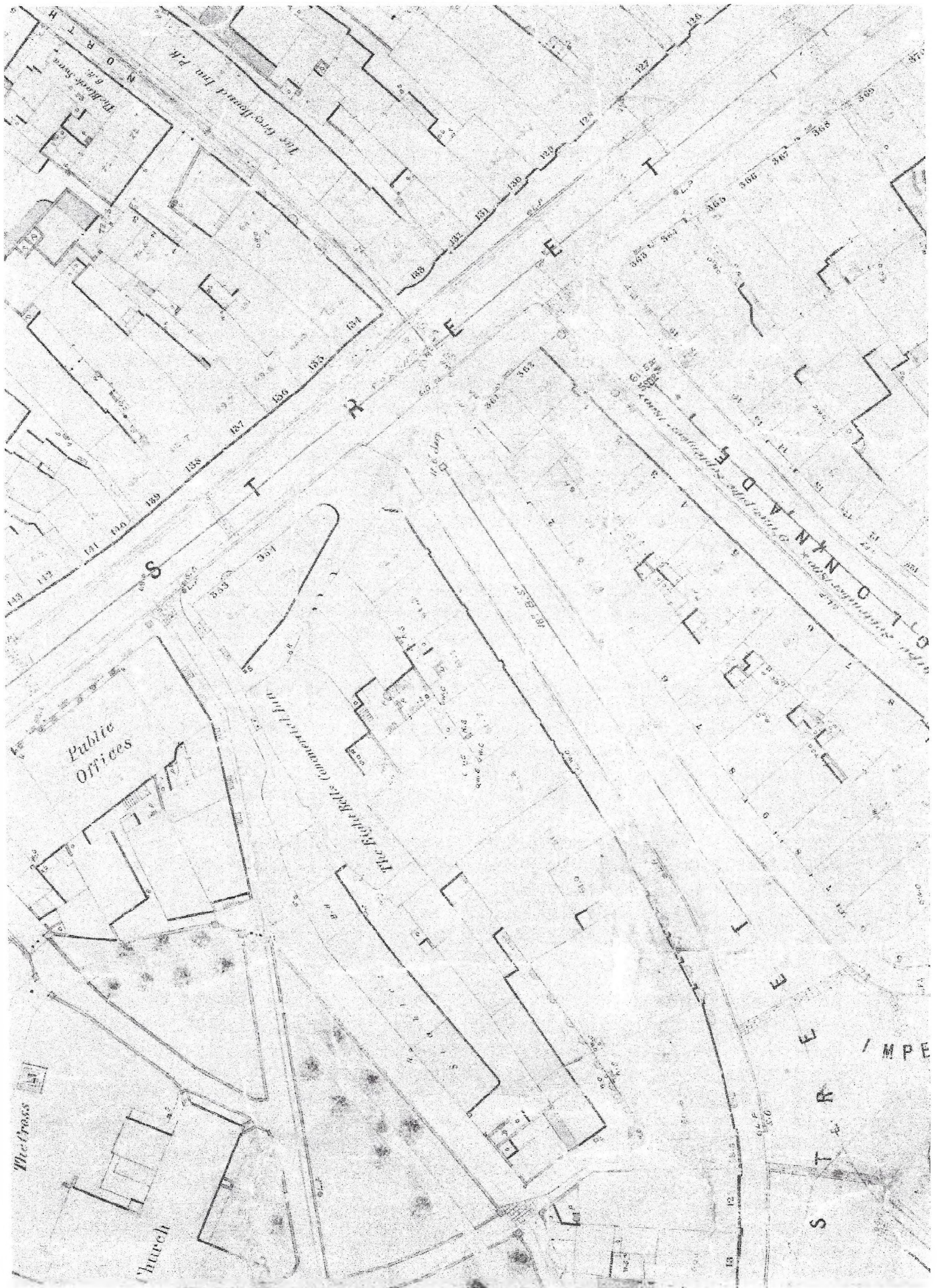
From the commissioners' minutes it is evident that during December 1854 and January and February 1855 some of them attempted to postpone action, trying to get the surveyor to make a statement about his proposals for the work and wanting to get tenders for contract etc. These pleas were rejected. Henry Dangerfield was to proceed, making monthly reports on progress and costs from April 1855.

### **How the Survey was done**

The initial work involved surveying, triangulation and measurement by chainmen. The levels of the whole town were to be laid down on maps, calculated from one fixed datum. First came a trigonometrical survey of the main points of the town, and secondly, a chain survey. The work, which started in March 1855, was described as an 'immense labour and anxiety to all concerned in it'. The initial survey was completed by the end of May 1856, the levelling work by the end of June 1856 and the checking work and the work done by the draughtsmen by March 1857 – two years in all.

Some 3,600 acres were covered, 1,700 acres in detail (rather more than the predicted 1,100), and a skeleton survey of 1,900 acres of suburbs. Draughtsmen planned to use 100 sheets covering 600 square feet in total plus a general summary plan for reference. No. 4 Bedford Buildings, Clarence Street, was rented for the period of the survey, at some £15 per annum. The letting agents were Young & Gilling whose offices at that time were in the Promenade.







The *Cheltenham Examiner* of 21 February 1855 reported that the survey was not an enlargement of Merrett's 1834 map (up till then, the best town plan available; earlier sewers had been marked on a copy of Merrett), but was on a scale of 44 feet to 1 inch, 'showing every house and piece of land in the towns & suburbs, all existing sewers, public or private, showing by a given level, how streets, houses, buildings & building land undrained can be effectually drained and showing the depth, fall and outfall of all present sewers'. Dangerfield stated that the survey maps would show the course of the sewers so obstructions could be traced, gas lamps marked so poorly lit areas could be recognised and the course of waterpipes marked where fire plugs were or should be placed. (One reason for the use of the maps today is that the actual course of sewers can be traced - Ordnance Survey maps do not show this.)

As agreed, Henry Dangerfield provided reports on progress and accounts:

(report dated 26 May 1855)

Surveyor	McCleary	34 days at 10/6	£17 17s 0d
Surveyor	Dangerfield	56 days at 8/-	£22 8s 0d
Surveyor	R. Andrews	40 days at 5/-	£16 0s 0d
Chainman	McDonald	24 days at 3/-	£ 3 12s 0d
Chainman	Webb	12 days at 1/10	£ 1 2s 0d
Chainman	Webb	12 days at 2/-	£ 1 4s 0d
Chainman	Smith	24 days at 2/6	£ 3 0s 0d

Besides surveyors and chainmen, there were costs for draughtsmen, labourers, tradesmen, instruments, stationery, rent and rates for the office, and sundries including carriage of parcels. Examples of interim payments survive in the archives, e.g.

<i>Burial Ground rate for Bedford Building office</i>		£1 2s. 10d.
<i>Sewers Rate for Bedford Building office</i>		£1 7s. 6d.
<i>Instruments</i>		£6 4s.
<i>Draughtsmen</i>	40 sheets at	£3 5s. per sheet

The total cost of the survey was £1,215 11s. 7d. estimated at £63 per annum for 30 years, to be paid for by a levy on the general district rate of ½ a farthing in the pound, i.e. 5d. on a house rated at £40. The *Examiner* of 21 February 1855 further advised that this would mean 1d. on a tenement rated at £8, 5d. on a house rated at £40, and 10d. on a house rated at £80.

← The survey extract opposite (approximately actual size) gives an idea of the level of detail recorded by Dangerfield's team. Besides an exact record of buildings, with names or house-numbers as appropriate, anything that bears on water or sewerage, and numerous features of the street scene, are all carefully marked. Note for instance the trees in the churchyard, and the paved crossings in the street. There is no surviving complete key to symbols and colours used on the survey (this will be a task for the indexing team!), but LP = lamp-post, P = pump, WC = water-closet, and D = dung-heap. The small circular symbol (within a small enclosure at the rear of many properties) probably indicates a privy.



A letter of 7 December 1854 to the commissioners had advised that Whitehall would sanction a mortgage for 30 years of £1,050. The Borough of Cheltenham Annual Statement of Accounts for subsequent years records this loan, together with others of the period. The extract shown from the accounts for the year ending 31 March 1906 includes details of loans effected between 1853 and 1905 for sewerage work.

Dates of Sanctions	Terms sanctioned for Repayment.	Purposes of Loans.	Dates of Loans.	Mode of Repayment	Dates of Expiring Terms.	Rates of Interest.	Amounts of Loans sanctioned.
		<b>DISTRICT FUND.</b>					£ s. d.
	30 years	Main Sewers ... ..	Aug. 5, 1853		Aug. 5, 1883		11000 0 0
	ditto	High Street Improvement ... ..	Jan. 5, 1855		Jan. 5, 1885		1800 0 0
	ditto	Town Survey ... ..	"		"		1050 0 0
	ditto	Purchase of Sewers from Sewers Company and Branch Sewers ... ..	April 6, 1858		April 6, 1888		17000 0 0
	ditto	Making New Sewers, etc. ... ..	Dec. 7, 1860		Dec. 7, 1890		6000 0 0
	ditto	Extending Sewers into St. Mark's District ... ..	June 34, 1873		June 24, 1893		1400 0 0
		<b>NEW WORKS OF SEWERAGE</b>					
May 18, 1897	30 years	Extending Sewers, Gloucester Road and Hall Road Districts No. 1 and 2, etc. ... ..	Oct. 30, 1897	Sinking Fund	Oct. 30, 1927	3½ per cent.	900 0 0
Jan. 30, 1899	ditto	ditto ... ..	Mar. 5, 1900	Instalments	Mar. 5, 1930	3 per cent.	6310 0 0
Sept. 17, 1903	ditto	ditto ... ..	"	"	"	3½ per cent.	4379 0 0
May 8, 1903	ditto	Leckhampton Road and Croft Street ... ..	Mar. 5, 1904	ditto	Mar. 5, 1934	3½ per cent.	150 0 0
May 23, 1899	ditto	Ditto and Works of Sewage Disposal ... ..	"	"	"	"	3437 0 0
June 16, 1900	ditto	Hatherley Brook Sewer ... ..	Dec. 5, 1900	Sinking Fund	Dec. 5, 1930	3½ per cent.	3603 0 0
Jan. 30, 1903	ditto	Hatherley Brook Sewer Reconstruction ... ..	Jan. 30, 1903	ditto	Jan. 30, 1933	4 per cent.	354 0 0
June 18, 1900	25 years	Shelburne Road Sewer ... ..	Dec. 5, 1900	ditto	Dec. 5, 1925	3½ per cent.	2453 0 0
July 31, 1900	30 years	Old Bath Road Sewer ... ..	Dec. 5, 1906	ditto	Dec. 5, 1936	3½ per cent.	652 0 0
Jan. 14, 1905	ditto	St. Peter's District Sewers ... ..	Oct. 1, 1905	ditto	Oct. 1, 1935	3½ per cent.	6653 0 0
Nov. 16, 1905	ditto	St. Paul's District Sewers ... ..	Nov. 16, 1905	ditto	Nov. 16, 1935	4 per cent.	10220 0 0
Nov. 29, 1898	ditto	Underground Conveniences, St. George's Square ... ..	Mar. 1, 1899	ditto	Mar. 1, 1929	3½ per cent.	460 0 0
Mar. 24, 1904	ditto	Surface Water Drainage ... ..	June 30, 1904	ditto	June 30, 1934	4 per cent.	260 0 0

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### Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Mrs Jean Lacock for her help with this research and her many hours spent at the GRO studying correspondence with the Commissioners in the Cheltenham Borough Archives.

# Maskelyne and Cooke: Cheltenham's men of mystery

SUE ROWBOTHAM

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## Introduction

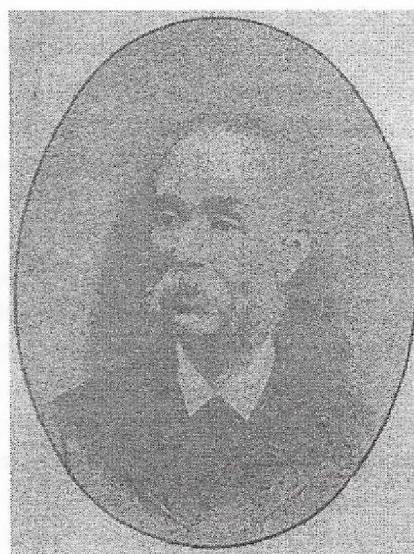
MANY PEOPLE interested in the history of Cheltenham will have heard of John Nevil Maskelyne, the watchmaker from the Lower High Street who exposed the deceptions of the fraudulent spiritualists known as the Davenport Brothers in Jessop's Gardens in 1865. However few Cheltonians know the full story of the man who was famous as a performer and inventor for more than fifty years, and is still acknowledged as one of the fathers of modern illusion by magicians all over the world. Even less is known about George Alfred Cooke, Maskelyne's friend and his partner for nearly 40 years, who had also come from Cheltenham. So who were these men and how did their fame come about?

## Early Days



John Nevil Maskelyne (*left*) was born at 20 White Hart Row<sup>1</sup>, off the lower High Street in Cheltenham in December 1839, the fourth of eleven children and only surviving son of John Nevil Maskelyne and Harriet Brunson. John Nevil Maskelyne senior had moved from Birmingham in the early 1830s, and had married Harriet in her parish church of St. Lawrence's in Swindon Village in August 1833. The family lived at White Hart Row until at least 1845, before moving to a number of other addresses in the St. Paul's area of Cheltenham, including Prospect House, which is thought to have been at the junction of St. Paul's Road and what is now called Tommy Taylor's Lane.<sup>2</sup>

George Cooke (*below*) was born in Cheltenham in 1825, the illegitimate son of Mary Cooke, a dressmaker from Newent. In *Memoirs of a Social Atom*, published in 1903, William Edwin Adams described Cooke as 'as poor a lad as any in the town, with no relative but his mother.'<sup>3</sup> Between 1841 and 1851 George and Mary lived at 1 Burton Street, just a few minutes' walk from White Hart Row. At some time after 1851 they moved to 5 Townsend Street and George continued to live with his mother here until at least April 1861. Contrary to popular belief, George Cooke was a tailor, not a cabinet-maker<sup>4</sup>.



Maskelyne's upbringing in one of the poorest parts of Cheltenham might seem an unlikely starting point for one of the greatest entertainers of the Victorian age but, despite his humble beginnings, it is clear from his published books and letters that he had had a good

education. It has not been possible so far to establish where he was educated, since his school days pre-dated most formal education records such as log-books<sup>5</sup>. However it is known that his three youngest sisters were well educated - Jane had attended the Parish Girls' School, Cheltenham; Miriam went to St. Paul's Infant School and Emily, the youngest, was a pupil teacher at Christ Church Infant School in Cheltenham. All three girls then trained as teachers at St. Mary's College, Cheltenham for two years before becoming headmistresses at girls' schools in Bath, South Wales and Cheltenham<sup>6</sup>.

Education was not compulsory in England until 1870 and most girls from the poorer areas of Cheltenham would have expected to go into service after they finished school, if they had received any education at all. The Maskelyne girls' successful careers as teachers would suggest both that they were bright and that their parents had encouraged them. John Nevil Maskelyne must have benefited at least as much from those advantages as his sisters. The Cheltenham Maskelynes also seem to have been very proud of their family connection, albeit a distant one, with Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811) who had been Astronomer-Royal to George III, as suggested by their repeated use of Nevil as a middle name in the family. Perhaps Nevil inspired them to achieve greater things or perhaps they shared some of his genes.

John Nevil Maskelyne's interest in illusions is said to have been aroused when he visited the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 and saw a mechanical 'piping bullfinch'. He also showed an early aptitude for mechanics himself when he dismantled a 'turnip watch'<sup>7</sup> belonging to his father. Maskelyne's father, impressed or perhaps exasperated by his son's interest, arranged for him to be apprenticed to a Cheltenham watchmaker, said to have been a Mr Brown of Montpellier Walk<sup>8</sup>. The only watchmaker in Cheltenham with the name Brown at the time of the census in March 1851 was Robert Brown, who lived with his family at 2 Warwick Buildings<sup>9</sup>, Cheltenham. It seems likely that this is the man to whom Maskelyne was apprenticed.

As a fashionable town, Cheltenham was a popular venue for the best-known entertainers of the day. In April 1847 a performer billed as Signor Blitz performed 'the novel and astonishing performance of walking 767 yards on a 110 gallon puncheon<sup>10</sup>, weighing 154 lbs., for a wager of £5, in 35 minutes, came off on Tuesday afternoon, on the Tewkesbury Road ... and proceeded from near the Cross-Hands, to the Worcester Arms ...'<sup>11</sup> This 'extraordinary feat' was watched by 'a great multitude of spectators', and the crowds must have included the Maskelyne family who lived nearby. Signor Blitz, the cask-walker, is said to have had many imitators: 'Who, among the admirers of *tours de force* has not heard of the renowned Signor Blitz. ... he has perambulated the streets half the towns in the kingdom, and so popular has the 'movement' of Signor Blitz become, that hosts of imitators - following at a very humble distance - have adopted the same means of amusing the public and supporting themselves.'<sup>12</sup>

John Nevil Maskelyne senior was a saddler at the time of his son's baptism, but also made a living as an ale and porter dealer and an innkeeper at different times in his working life. In 1851 he was running the Salutation Inn in Manchester Walk,<sup>13</sup> Cheltenham and in March of that year the Maskelyne family were visited by John Blitz, a 'lecturer' born in Deal in Kent, together with his wife Ann and son Abraham aged 1. In 1895 Maskelyne was quoted as saying: 'I trace my first desire to be a conjurer to Blitz ... who was a friend of my father's, and he amused us with sleight of hand.'<sup>14</sup> The same John Blitz who had visited the Maskelyne family in 1851 was living in Portishead in Somerset at the time of the 1881

census. His occupation was recorded as a 'Professor of legerdemain'<sup>15</sup> (performer). Ann Blitz and son Abraham also gave the same occupation. An illusionist and ventriloquist known as Antonio Blitz or Signor Blitz was very popular both in England and America between the 1820s and the 1870s. He was a pioneer of the art of plate spinning, which was a central feature of Maskelyne's act for many years, and is also believed to have been born in Deal in Kent. Antonio Blitz is said to have had thirteen imitators in the United States alone<sup>16</sup>. It is not clear yet whether these three performers called Blitz are in fact the same man.

### **Magic, Music and Laughter**

John Nevil Maskelyne and George Cooke would almost certainly have known each other by sight because they lived in the same part of town. Jasper Maskelyne, John Nevil's grandson, described the tale that his grandfather had often told of how the two men had spoken to each other for the first time when they quite literally bumped into each other on a street corner in Cheltenham: 'They seem to have stared at each other and begun the formal and high flown apologies of the age – and then, simultaneously, broken down in most unconventional laughter. They shook hands, exchanged names – and so began a partnership whose fame was to spread to the four corners of the earth.'<sup>17</sup> Despite the differences in ages – Maskelyne was probably in his late teens while Cooke was some 14 years older – the two men hit it off immediately and discovered that besides having a similar sense of humour, they also shared a love of music. At some point both they became cornet players in the band of the Cotswold Rifle Volunteers, and so would have played at major events in the town. Some sources suggest that they also played with Major and Bretherton's band.

Maskelyne and Cooke were also both interested in magic, and formed a conjuring club with 'half a dozen acquaintances' in Cheltenham, meeting at each other's houses, studying books on 'subjects ranging from witchcraft to legerdemain', giving demonstrations of their latest tricks and developing simple mechanisms to create illusions<sup>18</sup>. Maskelyne was said to have been '... a youth with natural aptitude for scientific research and a perfect mastery of mechanical resources and Cooke a marvel of physical dexterity. Together they often amused local audiences and especially in the company of the Cotswold Volunteer Rifles, with exhibitions of conjuring, plate-spinning, etc. These exhibitions were generally given free of charge.'<sup>19</sup> Other members of the club are thought to have included John Smith Friskney, who ran a sports, games and magical depot at 23 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham<sup>20</sup>, and James Lillywhite who sold cricket and racquet materials, ran the 'British Sports Depot' at 3 Queen's Circus and at one time ran a 'Velocipede School' in Cheltenham Town Hall<sup>21</sup>.

By 1861 Maskelyne was working as a jeweller at 12 Rotunda Terrace<sup>22</sup>, Cheltenham. The rest of his family, including all but one of his sisters, was also living at the same address, and his father was given as the head of the household. A study of the deeds for the property has shown that the Maskelyne family never owned the property. John Nevil Maskelyne's association with 12 Rotunda Terrace and with Cheltenham is commemorated on a blue Civic Society plaque. Paul Daniels, the well-known English magician who is a great admirer of Maskelyne, in 1988, unveiled the plaque.

In December 1862 John Nevil Maskelyne married Elizabeth Taylor, the fourth of seven children of Lucy Taylor, at Eckington in Worcestershire. Elizabeth's father (name unknown) had died sometime between about 1848 and 1851, and Lucy Taylor must have had great difficulty bringing up her seven children alone. At the time of the census in 1851 Lucy was described as a 'charwoman (pauper)', and she and her family were living at Melbourne



Cottage in the Carlton Place/Cleveland Street area of St. Paul's, not far from White Hart Row.

### **The Rise of Spiritualism**

From the late 1840s onwards there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in spiritualism and Ira Eratus and William Henry Harrison Davenport, sons of a policeman from Buffalo, New York, joined the growing number of people who claimed to be able to commune with spirits and became the most successful stage spirit mediums of the nineteenth century. They toured the United States with great success, accompanied by Dr J B Ferguson, a renowned orator and former church minister who passionately believed in the truth of spiritualism.

John Nevil Maskelyne's own interest in spiritualism had been aroused one day when a strange-looking man with long hair and beard came into the shop where he was working<sup>23</sup> and asked him to repair an unusual piece of apparatus. The man explained that he wanted the broken spring replaced, but managed to avoid answering a tentative enquiry about the use of the instrument. When the man returned to pay for the repair he tested the device carefully and then placed a gold half-sovereign on the counter. The cost of the repair was only a few shillings but the man is reported to have said confidentially 'I am sure that a useful young man like you will know what to do with the change. ... And in return just forget that you've seen me.'<sup>24</sup>

A few days later, at a meeting of the Cheltenham conjurers, a member mentioned that one of the American spiritualists was holding a seance at Devizes in Wiltshire, and that in the seance the invisible hands of the dead were said to rap on the table, answering questions put to them by a bearded old professor who acted as medium. Maskelyne thought of the strange apparatus that he had repaired and realised that it was an automatic table-tapper - invisible to the audience, but easily operated by anyone near the table. Before the meeting closed that night the Cheltenham conjurers vowed that they would carry out a campaign to expose all fraudulent mediums.

### **The Davenport Brothers Arrive in England**

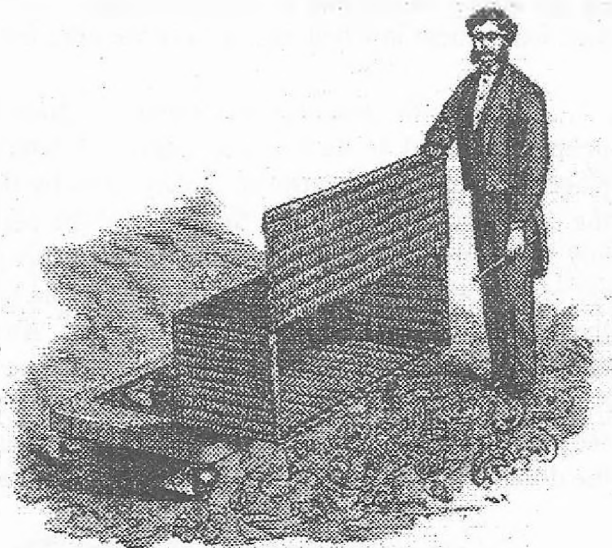
On 28 September 1864 the Davenport Brothers gave their first performance in England at a private seance in the London home of Dion Boucicault<sup>25</sup>. The Brothers went on to perform at the Hanover Square Rooms, London for several months before embarking on a provincial tour of the country. Reactions were very mixed and England became embroiled in the controversy over whether the Brothers were authentic spirit mediums or merely tricksters. In Manchester, for example, the distinguished actor Henry Irving and several friends ridiculed the Brothers in a skit at the Library Hall of the Athenaeum on 25 February 1865: 'Irving played the part of Ferguson, and the actors in the cabinet did their deceptions so deftly that the event was widely publicised.'<sup>26</sup> Irving repeated his performance at the Free Trade Hall. His attempts were a big crowd puller but it cost him his job when he refused to repeat his performance at the Theatre Royal. There were virtual riots when the Davenport Brothers performed in Liverpool the same month and many members of the audience there tried unsuccessfully to claim back their entrance fee the following day. Similar incidents are said to have taken place in Leeds and Huddersfield, and in Paris later the same year.

### The Davenport Seances in Cheltenham

On 21 February 1865 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* announced that the Davenport Brothers were to appear in the town. The reporter made scathing remarks about the Brothers' supposed 'spiritual manifestations' and suggested that 'had they announced themselves as [conjurers] they would have been just as successful' and would have avoided the unpleasant events in Liverpool the previous week. Maskelyne, Cooke and the other members of the conjuring club had begun to gain a reputation as '... young fellows who knew a thing or two, and might well be relied upon to detect any trickery that was going',<sup>27</sup> and so they were asked to join the committee that was to watch the Davenport performance at close quarters.

On the afternoon of Tuesday 7 March 1865 the Davenport Brothers made their first appearance at Cheltenham, at the Town Hall in Regent Street charging half a crown per person entrance fee. There was only a small crowd of about a hundred and the Brothers had a relatively easy time. The evening performance was a different matter. The room was in a state of almost total darkness, with only one chandelier lit and the gas turned down very low. The crowd was so restless and excited that a large police presence was required to maintain order. After his introductory address, and amidst much heckling, Dr. Ferguson asked the audience to select two men to go up onto the stage: 'Messrs Lilliwhite [sic] and Friskney were unanimously selected for this purpose, and they immediately came forward and proceeded to examine the 'cabinet' and to tie the Brothers, both of which ... they did in a thoroughly business like manner, the tying alone taking nearly three quarters of an hour ...'<sup>28</sup>

After nearly thirty minutes, 'during which prolonged period the patience of the audience became severely tried, and the vocal uproar grew well-nigh ungovernable',<sup>29</sup> the doors of the cabinet were thrown open and the Brothers emerged. Next the Brothers tied themselves in what Dr. Ferguson insisted was 'a most secure manner', and then the 'spiritual manifestations' began. According to the *Chronicle*, 'a horn, a banjo, and a bell, played themselves, were knocked about and thrown through the aperture of the cabinet; a hand was seen several times to move about, apparently without an arm, and, all the time the brothers were, or at any rate, appeared to be (when the doors were opened) securely tied to the cabinet.'



Mr. Lillywhite was then placed in the cabinet between the two brothers, holding them in such a way that he would be able to detect if they moved. The various "manifestations" were repeated and when the door of the cabinet was opened again: 'Lillywhite was seen with the tambourine on his head. On being released from his temporary imprisonment, Mr. Lillywhite, in a peculiarly pithy and pertinent manner, related his experience of what had transpired. It was 'a rum 'un,' he said. He 'felt all sorts of things; the instruments were flying about, but he did not find that the brothers moved.'<sup>30</sup> The audience continued to heckle as further 'manifestations' of the same sort took place. Finally Dr. Ferguson closed the seance by stating that Mr. Lillywhite and Mr. Friskney had done their work 'fairly, honourably, securely and scientifically' before the crowd finally dispersed.

Reactions to the Davenport Brothers' seances in Cheltenham were largely negative. The *Chronicle* called the performances 'a perfect farce and an insult to a respectable audience'<sup>31</sup>. The *Cheltenham Mercury* was rather more charitable: '... the Brothers Davenport have exhibited feats which are enough to lead superstitious minds to believe that the occult agency at work to assist them in their cabinet, must be of a somewhat supernatural kind. That the whole is capable of a scientific explanation I doubt not, but instead of abusing the operators; it would be far better for wide-awake sceptics to exert their ingenuity in discovering the *modus operandi*.'<sup>32</sup> Maskelyne and Cooke went on to do just that.

### The Davenports Outdone

On 14 June 1865 the '*Cheltenham Examiner*' announced news that would have been 'startling even before the advent of the Brothers Davenport and their imitators ... Messrs Maskelyne and Cook [sic] ... undertake to perform, in open daylight, the tricks which the Davenports professed to accomplish by 'spiritual' aid. They have constructed a cabinet similar to that used by the Davenports, and undertake to play a cornet duet therein, after having been securely tied. They also undertake to escape from a box; and indeed to practice the whole of the Davenport tricks with more than Davenport rapidity.'

Maskelyne and Cooke publicised the event in the local newspapers, billing themselves as 'the only successful rivals of the Davenport Brothers'. They announced that the cabinet that was to be used for the performance could be inspected at 12, Rotunda Terrace, Montpellier – Maskelyne's shop. Many of the people of the town would have known Maskelyne and Cooke, at least by sight, having seen them perform either in amateur magic shows or playing cornet together in the Cotswold Rifles Band. There must have been high excitement in Cheltenham over the next few days.

Finally the evening of Tuesday 19 June 1865 arrived and a crowd of several hundred people gathered in Jessop's Gardens. A simple cabinet, resting on wooden trestles, was placed on the small platform usually used by the Cotswold Rifles Band and was opened for the crowd to inspect. Mr T Smith acted the part of Dr Ferguson, but without laying claim to any spiritual intervention. Maskelyne took his place at one end of the cabinet while Cooke sat at the other. Two volunteers by the name of James and Barnett tied up the two men and the three doors of the cabinet were closed. About five seconds later bells began to ring and tambourines to play, and were violently thrown onto the stage. Less than a minute later the doors were thrown open from the inside and Maskelyne and Cooke were to be seen inside, as securely fastened as before. The manifestations were repeated several times and each time the doors were re-opened Maskelyne and Cooke appeared still seated and bound.

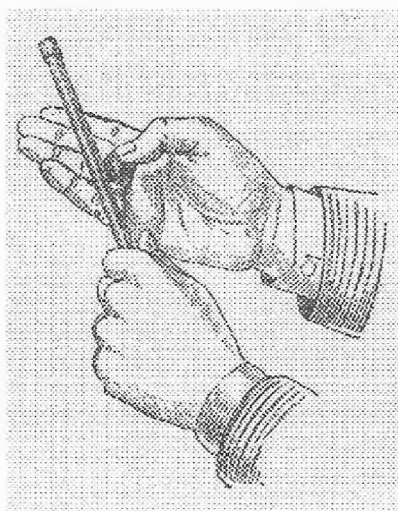
On the most spectacular occasion, 'The knots with which the performers were bound were sealed by the two gentlemen who had tied them, flour was placed in each hand and they were again locked in the cabinet, two cornets have been previously placed upon the centre seat. In less than half a minute, the strains of a cornet duet, 'Home Sweet Home', were heard, at first faint but sweet, until they gradually ascended into 'full concert pitch'. Scarcely had the echo died away when the doors were flung open the cornets were seen placed in their original position on the seat and Messrs Maskelyne and Cooke, still firmly bound, appeared to be sitting as calmly and immovable as if nothing had occurred. The sealed knots and the hands were closely inspected, but neither had apparently been disturbed.'<sup>33</sup>



The doors were closed again and five minutes later the two men emerged 'unfettered', with the flour still in their hands. Finally Maskelyne squeezed himself into a wooden box, only three feet by two feet in width, and only eighteen inches deep. The box was locked and tied with cord, and then placed in the cabinet. Bells were placed on the box, and the cabinet doors closed. 'A minute afterwards the tinkling of bells was heard, followed immediately afterwards by their being ejected through the aperture. After a lapse of eight minutes the cabinet doors were thrown violently open and Mr. Maskelyne was seen seated in the open box, and the cord lying upon the floor of the cabinet!'<sup>34</sup> The performance throughout was met with great enthusiasm and applause, and was reported widely both locally and in the national press.

### Royal Illusionists and Anti-Spiritualists

So began the professional careers of John Nevil Maskelyne and George Alfred Cooke - illusionists. They toured local towns, developing their act as they went. Times were not always easy and they came close to bankruptcy on several occasions. However in Lancashire they met William Morton, a young promoter, who arranged an extensive tour of the provinces and in 1869 he booked them for an engagement at the Crystal Palace in London. Their performance there was a great success. A private show for the Prince of Wales at Berkeley Castle further enhanced their reputation and their careers were assured. They continued to tour until 1873 when they signed a lease on a theatre in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, initially for three months. They remained there for more than thirty years, putting on - performances them- talent. Maskelyne was inventor of new illusions, showmanship, while 'Mr. comrade and devoted friend, assistant'.<sup>35</sup> They always illusions were the result of there was no intervention Throughout their time in Cooke never forgot their performed in the town on a they had become national Cooke paid frequent visits to Cheltenham and that he greeting for Cheltenham ready to provide them with free seats at 'Maskelyne and Cooke's' when they were on a visit to London.<sup>36</sup>



oneselves, and encouraging new always the frontman and combining science with Cooke, always a staunch was the confidential emphasised that their skill and dexterity and that from the spirit world. London Maskelyne and Cheltenham roots, and number of occasions after celebrities. It was said that his relatives and friends in always had 'a kindly people ... [He] was ever

Maskelyne founded a dynasty of illusionists, with his two sons and four of his grandchildren following in his footsteps, and almost all performed in Cheltenham. He maintained his connection with the Cheltenham Rifle Corps, subscribing to their prize fund until at least 1892. Maskelyne owned No. 1 and 2 Nevil Villas<sup>37</sup>, Hewlett Road, and is said to have owned other property in Cheltenham, as did Cooke. Maskelyne's sister Emily was headmistress at Christ Church Infant School in Cheltenham from 1874 to 1876 and then at Christ Church Girls' School between 1874 and 1886, and two of the pupils from the Girls' School were taken on as servants in John Nevil Maskelyne's household in Battersea in 1881.



As for 'Maskelyne's Home of Mystery' at the Egyptian Hall, and later at the St George's Hall in London – and the many inventions that Maskelyne patented during his lifetime – that is another story ...

*Left: 2 Nevil Villas (161 Hewlett Road)*

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### Acknowledgements

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Known as White Hart Street since about 1855-7. House was demolished in about 1903 as part of the preparations for the building of the Great Western Railway Honeybourne line (Hodsdon).

<sup>2</sup> Known as Taylor's Lane until the early 1880s (Hodsdon).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *Cheltenham Chronicle* 11 Feb 1905.

<sup>4</sup> Census returns for Cheltenham 1851 and 1861.

<sup>5</sup> Only required by law following the Education Act of 1863.

<sup>6</sup> St. Mary's Admission Book 1847-1894

<sup>7</sup> Type of pocket watch.

<sup>8</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo* 4 Feb 1905.

<sup>9</sup> Thirteen houses in a court off the west side of Winchcombe Street. Probably demolished in about 1935 (Hodsdon).

<sup>10</sup> Large cask for liquids holding between 72 and 120 gallons (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

<sup>11</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner* 28 Apr 1847.

<sup>12</sup> *Cheltenham Journal* 3 May 1847.

<sup>13</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 11 Feb 1905.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Maskelyne in *English Illustrated Magazine* dated Jan 1895 (quoted in Jenness).

<sup>15</sup> 'Sleight of hand, conjuring tricks, juggling' (Concise Oxford Dictionary)

<sup>16</sup> *The Illustrated History of Magic* p.106

<sup>17</sup> *White Magic* p.17

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 11 Feb 1905

<sup>20</sup> *Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory* 1879 and 1889.

<sup>21</sup> *Cheltenham and Gloucester Directory* 1865 to 1881.

<sup>22</sup> Terrace of nineteen houses and shops on the west side of Montpellier Street (Hodsdon).

<sup>23</sup> This incident probably took place while Maskelyne was still an apprentice to Mr. Brown.

<sup>24</sup> *White Magic* p.18.

<sup>25</sup> Successful Irish playwright, actor and theatre manager (1820-90) who started his professional acting career in Cheltenham.

<sup>26</sup> *Magic A Picture History* p.106.

<sup>27</sup> *White Magic* p.20.

<sup>28</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 14 Mar 1865

<sup>29</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On* 11 Mar 1865

<sup>30</sup> *Cheltenham Journal* 11 Mar 1865

<sup>31</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 14 Mar 1865

<sup>32</sup> *Cheltenham Mercury* 11 Mar 1865

<sup>33</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner* 21 Jun 1865

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *The Era* 4 Feb 1905

<sup>34</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On* 26 Jun 1915

<sup>35</sup> Now 159 and 161 Hewlett Road.

# One Out, All Out! - Resignations from the Cheltenham Fire Brigade, 1852

MICK KIPPIN

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ON MONDAY 28 June 1852 the Cheltenham town commissioners held a special meeting to appoint their various officers for the coming year. Mr Davies proposed that the superintendent of the fire brigade, Mr George Parsonage, be reappointed for a further year; however, a second nominee, Mr William Smith, a plumber, was put forward by Mr Beckinsale and seconded by Mr Sheddon. The matter was therefore put to the vote, which

**W. SMITH,**  
*REGENT HOUSE, top of St. George's Street,*  
**PLUMBER, GLAZIER, PAINTER, LEAD, GLASS,  
AND COLOUR MERCHANT,**

Begs to inform the Inhabitants of Cheltenham and the surrounding district, that he supplies every article in the above businesses, wholesale and retail, at Manufacturers' Prices, for Ready Money.

Builders and the Trade supplied with Water Closets, Lift Pumps, Sheet Lead, Lead Pipe, Brass Cocks of every description, equal to their sending to the makers, Oil, White Lead, and Colours. British Plate, Patent Plate, Sheet and Crown Glass bent and stained, and Ornamental Glass of every description.

*Estimates Given for Building, Alterations, or Repairs.*

**EXPERIENCED WORKMEN EMPLOYED IN EVERY  
BRANCH.**

*Agent for the Staffordshire Cement.*

Advertisement for William Smith's plumbing business.

resulted in 9 votes for Parsonage and 11 for Smith, so Mr Smith was duly appointed.

At the same meeting it was agreed that it was not necessary for the board to appoint the subordinate officers of the brigade and that Mr Smith should submit a list of names of five captains and 15 firemen at the next

monthly meet-ing, to be held on Friday 2 July. However, before the commissioners' meeting with Mr Smith, several officers of the Cheltenham fire brigade wrote a joint letter to express their concern over his appointment:

*'We the undersigned Officers of the Fire Brigade established under the late Town Commissioners having acted for some length of time under our Superintendent Mr George Parsonage, in whom we have always had the greatest confidence and being fully satisfied from our own experience that the Town is in considerable danger and will sustain a very great loss through the discontinuance of his services, and that his reappointment was only prevented through the absence of several Commissioners who, as we are informed, had left the Board under the impression that the business of a special meeting appointed for one o'clock would render it impossible for that portion of the report of the Committee to be considered.' ....'*

In asking the Commissioners to reconsider their decision, they further stated:

*"... any successor to Mr Parsonage who has not had experience in the management of the Fire Establishment is wholly unfit for the duties of the*



office and we cannot therefore place the smallest confidence in the management and direction of any inexperienced party....'

Five captains and fifteen firemen, the majority of the brigade at the time, put their names to the letter, as shown below:

*this last day of July 1852*  
*We are Gentlemen*  
*Your obedient Servants*

		No. of Years in the Brigade
Captains	Thomas Neale	2 Bayshill Terrace 14 years
	James Neale	2 Bayshill Terrace 14 years
	Richard Sutton	St Georges Square 16 years
	Edwin Smith	11 King Street 7 years
	Edward Matthews	12 Phipps Place 15 years
Firemen	Isaac Neale	1 de Choyse St 7 years
	Richard Hull	2 Albert Street 3 years
	Charles Craddock	3 Ambrose Street 4 years
	Andrew Crookshanks	5 St Paul St North Place 5 years
	Joseph Clarke	10 Manchester 7 years
	William Kilminster	Bayshill Inn 2 years
	William Simons	St James Square 4 years
	Joseph Dyke	10 Grove Street 2 years
	Thomas Tanner	Alstone 4 years
	Henry Hatch	28 St James Street 2 years
	William Austin	30 Lower South Street 14 years
	William Warren	Alstone 7 years
	Samuel Branson	Cold Bath Cottage 4 years
	Francis Sutton	5 Launce Place 3 years
	Samuel Kirk	3 Parkers Cottages 6 years

Gloucestershire County Record Office CBR B2/7/2/1 – reproduced with permission

Mr Smith duly presented his list of names to the commissioners at their meeting on 2 July 1852. However, they were told that only seven of the old firemen were on the list and that the rest had refused to serve under Superintendent Smith. A letter from Mr Parsonage was also read out in which he denied any involvement in the action of his officers.

**FURNISHING UNDERTAKER.**

**GEORGE PARSONAGE**

Begs to inform the Public that he is enabled to undertake the

**Furnishing of Funerals,**

upon any Scale, and upon the most Economical Terms, at th<sup>e</sup>  
same time ensuring the most efficient Appointments, combined  
with uniform punctuality in the execution of all Orders with  
which he may be entrusted.

4, ST. GEORGE'S PARADE,  
BAYS HILL.

1856 advertisement for Mr Parsonage's Undertaking business.

Parsonage was soon able to concentrate on his own business. The 1855 Directory shows him as 'Plumber, Builder & Undertaker', then in 1856, as 'Furnishing Undertaker'.

This whole unfortunate incident did not deter George Parsonage from further public office; he was elected as one of the commissioners for the West Ward in 1856 and then appointed mayor in 1882; an office he was to retain for the succeeding five years.

It would seem that it was not his trade as a plumber, but Mr Smith's lack of experience in fire fighting to which the officers of the fire brigade took objection, since the previous superintendent, Mr Parsonage, practised the same trade in Cheltenham<sup>2</sup>. In the 1852 Cheltenham Directory both Smith and Parsonage are shown as 'Painters, Glaziers & Plumbers'. However, with his involvement in the fire brigade behind him Mr

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 30 commissioners were appointed under the 1852 Cheltenham Improvement Act; only two-thirds were present at this meeting.

<sup>2</sup> It is of interest that Mr William Baker, yet another plumber, replaced Mr Smith as superintendent in 1881.

## William Jay, Regency Architect – date of birth confirmed at last?

FURTHER TO Susan Hamilton's article in *Journal 17*, where the long-uncertain year of Jay's birth was given as 'probably' 1792, Mike Grindley has drawn our attention to a newspaper announcement which appears to resolve the matter. Following Jay's 1828 bankruptcy, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 19 November 1829 advertised a forthcoming auction by his assignees of Jay's interest in a quantity of government stocks. Jay is described here as 'now in his 38<sup>th</sup> year' (his wife was in her 32<sup>nd</sup>). This puts his date of birth somewhere late November 1791 and mid-November 1792.

# No Hawlf Measures: Gifts to Cirencester Abbey and Llanthony Priory of Land in Cheltenham in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries

MICHAEL GREET

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THIS PAPER summarises some evidence concerning early land-holding in Cheltenham (describing gifts of land to Llanthony Priory before 1196 and c1220, and to Cirencester Abbey c1220). There are also references to the clearance of woodland (to assarts, to the place-names Wodebrock, Wodebreche), reflecting the gradual expansion of settlement and cultivation in the hundred. This adds to the evidence for woodland and assarting in Cheltenham hundred presented by Barbara Rawes in 1988<sup>1</sup>, and to Welch's 1935 observation that 'In 1161 Llanthony Priory got 11s [income] in Cheltenham, probably certain 'essarts' or clearings given them by Walter of Hereford'<sup>2</sup>.

Many of the gifts were by Walter Hawlf (also spelled Haulf). I assume that these gifts, all in the Cheltenham area within a period of about 30 years, were by one man (as the similarity of two of the gifts each to a different religious house might also indicate), but references to an individual of similar name in Gloucester deeds between c1220 and 1263-4 could suggest that there was more than one generation involved (a Cheltenham deed does refer to Hawlf's heirs) or even two families. However, one Gloucester deed, witnessed by Haulf, is a gift of land there by perhaps the Robert of Deerhurst whose daughter gave Haulf land in Alstone, a possibility supported by the use of 'Cheltenham' witnesses, and this might also suggest that only one man is involved. The stated motive for several of these gifts was to secure Hawlf's spiritual health; they make him an unusually prominent lay figure in Cheltenham at this period. Llanthony Priory in Gloucester and Cirencester Abbey were leading houses of the Augustinian canons, both founded around 1130.

## GIFTS TO CIRENCESTER ABBEY

### Land in Alstone

Some deeds in the Cirencester Abbey Cartulary ('CAC') show that, c1220<sup>3</sup>, Walter Hawlf of Cheltenham gave eight acres of arable to Cirencester Abbey for the health of his soul and those of his ancestors. The land was bought from Ralph and Mabilia Russell<sup>4</sup> before 1233, and comprised six acres in Gravendon' furlong, and two acres in Pesfurlong'. In return Hawlf was to receive 4d, payable in two parts, at Michaelmas, and Lady Day, and a pair of gloves or 1d. The same six acres were described in the Russells' charter as an assart above Gravendun, and the two acres evidently lay in Alstone. Hawlf had paid Ralph 20s in silver, and half a silver mark to Mabilia; and owed homage and service, and a render of 4d.

A separate charter by one Mabilia, daughter of Emma, [of Alstone] gave land of a similar description to Hawlf, in return for two marks of silver. (It is not clear why this apparent duplication occurred unless Mabilia had rights in the land, perhaps dower rights, which needed to be bought out). The charter, of which there are two copies, is also dated

before 1233, and the witnesses are almost the same as those in the Russell charter. One copy of this charter mentions a liability for foreign service ('salvo forinceco domini regis servicio'), which implies Mabilia had held by knight service.<sup>5</sup> One Sibyl of Bayeux also gave up all her rights in the same land.<sup>6</sup>

#### Land in Charlton Kings

Hawlf also gave in alms an assart of his land 'in Rodeweve versus orientem juxta regiam viam' (which William de Fonte had had and given up)<sup>7</sup>. Dues to the crown were 1d per quarter, payable 'as all tenants of the lord king in the manor of Cheltenham are accustomed to do', perhaps a sum payable when assarts were made on crown land. William de Fonte is probably the man who was an accessory to the murder of a merchant by de Fonte's wife and son in 1221<sup>8</sup>.

#### Land in Cheltenham

Hawlf also gave, with the agreement of his wife and heirs, for the health of 'me and mine' two acres more of land in Cheltenham. One acre lay in Westmoresfurlonge<sup>9</sup> between land of William Fraunkeleyn and that of Walter de la Venele [?Lane]. A half-acre lay in Hethhulle<sup>9</sup> between land of William Frang' [Franklin?] and that of Ralph de Campo. Half an acre lay next to the road of Kakebridge<sup>10</sup>. Cirencester Abbey already held Cheltenham rectory and its endowment<sup>11</sup>.

### GIFTS TO LLANTHONY PRIORY

#### Land in Ham and Charlton Kings

Before 1196 Walter of Ashley (Esseleg), lord of Ashley manor (Charlton Kings) since before 1143, and a tenant-in-chief of the king, gave to St Mary and the canons of Llanthony Priory for the health of the souls of him, his wife, his ancestors and descendants in perpetual alms, the homage and all the land held by Richard, son of Bald[w]in in Charlton, who was to pay the canons half a mark of silver annually for it<sup>12</sup>.

Walter of Ashley also confirmed a gift by Walter Hawlf<sup>13</sup>, for the health of his soul and those of his ancestors, of land (earlier received from Walter of Ashley) and the tenants thereon, at Ham, to Llanthony Priory. The gift consisted of two half-virgates [each about 12 acres] one held by Thomas son of Waluric and one by Radulf [Ralph] Godrich and their respective families. In return Walter of Ashley was to receive annually for Ralph's holding a pair of gilded spurs, worth 6d, for all service due to him and his heirs. For the other tenement 4s sterling would become due annually: 12d at the feast of St Andrew [30 November], 12d at the Annunciation [25 March], 12d at the feast of St John Baptist [24 June] and 12d at Michaelmas [29 September], for all service. Other service was owed to the crown for the two tenements in the vill<sup>14</sup>. There are several noteworthy points in these deeds:

- until they were given away, there were two Ashley Manor base (unfree) tenements in Ham. There were very probably 18 base tenements left in the manor in 1246<sup>15</sup>. The holdings were not concentrated in one block of land, but were scattered throughout the three tithings of Bafford, Charlton and Ashley. Until this evidence we knew of only one Ashley holding in Ham.



- this is the earliest reference to Ham, which was identified as a separate vill (township);
- some of the tenants living in Charlton can be identified for the first time. The Godrich family were evidently living in Ham some 200 years earlier than previously known.

The three holdings given to Llanthony are unidentified. We know some of the tenants of Llanthony land in Charlton Kings in the late 15th century, and the rent paid or owed for it, but we have no precise locations. For the first, in 1480 rents of 24s were payable from Ham; and a Charlton holding owed 6s 8d (was Richard's holding still paying the 12<sup>th</sup>-century rent of half a mark? It seems likely). For the second, also in the 1480s the lord of Charlton was also owed 'out rent ... paid by the tenant at Ham' of 4s 6d (the 4s owed before 1200 by Thomas for his land, plus 6d in lieu of spurs). For the third holding, in 1482 Margaret Hale of Charlton had paid 2s 6d, and Thomas Huntley 2s 5d.

Later references are made to the heirs of John Grevyle, Walter Frenssh, and Walter Boroghill owing bailiff's arrears of 49s 8d. The tenants of Geybreche (unlocated) in Charlton also owed money: in 1488 'when it was lately John Throckmorton's 3s 3d'<sup>16</sup>. The names Grevill, Frensshe and Throckmorton appear too in a rental of Cheltenham manor of c1450<sup>17</sup>. Walter Frensshe the elder then held Lordysleyn next Oakley in Ham, near where Llanthony also held land (see footnote <sup>7</sup>, last sentence).

#### Land in Hatherley

About 1220 Alexander, son of Swein of Alstone, because of his great need, sold land (his inheritance) in Hatherley, which he had recovered from John, son of Ralph (D?)ia, by a writ of the king in the royal court in Cheltenham, to both Walter Hawlf and to Llanthony Priory in each case for three marks. Presumably his holding was divided, but it is unclear why the priory wished to record the sale to Hawlf unless it had some interest in the land. In both instances the land was free of all service except for 6d annually to the (work or need?) of the crown in Cheltenham<sup>18</sup>. John Rhodes suggests 'the parallel conveyances by Alexander ... [may] show Haulf to be acting as the priory's agent' buying the land for the priory and holding it while it raised the money or gained permission for the acquisition, the second conveyance being his security<sup>19</sup>. This appears to explain the matter.

#### Land in Alstone

Probably in the late 12th century Walter Hawlf gave more land, for the health of his and his ancestors' souls, to God and the church of St Mary at Llanthony and the canons serving God there. There was an assart above Gravendon; two acres more in Pesefurlong, Alstone, a gift to him from Mabilia, daughter of Emma; and two acres of meadow in the meadow called Mora in the part called 'Alres' and which was a gift from Matilda daughter of Robert of Derhurst, rendering the necessary service<sup>20</sup>. This appears to be the earliest evidence of the name Alstone (Alveston). (A similar gift to Cirencester Abbey, but no meadow, was described above).

In 1230 there occurred the gift to Adam Esturmi, the King's servant, 'of half an acre called the meadow of 'la More' which Walter Haul essarted'<sup>1</sup>.

Mabilia, daughter of Emma of Alstone also gave to Llanthony Priory for the health of herself, her ancestors and successors an assart of her inheritance free from all service. It lay between Wodebrock and Blakebrok in Alstone<sup>21</sup>.

A further gift of land to Llanthony Priory, [probably 1200-1230], resulted from the disposal, (with the consent of his brother, William) by Reginald, son of Reginald de la Fortheye of Alstone of half his land of Wodebreche to Walter Hawlf, for his homage and service. It lay towards the south part and the (head?) extended towards the west part above the assart of Robert Coigne. Hawlf was to pay Reginald and his heirs 2d annually, 1d at the feast of St. Mary 'in Marcio' and 1d at Michaelmas. He could also sell or grant the holding to anyone. The service due to the crown from the holding was still to be paid<sup>22</sup>. Walter Hawlf then conveyed this land to Llanthony Priory, details of the transaction being similar to those of the conveyance to Hawlf, and service owed from the tenement to the Crown was to be paid as in Reginald's charter<sup>23</sup>.

In 1230, as Mrs Rawes noted<sup>1</sup>, Robert Coygnee, (who had held a virgate of land of the king in chief) was a fugitive and outlaw for the death of John Wudeman. Thomas Capellan [a chaplain?], son and heir of Reginald de la Fortheye then gave Llanthony, for his soul's health, half the land of Wodebreche [presumably the second half] which had been his father's holding<sup>24</sup>.

Llanthony Priory also held other land in the Cheltenham area, including two assarts at Oakley [SO 9722]<sup>25</sup>; Redgrove Manor; and property at Prestbury.

**Place-names:** the sources quoted in this paper provide the first references for several Cheltenham furlong, stream, and place names, for the time being not precisely located: these are *Blakebrok*, *Gravendun*, *Pesfurlong*, *Wodebreche*, and *Wodebrock* in Alstone tithing; and *Hethhulle* and *Westmoresfurlong* elsewhere. The mention of the meadowland *Mora* is the earliest yet found.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> B Rawes, *The fields and field names of the Hundred of Cheltenham (with some notes on the early topography) Part 1: the Parish of Cheltenham*, in *CLHS Journal* 6, 1988, p 11 (based on the *Calendar of Charter Rolls* Vol I, 119. 14 Henry III)

<sup>2</sup> F B Welch, *Gloucestershire in the Pipe Rolls*, TBGAS 57 (1935), pp 49-109

<sup>3</sup> *The Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey*, Vols I and II ed. C D Ross (1964), and Vol III ed. M Devine (1977). The CAC documents concerning Hawlf are c1220. Ross dated CACII 427/458, 428/459, and 430/462 as mid-13th century, and 429/461, 431/463 as before 1233. Devine dated CAC III 460 as mid-13th century. Mid-13th century is too late. Walter Hawlf witnessed 2 charters by Walter, Abbot of Cirencester 1217-1230 (CAC I 278/134,

279/136), where Ross suggests a date before 1220, about the date of the reference to William de Fonte. Llanthony Cartulary (LC) V, serial 79, shows Walter Hayewlf 'in the first year Silvester was consecrated Bishop of Worcester' [3 July 1216 to 3 July 1217] was granted the right to grow crops for four years on meadow called Brodemed at 'Hae' (probably Down Hatherley) for a horse given to John de Kynefare (Kinver?). The Priory presumably recorded the grant as its own land was being sub-let. Priory land in Down Hatherley, with other scattered holdings, formed part of its 'Hatherley' (Redgrove) Manor (J Rhodes). This manor depended on the royal Cheltenham hundred/manor (served by Cheltenham parish church, a former minster) and owed attendance at the hundred court ('in 1333 the Prior of Llanthony who owned land in Arle' had two animals

confiscated for non-attendance – Hart, *History of Cheltenham*, p 37) as did Ashley Manor. This explains why Down Hatherley land was part of Cheltenham parish ('infra limites parochie ecclesie de Chiltenham') and Llanthony owed tithes to Cirencester Abbey. CAC II 407/439, 408/440.

<sup>4</sup> One John Russell was granted by the Abbey (between 1196 and 1213) the land in Dorset earlier given to it by Walter of Ashley, the first Lord of Ashley, and Felicia his wife (CAC II/568). See also note <sup>12</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The second copy (CAC II 432/464) omits this phrase. Another gift by Mabilia is also represented by two copies of a charter: LC V, 42 and 43.

<sup>6</sup> CAC III 460

<sup>7</sup> CAC II 428/459. Barbara Rawes suggested this gift later formed part of the Cheltenham Rectory lands: 'Rodeweys was the ancient road which ran down Aggs Hill'. (see *Three Properties of Cirencester Abbey in the Cheltenham Area*. *CLHS Journal* 1 (1983), pp 2-3). The route continued from the foot of Harp Hill to the Tewkesbury road (see Nigel Cox, *An Ancient Road through Cheltenham, Glevensis* 14, 1980, pp 20-22). The 1848 Tithe Map shows TM 113, 114 as Lower and Upper Roadways, so Walter's land was probably on part of the site of Hewletts Reservoir. (M Greet, *An Ancient Road*, Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin (CKLHSRB) 9 (1983) p 49). See also references to Upper and Lower Radway in J Sale, *Hewletts and the Agg family*, *Journal* 5 (1987) pp 11-22. There are useful plans of local fields, including Lordysleyn, on pp 20-21.

<sup>8</sup> See M Paget, *Crime in Charlton Kings, 1221*, CKLHSRB 37 (1997), pp 2-3

<sup>9</sup> Not previously recorded or otherwise located.

<sup>10</sup> CAC II 430/462

<sup>11</sup> M Greet, *The Church and its Chapels in Medieval Cheltenham: A Summary*, *CLHS Journal* 13 (1997) pp 34-38

<sup>12</sup> The date 1143 is from Welch 1935, p 54. The gift is in LC VI, serial 57. Walter of Ashley, dead by Michaelmas 1196 (CAC II 568, footnote), is identified as the donor by the reference to 'Walt' filio meo' as a charter witness. (Walter of Ashley II succeeded his father (d. 1195), and died childless in 1245, when his sister inherited. She died in 1252. See F B Welch, *The Manor of Charlton Kings*,

*later Ashley*, TBGAS 54 (1932) pp 150, 152). Other witnesses included some, Humfrido, son of John; Walter de Lancinges and Gervase de Lancinges, (who are very probably Walter de Lance and Gervase, nephew of William [of Credewell]) who witnessed the gift by Walter I to Cirencester Abbey of a hide of land in Dorset before 1196 (CAC II/568). If this gift was in return for permitting the chapel in Charlton to be erected its date might be near the dedication date (1190-1191 or 1193) of the chapel (see M Greet, *A More Precise Date for the Dedication of the 12th Century Chapel at Charlton Kings*, CKLHSRB 8 (1982), pp 55-56, and *Charlton Chapel: Speculation*, CKLHSRB 9 (1983), p 32).

<sup>13</sup> LC VI, 55. Hawlf's charter witnessed by Ralph of Chandos and Richard of Veym, knights. The latter witnessed, with Walter I, a charter of Margaret of Bohun of c1174-1186 (see Walker p 61). Both Ralph and Richard witnessed Hawlf's further gift to Llanthony, see note <sup>19</sup>. Two earlier charters of Walter I, VI, 53, 54, conveyed the two half-virgates to Hawlf, witnessed by Sir (Dms) Richard of Muzegros and Sir Jordan de (Dighton?); Jordan de (Dighton?), Symon of the Ford, Walter de (?)ington, William Paris, Robert of Morin, William of Ham. One Richard Muscegros was Sheriff of Gloucester in 1206-1207 (see CAC I 267/124, footnote).

<sup>14</sup> LC VI, 56. The gift was made also for the souls of him, his ancestors and successors. Witnesses were William de Paris, Knight; Symon de Ford; Walter Harolf; dated before 1196.

<sup>15</sup> According to the second Walter of Ashley's Inquisition Post Mortem (Welch 1932, pp 145-65)

<sup>16</sup> Details of Llanthony rents in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Charlton come from John Rhodes' summary of the Accounts of the Farmer and Bailiff of Prestbury 1481-2, 1482-3, 1485-1486. GRO D1637/M26 (to be published as an Appendix to *Registers of Llanthony Priory 1457-1525*). Mrs M Paget stated that in 1705 'a Close of pasture called Gaybreaches...was mortgaged by Richard Pates'. It was adjacent to Harebreach or Hawbreach Grove. The location is 'at the top of the [present] Golfcourse... [near] the Common' in Charlton. Other land with this name may have existed. GRO D7661, box 5.

<sup>17</sup> M Paget, *A Rental of Cheltenham Manor about 1450. The Charlton Section*

(GRO D855/M68), in CKLHSRB 15 (1986) pp. 10-18

<sup>18</sup> LC V, 39 and 40. I presume this deed refers to Up Hatherley from the reference to the court in Cheltenham, and the names of some witnesses (associated with Cheltenham). Witnesses (39) Robert Morin, Simon de la Forde, Walter Wibert, Ralph Ruso; (40) as 39 plus Walter Hayewlf. Reginald's sons Reginald, Ralph, and Walter also appear to have witnessed the sale. The gift was c1220.

<sup>19</sup> Mr Rhodes quotes an instance in 1349 when three properties were similarly conveyed both to the priory and another party but it 'took twenty years to obtain a mortmain licence', meanwhile the royal escheator could be misled with the second deed. Mr Rhodes' letter to author, based on Microfilms 1101, 1106 PRO C115/75 (=6681) ff133-134 (old foliation) and C115/84 (=6690) ff64-66 nos 171-176.

<sup>20</sup> LC V, 41; witnessed by Ralph de Chandos, Richard de Veym, knights. (cf note <sup>13</sup>, 1st para).

<sup>21</sup> LC V, 42 and 43

<sup>22</sup> LC V, 44

<sup>23</sup> LC V, 45

<sup>24</sup> LC V, 46

<sup>25</sup> One of 8 acres and one of unknown size. See J Rhodes, *Llanthony Priory, Glevensis* 23 (1989) pp 17-19; D Walker, *Charters of the Earldom of Hereford 1095-1201*, Camden Miscellany 22 (1964), p. 46.

I am grateful to Mr John Rhodes, MA, for reviewing drafts of this paper, and drawing my attention to various sources, including the Llanthony Priory Cartulary references relating to the priory's holdings in Alstone and Charlton Kings. These are from Sections V and VI on GRO Microfilm 1104, (PRO C115/77, formerly C115/6683 or A1). He has commented that 'for administrative purposes the Priors of Llanthony grouped the scattered properties mentioned into their portmanteau

'manor' of Redgrove and attached those mentioned in Section VI to what they called their 'rectory or manor' of Prestbury'.

## APPENDIX

**Gloucester references to Walter Haulf/Hulf** -- taken from W H Stevenson, *Calendar of the Records of the Corporation of Gloucester* (1893)

192: About 1220 Walter Haulf witnessed a grant of Robert of Deerhurst's land near Goseditch, Gloucester, to his nephew Roger the Smith of Cheltenham.

265: About 1230 he witnessed a demise of Alice, the widowed daughter of Haulf the Shipsmith (who had held land in Walkers' or Fullers' Street/Lane, now Lower Quay Street) to Thomas the Dyer of Quenhulle, burgess of Gloucester, of her land there (near the Severn, 206; towards the bridge of Gloucester, 427). He witnessed grants of land in the same street also c1230, 332; 1245, 427; 1249, 423-3; in 1252-3 he witnessed a duplicate grant of Gloucester rents 487; about 1260 Walter Hulf held land in Smiths Street for 5s rent, 540; in 1263-64 Walter Hulfe held land in Walkers' Street, 585. He was perhaps a fuller as he had land in Walkers' Street, but other trades operated there too. (I found no evidence of fulling in Cheltenham in the 1200s but there was a fulling mill at Cudnall, Charlton Kings, in Henry V's reign. Hart, p. 43). It is possible he was connected with Haulf the Shipsmith (or Marinarius) from both his name and his landholding (in the early 13th century Walter, son of Hawlf, held jointly with Walter de Ford two half virgates in villeinage in Haresfield. This was part of land given to Llanthony Priory by Henry de Bohun, Earl of Hereford. (M Ecclestone, *The Haresfield Pottery: An Investigation*, Glevensis 33 (2000) p54). LC II 50,51. PRO C115/77. GRO MF 1104.

**Correction to *Aspects of Medieval Cheltenham* (in *Journal* 17, p 42, para A, line 7): the feast of St John is 24 June, not 29 August, which marked the beheading of St John Baptist.**

# Cheltenham Apprentices in Gloucester, 1595-1700

JILL BARLOW

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BETWEEN 1595 and 1700 (the period covered by the Calendar of Gloucester apprenticeship registers<sup>1</sup>), 51 boys who named Cheltenham as their place of residence were enrolled as apprentices in the Gloucester city registers now kept in the Gloucestershire Record Office.<sup>2</sup> These were not charity apprentices placed by the parish but young men hoping to advance in the world whose parents probably had to pay a premium to the master.

They were entering a system established by the medieval trade guilds to monitor standards of training and restrict the numbers entering a trade. The apprenticeship indenture was a legally binding contract: the master provided lodging and training and the apprentice promised to serve him faithfully, to keep his secrets and to abstain from gaming, fornication and marriage. At the end of his term the apprentice could become a freeman of the guild (later called a company), qualified to practise his trade and to take apprentices of his own. The Statute of Artificers, 1563, was intended to lay down national standards for apprenticeship but it failed to provide a national system of administration and enforcement and local practices continued to vary widely.

One of the requirements of the statute was that apprenticeship could not end until the boy was 24 (only in 1768 was the legal age reduced to 21). In the early part of the 17th century some boys served terms of 8 to 12 years but by 1700 the length of the term was almost universally 7 years. Most of the boys whose baptisms I managed to find were 15 or 16 when they were bound apprentice but very few seem to have served until they were 24.

Most of the Cheltenham boys setting off for Gloucester were, unsurprisingly, the sons of yeomen or husbandmen, though three claimed to be the sons of gentlemen. Almost a third were apprenticed to leather trades (skinner, tanner, currier, cordwainer and glover), again unsurprisingly since a quarter of all apprentices in Gloucester at this time were bound to leather workers.

Their aim in apprenticing themselves to freemen of Gloucester would be to claim the freedom of the city themselves if they successfully completed their apprenticeship. This would give them the right to trade in the city and to vote in parliamentary elections. The names of 17 of the Cheltenham apprentices appear in the roll of Gloucester freemen<sup>3</sup> on their enrolment and a further five must have been freemen because they took apprentices of their own. They presumably stayed to trade in Gloucester. Like Daniel Yates, who left Cheltenham in 1669 to be apprenticed to a currier and in 1681 took the son of a Cheltenham yeoman as his apprentice, they could provide a point of contact for other young men setting off for the city to seek their fortune.

- 1596 **Thomas Sturmy**, son of Thomas, yeoman, to Thomas Webb, mercer, for 10 years. Freeman by 1607
- 1598 **Robert Sturmy**, son of Thomas, husbandman, to John Simpkins, glover, for 7 yrs. Freeman by 1605
- 1599 **Thomas Farrington**, son of Edmund, husbandman, to Giles Carter, skinner, for 9 yrs.
- 1599 **William Hawkes**, son of John, tailor, to John Moore, tailor, for 7 yrs.
- 1602 **Edmund Varentur**, son of Edmund, bagger, to John Bruster, skinner, for 12 yrs.

- 1609 **Thomas Bosley**, son of Thomas, tailor, to Francis Yarnold, glover, for 11 yrs.  
 1614 **Edmund Randle**, son of William, yeoman to Anthony Robinson, merchant, for 7 yrs.  
 1616 **John Hall**, son of John, cordwainer, to Walter French, cordwainer, for 7 yrs.  
 1617 **Walter Lane**, son of Walter, husbandman dec'd, to John Heyford, baker, for 7 yrs. Freeman by 1624  
 1618 **William Ashmead**, son of John, yeoman dec'd, to Thomas Purrocke, baker, for 7 yrs.  
 1623 **Thomas Powell**, son of John, clothier, to John Wilcox, clothier, for 7 yrs.  
 1624 **Richard Eckly**, son of Robert, yeoman, to John Wilcox, clothier, for 7 yrs.  
 1627 **Henry Atkins**, son of Thomas, to Thomas Moore, baker, for 8 yrs.  
 1628 **Ralph Powell**, son of John, yeoman, to Luke Nourse, mercer, for 8 yrs.  
 1629 **Walter Eckly**, son of Robert, husbandman, to Thomas Eckly, chandler, for 7 yrs.  
 1629 **William Eckly**, son of Robert, husbandman, to Edward Greene, cordwainer, for 7 yrs.  
 1632 **George Chestro**, son of George, wheeler, to Eleanor Bubb, cordwainer, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1657  
 1641 **Richard Chandler**, son of Cuthbert, turner dec'd, to Thomas Pedlingham, saddler, for 8 yrs. Freeman 1652  
 1649 **Henry Collett**, son of William, dec'd, to John Sturmy, glover, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1662  
 1650 **Daniel Sturmy**, son of Daniel, yeoman dec'd, to John Sturmy, glover, for 7 yrs.  
 1653 **John Hopkins**, son of John, husbandman, to George Mitchell, garter weaver, for 7 yrs.  
 1656 **John Dole**, son of —, gardener, to Thomas Meeke, currier, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1702  
 1656 **Nicholas Haines**, son of Nicholas, husbandman dec'd, to John Jones, pinmaker, for 7 yrs.  
 1658 **Anthony Warde**, son of Anthony, husbandman, to John Welsteed, blacksmith, for 7 yrs.  
 1658 **Daniel Okey**, son of John, miller dec'd, to George Mitchell, weaver, for 7 yrs.  
 1659 **John Hopkins**, son of John, husbandman dec'd, to Roger Wadman, garter weaver, for 7 yrs. <sup>4</sup>  
 1660 **John Smarte**, son of John, mason, to Thomas Weaver, butcher, for 7 yrs.  
 1667 **Walter Yates**, son of Humphrey, farmer dec'd, to Thomas Meeke, currier, for 7 yrs.  
 1669 **Daniel Yates**, son of Humphrey, farmer, to Serjeant White, currier, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1681  
 1669 **Thomas Nicholls**, son of John, miller, to Thomas Barnes, plumber, for 7 yrs. Freeman by 1694  
 1670 **Thomas Benfeild**, son of Thomas, mercer, to John Marston, merchant, for 8 yrs.  
 1671 **Samuel Collett**, son of John, husbandman, to Thomas Lugg, haberdasher, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1678  
 1671 **Josiah Yate**, son of Humphrey, dec'd, to William Randle, tailor, for 8 yrs.  
 1672 **George Chestro**, son of Nathaniel, maltster dec'd, to Leigh James sr, baker, for 7 yrs. Freeman by 1688  
 1673 **Daniel Forty**, son of Thomas, tiler, to Henry Knowles, brazier, for 8 yrs.  
 1673 **John Moore**, son of John, currier, to Richard Sparrowhawke, silkweaver, for 7 yrs.  
 1675 **Edward Bleeke**, son of Richard, yeoman, to Lawrence Allen, chandler, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1709  
 1677 **Guy Ellis**, son of Guy, gentleman, to Thomas Longden, ironmonger, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1684  
 1679 **Richard Price**, son of Richard, yeoman dec'd, to William Dawes, tiler & plasterer, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1692  
 1681 **Josiah Yate**, son of Humphrey, yeoman, to Daniel Yate, cordwainer, for 7 yrs.  
 1683 **Thomas Perkins**, son of John, yeoman, to Thomas Meeke, currier, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1708  
 1686 **Thomas Stiles**, son of William, labourer, to Abraham Meadway, bricklayer, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1696  
 1691 **William Higgs**, son of Eleanor, widow, to Francis Brabant, cooper, for 7 yrs.  
 1691 **Robert Higgs**, son of Eleanor, widow, to Richard Wells, cordwainer, for 6 yrs. Freeman 1698  
 1692 **Thomas Drinkwater**, son of William, to Joseph Hornage, ropemaker, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1722  
 1693 **John Stephens**, son of Thomas, yeoman dec'd, to Thomas Spencer, cooper, for 7 yrs.  
 1693 **John Ashmead**, son of John, coverlet weaver, to John Hyett, merchant, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1700  
 1699 **Samuel Sermon**, son of Samuel, yeoman, to John Blizzard, baker, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1707  
 1699 **John Buckle**, son of Walter, gentleman, to Samuel Burroughs jr, gentleman (innkeeper), for 7 yrs.  
 1700 **Giles Ashmead**, son of Giles, glover, to William Beard, mercer, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1707  
 1700 **Walter Mason**, son of Walter, gentleman dec'd, to John Matthews, tanner, for 7 yrs. Freeman 1708

<sup>1</sup> *A Calendar of the Registers of the Apprentices of the City of Gloucester, 1595-1700*, ed. Jill Barlow (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Gloucestershire Record Series vol 14, 2001)

<sup>2</sup> GBR C10/1-4

<sup>3</sup> *A Calendar of the Registers of the Freemen of the City of Gloucester, 1641-1838*, ed. John Jurica (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Gloucestershire Record Series vol 4, 1991)

<sup>4</sup> On 2 June 1660, the day the other John Hopkins (listed above) was due to complete his apprenticeship with George Mitchell, this John was assigned to George Mitchell 'to serve the residue of his term' (C10/2 page 249). A strange coincidence or a clerical confusion?



Scale of Chains  
 10 inches to a Mile  
 40 Chains or 1/2 Mile

ERRATUM Down Waterby road of Hatherley.

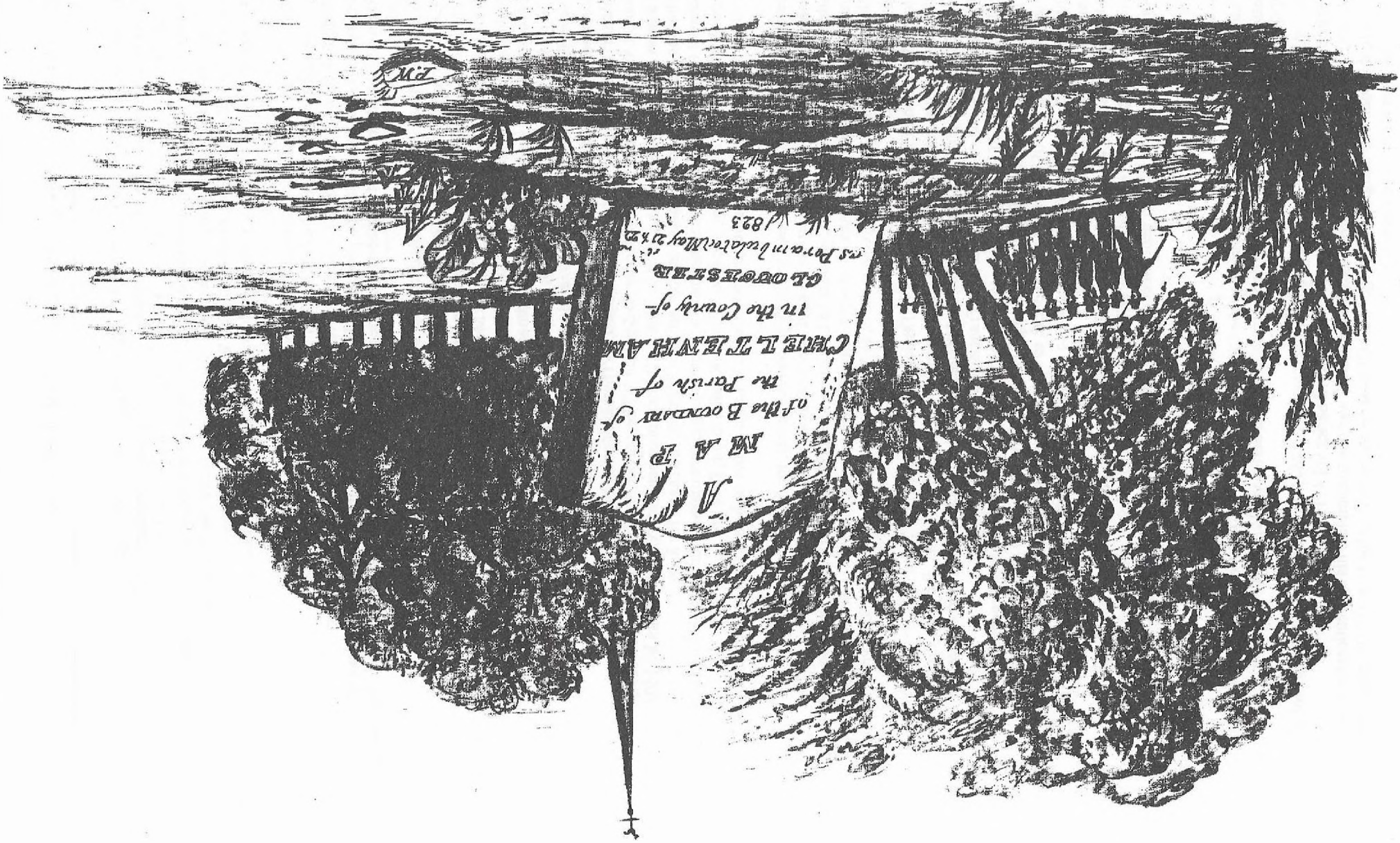


Fig 1



# Beating the Bounds: the 1823 Perambulation of Cheltenham

TERRY MOORE-SCOTT

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THE FOLLOWING report appeared in the *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette* of Tuesday 27 May 1823:

*'The ceremony of the Perambulation of Cheltenham Parish, which had not been observed for nearly a century, took place on Tuesday and Wednesday. It is calculated that nearly a thousand inhabitants accompanied the procession, which was headed by Mr. W. Buckle, the head constable; the Rev. J. Davis, accompanied by Mr. Stafford and Mr. Fowles, the churchwardens; and the parish officers, the town and road surveyors, etc. etc. and followed by the town children of the National School and those of the Lancasterian Establishment'.*

Forty years on, Goding, in the chronology appended to his *History of Cheltenham*, recorded the same event thus:

*1823. May 20. Parish boundaries perambulated. Prior to this official act no survey of the parochial boundary had been taken for a quarter of a century. It occupied two days, and the ground walked over exceeded 26 miles.*

(Indeed, it was not even a full quarter of a century. The same chronology notes that a perambulation took place on 21 May 1809, though no other detail is given.)

What distinguishes the 1823 event from any others is that recently, and quite by chance, a discovery was made in the Gloucestershire Record Office of an original map of the perambulation probably produced quite soon after the occasion<sup>1</sup>. Drawn on one large sheet, the map shows not only the route taken by the procession, but also a large amount of descriptive detail for areas adjacent to the boundary. Also in the GRO is what appears to be a second, later, version of the map<sup>2</sup>; it largely duplicates the first, but there are some differences in the precise route taken by the procession at certain points, names of landowners, etc., suggesting that it may have been intended to correct mistakes made in the first map.

Taken together, these two previously unpublished maps provide valuable new (or at least corroborative) detail relating to areas around the edges of the parish as they were in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, well before the first ordnance survey. Further details about the map are given below but firstly let us take a look at the ancient custom of perambulating a parish boundary and what it entailed.

## Historical background<sup>3</sup>

The custom of beating local boundaries has its roots in the early church's annual Rogationtide ceremony, centred on prayers, fasting, and intercessions especially for the harvest. The ceremony has in turn been held to have earlier origins in the pagan Roman festival of Robigalia, which took place on 25 April to petition the god Robigus to protect the

crops. The Rogation Day ceremony devised by the church to replace the pagan ritual introduced the custom of processing around the parish. This came to involve the incumbent, parish officers, prominent vestrymen, and a good many children, all processing around the parish. The boundary was marked at many points by 'Gospel trees' where appropriate texts were read. The leader of the procession carried a wand or staff of office, and the bounds were solemnly beaten with willow rods.

Questions of parish boundaries were thus regarded as falling within the church's jurisdiction, and as such were properly recorded in parish registers (although the poor survival of such records in England means that the earliest recorded perambulations are no earlier than the late 17<sup>th</sup> century). Outdoor religious processions were abolished by law in 1547, but soon after, in 1559, a royal injunction was issued making the perambulation of parishes at Rogationtide obligatory. This may reflect the fact that Tudor legislation (for example on local military provision, highways and bridges, vermin; and the Poor Laws) had imposed increasingly onerous financial obligations on parishes. The serious purpose of the ceremony was therefore not only to check the boundary, and that markers were still in position, but also to check that no unrated buildings encroached onto parish territory. (Things were not always straightforward. According to Goding, at one stage during the 1845 ceremony in Cheltenham, a man was required to go up a ladder, pass through a window and exit at another window at the rear of the house since the boundary was supposed to run through the premises!)

The intention may have been for the ceremony to continue taking place annually, but available records around the country from the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries suggest that the interval between perambulations varied quite widely, averages of between 6 and 12 years being evident. In connection with the 1845 ceremony in Cheltenham, Goding relates an anecdote that 'If they don't do it every fourteen years, Cheltenham would be claimed by the Catholics!'; while the stated rationale may be doubted, the interval certainly agrees with that between the 1809 and 1823 circuits.

The occasion of a perambulation seems to have entailed a fair amount of jollity for its participants. Goding records that in 1845, a band of musicians accompanied the procession. Beer, cider, and other refreshments were served to the followers at various stopping points along the way and 'larking about' seems to have been common, indeed encouraged, evidently as a way of causing those present to remember the event. The presence of a large number of children ensured that later generations of citizens would know the boundaries and be able to carry on the tradition. It is even recorded that on occasion young boys were beaten or bumped on the ground at the boundary, presumably to impress the event on young minds more strongly. As we have seen, in 1823 not only were children from the National School involved, but also those from the 'Lancasterian establishment'<sup>4</sup>.

An additional insight into these occasions and the paraphernalia involved is provided by the record of a perambulation of Charlton Kings parish in September 1831<sup>5</sup>. On that occasion, participants in the procession were said to have included one person acting as 'the Aged Man' (presumably someone familiar with the boundary route and well-versed in the conduct of a perambulation), another whose task was 'to dig the crosses' (a reference presumably to the use of wooden crosses as route markers), a bearer of the flag staff, and another who carried a pickaxe.

Again according to Goding, the perambulation of 13-14 May 1845 was the last in Cheltenham parish, the practice being discontinued 'because no payment of expenses was

allowed for under the New Poor Law legislation<sup>6</sup>. Elsewhere, however, the custom seems however to have continued well into the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: there is a record of Leckhampton's parish boundary having been beaten as late as 1870<sup>7</sup>. But by this time the ready availability of accurately-surveyed maps showing the boundaries had made such occasions largely irrelevant and, sadly, a colourful aspect of local and historic public life had disappeared.

### The Map

The map is drawn on a single large sheet approximately 5ft by 4ft on a scale of 10" to the mile. The detail on it relates just to the boundary and adjacent features, the central area of the parish being left blank. Much of the detail is drawn in black ink but some colour wash is used to highlight certain features like field enclosures, and the boundary itself is shown by a now faded broken red line. Along the line of the boundary, red crosses mark what are probably the locations of route markers. Apart from the scale bar and a single compass rose, no key or legend of symbols and conventions used is provided. Most features are self-explanatory, except that watercourses at first glance appear indistinguishable from roadways. For this publication, watercourses are marked with arrows indicating the direction of flow.

General features shown on the map, a number of which are previously unknown or little known, include buildings (such as dwellings and mills), field boundaries and field names, the names of landowners, roads and tracks and turnpikes. The delightfully drawn cartouche (*Fig. 1*) appears in one corner of the earlier map; it depicts a dignified procession leaving the parish church and proceeding probably along Well Walk, with a figure at its head carrying some kind of banner. The unresolved initials PW appear under the sketch. Whether the same hand also drew the map itself is unknown.

It will be seen that most place-names on the map are presented by a combination of capital and small letters but four sites stand out by being shown all in capitals. These are Hewletts, Sandford Mill, the Exmouth Arms and Arle Court. Why this should be so is not clear; perhaps they were rest and refreshment points along the route, but if this were so, one might have expected at least one more somewhere along the western and northern sections of the boundary.

There are two noteworthy differences of route on the two maps. At the Hewletts, the first version shows the route passing diagonally across the fields west of the Hewletts, whereas the second map shows what is the accepted alignment of the boundary. Could this possibly tell us that the perambulation procession took what they thought of as a short cut? At Sandford Mill the earlier map shows the route passing straight up the Old Bath Road (as Merrett's 1834 map does) but, according to the later version, the route leaves Old Bath Road to pass along the Chelt to Sandford Mill, continuing on through Charlton Park to rejoin Old Bath Road near Park House. This latter route is almost certainly the accepted one; the same alignment appears on an 1811 estate map of Charlton Park<sup>8</sup> as well as on the map of Cheltenham's boundary published by the Ordnance Survey in 1885<sup>9</sup>. According to one authority, a special relationship between parish boundaries and watermill sites is not uncommon, parishes often going out of their way to incorporate a mill within their area in order to take advantage of the economic benefit it brings<sup>10</sup>. This appears to have been the case with Cheltenham and Sandford Mill.

Neither version of the map shows where the 1823 perambulation started or the direction it took (and the order in which the sections are presented here is therefore arbitrary). A tentative clue as to the direction may be provided by the map-maker's whimsical inclusion

at Marle Hill Lake of a rowing boat crossing the lake [map 9]. The author leaves it to the reader to decide whether the boat was on a northerly or southerly course! For comparison, the 1831 perambulation of Charlton Kings began at Sandford and proceeded north; that of Leckhampton in 1835 began near Pilley (where Charlton Kings, Cheltenham and Leckhampton parishes meet) and moved off westward<sup>11</sup>, i.e. both went clockwise.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank, as always, the staff at the Gloucestershire Records Office for their assistance in producing this article, James Hodsdon for his editorial assistance and valuable contributions throughout and, finally, the Rev. David Nye (of Northleach) for his help on Rogationtide ceremonies.

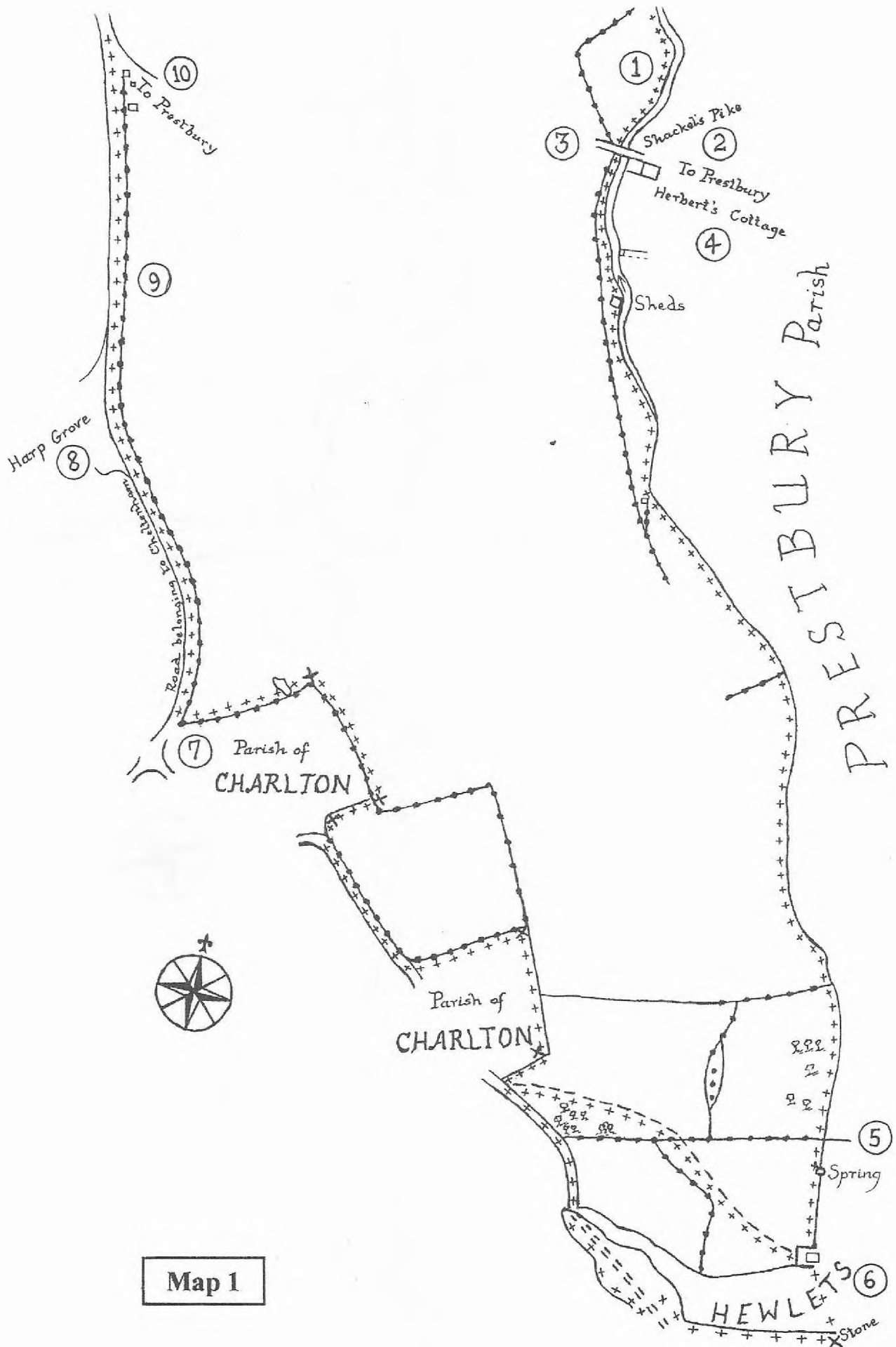
### NOTES

1. G.R.O. D2216/2, box2.
2. "Map of the Boundary of the Parish of Cheltenham in the County of Gloucester as perambulated May 21 and 22 1823"; G.R.O. D4242/2.
3. This section based on F L Cross, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1958); P Dearmer, *The Parson's Handbook* (1931); W E Tate, *The Parish Chest* (1969); W Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (1875).
4. Cheltenham's first National school was established in 1817 in Bath Road near where St. Luke's Parish Hall stands today. The 'Lancasterian Establishment' (or British) schools were non-conformist church institutions following principles laid down by the Quaker Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838). The first such school in Cheltenham was opened in 1820 beneath North Place Chapel. (*Education in Gloucestershire: A Short History*, written on behalf of the Gloucestershire Education Committee by A Platts and G H Hainton, and published by the GCC (1954), pp 56-59.)
5. "Parish Book compiled by the Rev. Robert Williams for his Successor"; G.R.O. P76 IN3/1.
6. A reference presumably to the Poor Law Amendment Acts of 1834 and 1844 which established, and defined the operation of, elected Boards of Guardians for the administration of Poor Relief.
7. *Cheltenham Examiner*, 13 April 1870.
8. Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin 8.
9. Interestingly, the record of the 1831 perambulation of Charlton Kings boundary (which is contiguous with Cheltenham's at this point) refers to participants having to pass through the mill at Sandford and wade along the mill's tail stream.
10. M Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape: Landscape Archaeology and Local History* (1985), p. 42.
11. Leckhampton Local History Society's Newsletter *Smoke Signal* 11 (June 1995)

*The tracings reproduced with this article are mainly based on the first version of the map but incorporate corrections from the second version, with accompanying explanation. Features deserving comment are indicated by circled numbers, keyed to the notes on pages 47-9.*

*Scale: the tracings here are at approximately 10 inches to the mile.*

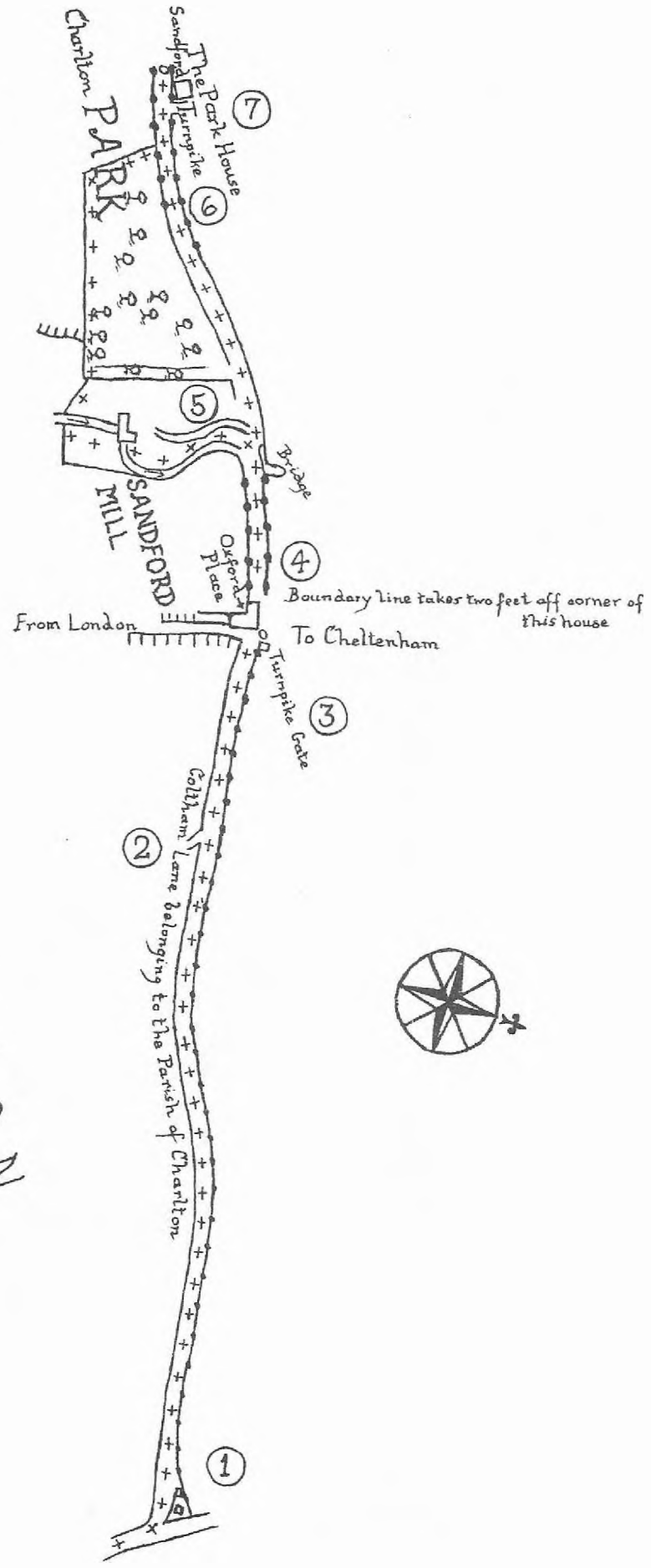




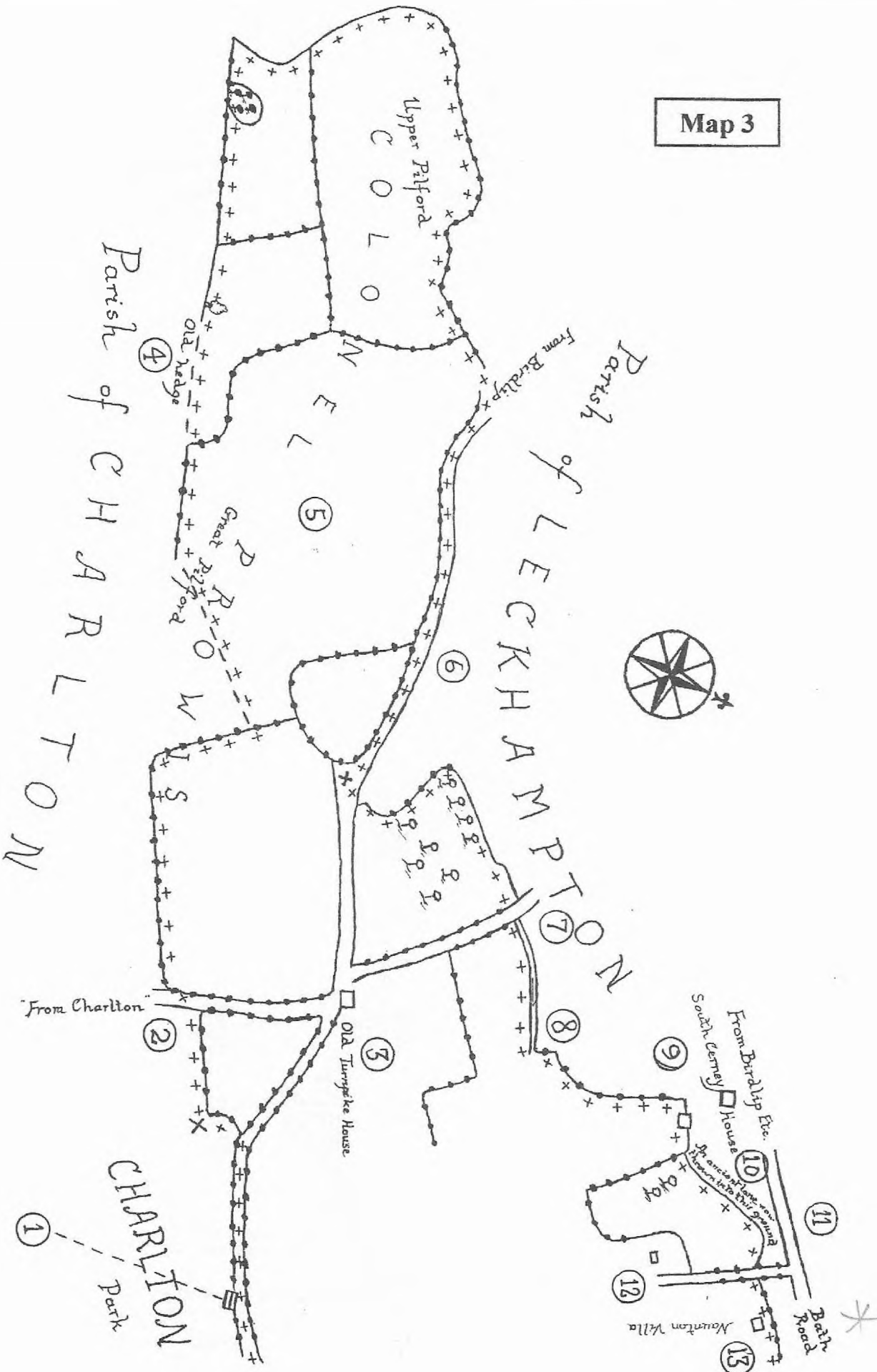
Map 1

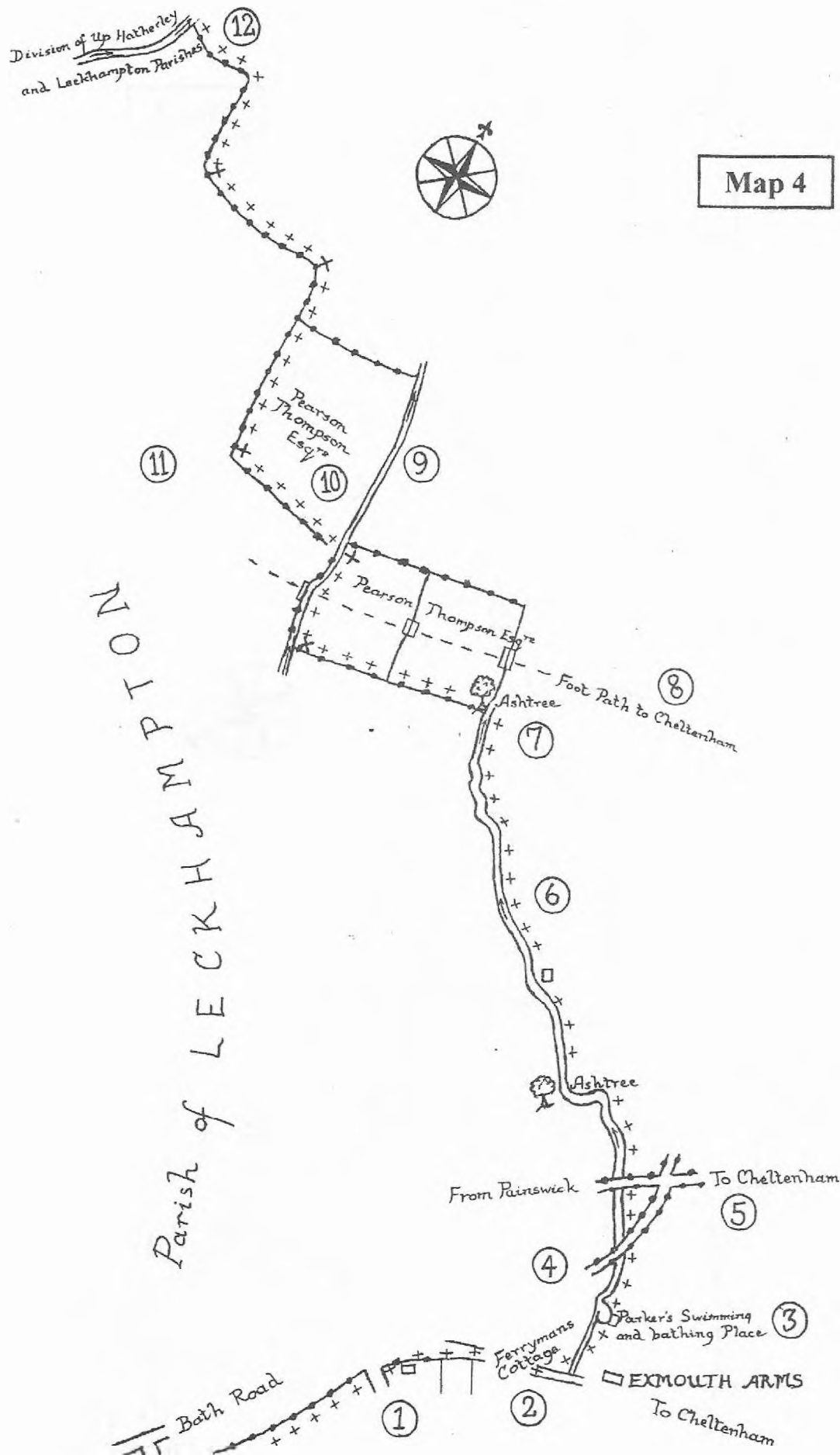
Map 2

Parish of CHARLTON

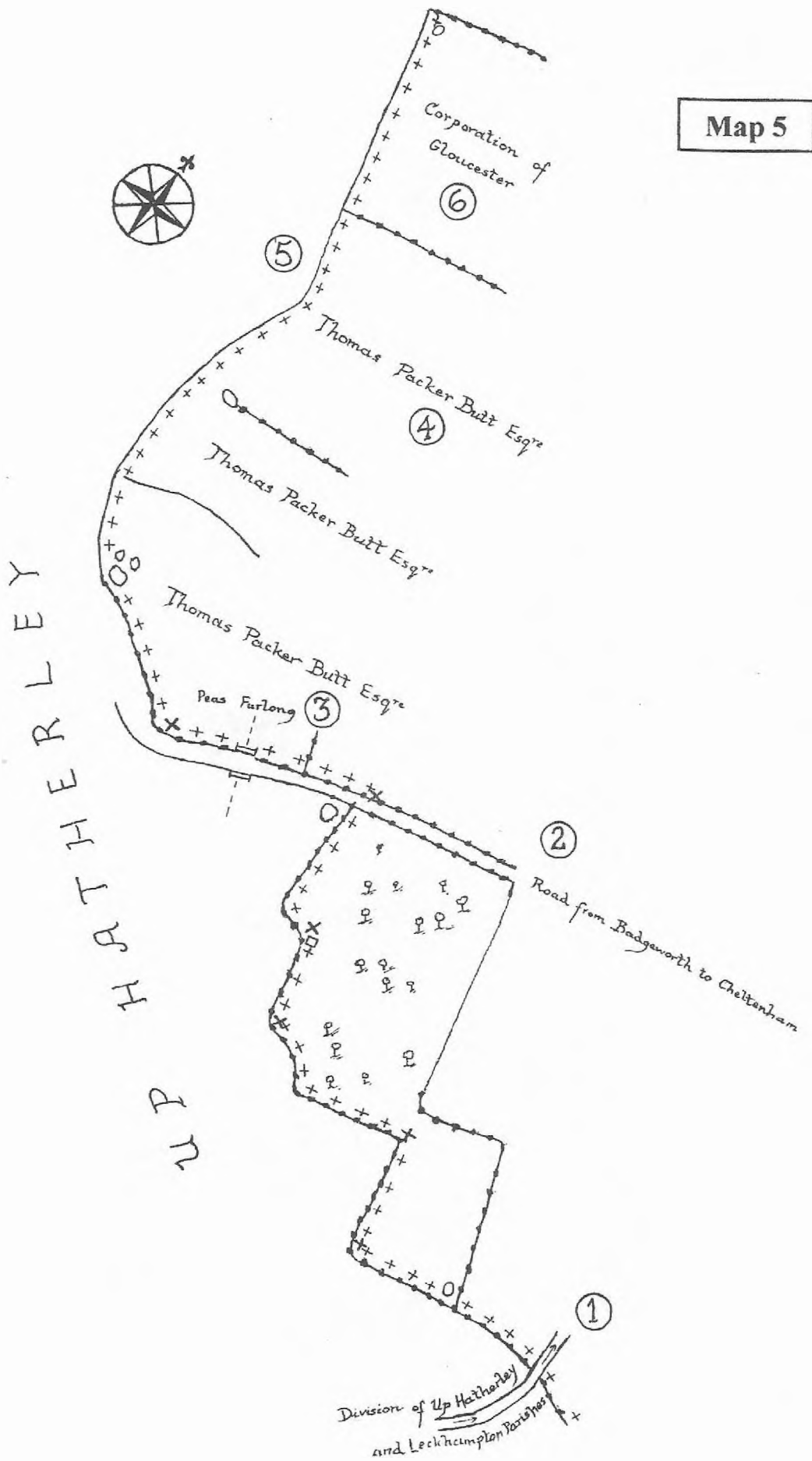


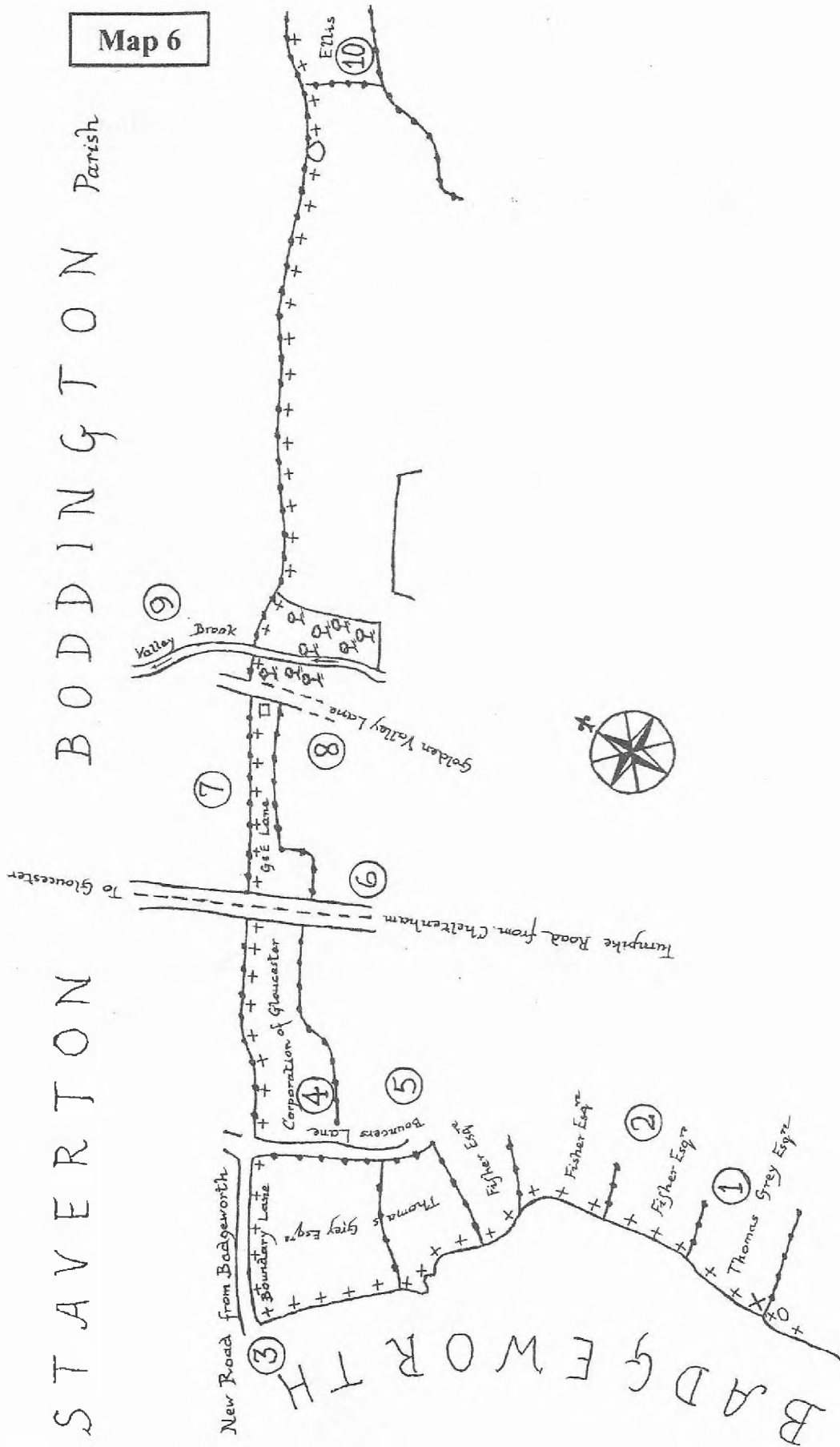
Map 3

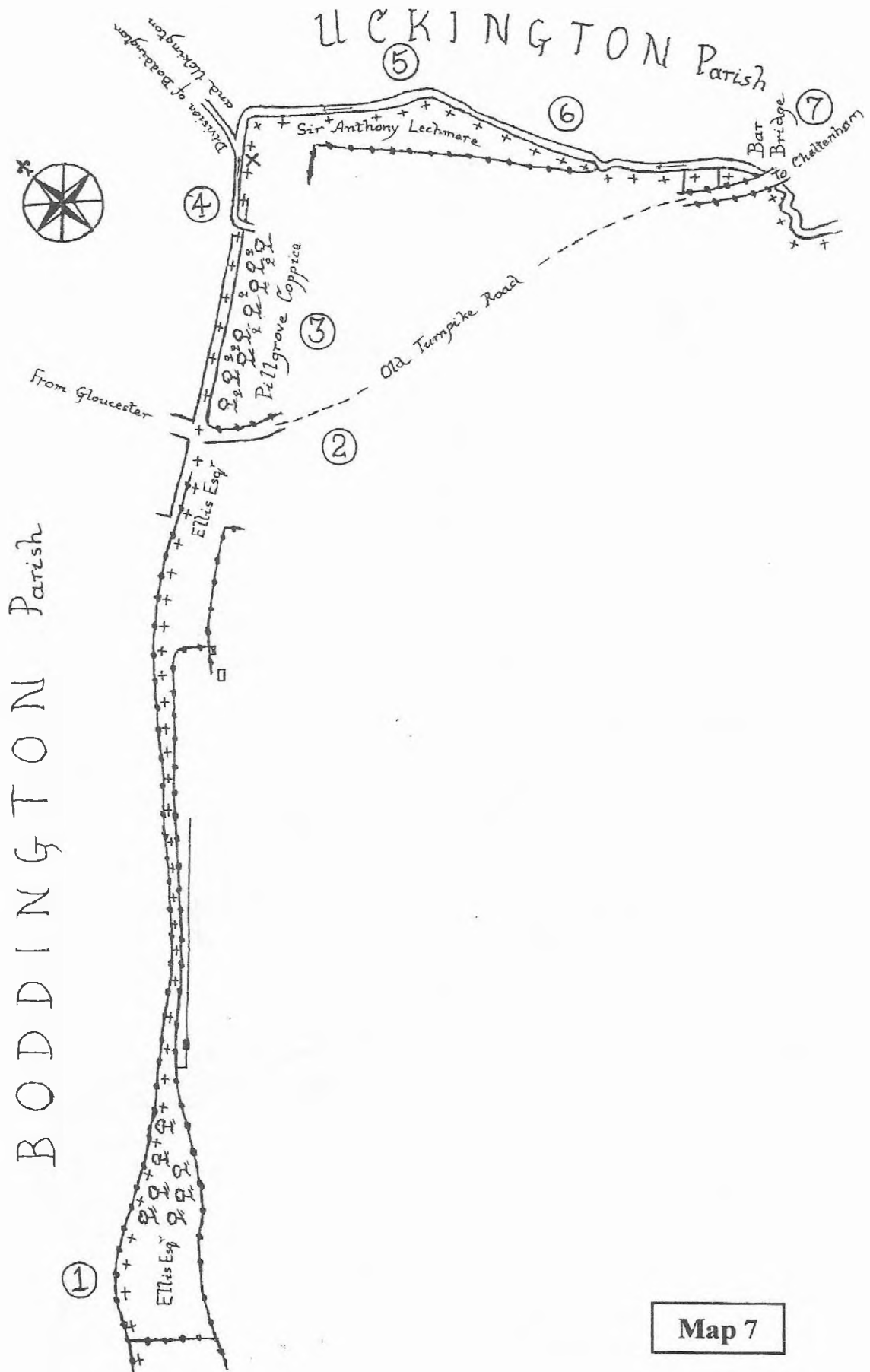


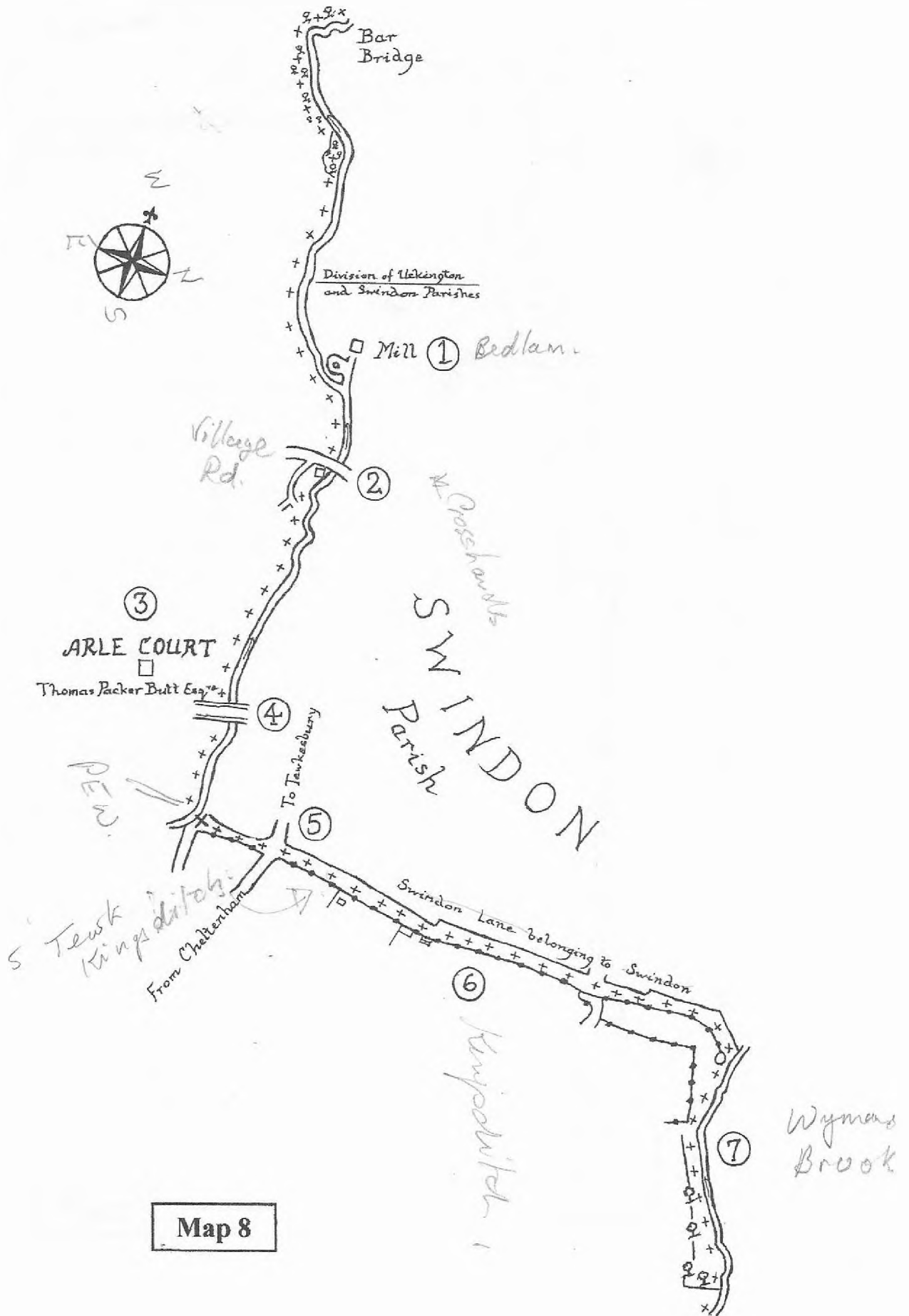




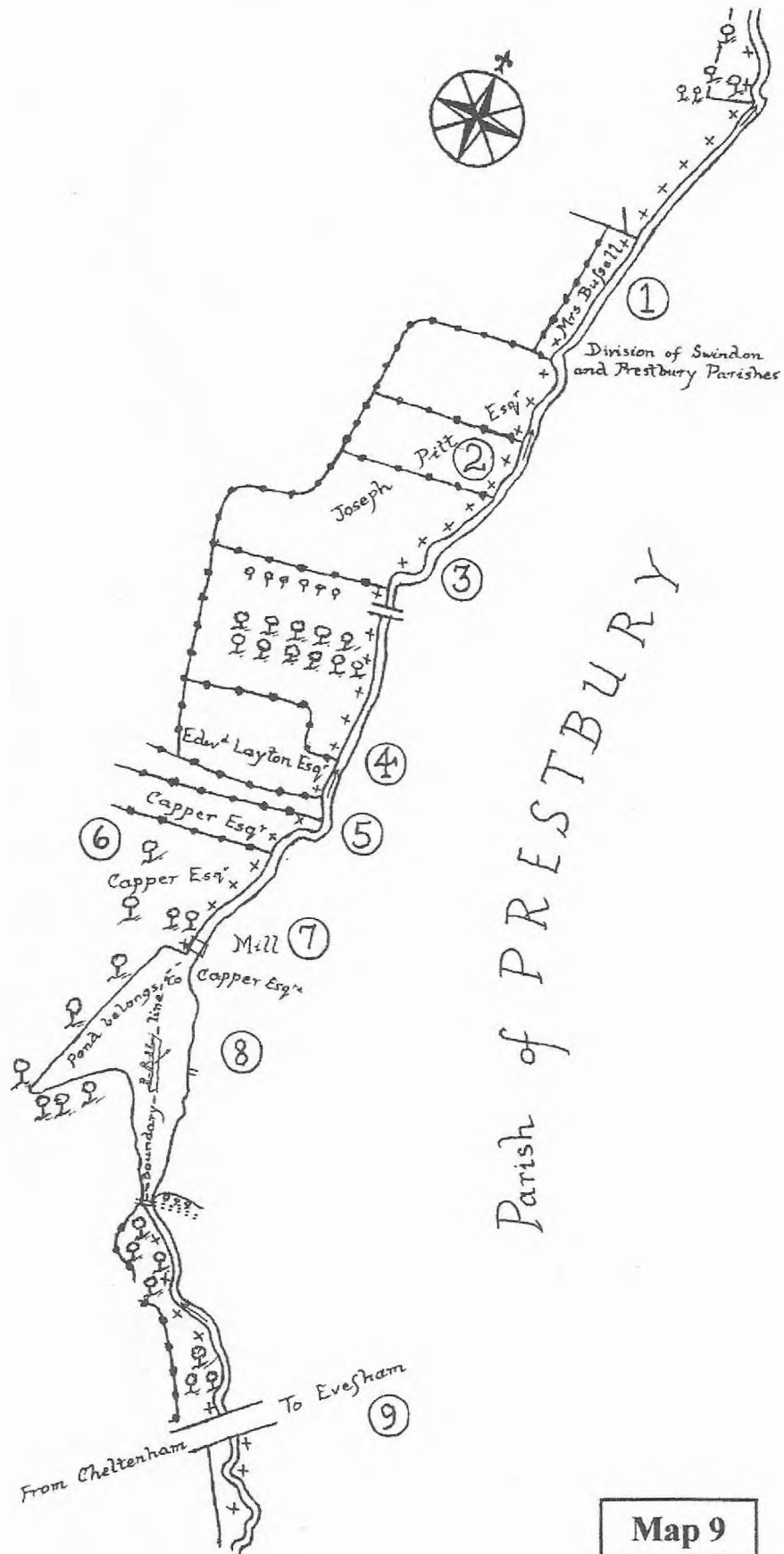






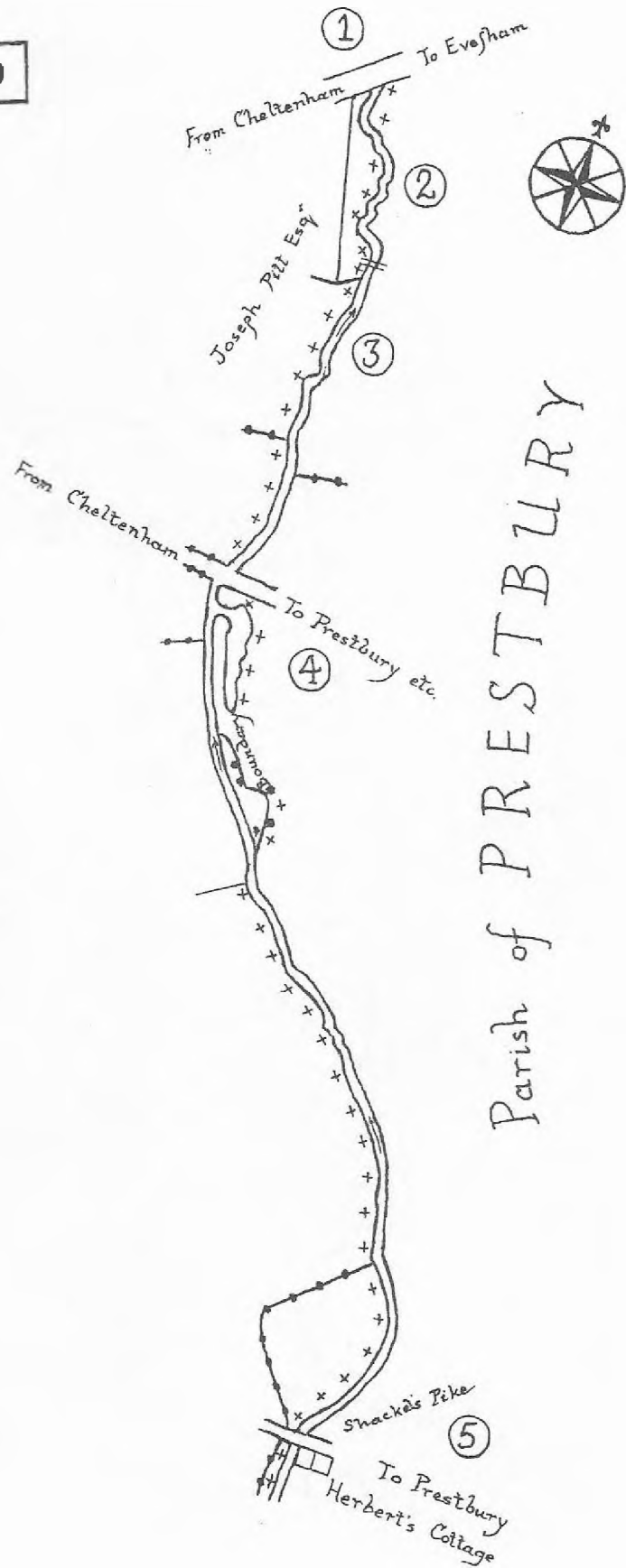






Map 9

Map 10



**MAP 1 Notes**

1. Here the boundary follows Wymans Brook up towards the scarp.
2. Shackel's Pike: probably erroneous, as Bouncers Lane was not a turnpike route. The 1827 OS map more credibly places Shackel's Pike further south along Bouncers Lane, at the foot of Harp Hill, an old turnpike route to London. Spelled 'Shacke's' on the earlier map, amended on the later one.
3. Bouncers Lane. 'Bouncers Gate' where the lane crosses Wyman's Brook is mentioned in Norden's Survey of 1617 as one of the boundary points of Cheltenham hundred (Hart, p 85).
4. Herbert's Cottage: no known previous record
5. Spring: Wyman's Brook rises near here.
6. The record is ambiguous as to the actual route of the perambulation at this point. The earlier map shows the more northerly route following a trackway running diagonally across the fields but the later map quite clearly depicts the accepted parish boundary which continues on south from Hewletts Farm, approximately as far as the point on this map marked 'Stone' (probably a merestone). A red marker cross is also shown at this point.
7. Junction with Greenway Lane.
8. Harp Grove: no known previous record. There were once several closes called The Harp on this hill, so called from their harp-like shape (Hodsdon).
9. Harp Hill.
10. Junction of today's Hales Road and Priors Road. Is the building marked here the real Shackel's Pike?

**MAP 2 Notes**

1. Junction with Harp Hill and Hewlett Road.
2. Coltham Lane (formerly Gallows Lane) was so called after the nearby Coltham Fields. Renamed Hales Road in 1847 (Hodsdon). Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the boundary between Cheltenham and Charlton Kings parishes along Hales Road was moved further eastwards, close to Holy Apostles church.
3. Turnpike Gate: the London Road Turnpike Trust was set up in 1756 and a turnpike on the London Road in the vicinity of the Hales Road and Old Bath Road crossing appears on a map of 1776 (B Kearney; *Cheltenham Toll Roads in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*; CLHS *Journal* 10 (1993/4)).
4. Oxford Place, London Road. Construction of this terrace had begun by 1819 (Hodsdon) and Cossen's 1820 map provides evidence of a terrace of four buildings fronting on to London Road but with a separate building (named Oxford Cottage) standing at its northern end and facing corner-on to Old Bath Road. It is possibly this last building that is referred to here as losing two feet to the boundary line. In due course, no.79 Oxford Place – presumably then the end house of the terrace – was demolished to widen the junction with Old Bath Road (Hodsdon).
5. See main article for discussion of the two different routes for the boundary shown here.
6. Sandford Turnpike. The later map is clear in placing this turnpike (for which there is no other known record) actually on the Old Bath Road just above Park House. By about 1840, the turnpike was more definitely located further up the Old Bath Road from here (Kearney), as indicated by the present street-name Charlton Park Gate. While the perambulation map may show a genuine early gate (a petition to turnpike Old Bath Road, described as a road from Bembridge Field (Cox's Meadow) to Birdlip and Painswick, was raised in 1758 -- G.R.O. Q/SR h 1787 A/3), the suspicion remains that it is in error.
7. Park House, dating from c.1820, survives as a Grade II listed building.

**MAP 3 Notes**

1. This track exists today as Claypits Path (a.k.a. The Chicken Run), running between Old Bath Road and Moorend Road. It appears on an estate map for Charlton Park of 1811 leading to Withyholt, crossing a field named Clay Pit Ground (*Charlton Kings LHS Research Bulletin* 8 (1982) p 41).
2. Today's Charlton Lane.
3. Old Turnpike House: located roughly where Pilley Bridge now stands. Probably connected with the Charlton Park Turnpike which ran along Charlton Lane to join the Birdlip Turnpike on Leckhampton Road opposite Church Road.
4. This portion of the boundary is still marked by a hedge-line and public footpath passing to the east of Richard Pate Junior School and leading towards the hill and Daisybank.
5. The land encompassed by the boundary here originally comprised one large open field known as Pilford Field extending from roughly today's Everest Road up to Daisybank. It was evidently part of the Charlton Park estate and the "Colonel Prowis" (shown only on the earlier map) is almost certainly Colonel George Bragge Prowse (d.1839) who inherited that estate from William Prinn in 1822. On the later map, Prowse's name has been replaced by "G.B.P. Prinn": on acquiring the estate, Prowse took the additional name Prinn. (*CKLHSRB* 8 (1982) p 37).
6. At this point, and for a distance down Old Bath Road, the boundary follows the course of the Pilley Brook, eventually aligning with the Nolty Brook in Naunton.
7. Charlton Lane.
8. The Nolty Brook, which today passes culverted across Charlton Lane and through Maida Vale along Fairfield Walk to join the Westal Brook at the Exmouth Arms (Hodsdon).
9. South Cerney House: not previously recorded, and perhaps simply an error for Southcourt House, whose site it seems to occupy and which features on

5. Bouncers Lane: not previously recorded on this side of the parish, and assumed to be in error for 'Boundary Lane' – although the possibility exists of some reference to a custom of bouncing children here (see text). It is today's Bamfurlong Lane.
6. Turnpike Road from Gloucester: now Gloucester Road; turnpiked in 1809 (Kearney). The central dashed line indicates the Gloucester-Cheltenham rail road
7. G & E Lane: not further identified, but the surname has been current in Cheltenham records since the 1500s. On the 1833 Arle enclosure award map this holding is in the name of Geo J Lane.
8. Golden Valley Lane: what is now Pheasant Lane.
9. Valley Brook: a continuation of the Hatherley Brook.
10. Ellis: likely to be Anthony Ellis of Gloucester, described as being 'very rich and having large landed property in the county' (Humphris & Willoughby, *At Cheltenham Spa* (1928), p 139); holdings in the name of Anthony Ellis appear elsewhere on the 1806 Cheltenham enclosure award.

#### MAP 7 Notes

1. Ellis: see note 10 for Map 6.
2. Old Turnpike Road: today's Hayden Road/Old Gloucester Road, turnpiked in 1756 (Kearney).
3. Pillgrove Coppice: see Hodsdon.
4. A tributary of the Chelt flowing from the direction of Hesters Way.
5. Sir Anthony Lechmere: 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet (1766-1849) of Hanley, Worcs (Burke's Peerage). This appears to have been his only holding in the Cheltenham area, and it is associated with him until at least 1836 (GRO deed).
6. River Chelt.
7. Bar Bridge: where Hayden Road crosses the Chelt.

#### MAP 8 Notes

1. Very probably Bedlam Mill, recorded as a cloth and dye house in 1775 (Hodsdon).
2. The start of today's Village Road, the main street of the original hamlet of Arle.
3. Arle Court: the original house dated from Elizabethan times, and was bought by Thomas Packer Butt in 1795. After his death in 1828, little attention appears to have been paid to it and it was finally demolished c. 1880. Various fixtures, panelling etc. are said to have been removed from it to the new Arle Court at Grovefield (see Map 5, note 3). (Dowty Group, *History of Arle*; also Phyllis White, *The Grovefield Estate and its houses*, CLHS *Journal* 15 (1999)).
4. The bridge over the Chelt shown here is on a track from the Tewkesbury road to Arle Mill (see 1884 OS), but the imposing depiction is puzzling, as it is not known to have been a specially large structure.

5. The junction of Tewkesbury Road and today's Kingsditch Lane. The stub of road opposite Kingsditch Lane is on broadly the same alignment as today's Princess Elizabeth Way but went no further than the Chelt.
6. Swindon Lane belonging to Swindon: the section as far as 'to' is now Kingsditch Lane, at which point (today's double mini-roundabouts) it becomes Wymans Lane.
7. Wymans Brook.

#### MAP 9 Notes.

1. Mrs Bussell: no further information, and probably an error for Russell: this holding is in the name of Henry Russell on the 1806 enclosure award.
2. Joseph Pitt: 1759-1842, developer of the Pittville estate, and the largest property holder in Cheltenham of his day.
3. Wymans Brook.
4. Edward Layton: probably refers to Edward Leighton, of a family of builders and property developers originally based in the High Street (Hodsdon).
5. Approximating to Folly Lane.
6. Capper: very probably the Robert Capper who came to Cheltenham in 1816 and in 1837 was living at 2 Suffolk Lawn (on the east side of Lypiatt Road). He became a J.P. for Cheltenham and in 1846 was appointed President of the General Hospital Board (Goding pp 465, 642; 1837 *Annuaire*; *Cheltenham Examiner* 28 Jan 1846).
7. Mill: this mill survived until at least 1855 (described as 'flour mill' on Old Town Survey).
8. Pond: became known as Marle Hill Lake but even as late as the 1885 OS map it is still called 'Capper's Fish Pond'. Now the Pittville Park boating lake. Although Merrett depicts the parish boundary as running along the eastern edge of the lake, this map (along with its delightful drawing of a rowing boat apparently carrying two adults and two children) confirms other sources in showing the boundary continuing to follow the line of the brook down the centre of the lake.
9. Evesham Road.

#### MAP 10 Notes

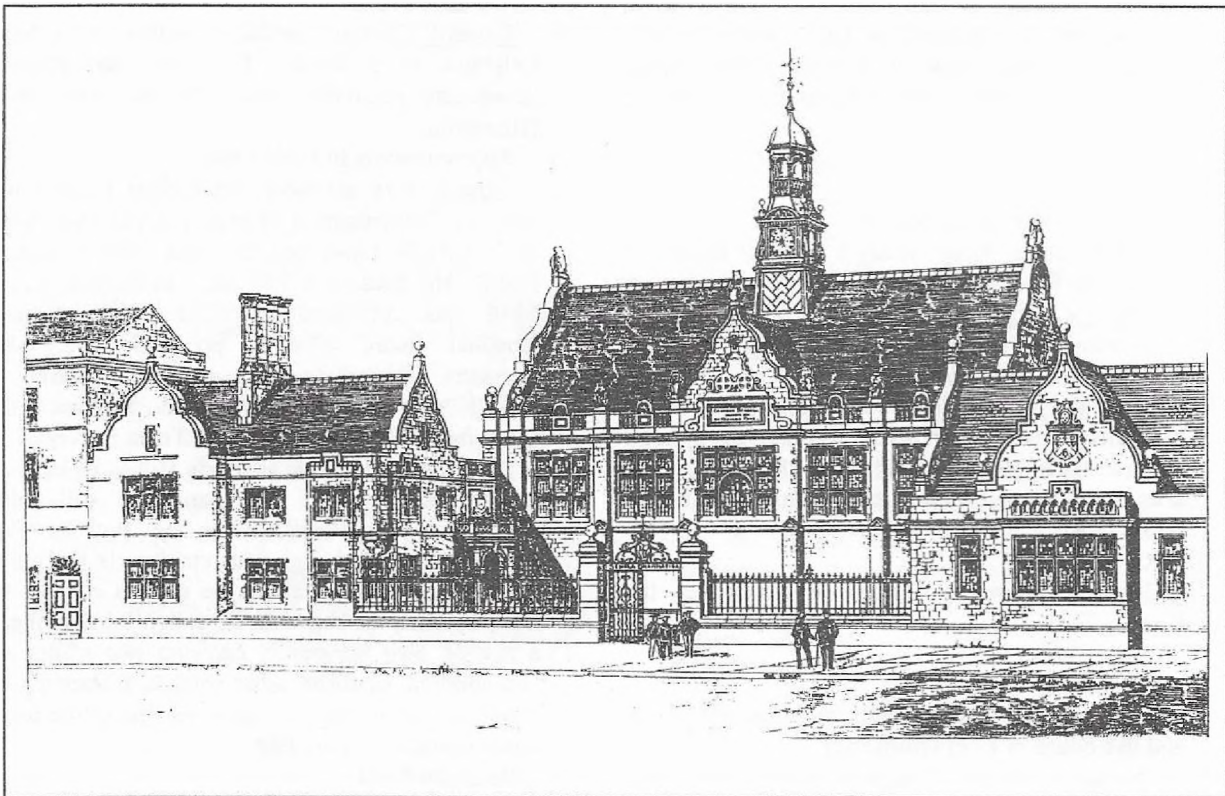
1. Evesham Road.
2. Wymans Brook.
3. The boundary here passes through what was to become Pittville Park. Construction of the Pittville Pump Room was started in 1825 (Hart, p 178-9) and, by 1834, Merrett's map showed Wymans Brook dammed to form the park's ornamental lake. The small bridge may be on the old Cleeve path (today's Albert Road).
4. Prestbury Road, with, to the east, a lobe of water that is marked on the 1855 Old Town Survey as 'osiers'.
5. Shackel's Pike and Herbert's Cottage – see notes to Map I.



# Cheltenham as it might have been: The Grammar School, 1886

ERIC MILLER

THE ILLUSTRATION below is to be found in the National Buildings Record Centre at Swindon and is taken from *The Builder* of 8 May 1886. A similar version, showing more emphatic rustication of the stonework and a few more boys and passers-by, appeared in the *Cheltenham Examiner* of 20 January 1886. It is immediately obvious that, although the drawing is described as the accepted design, it is not the one that was eventually built and is more flamboyant than the Tudor-style building which will have been familiar to many – see opposite.



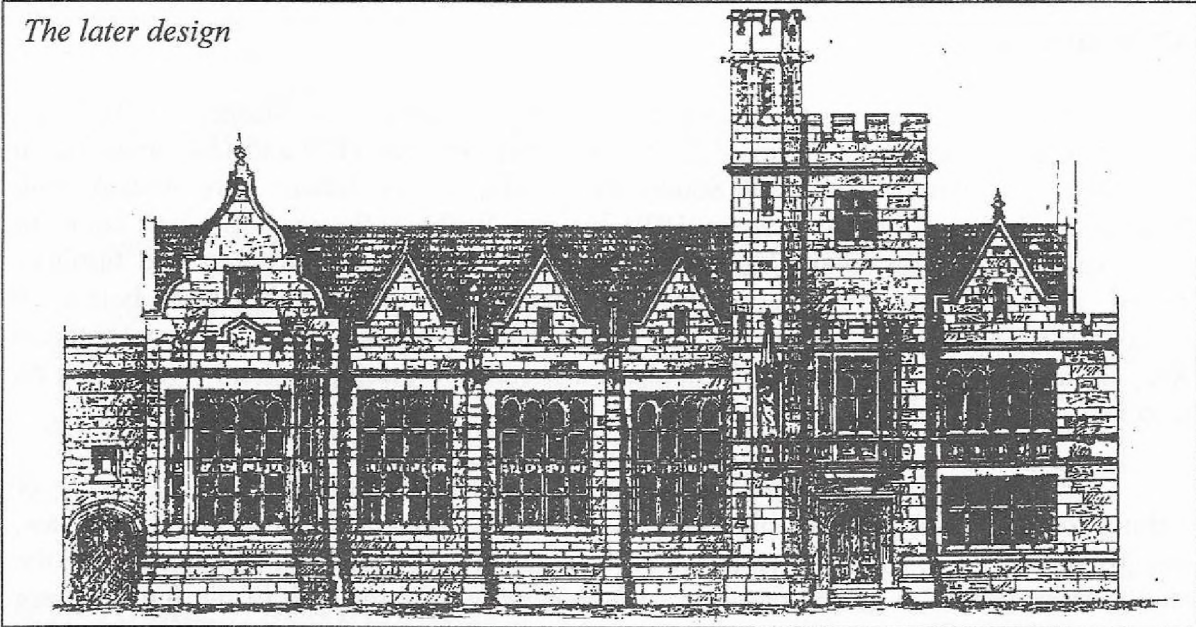
'Accepted Design' for New Cheltenham Grammar School, 1886

The drawing was accompanied by a plan and description. The assembly hall was set back behind railings and formed one side of a quadrangle, to the right of which was the board-room and governors' entrance. The classrooms were placed at the rear, facing on to the playground. All the accommodation was on ground level with the exception of a chemical laboratory and a lecture room. The bell turret, incorporating a clock, was to rise 20 feet above the roof line. The estimated cost was £5,560.

The winning design, by the London architect Henry Hall, was one of 78 entries submitted and was chosen by the Consulting Architect to the Charity Commission, who considered it overall 'by far the best', with proportions that 'most nearly conform[ed] to the conditions of the competition with regard to cubical space'. However, it was reported in the *Examiner* that, even at a meeting convened on 22 December 1885 to receive the Architect's

report, 'the elevation of the selected design did not ... commend itself to the Governors'. The correspondence columns of the *Examiner* soon showed that many townspeople shared these reservations. 'Nemo' considered that the architectural flourishes disguised the 'real common-placeness of the structure'. The clock tower seemed to cause particular offence but the fact that the architect was from London also drew criticism. One Old Grammarian accused Henry Hall of being responsible for 'London Board Schools of the ugliest description' and hoped that 'Knight and Co's building' would be accepted. Messrs Knight

*The later design*



and Chatters, of The Colonnade, Cheltenham, had in fact submitted two designs which, according to the *Examiner* of 8 June 1887, were not taken into consideration 'owing to some misunderstanding as to the cost of the building'. The Governors, with the approval of the Commissioners' Architect, accepted a scheme which combined these two, to enable teaching to be carried out exclusively in class-rooms without recourse to a common-room.

Plans to replace the old Grammar School had first been mooted in 1883, when there was a proposal to remove it to more open ground opposite Christ Church, which the governors had conditionally agreed to purchase. However, there was widespread opposition to moving 'away from the homes of the majority of those for whose immediate benefit it was intended by its venerable founder', and by March 1885 the Governors' resolution was overruled by the Charity Commissioners and the school remained in the High Street where it had been ever since its foundation. (The Christ Church land was bought by the Ladies' College in 1894 for use as a sports field.)

The foundation stone of the new building was laid on 14 December 1887 by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and the new school, built by Messrs Collins and Godfrey, whose tender price was £6,270, was opened in 1889. Thus a 'long and wearisome controversy' and the 'painfully tedious negotiations that had preceded the signing of the contract' (as described in the *Examiner*) had come to an acceptable conclusion.

#### Sources

*Cheltenham Looker-On* 14 and 21 Apr, 5 May, 11 Aug 1883; 28 Mar 1885; 6 Nov 1886; 1 Sep 1887

*Cheltenham Examiner* 6 Jan, 26 May, 9 Jun 1886; 25 May, 8 and 29 Jun, 30 Nov, 21 Dec 1887

*Victoria County History: Gloucestershire* Vol 2 pp 427-8

A Bell, *Tudor Foundation*, 1972

# Cheltenham in 1830: three unpublished letters from William Barton of Southwark

STEVEN BLAKE

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## INTRODUCTION

IN 1999, Mr John Hine, the Gloucestershire County Editor for the Midland (GB) Postal History Society, purchased a group of 22 letters written between 1830 and 1842 to and from members of the Barton family of Southwark. Three of the letters were written from Cheltenham during July and August 1830 by one William Barton, who had come to Cheltenham to work for John Alder, one of the town's leading upholsterers and furniture dealers. Two of Barton's letters were sent to his mother and the third to his father, both at 20 St. Saviour's Churchyard, Southwark. The remainder, which date from between 1836 and 1842, are mainly between William Barton and a friend in Norfolk, William Taylor, and do not contain any Cheltenham references.

The three 1830 letters provide a wealth of detail about Barton's own experience of working for Mr Alder, and his observations of life in Cheltenham at a time which saw, amongst other things, the local response to the funeral of George IV, the opening of the Pittville Pump Room, a general election, and preparations for the visit of the future Queen Victoria. As such they are well worth transcribing in full, with explanatory notes, where appropriate.

Mr Hine has kindly given his permission for the three Cheltenham letters to be published here. I am most grateful to him for this, and for providing photocopies of the letters, along with valuable background information. I am also most grateful to Mr Anthony Robinson of Great Massingham in Norfolk, who is currently researching the Norfolk material in the letters, for permission to use his transcripts of the letters, and for information on the demolition of the chapel of old London Bridge. The letters have been transcribed exactly as they were written by William Barton, including his somewhat erratic use of capital letters, minimal punctuation and abbreviation or misspelling of certain words and names, including 'Pitville'. Sadly, part of letter three is missing, while a number of words in letters one and two were lost when the wax seal was opened; missing words are indicated by the symbol [.....].

## THE LETTERS

### Letter one : to Mr Barton, 15 July 1830

Dear Father

I arrived here about 1/2 past 8 on Monday evening<sup>1</sup> after a very unpleasant journey down it rained very heavy at different parts of the day, the Wind was so high we could not hold our Umbrellas up. I was very cold & wet by the time I got to Oxford (as were all the outside passengers) the Fire at the Inn was more acceptable than the dinner The young Woman you saw sitting next me on the Coach in Gracechurch St. was taken very ill



on the Road she was quite overcome with cold & fatigue & she & her Mother were obliged to be left behind. I soon found out Mr. Alder<sup>2</sup>, he had given me up for that day as I did not arrive sooner, he received me very politely & Mrs. Alder made me some Tea soon after which I went to Bed, they are very plain kind of people, but I think rather near & close, I think I shall like him better than her - The premises are very extensive, the part with which I am connected consists of 4 spacious Show Rooms, 2 of them 50ft by 28 & two 25ft Square with 14 ft Ceilings, they are all crowded with Furniture & some of it of the most elegant description there are several articles I hardly at present know the use of. There is a great deal of Company in and out all day many of them only to look at the things I think that to attend to them & to keep the Furniture in the order it should be is constant employment for one if not more persons without the Books & that one or the other must be neglected the latter of which the young Man who has left informs me has been the case. I sleep in the front show Room on an enclosed Bedstead which is very comfortable at this time of the year Certainly few people have such a noble & well furnished Bed Room. The dressing Room is down Stairs it is furnished with drawers, dressing table Wash hand stand etc. but is so dark I cannot see at all to shave in it, hardly to wash; The Shutters are very simple being fastened inside with Bars like ours on the dining Room at home, he keeps 20 Cabinet Makers but I have not seen the Women.

*'The premises are very extensive'*

Alder's Albion Street premises, next to the Almshouses, as shown in Rowe's *Illustrated Guide* (1850). Though the entrance is much altered, the rounded corners of the building are still easily seen today.



The town lies in a beautiful Valley & is nearly surrounded with lofty hills, The Hotels & Houses are of the first rate description as are also some of the Shops, Libraries etc. The walks by the Pump Rooms are quite enchanting, the Pitville Spa which is just completed is to be opened next week by a public Breakfast on a very grand scale<sup>3</sup> it is the most splendid of all the Pump Rooms & has been elegantly furnished by Mr. Alder he is going to take me to see its interior there is a lake in front of it with miniature Ships which sail and tack about every evening to the amusement of numerous Spectators It will cut up the other Proprietors of Rooms for a time (being a new thing) as the Doctors (who perhaps are Shareholders) recommend it before all the others & I am told it is quite unfashionable to think of drinking any other than the Pitville Waters, Mr. Taylor's Engraving of it<sup>4</sup> is in several Shop Windows, they are all closed today, the great Bell has tolled every day muffled for 2 hours since the Kings death<sup>5</sup> - The Duchess of Kent & Princess Victoria are expected here very soon the Royal Clarence Hotel is fitting up for them<sup>6</sup>. The Races also commence next week<sup>7</sup> -- I should like to know when my Clothes will come down as I will look for them. I will write again when I receive them & by that time shall be able to know a little more how I shall succeed here.

I have been walking all this afternoon I went out with the intention of going up one of the Cotswold hills which are very lofty & in the immediate neighbourhood of Cheltenham but found the distance too far to get home early -- the Churches & Chapels will all be open this evening & funeral Sermons preached at them all.



I saw a very queer funeral as I returned home just now the Porters Poles were 3 times as high as themselves & great Bunches of Crape tied at the top, the Pages wore curiously ornamented Cloaks their Hat bands nearly touched the Ground, the Corpse was put on a pair of trestles in the Church Yard & the Service read over it before it was put into the Grave. I must conclude as this [.....] remaining your affectionate Son W. Barton.

Mr. Alder tells me Haines's Van from the Blossoms Inn is a good and quick conveyance.

**Letter two : to Mrs Barton, 22 July 1830**

Dear Mother

I received your Letter & the Box on Saturday morning, the latter came down quite safe, I wish I had known of your sending a Clothes Brush as I should not have bought one which I did only the night before and paid twice as much for it as I should have done in London, -- Whether I am likely to continue here is I think quite uncertain, as there are several things which would render a long continuance not at all desirable -- In the first place, the hours are longer than I expected not any night yet having left off much earlier than 9 O'Clock, on 3 evenings last week later, and on Saturday night it was past 10 before I had finished writing, having all the Cabinet Makers time, materials etc. to enter, the foreman of them tells me it is much the same every week, so that I have hardly any time I can expect to call my own, and very little time is allowed for meals, besides which I find the Sleeping place very awkward being such a distance from the dressing Room (which is below stairs & partitioned off from the Cellar) & having a Brick floor to go over to it must make it very uncomfortable in Winter time, though it is very well at this time of the year -- Mrs. Alder is also rather near & close in her manner of housekeeping. I am sorry to be obliged to find fault so soon but have the beforementioned reasons with some others for so doing -- I do not know why there is not a Bed Room in the House as I have seen very little of it, it is quite at the back of the Premises, the young Man who has left says he thinks they might find room -- I should however like to stay long enough to get something towards the expenses that have been incurred by my coming here. Mr. Alder has not yet said any thing about Salary, I think I should like him very well in many respects, but if I continue he must make some alterations -- I have as yet seen very little of the Town & neighbourhood, having only a little time after dusk to go out, but what I have seen of it I like very much. I went last Thursday evening to the Parish Church, which is a very ancient and singular structure to hear Mr. Close the minister, who is extremely popular, preach his Funeral Sermon for the King, but could hardly get in for the crowd<sup>1</sup>. The Service is Chanted (as it is at most of the Churches here) by a choir composed principally of females, who sit in a row in front of the Organ, it is well lighted with Gas & has many monuments to persons who have come to Cheltenham for their health & died. I again went on Sunday morning but was obliged to stand all the Service, not only the Pews & Aisles but even the Porches were quite full of people. Mr. Close is very eloquent & is considered a very handsome Man. They dine late here on Sundays & I only had time to look into 2 other Churches in the afternoon but found them full. In all the new ones a stranger to get a seat must pay a Shilling at one of the Libraries for a Ticket which will admit him to a Pew for a single Service only, either morning or afternoon, this information is on the Church doors, and so I stand a poor chance of ever getting a seat<sup>2</sup>. A Free Church is building<sup>3</sup> and it is quite time there was, the Chapels have the same regulations -- I would not trouble any of them in the evening but took a delightful walk up the highest of the Cotswolds where I had a view into 8 Counties, Welsh and English, the Town of

Cheltenham and the Vale of Gloucester is seen to great advantage as are also the whole range of the Malverns. The members are very busy canvassing to day & have been up in the Shops drinking with those men who are going to vote for them<sup>4</sup>. The people are all very honest here none of the doors or Windows are hardly secure, a thief might easily get into any of the Show Rooms. I was rather frightened the other night in the middle of it, on hearing a noise which woke me & seeing somebody with a light at the further end of the place but my fears soon subsided when I found it was Mr. Alder who was called up to a Funeral, & was looking for a board which they use to lay them out on, he has I believe some good jobs but I shall stand no chance of going to any of them -- The Races commence next week & all The clergy are doing their utmost to keep people from going to them<sup>5</sup>. Tracts are distributed, & Sermons preached every where [.....] Mr. Close will give all those School Children who do not go, Buns & Tea as [.....] Cheltenham is not very full yet, the Season has hardly commenced, [.....] walk is crowded however every evening & the Band plays delightful. I heard it a short time last night. It has been a very grand day here to day; Pitville has been opened, the Road to it has been thronged with Carriages & Company going to it. Breakfast was laid for 700, the Ball afterwards was opened by 2 young Ladies 10 years of age dancing the Pitville Waltz. Mr. & Mrs. Alder have gone with a large Party gaily dressed, though notice was given that no Tradespeople would be admitted and I have taken the opportunity in the mean time to write this Letter. I must now conclude it, hoping all at home are well

& Remain  
Dear Mother  
Your Aff. Son  
Wm. Barton

I intend to go to Gloucester next Sunday, it is only 8 miles distant Mr. Alder had a very good Funeral yesterday, the Mens Hatbands were the best Silk I ever saw used for the purpose 2 1/4 Yds in each and a capital pair of Kid Gloves in addition to the pay. The Coach pages at all the Funerals here wear Cloaks, the Feathers are obliged to be sent for from Bristol. Mr. Alders address is Albion St. but any direction will find him. The Bath and Hereford Mails came through Cheltenham last Thursday evening at the pace of a Funeral Hearse the Horses dressed out in Velvets and Feathers, the Coachmen wearing long black Cloaks they had a very curious effect & the High St. was thronged with people to see them<sup>7</sup>

**Letter three: to Mrs Barton, undated, but probably 5 August 1830; it is postmarked 6 August**

[half a page missing]

...leads into the House. It would be better if it was in the High St. but Albion St. is in a retired part of the Town, the Premises were built by Mr. A. about 2 years back, his Shop was before in the High St.<sup>1</sup> -- I am up early of a morning and get the Drawing & Dining Rooms in order by 9 O'Clock, They Breakfast about that time, but I come rather short off as I can seldom get more than 3 thin slices (which is not enough) and 2 only at tea my appetite unfortunately is as good as ever, I manage better at dinner as to quantity though I am hardly yet used to underdone meat & Bacon. Their home brew'd Beer is so hard that it disagreed with me very much at first, I complained of it when I had Cyder which was quite as bad, since that they have had some Table Beer in but I cannot get more than a Glass and half at

dinner. They eat very little themselves but they make up for it between meals by Luncheons & I am obliged to do the same though at my own expense. I think Mrs. A...

[half a page missing]

...times a year. I went to Gloucester last Sunday week, I had an early Breakfast and walked there the distance is 9 miles & the views are very fine all the way. I got there an hour before the Cathedral was open. It is a large and magnificent Structure, & surpasses in many respects any other in the Kingdom. The Choir is very grand the great Window over the high Altar contains nearly 3000 feet of Painted Glass (it is the largest in England). The great Cloisters exceed any thing of the kind I have yet seen, as does the Pavement before the Altar. The Bishops of Gloucester & Hereford were conducted to their Stalls followed by the Mayor and Corporation of the City and the Blue Coat School, their dress is precisely the same as those in London. The Cathedral Service was performed with very great solemnity, I was placed in the next Stall to the Bishop of Hereford without a Ticket from a Library (if it was nearer I would not trouble the Cheltenham Churches) I dined at an Inn and had a famous dinner for 1/6d. I stopt till the Service was over in the Afternoon and walked home in the evening; I saw Mr. Moores house in Westgate Street (Mr. Chants relation) but did not go in as it was Sunday -- I was at Trinity Church last Sunday<sup>2</sup> and for the first time got a seat; the congregation is very gay it rained hard in coming out, & Flys and Chairs were in great request. The people are more mixed at the Parish church consisting of Visitors, Country people etc. the latter bring small Nosegays with them, most persons have a flower of some sort. I was there in the evening : it rained greatest part of the day & I was out no where but to Church -- Mr. & Mrs. A. go to Chapel. Mr G. Clayson preached there a few Sundays back, the Dean of Westminster I here & is going to preach at the Psh. Church on Sundy. Week -- The Duke of Gloucester is here too<sup>3</sup> the Ps. Victoria before she comes is going up the Malverns, she is to be carried up in a chair<sup>4</sup> --

I was surprised to hear of Mr. Richardsons being in London, suppose he is gone before this. I was sorry to hear of the destruction of the Bishops Chapel. I hope his Coffin and Tomb were not destroyed what have they done with them, did they open the Coffin; there was a slight notice of it in the Chelt. Chronicle<sup>5</sup>. The Election is over at Gloucester the Radicals have turned out Bransby Cooper and the Town is a little quieter<sup>6</sup>. The Company are coming in very fast & the arrivals as they are called are very numerous. I sometimes amuse myself as they come in of an evening by seeing them dismount at the different Hotels, & sometimes by looking in at the Book and Print Auctions -- There is a Turk from Constantinople here who has just opened a Turkish Bazaar some of his Goods are very beautiful, when he has no Company he sits upon a Little Mat smoking something that scents the whole neighbourhood. There is all manner of Exhibitions but I have no opportunity at present for seeing anything I do not know what I might have by & by<sup>7</sup> -- The Races were last week, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day in the old Well Walk (which is one of the finest avenues of Trees in the Kingdom) 700 Children from the different Church Schools set down to dinner along with the Clergy etc. The Tables were placed down the Centre & the Company walked round, the Band played in the mean time, it must have been a pleasing sight to them<sup>8</sup>. I must now leave off as it is near Post time I shall after taking this to the Office, go & see the Fair<sup>9</sup>, the Booths are down the High St. & some of them sell very superior Pastry, I mean to taste it; but must first conclude hoping all are well, remaining

Dear Mother  
Your Aff. Son  
Wm. Barton

I was glad to hear of Maria's going on the Water suppose she will be wanting now to go for an excursion to the Nore. I hope you enjoyed your selves in Greenwick Park. I wish you could see some of the beautiful Scenery here particularly the views from Pitville Spa -- I intend to see Tewkesbury & its famed Abbey next Sunday.

Since I began this letter I find I am to change my Bed place for a time, as a Customer has bought my Bedstead. I hardly know in what part of the Premises I shall sleep but suppose in the Upper Show Room, which is much further from the dwelling House than the Shop below & is the only place where there are any Bedsteads. It is a very large Room & there is no door at the top of the Staircase.

## NOTES

### Letter one, 15 July 1830

<sup>1</sup> William Barton arrived in Cheltenham on Monday, 12 July 1830. He appears to have been employed by John Alder as something of a trainee manager, perhaps to equip him for a career in his own father's upholstery business in London. His age in 1830 is uncertain, although he may have been as old as 30, for his school friend, William Taylor, who wrote most of the later letters in this collection, was born in 1800.

<sup>2</sup> According to his obituary in the *Cheltenham Examiner*, 10 April 1878, John Alder was an upholsterer for 58 years; he died at his residence, 3 Segrave Place, Pittville (now 5 Pittville Lawn) on 5 April 1878, aged 83. Pigot's 1822-3 *London and Provincial Directory* records him as a 'cabinet maker, upholsterer and paper hangar' at 82 Albion Street, in which street his business was situated for the remainder of his working life. I have been unable to locate him in the 1841 census, but the 1851 census lists two of his servants at 'Alder's Cabinet Rooms' in Albion Place, and adjoining next to Pate's Almshouse; notes that Alder employed 28 men and 6 women. These are presumably the premises described by William Barton and which are illustrated on page 50 of George Rowe's 1845 *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide*. The building, which later served as a theatre, a cinema and a snooker hall, is currently 'the Springbok Bar'. Harper's 1844 *Cheltenham Directory* also records that Alder had a timber yard in Hewlett Street. The *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 29 May 1847, reported a serious fire at his premises on 24 May, noting that Alder had 40 employees. By 1860, that number had risen to at least 60, for whom Alder gave a dinner at the Lamb Hotel on 3 January, to celebrate his 40 years in business (*Cheltenham Examiner*, 4 January 1860). On 28

March 1863, the *Cheltenham Looker-On* announced Alder's retirement after 45 years in business (which, if correct, would take the origin of his business back to 1818), but the 1871 census still lists him, in Albion Street, as a Master Upholsterer employing 15 men. In 1871 his place of birth is given as Prestbury and his age as 75; he was a widower by that date. Also recorded at the same address in 1871 was his 37-year-old nephew Edward, who, with his brother Enock, traded for some years as Alder & Alder, and may well have taken over at least a part of their uncle's business in 1863. I have been unable to discover any information about Mrs Alder.

<sup>3</sup> The opening of the Pittville Spa was scheduled for 20 July. The event is described in Barton's second letter and was fully reported in the town's two weekly newspapers, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* and *Cheltenham Journal*.

<sup>4</sup> Although the collections of the Art Gallery & Museum, Library and Record Office contain several early prints of the Pump Room, none is attributed to an artist or printmaker named Taylor.

<sup>5</sup> King George IV died on 26 June 1830. The *Cheltenham Chronicle* for 15 July noted that "few towns in the kingdom have paid more respect to departed royalty than Cheltenham, the muffled knell having been tolled every two hours every day since the decease of his late Majesty and the churches hung with black drapery".

<sup>6</sup> The Clarence Hotel in Crescent Place is now the Countryside Agency; when the Duchess and her daughter eventually visited the town, on 14 August, they stayed only a few hours and not overnight.

<sup>7</sup> The Races, on Cleeve Hill, were scheduled to run over three days, between 27 and 29 July.



### Letter two, 22 July 1830

<sup>1</sup> St. Mary's church, where the Revd Francis Close's sermon was preached on Thursday, 15 July, the day of the late king's funeral.

<sup>2</sup> The so-called 'proprietary system', including the charging of a shilling per service for non-pew owners, applied to most of the town's Anglican churches. A board giving details of where tickets might be obtained may still be seen in the vestibule of Christ Church.

<sup>3</sup> St. Paul's church, begun in 1827 and completed in 1831.

<sup>4</sup> Cheltenham did not get own MP until 1832, and this canvassing appears to relate to the election of two members for the city of Gloucester. On 15 July the *Cheltenham Chronicle* wrote that "during the past week this town has been agitated by some of the political bustle of a contested election, in consequence of the number of Gloucester freemen who reside here, and the visits of the rival candidates for the purpose of canvassing the votes of their friends. Colonel Webb and J. Phillpotts Esq. held meetings at different inns on Friday last and R.B. Cooper Esq. called together the electors in his interest on Monday". In the following week's issue, the *Chronicle* noted that 82 Gloucester voters lived in the town and neighbourhood of Cheltenham.

<sup>5</sup> The Races were fully reported in the town's newspapers, which also noted the publication of the Revd. Close's *A letter addressed to the inhabitants of Cheltenham, more especially the poorer part of them, on the subject of the Races by their friend and minister, Francis Close*, price one penny.

<sup>6</sup> The Pump Room actually opened on 20 July, two days before Barton wrote this letter.

<sup>7</sup> The event being described by Barton took place on the day of the late king's funeral and was also described in the *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 22 July 1830.

### Letter three, 5 or 6 August 1830

<sup>1</sup> Although Alder certainly had premises in Albion Street from at least 1822, it is possible that he may also have had a shop in the High Street at some stage, although I have found no direct evidence of this.

<sup>2</sup> Holy Trinity church, Portland Street, opened in 1823.

<sup>3</sup> William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester (1776 - 1834), George III's nephew, was a regular visitor to Cheltenham from 1809 onwards and often stayed at 18 Royal Crescent.

<sup>4</sup> Princess Victoria and her mother, the Duchess of Kent, left London on Monday, 2

August and arrived in Malvern on Friday, 6 August, having visited Oxford, Woodstock, Leamington, Warwick, Birmingham and Worcester *en route*. The Duke of Gloucester visited them at Malvern on Monday, 9 August and they spent several hours in Cheltenham on Saturday, 14 August. They arrived at the Crescent at 1 p.m. and, after refreshments, were taken on a tour of the town by Charles Marshall, the Master of the Ceremonies. They visited the Royal Well, the Montpellier Spa and Promenades, Imperial Spa, Pittville Spa and the Assembly Rooms, at each of which a band and a large numbers of sightseers awaited them. They returned to the Crescent for dinner with the Duke at 4 p.m. and then returned to Malvern. The visit was fully reported by both the town's newspapers.

<sup>5</sup> Barton is probably referring to the chapel on Old London Bridge, which was demolished in 1830, following the construction of a new bridge a little to the west. While demolishing the chapel's undercroft, the workmen came across the remains of the bridge's architect, Peter of Colechurch, which they appear to have thrown into the Thames!

<sup>6</sup> The successful candidates for Gloucester were Edward Webb (830 votes) and John Phillpotts (814 votes), who were 'chaired' on 5 August, Robert Bransby Cooper having conceded defeat and withdrawn the previous day.

<sup>7</sup> Among the current exhibitions noted in the town's newspapers between 12 July and 12 August 1830 were Jacob Spornberg's collection of limewood models of famous buildings, including the Pittville Pump Room; Master Hubard's 'papyrotomia', which included a likeness of John Milbanke 'the muffin man', one of Cheltenham's best known itinerant food sellers; 'the Cosmorama, Physiorama and Dioramic Gallery' from Regent Street, which included Monsieur Dupeaux' 'grand illusive painting of the interior of Rosslyn Chapel'; and Mr J. J. Vallotton's 'Dutch Fair', which included 'a great variety of moving figures'.

<sup>8</sup> The *Chronicle* for 29 July reported that 760 children from the National and Sunday schools had tea in the Old Well Walk at 5 p.m. on Thursday, 29 July, the third and last day of the Races, not the first day as stated by William Barton.

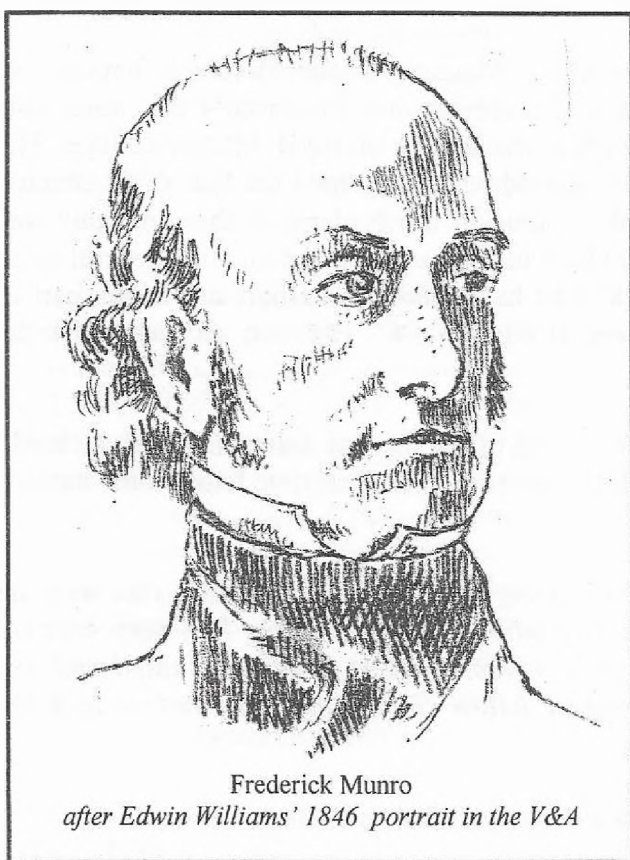
<sup>9</sup> According to the *Chronicle*, the monthly Fair was held on Thursday, 5 August.

# Frederick Monro (1791-1879): Soldier and Cheltenham Commissioner

DEREK ROWLES

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*The visit in 1982 of the famous actor Sir Ralph Richardson to the house of his birth in Tivoli Road inspired Derek Rowles to investigate who else had lived there before his own family's arrival in 1972. A detailed research project, over a period of 4 years, resulted in a fascinating history of previous occupants and their families. The first owner, in 1833, was a Royal Artillery officer named Frederick Monro.*



Frederick Munro  
after Edwin Williams' 1846 portrait in the V&A

FREDERICK MONRO was born on 27 December 1791 at a village named Monken Hadley, then in Middlesex but now just in Hertfordshire, close to Barnet. For his father, Captain James Monro, the day must have been traumatic, as his own father, Dr John Monro, died on the very same day. The house where Frederick is believed to have been born -- a former malt-house that Captain James converted into a home for his family to enjoy after his sea-going days had ended -- still exists and is known as Beacon House.

In 1782, James Monro had purchased and assumed command of the East Indiaman *Houghton* for 4,000 guineas (1998 = £226,800) from his uncle William Smith. By 1790 the stresses of his responsibilities were beginning to tell. In a letter to his brother Charles on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1790 from Calcutta he refers to a decision to sell the ship and writes: -

*"... it is intended the Houghton shall be dispatched for Europe in August. You must not therefore expect to see me before the beginning of January (1791).*

*It is a most mortifying experience to be kept so much longer from home, but in money matters, situated as I was, it was the best thing probable to happen, and I am very much mistaken if in the end it does not turn out so favourable as to prevent the necessity of my making any more trips to this part of the world."*

He ends his letter:

*"I am heartily tired of my share of the business already, and sick of the bustle I have been in so many years. I look forward to my next arrival in England with the additional pleasure in the idea of not being necessitated to leave my family and friends again."*

Frederick Monro was conceived within a few months of his father's return to England and the newly converted house alongside Monken Hadley church – a church famous for the beacon on its tower. An 18-year-old artist, named J.M.W. Turner, captured an image of both the house and the church in a watercolour painted in 1793. At this time Frederick would have been barely two years old and likely lying within the house now receiving the attention of a man destined to become one of the country's most famous artists.

His early childhood must have been idyllic, playing with his brothers and sisters in the beautiful wide-open countryside that comprises Hadley Common and Hadley Wood, but great sadness was to follow. A brother John Culling, just three years older, died when he was eight and by 15 both his mother and father had died.

The Monro family had a tradition of being educated at the Merchant Taylors' or Harrow Schools before going on to Oxford or Cambridge but Frederick's education was military. On 3 February 1807, aged 15, he set off to the Woolwich royal military college. His career in the Royal Regiment of Artillery really started when he joined the Earl of Chatham's Company of Gentlemen Cadets. With Napoleon causing much alarm at this time this was doubtless a popular choice of career. Two years later his name was listed on a muster roll as an 18-year-old 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and by 1 March 1812 he had arrived in Lisbon and taking part in the Peninsular War, having joined Major General Clinton's 6<sup>th</sup> Division serving under the Duke of Wellington.

Within a month he was taking part in the siege of the forts of Salamanca and the battle of Salamanca, after which he wrote a wonderfully descriptive and emotive letter home dated 6 July 1812 with such passages as:

*"We fired for some hours at each other, during which time an unlucky shot went as completely through our Captain's heart as possible; but considering how very near we were, I am very much surprised that our loss was so slight. I had one killed and one wounded at my gun, and another unfortunate fellow close to me was shot through the head".*

And on 15 July he recorded his compassion for an enemy in distress with:

*"In my ride to R. B. (a family friend) I found a French Sergeant Major naked, groaning and praying for a drop of water, which nobody had given him, in spite of his entreaties. I had none, but I had a little milk which I had intended for the coffee of the said R.B. This he drank with such avidity that I began to think of taking leave of the bottle as well as its contents, and I then made some fellows carry him to a village where our own wounded and surgeons were."*

On 11 August 1812 another tragedy befell the 21-year-old Frederick for it was on this day that his younger brother was killed. George Monro was serving on HMS Menelaus when enemy batteries at St Stephano in the Bay of Orbetello shot him. He died of his wounds without having reached the age of 17. It is likely that several weeks would have passed before Frederick received this sad news.

In September 1812 he took part in the siege of Burcos and in the following year the battles of Vittoria, Bidapoa, and St Jean de Luz, and the sieges of St Burgos and St Sebastian following which he was promoted lieutenant. 1814 found him first in France and then returning to England. The following year he sailed on a troopship bound for Ostend on his way to Ghent where his corps of artillery was stationed at the time of Waterloo. After that battle he stayed on in France as part of the army of occupation. He returned from France in February 1816. On 5 April 1824, he married his cousin Sarah Monro at Bushey, Herts, and retired from the army on half pay a few weeks later, on 23 June.

Frederick and Sarah had a common grandfather named Dr John Monro, one of several Monro doctors specialising in the treatment of insanity and holding the position of physician at Bethlehem Hospital in London, from whence the term "bedlam" comes. The Monro doctors also shared a common interest in the fine arts, and Sarah Monro's father – Dr Thomas Monro, is widely acknowledged as being a mentor of such early English water-colour artists as Turner and Girtin. Young artists would come to his home and academy at Adelphi Terrace, London, where they would develop their skills by copying paintings from his collection, which included sketches and drawings by Gainsborough, Canaletto, Rembrandt, Cozens and Hearne. An anecdote relates that the female members of the family did not appreciate the painting evenings at Dr Thomas Monro's house: it was apparently Sarah and her mother's practice to depart upstairs to avoid the uncouth manners of some of the young artists.

In his later life Dr Thomas Monro moved out to Bushey, where Frederick and Sarah were married, and it was likely here that they spent the first few years of married life, before moving to Cheltenham in 1833 soon after Dr John Monro's death.

Although the house deeds of 1833 refer to a 'newly formed street' the actual condition of Tivoli road at this time, when new houses were being built, is not known. Indeed the deeds indicate an original intention to name the road Mary Bone Park Place and to charge the householders annually for the maintenance of the new road. Doubtless the house foot-scrapers, that exist to this day, would have been well used to scrape off the mess left by passing horses and the construction of the new villas.

What particularly attracted the Monro family to Cheltenham is not known but news of the fashionable spa could have reached them through Frederick's military friends. The family also had connections with the East India Company, with whom both Frederick's father and eldest brother James had worked, and some members of the family had held church appointments within the county. Whatever the reason, it is clear that Frederick Monro was determined to make an impact and contribution to the development of his new town.

When he and his wife moved into their new house in Tivoli Road, Frederick Monro would have been 42 years of age and his wife nearly 39. Now retired from the Royal Artillery on half pay, he was fast developing an interest in the major civil and political issues of the day. Cheltenham had just become a parliamentary borough. Frederick was a Liberal and an 'able and powerful speaker'; it was he who proposed the town's first MP Craven F Berkeley. In those days the 'proposer' played a major part in the election campaign and he continued to perform this role for the Cheltenham Liberal party for many years.

The first public document confirming the initial occupants of the house is the census of 1841. Frederick Monro was listed as an army officer, aged 49; his wife Sarah's age was quoted

as 46. Also listed were Sidwell Beavis and Ann Yeomans, identified in the 1851 survey as a cook, born in Devon, and a maid, born in Hereford. Sarah's birthplace was given as St Martin's, London. Also visiting the house on the day of the 1841 census was Sarah's younger brother, Alexander Monro, an accomplished artist aged 38, and his 35-year-old first wife Lucy.

Frederick Monro entered public office in the town in 1852, when he was elected as one of the new commissioners established by the Cheltenham Improvement Act of that year (this body replaced the original Paving and Lighting Commissioners set up by Cheltenham's 1786 Act). He was one of six commissioners appointed for the south ward of the town. Two issues of the *Cheltenham Examiner* of that year mention him, the first concerning his chairing a meeting of the Liberals at the town hall and the second a meeting when the Liberal candidate Craven Berkeley spoke.

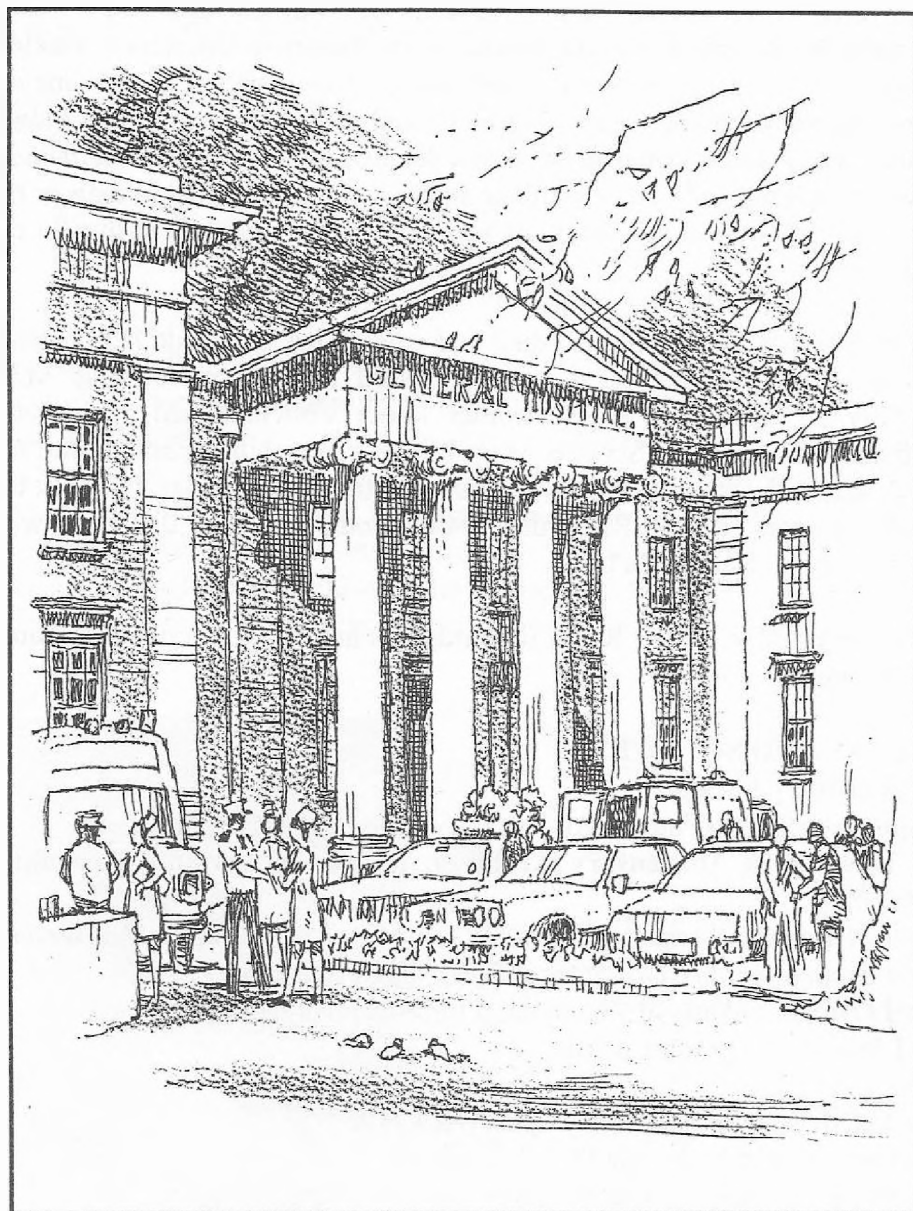
The Improvement Commissioners inherited all the responsibilities of the previous unelected Paving and Lighting Commissioners for paving, street lighting and cleaning, fire fighting, the control of nuisances, the regulation of new housing, and licences for sedan and wheel chairs, fly and hackney carriages. In addition the new commissioners took on such matters as sewerage and drainage systems, water supply, the naming and numbering of streets, burials and the provision of a new cemetery and a new town clock.

The commissioners ran the town through a number of standing committees to which their officers reported. Monro's name is listed among those taking part in the first meeting of the Improvement Commission on 7 June 1852, chaired by James Agg Gardner. Also present were such well-known local figures as William Henry Henney, William Nash Skillicorne and Edward Warner Shewell. At an AGM on 7 November 1854 Frederick Monro was unanimously elected chairman of the commissioners. In addition the *Examiner* records that, at various times, he also chaired committees concerning the Patriotic Fund, the Tyndale Monument, the relief of the unemployed poor and the Working Men's Improvement Society. Old council records also confirm his attendance at meetings for the election of commissioners, the cemetery committee and the water committee, which he chaired.

One of his most difficult assignments must have been chairing a public meeting at the Town Hall, then in Regent Street, on the proposal 'the Public Libraries Act 1855 be adopted in this borough' (reported in detail in a special supplement to the *Cheltenham Examiner*). The Chairman strove courageously for a successful outcome but the meeting ended in uproar. The necessary two-thirds majority was not obtained, probably due to the ratepayers' fear of having to bear the cost of this development, and Cheltenham had to wait many more years for its public library.

It was probably the Cheltenham General Hospital and Dispensary that took most of Frederick Monro's time and attention. His name first appears at an AGM of governors of the old Cheltenham General Hospital and Dispensary in the Lower High Street in 1846. By 1850 a new hospital had been built and opened on its present site and Frederick Monro was president of the board of governors in 1851 – an office he held until January 1854. In 1852 he was also appointed steward for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions and donations for the hospital. On completion of his term as president he was thanked for his 'valuable services' and for his 'successful efforts to promote on all occasions the good of the Hospital' he became a Vice President – a position he held until his death.





His career in local government ended in 1858, by which time he had reached the age of 67, but there were still causes for which he fought. He was a Christian of the most practical kind. Whilst he regularly attended services at Christchurch he also believed that the Church of England needed to reform. Even by 1875, when well into his 80's, the *Cheltenham Examiner* published his views on such subjects. His own obituary referred to his concern for the condition of the churchyards of England and his strong belief that all should have the right to bury their dead according to their own form of religious services. Membership of the Cheltenham Literary

& Philosophical Institution however suggests that his interests were not confined to such contentious subjects as politics and religion.

He continued to actively support the Liberal party perhaps longer than was wise. On July 15 1865, when in his 74<sup>th</sup> year, the *Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Gazette* recorded that Monro 'presented himself, and in a long-winded oration' to a crowd of nearly 20,000 proposed that the Hon Frederick William Fitzhardinge Berkeley represent Cheltenham in Parliament for a fourth term. The candidate nomination meeting in St Ann's Field, off Hewlett Street, was acrimonious, and in the poll the following day Berkeley lost to the Conservative candidate. The *Cheltenham Journal* ended by reporting that 'Mr Monro appeared in answer to repeated calls. He said that they [his supporters] were unaccustomed to defeat, and if they did not behave themselves very well under it he thought they might be excused.' He hoped to have the pleasure of seeing the rival candidate, Mr Schreiber, unseated and having their own representative in Parliament again. Frederick Monro's active career, which started with victory in a military battlefield near Salamanca, ended in defeat in a political battlefield in Cheltenham.

Frederick Monro died at 11 Tivoli Road on 3 May 1879 at the age of 87. Many members of his family attended the private funeral service at the then new cemetery at Oakley. It is believed that he was, for a time prior to his death, chief of one branch of this ancient Scottish clan. The following weekend the vicar of Christ Church, Rev J F Fenn, made Monro the subject of his sermon, which was reported along with a detailed obituary in the *Cheltenham Examiner*. His many appointments and causes indicate that he was an invaluable man in the development of the town and its hospital and, as in his younger days, continually strove for the well-being of his fellow man.

Within 18 months his wife Sarah had also died and was buried alongside her husband in Cheltenham cemetery. Their house in Tivoli Road passed to their niece Miss Mary Elizabeth Monro, daughter of Frederick's eldest brother James who had died many years earlier whilst working for the Madras Civil Service. Mary Elizabeth lived in the house until her death in 1899, three days before the start of the new century. Within a year an art master at the Cheltenham Ladies' College named Arthur Richardson would come to live at the house with his family. Two years later his son Ralph was born.

The house is often referred to as 'Sir Ralph Richardson's house', but perhaps it should also be known as 'Monro's house'.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

**Barnet & District Local History Society**

**Bethlehem Royal Hospital Archives** (Patricia Alderidge, Archivist and Curator)

**Cheltenham General Hospital & Dispensary Archives:** records of governors' meetings (courtesy of Mr Peter Robins).

**Cheltenham Reference Library:** local publications including *Cheltenham Looker-On*, *Cheltenham Journal* and *Gloucestershire Gazette* and *Cheltenham Examiner*

**Gloucestershire Record Office:** records of Cheltenham Improvement Commissioners

**Gloucester Reference Library:** Biographical Index

**Gloucestershire Collection**

**London Metropolitan Archives:** Monro Family Papers (ACC/1063)

**The Monro Family** and in particular the late Dr F J G Jefferiss

**Public Record Office:** Royal Artillery Statement of Services (WO/76/359/96)  
War Office Muster Rolls

**Royal Artillery Institution** (Brigadier K A Timbers, Historical Secretary)

Cass, *Monken Hadley*, 1880

Major Duncan, *History of the Royal Artillery*.

W H Gelder, *Monken Hadley Church and Village*, and *Georgian Hadley*

Lt-Col M E S Laws, *Battery Records of the Royal Artillery 1716-1859*

Very Rev W Norris, article *Dr. Monro* in *The Old Water-Colour Society's Club 1924-25*  
Second Annual Volume

C Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*, vol V

C Oman, *The Centenary of the Battle of Salamanca*, in *The Fortnightly Review*, July 1912

Roget's *History of The Old Water-Colour Society*

M J Rose, *Biographical Dictionary* (1853)

🎨 Sketches of Munro and the General Hospital by *Aylwin Sampson* 🎨

# The Caffieri Family from France: their Life in Cheltenham

MIKE GRINDLEY

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A SMALL stained glass window in the Lady Chapel of St. Gregory's Catholic Church in Cheltenham has the following inscription:

<i>Marie Le Feuvre</i>	<i>wife of</i>	<i>Nicholas Philippe Constant Caffieri</i>
<i>Born at Jersey 14th Aug. 1777</i>		<i>Born at St. Omer, France, 6th Sept. 1787</i>
<i>Died at Cheltenham 30th Nov. 1855</i>		<i>Died at Cheltenham 25th June 1854</i>
<i>They are both buried at Broadway, Worcestershire, R.I.P.</i>		

The memorial was given by their son Hector St Cyr Caffieri, who was, like his late father, a well-known Cheltenham wine merchant, and himself the father of Hector Caffieri, the Cheltenham-born landscape, marine and still-life artist who died in Boulogne-sur-Mer in 1932.

The above Nicholas Philippe Constant Caffieri, known as Philippe, was descended from an ancient Italian family, one of whom had been a cardinal and subsequently Pope<sup>1</sup>. Later the family came to France and the first to do so was probably the Philippe Caffieri (1634-1716) who was brought there by Cardinal Mazarin and appointed 'sculptor of the king' under Louis XIV. His son Jacques (Paris 1678-1755) was a sculptor and a renowned producer of chased work for the royal palaces at Versailles, etc. The sons of Jacques Caffieri included bronze-worker Philippe (1714-1777) and Jean-Jacques (1715-1792) who produced many bronze and marble portrait busts<sup>2</sup>.

The Philippe Caffieri who came to Cheltenham was a native of St. Omer, 'of one of the most respectable families there'. He entered the French army (the 43rd Regiment) under Marshal Soult and served against the English forces in several of the most celebrated engagements of the Peninsular War, being wounded several times. When peace came, he retired to private life, but on the return of Napoleon from Elba he rejoined the Imperial Army and was in charge of a reserve detachment on the road to Waterloo in October 1815. In circumstances yet to be illuminated, he 'effected his escape to England' after that battle, and became a teacher of French at Bath and Stroud, which must have been a strange change of fortunes for him!<sup>3</sup>

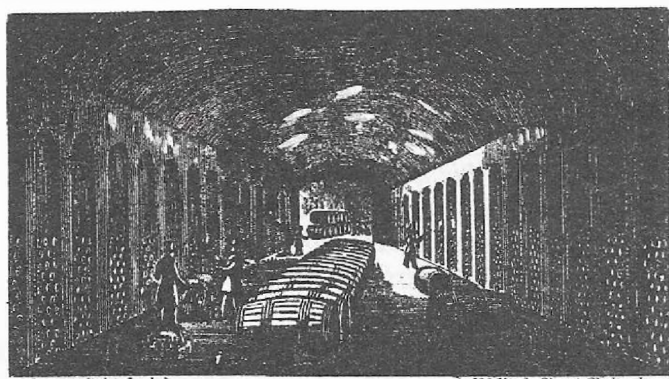
Philippe and Marie's son Hector St Cyr Caffieri was born and baptized at Bath on 2 December 1816 according to the Cheltenham Catholic Chapel register, and by mid-1818 they came to live in Cheltenham, where Philippe gave instruction in French language and elocution 'to most of the county's nobility and gentry'<sup>3</sup>, both in schools and also to private pupils at his home, which by 1828 was 3 Portland Place, opposite Holy Trinity Church in Portland Street<sup>4</sup>. Every year he visited St Omer for the Christmas season and for a mid-Summer break (details are known for 1827 to 1832)<sup>5</sup>.

In 1840 or 1841 Philippe's career as a teacher of French was over. The magistrates in September 1836 had issued him with a 'new victualler's license' for 3 Portland Place, which became an imported wine and spirits establishment. P. Caffieri & Son was the name. Son Hector took an early active position, his name appearing in advertisements in March 1838 and in 1840<sup>6</sup>.



However, Philippe was having political problems in the local voter registration court each October. As a Liberal his vote suffered regular objection by the Tories. He kept his vote in 1838, but it was expunged in later years, he being proved a non-naturalized 'alien, of alien parents' in 1841 and 1843. In 1842 he did not appear to state his case and was thus automatically struck off the list under 'the slaughter of the innocents' procedure<sup>7</sup>.

Advert here



Johnson, Del & Sculp<sup>r</sup>

128, High Street, Cheltenham.

### HECTOR CAFFIERI,

Importer of and Dealer in

### Foreign Wines & Spirits,

3, Portland Place (opposite Trinity Church)

CHELTENHAM.

*For the accommodation of the Visitors & Inhabitants of Cheltenham, M<sup>r</sup>. H. C. informs them they may be supplied from a single bottle to any quantity.*

EXTRA DOUBLE IRISH STOUT, LONDON & IRISH PORTER,  
in Bottles, Pints, & Casks. BURTON & SCOTCH ALE, CIDER & PERRY.

Superior Soda Water.

*Wines & Spirits imported into & bonded at Gloucester.*

All Letters to be addressed to H. C. at the Counting House as above.

HAMPERS, BOTTLES, & CASKS, at cost price.

*M<sup>r</sup>. H. C. (or his agent) will have the honor of waiting upon his customers in the country every three months.*

*Presented by*

The June 1841 Census shows the Caffieri home with Philippe's wife, son Hector, one servant and two probable lodgers. The vaults there were well placed to serve the Pittville Estate to the North, but with the growing predominance of the town's South side in terms of fashionable society, the time was ripe to expand the business to Montpellier. Philippe Caffieri & Son announced in early December 1841 that in addition to 3 Portland Place, they had just opened 'a second Depot for the sale of Wines, Spirits, Porter, Ale, etc. at the Montpellier Wine & Spirit Vaults, next door to the Cheltenham Looker-On Office [Henry Davies]'<sup>8</sup>. The most expensive spirit offered was 'Very Old Cordial Cognac Brandy (1762 Vintage), 60s per gallon, or 10s per bottle'. Champagne was 84s per dozen bottles. Large advertisements appeared for many years in every issue of the 'Looker-On', and business was carried on from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. at both sites.

The Montpellier Wine Vaults<sup>9</sup>, like many of the elegant premises in Montpellier Walk, had frontages onto both the Walk and Montpellier Street behind it, and in 1844 was one of 'some shops adjoining the Pump Room and continuing a little way down - the uppermost is Mr. Davies's Montpellier Library'<sup>10</sup>. Montpellier Walk (otherwise known as Montpellier Promenade) possessed five shops in late 1843, all in its upper section: the Montpellier Library (Henry Davies), Madame Salomon's French shoe warehouse (she was born in Rouen), Charles Hale's Music Shop, Caffieri's Montpellier Wine Vaults and the Montpellier Bazaar of Hirtz Karo (a Prussian-born Jew)<sup>11</sup>. The Caffieris obviously enjoyed cordial relations with all their neighbours. When alterations were in progress at the back of the Pump Room in July 1844, Mr. Hale let them use his Music Shop - 'in Montpellier Promenade' - as the temporary entrance to the Wine Vaults<sup>12</sup>, while Hirtz Karo, the Caffieris and Charles Hale all gave to each other's charitable causes, and on 13 February 1847 Hector's probable brother-in-law, Leonard Clow, Esq. of London, married Charles Hale's fifth daughter Ellen<sup>13</sup>.

Hector succeeded his father to the business in March 1845<sup>14</sup>, around the period that he married Mary Clow (born 1821, of a London family). She bore him six children:

14 January 1846	Marie Constantia Florence
7 June 1847	Hector Edward Phillip
6 January 1848	Pauline Helen Sophie
26 September 1850	Madeleine Julie Anne
21 March 1852	Virginie Isaura St Sophie
24 November 1854	Henry Leonard Paul

All were born at 3 Portland Place and baptized at the Catholic Chapel in Cheltenham. The godparents' names included the grandparents Caffieri (for the first-born); Mary's older sister Sophy Clow and Edward Reeve (for Hector E.P., baptized 11 June 1847, later the artist); Henry Francis Polydore (Italian by origin, and being researched by Jill Waller); and Casimir Tiesset and his sister Sophia Tiesset, the French and Italian language teachers and, like the Caffieris, devout Catholics<sup>15</sup>. Sophia Tiesset first came to Cheltenham in January 1836, having been induced by Lady Darling, Lady Ford and other society leaders of that day, to leave Boulogne where she then lived, and to settle in Cheltenham to teach; she died there in December 1884 at Oxford House aged 84<sup>16</sup>. Philippe Caffieri was godfather at St. Gregory's in 1845 to Casimir and Mary (née Davies) Tiesset's older son Eugene, who received his musical education at Leipzig, Bologna and Milan (his fellow students including Sir Arthur Sullivan and Carl Rosa); Eugene died in June 1885 in Newcastle<sup>17</sup>.

On a more earthbound level, the Caffieris had occasionally to prosecute for non-payment or pilfering. In March 1844 a young man was caught stealing three bottles of stout off a truck of six dozen which their porter, William Rawlings, was taking from Portland Place to the Montpellier Wine Vaults. The culprit sank his teeth into Rawlings' hand, savagely injuring the sinews. Philippe Caffieri said he would have ignored the case, 'had it not been for the thief gnawing the man's hand so'. With a known previous conviction, the sentence was 15 years transportation!<sup>18</sup>

About the period of Hector's marriage, Philippe and his wife went to live at the Montpellier Wine Vaults where they were noted in the March 1851 census, with one servant girl. Hector and his wife Mary stayed on at 3 Portland Place, and in the same census were listed there with their then four children, sister-in-law Sophy Clow (spinster, aged 36, from London), two female servants and a visitor, Henry Castillon (gentleman, aged 19), born in the brandy region of Cognac in France. Hector was noted as employing two men.

The early 1850s were boom times for the Caffieris. The glittering culmination of the winter season's social whirl was the Bachelors' Fancy and Full Dress Ball each February at the Assembly Rooms. Both in 1850 and in 1852 the Caffieri cellars supplied all the wine, and around 500 'fashionables' attended on each occasion. In 1850 'their champagne and other wines were praised by all who drank them ... for they were of the choicest qualities and supplied with unbounded liberality'. At the 1852 event, 'from first to last, the supply of wines was unlimited, and the quality such as must prove a card of recommendation to Mr. Caffieri for many a day to come ... The flavour of his wines, and the excellence of Mr. Wyatt's oysters, formed not unfrequent themes for eulogy'.<sup>19</sup>

On 25 June 1854, sadness struck. After a long and severe illness, Philippe Caffieri died 'at his residence 24 Montpellier Street', aged 67. Said the local press: 'He was a most active, intelligent and benevolent man - a 'Good Samaritan' dispensing his charities to all alike,



regardless of creed, or clime, or colour; in him the poor have lost a true friend. Few men have gone to their grave more beloved and respected than this most excellent man'... 'His upright conduct and sound judgement in the wine merchants' trade obtained for him the respect of a large circle of friends, and the confidence of all those who had occasion to consult his opinion'<sup>3</sup>. Mary, his widow, died on 30 November 1855 at 5 Montpellier Street, aged 78, of bronchitis<sup>20</sup>. They were buried at Broadway (then the nearest Catholic burial ground).

Hector senior followed his late parents' public spirit by contributing to funds for causes as diverse as support of the meetings at Cheltenham of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1856) and the Tangier Relief Fund for destitute refugee Moroccan Jews at Gibraltar (1859), plus many local appeals. From May 1853 he was one of a 5-strong committee raising funds for the erection of what became St. Gregory's Church<sup>21</sup>.

The Caffieri lease of 3 Portland Place expired in March 1857, the stock there was sold off, and Hector and family went to live at 7 Painswick Lawn, with the wine and spirits business now concentrated in Montpellier Walk and Street<sup>22</sup>.

In the April 1861 census the only Caffieris at home were the three youngest children (the youngest called by his third name, Paul), plus a governess, a housemaid and a cook. The cook was caught stealing linen sheets from another house later in the year and spent four months in Gloucester Gaol<sup>23</sup>.

A Hector Caffieri receipt with the printed year '186[blank]' at the top has the business address as '24 Montpellier Street, Cheltenham, *and at Liverpool*' (my italics)<sup>24</sup>. A further Merseyside connection was revealed on 30 October 1866 when 'Marie Constantia Florence, eldest daughter of Hector Caffieri, Esq.' was married in style at St. Gregory's, Cheltenham, to William Gilbertson, an affluent merchant of Birkenhead, and son of Thomas Gilbertson, Esq. also of Birkenhead. Said the local press:

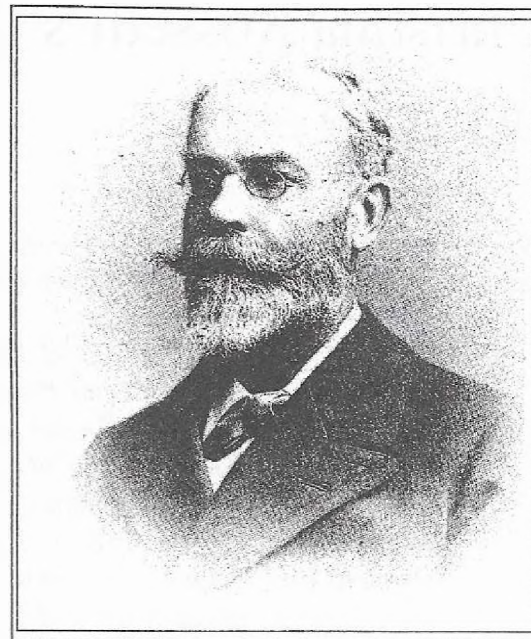
*'It is very long since a prettier wedding party has been seen in Cheltenham, or a more imposing ceremony performed. At the residence of the bride's father, a splendid breakfast was provided by Mr. George, to which about forty sat down. Dinner was also provided by Mr. George for a large party, and in the evening a ball took place. Early in the afternoon the newly-married couple left Cheltenham on their wedding trip ...'*<sup>25</sup>

We hear no more of the Caffieris residing in Cheltenham. Local directories indicate that at some point in 1868, they moved away, a best guess being to London (native place of Hector's wife) or Liverpool (where he had a business connection). Certainly, Cheltenham's high-society palmy days were over, and new opportunities for business presumably lay elsewhere.

But that is not the end of the story. Hector's elder son Hector (b. 1847 and educated in Cheltenham) later won acclaim as a prolific painter of landscapes, beach and harbour scenes (especially showing fisher-folk), still life and some sporting subjects, chiefly using watercolours. He studied art in Paris under Bonnat and J Lefebvre and later worked in London and Boulogne-sur-Mer (not far from his grandfather's birthplace at St. Omer). He apparently covered the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, and lived in London from 1882 to at least 1901 at Hampstead Road and Great Russell Street. Elected a member of the Royal Institute (1885), ROI (1894) and RBA, he was also a member of the New Water Colour Society. He exhibited at the Royal Academy 1875-1901 and in Paris at the Salon de la Société des Artistes Français 1892-93.

There is an 1895 painting by Hector in the Cheltenham Art Gallery, titled *Boulogne Harbour*<sup>26</sup>. From 1903 he lived in Boulogne, where he died in January 1932 at 85 rue des Vieillards<sup>27</sup>.

The artist's grandson Michael Caffieri Turner with his wife and family (including grandsons) briefly visited Cheltenham from Watford in February 1986 to attend the unveiling of a plaque to Hector Caffieri.



*Hector Caffieri RI, RBA, ROI (1847-1932)*

## NOTES

[CC: *Cheltenham Chronicle*; CE: *Cheltenham Examiner*; CFP: *Cheltenham Free Press*; CJ: *Cheltenham Journal*; CLO: *Cheltenham Looker-On*; CM: *Cheltenham Mercury*.]

1. CJ 1.7.1854.
2. 17th/18<sup>th</sup>-century information kindly provided by Richard Barton (via Brian Torode). For more details, see Elsevier, *Great Encyclopaedia of Antiques*; and J Guiffrey, *Les Caffieri, sculpteurs et fondeurs-ciseleurs [etc.]*, Paris 1877 (British Library ref. no. 2264. cc.9).
3. Amalgamation of obituaries in CC 27.6.1854, CJ 1.7.1854 and CE 28.6.1854.
4. All Caffieri advertisements (CLO, Cheltenham Annales, etc.) give them at '3 Portland Place, opposite Trinity Church'. The 1855-57 Old Town Survey erroneously labelled the then Winchcomb Place (part of Prestbury Road near the Sudeley Arms) as 'Portland Place' as well; all other sources prove this wrong. See also note 22.
5. CC and CJ, passim (Arrival lists, advertisements and local news items).
6. Cheltenham Annales from 1837. CFP 10.9.1836 and CC 14.3.1838.
7. CE 20.10.1841, CJ 17.10.1842 and others.
8. CLO 4.12.1841.
9. CLO advertisements show the Montpellier Wine Vaults as numbered '13 Montpellier Street' from later 1845, and renumbered '24 Montpellier Street' in June 1850. Directories show that, from about 1861, the Caffieri business was numbered '23 Montpellier Walk'; this is now believed to be the northern half of O'Neill's Irish Bar (late Peter's Bar).
10. G Rowe, *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* (published by February 1845).
11. Harper's 1844 Cheltenham Street Directory (published 1.2.1844). 1851 census (for birth-places).
12. CLO 27.7.1844.
13. CC 25.2.1847 and CLO 9.8.1851.
14. CLO 1 and 8.3.1845 (advertisements).
15. GRO D4290 PP 1/1, and CC, CE and CFP birth announcements.
16. CC 21.1.1836 and CM 3.1.1885.
17. CM 6.6.1885.
18. CFP 23.3.1844 and CC 4.4.1844.
19. CLO 9.2.1850 and CLO 7.2.1852.
20. CC 4.12.1855 and CM 8.12.1855.
21. CLO 5.7.1856, CE 30.11.1859, CLO 28.5.1853, etc.
22. CLO 22.11.1856 and CLO 13.6.1857. In later hands, 3 Portland Place became first the Pittville Wine Vaults (CM 29.6.1861) and then the Pittville Hotel (various directories), before eventual demolition in the late 1960s, when the whole area became a car park.
23. CM 12.10.1861.
24. This receipt kindly given me by Michael and Carolyn Greet.
25. CM 3.11.1866.
26. Cheltenham Civic Society *Newsletter*, June 1986.
27. Information on Hector's artistic career kindly passed me by Richard Barton (via Brian Torode) and Neil Grindley (Courtauld Institute).

# Christina Rossetti's Cheltenham Connection

JILL WALLER

WHILE BROWSING through 19th-century issues of the magazine *Notes and Queries*, I came across the following letter<sup>1</sup>, which had been sent in from a Cheltenham address:

*PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH MILITANT (3rd S. ii. 409) - A correspondent inquired whether any second Prayer Book could be brought forward in which the commencement of the Prayer for the Church Militant is printed: "Almighty and everlasting God, instead of everliving." I have just met with one. It is fairly printed on brownish paper, and is bound with a Holy Bible printed by the same persons as the Prayer Book, and dated "MDCCLXVI," and with Sternhold and Hopkins's Psalms, dated "MDCCLXI." The three editions are very similar in appearance, and form a stout volume, on the now shabby brown cover of which is stamped "Kempsey (or Kembsey?) Manor."*

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

*Chester Villa, Painswick Road, Cheltenham.*

I have to confess that I knew very little about Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894), other than that she had written the words to 'In the Bleak Midwinter', but I was very surprised that she should have given a Cheltenham address. Intrigued, I set off on a quest to find out more.

Firstly I was able to establish that it was indeed *the* poet who had written the letter - apparently she *always* signed her letters 'Christina G Rossetti', even to her family<sup>2</sup>. She was born in London in 1830, Frances (nee Polidori) the most important women century. One of her brothers, (1828-1882), rose to fame as founders of the Pre-Raphaelites, and some of her published in the Brotherhood was not a Pre-Raphaelite person, Christina had a temperament and was a devout High Anglican, much influenced by the Tractarians<sup>3</sup>. This would explain the content of her letter in *Notes and Queries*.

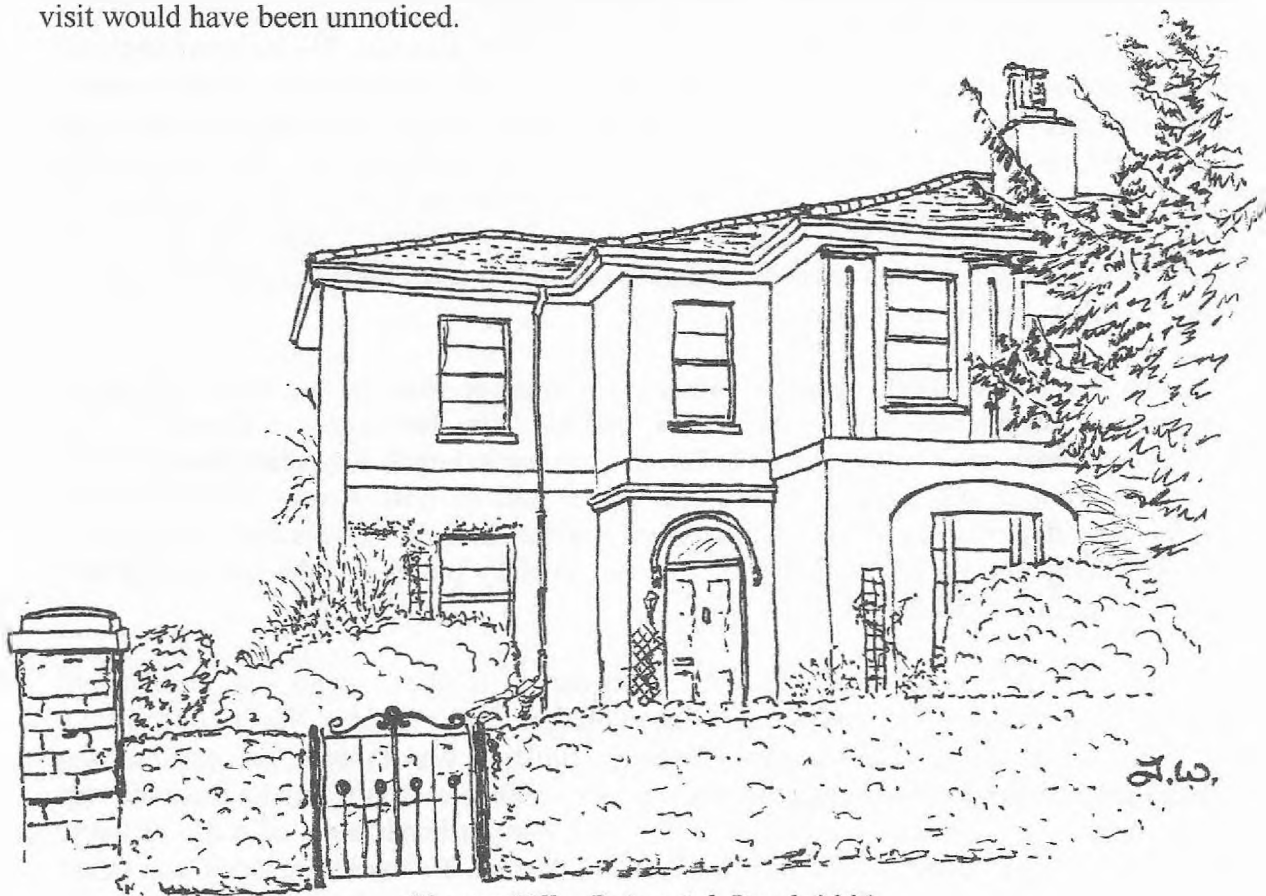


I wanted to establish whether Christina was actually living at the Painswick Road address in 1863, or just visiting Cheltenham. From various Cheltenham directories it was apparent that Chester Villa is now 52, Painswick Road. In fact the name can still just be made out in peeling paint on a brick pillar at the corner of the plot. In 1863, when Christina wrote to *Notes and Queries*, this end of Painswick Road was still in the parish of Leckhampton, with Ashford Road forming the boundary between Cheltenham and Leckhampton. I contacted the owners of the house, who were able to give some information from the house deeds. Chester Villa was built between 1857 and 1859, and at the end of



1859 ownership was transferred to George Oliver Sheepway, butcher. He retained ownership for the next 20 years, during which time it was let to tenants. Unfortunately these tenants are not named in the deeds<sup>4</sup>.

The next step was to check all the guide books to Cheltenham, from Goding's *History of Cheltenham* (1863) to Sampson and Blake's *Cheltenham Companion*. They invariably included at least a paragraph, if not a chapter, reciting all the famous artistic and literary visitors and residents of the town. Nowhere could I find a mention of Christina Rossetti, nor was her name included in any lists of "fashionable arrivals" to the town in the local press of the 1860s. *Goblin Market and other Poems*, her first major work, had only recently been published in April 1862, so her fame was just beginning. Also, although happy to lead an active social life with her family or old friends, Christina was shy of strangers and would not have drawn any attention to herself<sup>5</sup>. This may explain why any visit would have been unnoticed.



*Chester Villa, Painswick Road, 2001*

I turned my attention to the family of Christina Rossetti, and at last discovered that her connection with Cheltenham was through her maternal uncle, Henry Polydore (1808-1885). Most biographies of her life state that Christina frequently visited her uncle Henry in Gloucester, but a closer look at family letters revealed that he also spent many years in Cheltenham. Perhaps his earliest appearance is on the list of 'fashionable' arrivals given in the *Cheltenham Looker-On* of 24 May 1834 – 'Mr. Polydore, 8, Portland Square' (now 10, Albert Place)<sup>6</sup>. He seems to have settled in the town as he appears on the 1841 census living at Oxford Place, on the London Road in Cheltenham

By the time of the 1851 Census Henry Polydore was living in Gloucester with his daughter, Henrietta, where they remained throughout that decade. Christina's letters to



family and friends during the 1850s mention visits to her uncle and cousin in Gloucester, and in June 1860 she reports that 'Twice my Uncle and I spend [sic] a day with kind friends at Cheltenham.'<sup>7</sup>

The 1861 Census shows Henry Polydore had moved back to Cheltenham and was living at 6, Brandon Terrace (Brandon Terrace is now 1-35 Gratton Road)<sup>8</sup>. In October that year, in a letter to her brother William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919), Christina asks if he would forward a *Guardian* to Uncle Henry at 8, Brandon Terrace, Cheltenham<sup>9</sup>. (The Rossetti family were in the habit of circulating various newspapers and periodicals amongst themselves.) Eighteen months later Henry had moved around the corner to Chester Villa, where Christina wrote her letter to *Notes and Queries*. He remained at this address until 1865, when he moved to Oxford Street in Gloucester.

Henry Polydore was an articled clerk to a firm of solicitors. He was born Henry Francis Polidori, in 1808; his father was Italian, his mother English. He chose to anglicise his name to Polydore in the hope of attracting wealthy clients, but according to his nephew, William Michael Rossetti, 'the clients never came.' In his diary William describes his uncle as 'a man of narrow nature, kindly in an ordinary degree, punctiliously conscientious: in this respect I think he exceeded all other men I have known, having more of the scrupulosity of some women. A strict Catholic, devout in practice'<sup>10</sup>. Christina's other brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, regarded his uncle as a nervous old fogey, and tended to ignore him during Henry's visits to the family in London<sup>11</sup>.

In about 1843 Henry married Henrietta Mayer (or Maher), the eldest of eleven children of a Cheltenham baker, John Mayer, and his wife Henrietta (nee Cheek)<sup>12</sup>. The family kept a number of bakery shops in Cheltenham, including 8, Keynsham Bank (on the London Road near the junction with Hales Road) and 3, Bath Road. Mrs. Henrietta Polydore was described by William Rossetti as 'a somewhat curious character, with lots of business energy and power of falling on her feet in risky places. ... She has an ordinary amount of education and culture'<sup>13</sup>.

In 1846 the couple had a daughter, also named Henrietta, who was the Rossetti children's first and only 'Polidori' cousin. The Polydore family lived in North London for a few years before moving to Gloucester, where Christina was to visit her cousin, who suffered from consumption, frequently over the years. While cousin Henrietta was still very young, Mrs. Polydore left the family. She and her husband were of very different temperaments, and, reflecting on their separation, William Rossetti concluded that 'their tempers and habits disagreed, but there is no imputation on Mrs. Polydore's character'<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, the Rossetti family remained on good terms with Mrs. Henrietta Polydore throughout her life. By 1851, as the census returns show, Henry Polydore was living at 48, Oxford Street, Gloucester, with his daughter, but his wife had returned to Cheltenham and was running the baker's shop at 3, Bath Road.

In 1855, Mrs. Henrietta Polydore emigrated to America, taking her daughter with her. Henry wrote to his nephew, William Rossetti, in some distress asking him to help regain cousin Henrietta<sup>15</sup> - William worked in the Inland Revenue Department, and Henry evidently had confidence in him as a government servant. In fact cousin Henrietta returned from America to live with her father in 1860. (She did visit her mother again in America on several occasions during her short life, and died of consumption there in 1874.) Mrs. Polydore's enterprising character stood her in good stead in America and she soon opened a

'vast' hotel in Mississippi City called 'Barnes' (but there was no 'Barnes' according to William Rossetti)<sup>16</sup>. In 1866 she paid a surprise visit to England and William noted in his diary 'She has gone through any number of singular adventures. At one time she was near being exchanged to an Indian for a horse, as his squaw; and she actually some years ago, on hearing of her Father's illness or distress, came from Salt Lake to Liverpool, having in her pocket at starting only three dollars, and not spending any of it on the way<sup>17</sup>.' An example of Aunt Henrietta's amicable relationship with the Rossetti family was shown when, in 1871, Christina helped a friend (Charles Augustus Howell, secretary to John Ruskin) to procure a supply of razors for Mrs. Polydore's hotel in Mississippi City<sup>18</sup>.

Mrs. Polydore's parents, and some of her brothers and sisters, also left Cheltenham to live in America. At Salt Lake City on 16 February, 1856, one sister, Jane Elizabeth Mayer, became one of the six concurrent wives of the Mormon Samuel Whitney Richards. He had been president of the British Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. Jane bore him one of his 29 children, Phineas Henry, whom she took to visit his Mayer relatives in New Orleans and Arkansas. One of Samuel's concurrent wives, Mary Ann Parker, was the niece of the woman he had married first, Mary Haskin Parker<sup>19</sup>. I do not know whether Christina was aware of the unconventional life-style of this sibling of her aunt by marriage, but I doubt she would have approved.

Christina Rossetti's visit to her uncle and cousin at Chester Villa in 1863 lasted several weeks, beginning on the 6th April. She was back at home in London by the 21st May, and her letters of the time do not tell us anything about the visit. However, in July the following year Christina was once again a guest at Chester Villa, and on this occasion she reported in a letter to a friend '*... down here to my surprize we have been somewhat gay, thanks to the kindness of two friends giving us drives. Moreover two of these drives were of a decidedly pic-nic-ish character, and proportionably enjoyable: two others terminated in a little supper with our hospitable entertainer. Cheltenham proper is still, as it was last year, not to my taste: but the environs afford charming drives, and some of the finest views I know*<sup>20</sup>.'

In January 1865 Christina mentions that Uncle Henry was returning to Cheltenham from a holiday<sup>21</sup>. However, later that year he and cousin Henrietta moved to Gloucester, once again living in Oxford Street, but this time at No.3. Christina visited them a number of times in Gloucester during the 1860s and 1870s, and makes no further mention of Cheltenham. In fact, Henry Polydore spent his last few years back in Cheltenham. The 1881 census return shows him lodging at No.1, Carlton Street, and his occupation is given as Solicitor. He died on 6 January 1885, aged 77, at 8, St. James' Terrace<sup>22</sup> (now Suffolk Parade, near St. James' Church).

It is unlikely that Christina visited Cheltenham again. After a serious illness in 1874, she became quite reclusive, rarely receiving visitors or leaving her home in London. By the 1880s she was virtually an invalid, following recurrent bouts of Graves' disease, a thyroid disorder. She continued to write throughout the rest of her life, and was even considered a possible successor to Alfred Tennyson as poet laureate<sup>23</sup>. She died in London on 29th December 1892<sup>24</sup>. Christina G Rossetti is increasingly being reconsidered as a major Victorian poet, and I feel she deserves a mention in Cheltenham's lists of more erudite visitors.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> N&Q Vol. 3 3rd S. (72), 16 May 1863, p 397 (courtesy of the Bodleian Library website -- www.bodley.ox.ac.uk)
- <sup>2</sup> Thomas, Frances, *Christina Rossetti, A Biography* (Virago Press, 1994) p.395n
- <sup>3</sup> Marsh, Jan, *Christina Rossetti, A Literary Biography* (Pimlico, 1995)
- <sup>4</sup> Information kindly supplied by Lindsay Raitt, 52, Painswick Road.
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas, p.250
- <sup>6</sup> My thanks to Mike Grindley for spotting this visitor to his 'manor'.
- <sup>7</sup> Harrison, A H, *The Letters of Christina Rossetti, Vol.1, 1843-1873* (University Press of Virginia, 1997) p.131
- <sup>8</sup> Hodsdon, James, *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham* (BGAS, 1997)
- <sup>9</sup> Harrison, p 150
- <sup>10</sup> Peattie, Roger W (ed), *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti*, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990) p.316n
- <sup>11</sup> Marsh, Jan, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Painter and Poet* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999) p.156
- <sup>12</sup> International Genealogical Index - Ancestral File (www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>13</sup> Peattie, p.316n
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid* p.316n
- <sup>15</sup> Marsh 1999, p.157
- <sup>16</sup> Harrison, p.97n
- <sup>17</sup> Marsh 1995, p.363
- <sup>18</sup> Harrison, p.365
- <sup>19</sup> Ward, Maurine - website: www.nl.net/~mcward/swr.htm
- <sup>20</sup> Harrison, p.200
- <sup>21</sup> *ibid* p.218
- <sup>22</sup> *Cheltenham Mercury*, 17 January 1885
- <sup>23</sup> Marsh 1995, p.559
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas, p.372

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## Recent books and articles on the history of Cheltenham

### List compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

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Brooks, Robin, *A century of Cheltenham. Events, people and places over the last 100 years*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, exclusively for W. H. Smith, 2001. 125pp. £14.99. A brief historical introduction and around 200 captioned photographs.

Carter, G., *Anglican Evangelicals. Protestant secessions from the via media c.1800-1850*, Oxford University Press, 2001, includes information on the Revd. Thomas Snow (1786-1865), who was connected with both North Place chapel and 'Snow's chapel' in Grosvenor Street during the period 1816-26.

Charity, Michael, *Cheltenham people and places 1960s to 1980s. The photographs of Michael Charity*, Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2001. 96pp. £12.99. Photographs by a well-known locally-based professional photographer.

Coleman, Laurent, and Watts, Martin, 'A Romano-British Field System at Cheltenham. Evidence from excavations at St. James's Car Park', *Glevensis* 34 (2001), pp. 67-71. A report on the December 2000 - January 2001 Cotswold Archaeological Trust excavation, with an assessment of its significance for the town's early history.

Greet, Michael (ed.), *"The days in gard'ning, and the nights in rhyme"*. A reprint of poems on various subjects by Isaac Bell, gardener, East Court, Charlton Kings (c.1825-1833). Carmichael Books, Cheltenham, 2001. 178pp. Unpriced. Reprint of a volume of poems, with many Cheltenham references, first published by S.C. Harper of Cheltenham in 1833. Includes an introduction and explanatory notes by the editor.

Grimster, Jo, and Powell, Carole, assisted by Bishop, Kate (compilers), *Twentieth century memories of Prestbury in Gloucestershire*, Prestbury Parish Council, 2000. 94pp. £5.00. A collection of memories and recollections of Prestbury by a number of past and present inhabitants.

Howe, John, 'A political problem - local Liberal candidates at the General Election of January 1910', *Gloucestershire History* 15 (2001), pp.16-20, includes Cheltenham references.

Miller, Eric (ed.), *Leckhampton Local History Society Research Bulletin* 2 (Autumn 2001), published by the Society. 55pp. £4.00. Articles on potteries, tiles and brickmaking in Leckhampton, c.1840-1912 (Eric Miller), the North Gloucestershire Golf Club, 1910-1922 (Eric Miller), Farrar's the coal merchant and Leckhampton (Terry Moore-Scott), foxhunting and Leckhampton Court Foxhounds (Amy Woolacott), the old roads and tracks of Leckhampton (Terry Moore-Scott) and the Leckhampton Free Reading Room (Owen Stinchcombe).

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## Gloucestershire Record Office: Cheltenham area accessions, 2001

JULIE COURTENAY, Senior Cataloguer, GRO

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The GRO continues to receive a wide range of archives relating to the Cheltenham area. The following is a brief list of archives donated or deposited in 2001. More information about the Record Office and its holdings is available on-line at <http://archives.gloscc.gov.uk>

The late Mrs Eleanor Smith of Cheltenham (c.1923-1999): papers and photographs relating to her involvement in the amateur stage as actress, producer and chairman in various companies including the Civic Playhouse, Cheltenham Little Theatre, Cheltenham Operatic and Dramatic Society, 1948-1990s (D8782)

H M Coroner, Cheltenham: inquest files, 1999 (CO7 acc 8805)

Christchurch Church of England Primary School: Infant School admission register [copy], 1917-1955 (S78/6 acc 8806)

Benhall Infant School: minutes of governors' meetings, including Headmaster's reports, governors' and subcommittee and finance committee minutes, 1996-1999 (SM78/24 acc 8808)

National Union of Teachers, Cheltenham branch: minutes, 1969-86; attendance book 1976-87 (D8824)

Cheltenham Council of Churches: Council minutes 1951-1971; executive minutes 1952-1973; various correspondence files and some accounts 1960s-1980s; 'Together' newsletters, 1973-1978 (D8832)



**National Council of Women, Cheltenham branch:** branch minutes 1966-1982; committee meeting minutes, 1967-1982 (D4595 acc 8833)

*(information from the branch treasurer: originally called the Society of Women Workers. Cheltenham was one of the early societies, the impetus for it coming from the Ladies College. The branch closed at the beginning of World War II and reformed in the 1960s)*

**Naunton Park Council School:** school managers' minutes, 1907-1932 (SM78/9 acc 8846) *(It is fortunate that this volume survived; it was bought in a house clearance sale several years ago)*

**Leckhampton, St Philip and St James parish:** annual reports 1960-1955; parish magazines 1866-1990s; PCC minute book 1964-69; accounts 1891-1930s (P198/2 acc 8852)

**Co-operative Chemists, Cheltenham:** prescription books, 1947-1989 (D8881)

**Oaklands Estate, Charlton Kings:** suite of plates lithographed by G Rowe of Cheltenham and three pen and ink maps of the estate, pen and wash drawing of the conservatory, plate of Grove Villa and general plan of the estate, 1846 (D8901)

**Willans, solicitors of Cheltenham:** title deeds and related papers concerning property in Cheltenham including All Saints Road (1863)-1971, 12 The Promenade 1821-1907, 13 The Promenade (1844)-1991, Dromore formerly Stoneyfield 1890-1971, Bredon View (1855)-1972, 26 Libertus Road 1884-1980, 1 Arle Drive 1924-1992; also Chargrove Lawn, Shurdington (1904)-1983 (D5907 acc 8913); property in St Georges Road (1873)-2001, Bayshill 1848-1978, St Luke's Road (1878)-1987, St Luke's Place (1924)-1983, Queens Road (1882)-1967, Cedar Garage, Bathville Mews, Bath Road, 1969-1981, Parabola Road 1956-1986; East End Road, Charlton Kings (1894)-2001 (D5907 acc 8972)

**Dent family of Cheltenham:** papers and memorabilia mainly concerning the marriage of Walter and Gladys Dent and setting up home at Coden, Okus Road, 1934-1962 (D8914)

**Smiths Industries of Bishops Cleeve,** developers and manufacturers of aerospace electronics, medical systems and specialised industrial products: newsletters 1960s-1980s; files on pay and efficiency matters 1970s, correspondence 1981-1991; programme of the opening of Micro Circuit Engineering (part of the Smith's Industries Group), 1981 (D8714 acc 8918 & 8921)

**Everyman Theatre:** programmes and posters 1841, 1920s, 1960s, 1996-2001; photographs 1960s (D6978 acc 8922)

**Whitbread PLC:** minutes and other records of **West Country Brewery Holdings Ltd** and predecessor and associated companies, including West Country Breweries Ltd, Cheltenham Brewery Holdings Ltd, Cheltenham & Hereford Breweries Ltd, Cheltenham Original Brewery Co Ltd, Nailsworth Brewery Co Ltd, Arnold Perrett & Co Ltd, Wintle's Brewery Ltd, Stroud Brewery Co Ltd, C R Luce, Godsell & Sons Ltd of Stroud c.1888-c.1970 (D8947) *(This extensive archive was given to GRO when Whitbread PLC decided to close down its company archive in 2001)*

**Davis Gregory, solicitors of Cheltenham:** title deeds and related papers concerning Mayfield, 204 (formerly 104) London Road, Charlton Kings, (1896)-2000 (D5902 acc 8952); 178 Cirencester Road, Charlton Kings, (1883)-1986 (D5902 acc 8975); 9 Keynsham Street, Cheltenham, 1860-2001 (D5902 acc 8982)

**Royal Gloucestershire Hussars:** photographs including one of a visit of HRH Prince of Wales to Cheltenham, 13 May 1897; other records include nominal roll, 1868; visitors' book to Cheltenham Territorial Army centre, Arle Road, 1949-1982; "Parade", October 1942-March 1944; release and resettlement pack, 1945; replies to questionnaire about RGH history and related file, 1980; video tapes of 150th parade, 1984 and RGH museum opening, 1990; audio tapes concerning museum exhibits [c.1990] and of RGH and Glos Regiment bands, Colston Hall, Bristol, 1989; other memorabilia, articles and newscuttings, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> cents (D4920 acc 8957)

**Cheltenham Civic Players** scrap books 1948-1962 (D8544 acc 8967)

**Robert Hillman, dairyman of Cheltenham:** employment and personal memorabilia [c.1910] - 1956, including photograph of children at Naunton Park School, Leckhampton, undated [c.1910]; two photographs of horse-drawn milk carts, trade card and small note book from Benhall Dairy, Great Norwood Street, 1920s-1930s; Stroud Mutual Benefit Society rules 1926; medical insurance cards; notes and circulars relating to wartime employment at A W Hawksley's Brockworth canteen c.1942; local horse show prize ribbons 1920s and steward's badges for shows 1955-1956 (D8981)

**Hilden Lodge formerly Castleton Villa, Charlton Kings:** deeds, (1716)-c. 1955 (D8991)

**John Packer, Postmaster of Cheltenham:** 'deed of mutual covenants' concerning his appointment, 1828 (D5556 acc 8995)

**Cheltenham Petty Sessional Division:** adult court registers, 1991-1994; juvenile court registers, 1991-1994 (PS/CH acc 9004)

**Gloucestershire Constabulary:** Chief Constable's day book 1840-1868; information and circulars concerning wanted persons from around the country 1884-1885 (Q/Y acc 9011)

**Dowty Group of Cheltenham:** records from Dowty Communications Manager's office including 'Arle Court Circular' (in-house magazine) 1938; Dowty in-house magazines 1950s-2000; Dowty annual reports 1940s-1990s; publicity brochures c.1950-2001 including brochures sent to shareholders opposing TI takeover bid 1992; files relating to staff bonus scheme 1959; 'standing orders' (in-house announcements about new staff, etc) 1981-1992; arrangements for VIP visits 1989-1990s; press releases about redundancies 1991-1992 and staff biographies 1990s; many loose black and white and colour photographs of personnel, products and buildings 1950s-1990s; several hundred black and white and colour slides (35mm); mainly loose, undated and untitled, but including two files marked '1993 presentation', 1950s-1990s (D8347 acc 9021); additional records including Group reports and accounts 1948-1994; OS sheet marked up by George Dowty to show Arle Court site plan 1950 (D8347 acc 9058)

**Workers' Educational Association, Cheltenham Branch:** minutes, 1992-1993 (D4227 acc 9024)

**St John's parish, Cheltenham:** additional parish records including registers of services 1895-1949; incumbent's papers, (1829)-1967; pew rent accounts, 1919-1949; annual financial statements, 1938-1966; churchwarden's property papers, 1827-1968, including deeds of church site, 1827-1865, architect's ground and gallery plan, 1828, architect's plans of proposed improvements and related letter, 1868-1869, inventories, 1914 and 1959; papers and architect's plans relating to St

John's parish room, 1905-1968; records of St John's primary school, 1866-1967 including plan of proposed alterations, [late 19th cent]; parish magazines, 1871-1955; Guide to St John's church, 1959 (P78/6 acc 9044) (*St John's church was closed and demolished in 1967, the parish having been combined with St Luke's; see also entry below*)

**St Luke's parish, Cheltenham (from 1965 the united benefice of St Luke and St John):** additional parish records including registers, 1960-1992; registers of services, 1845-1888, 1982-1991; mission room licences, 1873 and 1916; papers about vicarage and other benefice papers, 1904-1989; papers concerning closure and demolition of St John's church, 1966-1976; pew rents ledger, 1860-1874; churchwardens' financial records, 1879-1979; churchwardens' property papers, 1854-1981 including inventory, 1910, ground plan of church, [c.1900]; quinquennial reports, 1986-1996; papers relating to St Luke's church hall, 1931-1990; vestry and PCC minutes, 1903-1992; PCC secretary's papers, 1942-1985; minutes of St Luke's War Savings Association, 1918-1920; minutes of St Luke and St John's social committee, 1980-1989; records of St Luke's senior school (earlier St Luke's infant school), 1881-1932, including joint managers' minutes of St Luke's and St James' schools, 1927-1929; parish magazines, 1878-1966; Cheltenham Deanery synod minutes and other papers, 1960-1981 (P78/7 acc 9045)

**Cheltenham Old Town Survey, 1855** (CBR acc 9067)

*(We are indebted to the enthusiasm and hard work of Society members in helping to ensure that these irreplaceable original Survey sheets are now safely deposited at GRO. Searchers at GRO will have access to the digital copies)*

**Joseph Powell of Charlton Kings, artist:** sketch book of Charlton Kings and environs. 1824 (D9071)

**Pinkerton Leeke, solicitors:** title deeds and related papers concerning properties in and around Cheltenham (1866)-1965 (D9072)

*The GRO is always pleased to hear about archive material and to give advice to owners about storage and long-term safe-keeping. Its address is Gloucestershire Record Office, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GL1 3DW (tel 01452 425295).*