

CHELTENHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY meets once a month between September and April, usually on the third Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m. in the Municipal Offices, Cheltenham. Details of the current lecture programme can be found on the Society website (see below).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY includes receipt of the Journal and Newsletters detailing meetings and other activities. For further information regarding membership please contact:

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To find the **SOCIETY WEB SITE** search for 'Cheltenham Local History Society'.

CHELTENHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL is published annually and distributed free to members. It is also available from Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, Gloucestershire County Records Office and other locations, including events hosted or attended by the Society. Please note that views expressed in individual articles are not necessarily the views of the Society.

JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS Articles and other contributions appropriate to the Society's interests are welcomed for possible publication in the Journal and should be submitted to the Honorary Editor:

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BACK ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL are available from the Editor at the above address, and from events hosted or attended by the Society.

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Drawing of the General Hospital by Aylwin Sampson.
Reproduced by kind permission of the artist.

See David Elder's article 'He Went About Doing Good: the Life of Dr Edward T. Wilson' pp.13-21



Cheltenham Local History Society

JOURNAL 22

2006

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From the Editor

SUE ROWBOTHAM

ONCE AGAIN we have to thank both new and established contributors who have taken precious time out from their research to write an article for the Journal. I am always astonished by the breadth of our members' interests, and the depth of their knowledge, and this year we have a particularly wide range of topics – from a 14th century pilgrim to a 20th century housing estate, from a scandalous escape to the launch of a lifeboat in land-locked Cheltenham.

Knowledge sharing is one of the principal aims of the Society, so if you are carrying out original research on a topic relating to the history of Cheltenham please think about writing an article for a future Journal. I am happy to discuss your ideas with you. If you have never written an article before, and do not know quite where to start, please let me know. I am happy to help in any way I can. For more confident contributors we have guidelines for the format of text and illustrations. Please ask if you would like a copy. Please note that the closing date for submissions for Journal 23 is 31 Dec 2006.

Have you come across a few words in a publication, or learned a snippet of information that you have thought would make an interesting topic for research? Do you have insufficient time to commit to the research yourself, or lack the confidence to work alone? If so there may be someone else in the Society who can help. Contact me if you would like advice.

A most important and useful Medical Work, particularly recommended to the Heads of Families and Public Seminaries, and to the Youth of both Sexes.

This Day is Published, Price 4s.

THE MEDICAL MONITOR; containing Observations on the effects of EARLY DISSIPATION, in which the most destructive and most prevalent Species of Juvenile Debauchery is investigated and expounded on long experience, and supported by unquestionable authorities, may give a check to that progressive Degeneracy in the Human Race, which appears to be making rapid strides to its total extinction.

The whole interspersed with friendly medical admonitions to youth of both Sexes, and instruction how to preserve a good, invigorate a feeble, and repair a shattered Consitution.

By E. Senate, M.D.

DEDICATED TO THE QUEEN

Advertisement published in
the *Cheltenham Chronicle*
8 April 1811.

Some things never change!

A Scandal in Cheltenham

CAROLYN GREET

IN 1812 CHELTENHAM WAS CONVULSED BY A SCANDAL ‘aggravated by every circumstance that could enhance its baseness’¹: a French prisoner who had been living in Cheltenham broke his parole and absconded.

General Charles Lefebvre-Desnouettes (usually referred to simply as General Lefebvre) had surmounted his lowly background as the son of a Parisian draper to become a distinguished member of Napoleon Bonaparte’s army and a favourite of the Emperor, who made him a count though he rarely used the title. He was born in 1773 and described as being ‘of a very affable and mild demeanour’², a fair-complexioned man, slender and of medium height, with grey eyes, dark hair and an oval face.

During the retreat of Sir John Moore to Corunna in December 1808 Lefebvre was dispatched by Bonaparte at the head of 600 cavalry to attack the British rear guard, but while crossing the river at Benavente the French troops were ambushed and routed, and despite defending himself bravely and ‘having his clothes much cut by sabres of the British dragoons’, the General was wounded and captured, a fate particularly humiliating as Bonaparte himself was watching. Lefebvre considered that that he was himself largely to blame, and his anxiety over Bonaparte’s reaction to his capture was to some extent justified for he was criticised in Bonaparte’s bulletin on the affair, although his personal courage was commended³.



General Lefebvre
(illustration from Chandler *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars*)

With other captured French officers Lefebvre was brought to England and shortly afterwards he and two other Generals, together with several private soldiers, arrived in Cheltenham, an arrangement brought about at the request of Colonel MacLeod of Colbecks, a local resident. The Colonel had been arrested in France at the outbreak of war and detained there for some time, being treated with great civility. In return he had taken pains to show similar kindness to French prisoners now detained in this country. Having given their word of honour not to travel more than three miles from the town, the French officers were ‘treated with the most marked politeness and attention by the residents and visitors of distinction’. The private soldiers were lodged on the eastern and western outskirts of the

town, but the three generals had lodgings in a prime position in the centre of the High Street, at what was then no. 82, the third house to the east of North Street. In February 1811 the General's wife, the daughter of an eminent Parisian banker, was allowed to join him, and Madame Lefebvre was welcomed soon after her arrival when 'Albania, Countess of Buckinghamshire, gave an elegant *gouter* at 3 o'clock, to Madame Lefebvre, the French General, and a select party of about 30'⁴ at her house, St. Julia's Cottage in Oxford Passage. Presumably, however, the Lefbvres were sufficiently tactful not to attend the gala given in July to raise funds for the relief of British prisoners held in France.

The couple lived a fashionable and – apart from the limits of parole – free life. The General was given permission to travel to London for medical advice; how long he stayed there is unclear, but it was long enough to receive 'polite attention from several persons of distinction', and the physicians he consulted refused to take any fee from him, which suggests that he possessed a degree of personality and charm. A further instance of interest and generosity shown to him, involving no less a person than the Prince Regent, arose in connection with a watch owned and highly valued by the General. This had been taken from him on capture, either by the dragoons involved in the skirmish or by those later guarding him. He somehow ensured that investigations were made into its disappearance and three years later it was recovered, apparently thanks to the Earl of Moira and the Prince Regent himself, and the Private Secretary to Sir H. Wellesley travelled to Cheltenham to return it from the Prince.

There had for some time been a proposal that Lefebvre should be exchanged for the Earl of Beverley, brother of the Duke of Northumberland, who had been a prisoner in France since the outbreak of war, but though tentative arrangements had been discussed nothing specific had been decided and ratification by the French Government now appeared to be unlikely. It was presumably this frustrating state of affairs that triggered the events of May 1812 when, to the fury and indignation of the people of Cheltenham, the General absconded from his parole and escaped to France.

His plans had been carefully laid. Under the pretence of needing money to pay off some debts incurred in Cheltenham, Lefebvre successfully persuaded friends in the town to 'lend' him a considerable sum, against some of which he pledged items of jewellery, including the famous watch. One of these friends was Thomas James, at whose house (Marle Hill) all three French officers had been frequent and welcome visitors; in return for an unspecified loan Welles received a handsomely decorated gold ring containing a miniature likeness of Bonaparte which had been presented to Lefebvre at the Emperor's coronation.



General Lefebvre's 'Napoleon' ring
(reproduced by kind permission of Cheltenham
Art Gallery and Museum)

On Saturday 2 May, in the guise of a German Count and accompanied by his wife disguised in boy's clothes as his son, and with his aide-de-camp Armand Le Duc dressed as a valet, Lefebvre took a post-chaise from Cheltenham to London. Here the party stayed overnight at a hotel in Jermyn Street, the General claiming that he was about to leave

England with his son and was in the capital for the purpose of acquiring the necessary passports. From London they went to Dover, still in disguise, where arrangements had been made for a boat to smuggle them across the Channel to Calais.

When his absence from Cheltenham was discovered on the Sunday morning, there was consternation. The only resident magistrate hastily gathered a group of manorial constables and local townsfolk and rushed to the outskirts in a belated attempt to stop the French group but to no avail; Lefebvre had laid his plans too successfully. The authorities immediately put out a detailed description of the General and Le Duc and offered a reward of ten guineas for their recapture. Interestingly, a much larger reward of 20 guineas was offered for the conviction of any British subject who had assisted in their escape; in time of war treachery at home was more of a threat than the escape of a couple of prisoners, however eminent.

Cheltenham society was predictably outraged. In addition to the major disgrace of having broken his word of honour the General had slighted the personal trust shown in him by Colonel MacLeod, abandoned his bail and disregarded the favour shown him by the authorities. Perhaps worst of all in the town's eyes he had made them look foolish; this man, though technically an enemy, had been accepted as one of themselves, offered liberal hospitality and generally treated with respect. Now they were left fuming with indignation and suggesting without much hope that 'Bonaparte will send back this fellow, to be immured in a British prison, as his conduct deserves, or at least that he will not suffer him to dishonour his presence, by allowing him to appear before him, nor his service by employing him'. For their own safety the remaining French prisoners in the town were transferred to Abergavenny, while Cheltenham was left to brood over the ingratitude of the faithless French.

Bonaparte did not react as Cheltonians had hoped: Lefebvre, who soon after his arrival in France had sent a 'most insolent' letter to the Secretary of State for the Home Office in justification of his actions, was not only accepted back but continued to serve his Emperor. Indeed his future career was distinguished; he accompanied Bonaparte to Russia, fought at Bauzen, Merseburg and Hanau and commander of the Young Guard Cavalry. Having escorted Napoleon into exile he attempted without success to raise troops to assist in his return, then at Waterloo he commanded the Light Cavalry Division. Proscribed after the battle he fled to the United States and was sentenced to death in his absence. In 1822 he decided to move to the Low Countries but his ship sank in a storm off Ireland and he was drowned, aged 49.

Needless to say, none of the jewellery pledged to those 'friends' in Cheltenham was ever redeemed: all trace of the watch has been lost; the ring however passed eventually into the care of Cheltenham Museum, where it can still be seen.

¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle* 14 May 1812. This issue contains a full account of the events and all quotations are taken from this unless otherwise attributed.

² Goding, J., *History of Cheltenham*, (1863)

³ Background information on Lefebvre's career is taken from Chandler, D., *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars* (Wordsworth Editions, 1999)

⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle* 14 Mar 1811

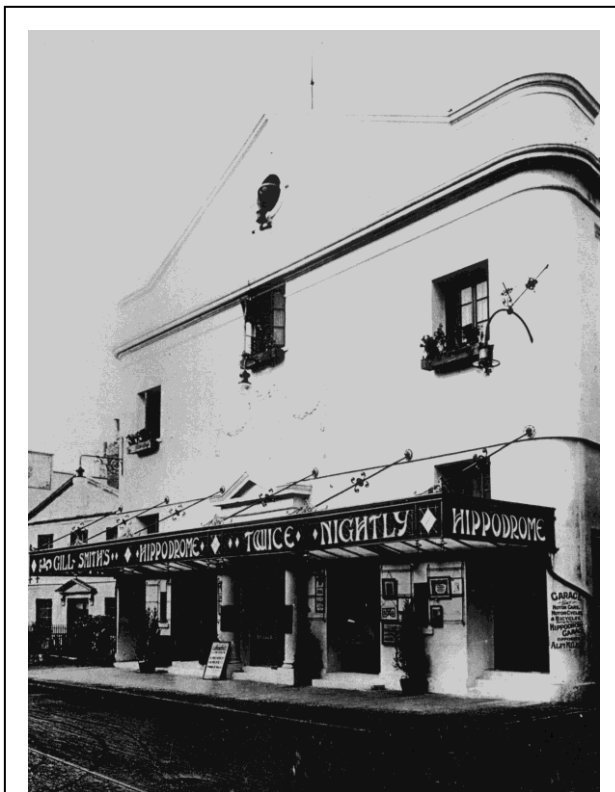
The Coliseum

ROGER BEACHAM

DESPITE THE RAIN A LARGE CROWD GATHERED in Albion St. on the evening of 22 September 1913 for the opening of Cecil Gill Smith's new Hippodrome¹. Designed by the local architect Herbert Rainger the theatre occupied the site of the former Conservative Club and incorporated the façade of that Georgian building². The theatre patrons entered through the building's original entrance or one of the two new ones on either side of it. The pit entrance was at the west corner. Seating nearly a thousand (204 stalls, 430 pit, 268 circle, 20 to 30 in the four boxes) the auditorium was simply furnished with 'old rose' coloured carpets and seats, the walls French grey with inset panels imitating old tapestries. It was a twice nightly house with performances at 6.45 p.m. and 9 p.m.

The first audiences saw Bernard and Weston, comedians and dancers; Kit Keen, comedian and Pearl Grey, the Northern Nightingale; the *Echo* reviewer found her voice powerful if somewhat harsh. The star turn was a group of Chinese acrobats, the Imperial Manchu Troupe. Their leader, Lt Col Ma Tza Yung, found it necessary to explain that the six acrobats were all men, 'the costume being a little confusing', That cuckoo in the nest, the bioscope, took up half the show. The following week Jack Judge, the composer of *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* paid the first of several visits to the theatre. There is a story that

Judge 'arranged the score and gave it its first public airing here' but the advertisements for that week bill Judge as 'the composer and original singer' of *Tipperary*, which was first performed at Stalybridge in 1912.



The Hippodrome, later the Coliseum,
Albion Street
(Roger Beacham's private collection)

Over succeeding weeks many well known artists appeared at the Hippodrome including the Australian born Pansy Montague who appeared as La Milo in the art of living statues and in March 1914 La Pia the dancer who had appeared at the first Royal Command Performance in 1912. The theatre played host to a seemingly endless list of dancers, singers and musicians, conjurers, comedians and jugglers including Lily Hill, the Lancashire Nightingale; Victoria Campbell, the Scottish Nightingale; Sandy White, the Scotsman at the piano; Bi-Bo-Bi, the Sousa of the bells; Nestah, comedy juggler; Gyto, the jocular juggler; Jaffa, the talkative conjurer; Norman and Allan, the popular pattering postmen, comedians and dancers; Dolly Whiz, comedienne; Mona Magnosthe up-to-date

versatile comedienne; Emma Don, male impersonator; Brinn, the world's greatest balancer. In August 1914 and again in May 1915 Will Hay performed the character of an inept schoolmaster that was later to bring him fame in films. From London's Egyptian Hall David Devant, who has been described as 'the greatest of British Magicians', appeared here in July 1915. In January 1918 the great Chinese (sic) illusionist Chung Ling Soo, in reality the American born William Robinson, appeared here with his wife Suee Seen. Only two months later he would be killed on the stage of the Wood Green Empire when his spectacular *catching a bullet in the teeth* act went tragically wrong.

In 1913 Cheltenham, like the rest of the world, was seduced by the passion to Tango. A club was formed at the Montpellier Rotunda and in November Poole's Picture Palace screened the film, *The Tango*, of two people dancing. That same week, in addition to the evening variety performances, the Hippodrome held Tango Tea matinees, with Victor and Miss Violet Miller from the Queen's Theatre, London. Private lessons could also be arranged.

In November 1916 the *Cheltenham Looker-On* commented that:

*'revues are much to the taste of Hippodrome patrons ... In these light and airy productions the title counts for nothing. Plenty of music, singing, dancing and comicalities with pretty faces and fetching frocks form the staple of them all and they are excellent entertainment for dreary weather'*³

In June 1916 the 17 year old Gracie Fields appeared in just such a revue, *It's a Bargain* with her future husband Archie Pitt. Jimmy Nervo, later a member of the Crazy Gang, appeared in *Time Please* in July 1916. In June 1918 Will Garland and his 25-strong Creole company presented the revue *Coloured Society*, the first time a revue had been presented here by black performers. The *Echo* reviewer particularly praised Garland's 'excellent tenor voice'. The company returned in January 1919.

Actors from the legitimate stage sometimes appeared in one act plays at variety theatres in what were described as *flying matinees*. On 22 October 1913 Gillsmith presented Arthur Bouchier in three playlets supported by ballerina Katrina Blackowska 'a juvenile Pavlova' and variety acts, attracting a large audience with only part of the pit unoccupied. H. B. Irving appeared in *The Van Dyck* on 26 May 1914 when the scenery was lent by the Opera House Company. The distinguished actress Violet Vanbrugh appeared in *The Test Kiss* and *Her Wedding Night* on 17 July 1918 having previously appeared in *Her Wedding Night* at the Town Hall in September 1914⁴.

Mrs Gillsmith was often in the box office 'flashing rings and the lot'⁵ though later the young Dolly Moxey became booking clerk and cashier. Many years later she would

GILLSMITH'S
HIPPODROME,
ALBION STREET, CHELTENHAM.

MONDAY NEXT, JAN 14th,
6.50. Two Performances Nightly. 9
The World's Greatest Conjuror,
CHUNG LING SOO,
In a performance of Oriental Splendour and
Weird Mysticism, assisted by
MISS SUEE SEEN.

PAUL-ROEY. Anglo-Belgian Vocalist.
DOROSWAMI, Indian Court Musician.
Bioscope Latest Pictures.
A. ATHOS, and L. COLLINS,
Eccentric Comedian. Burlesque Actress.

Chung Ling Soo Matinee, Saturday,
Jan. 19, at 3. Seats can now be booked.

PRICES AS USUAL.

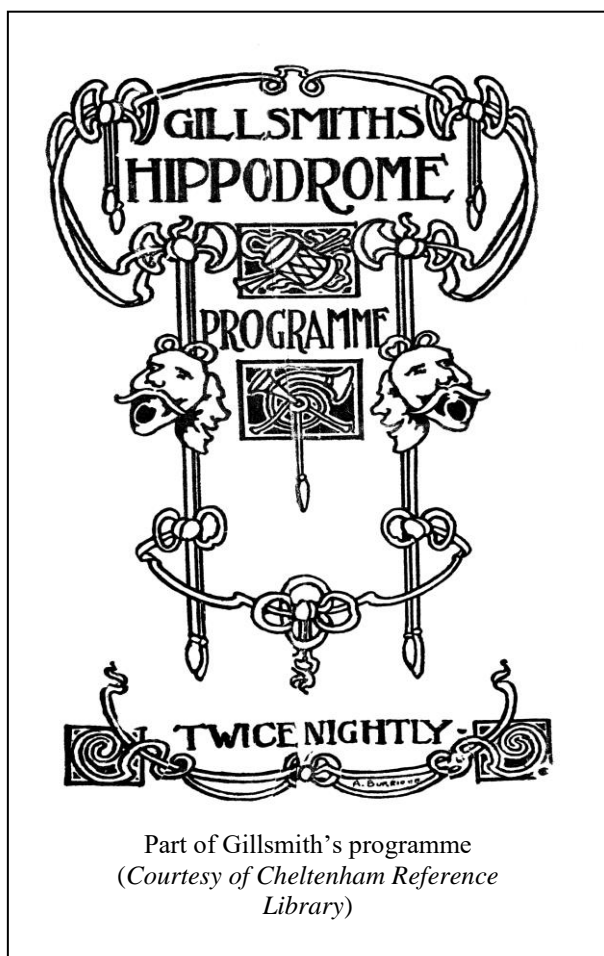
Advertisement from the *Looker-On*
dated 12 Jan 1918
(Courtesy of Cheltenham
Reference Library)

reminisce of the days the theatre staff and the performers would slip across the road after the show to O'Hagan's Oyster Bar at 98 Albion Street⁶.

An odd event occurred at the beginning of July 1914. The eight Viennese Germania Girls, who had presented their vocal and drilling act all week, disappeared after the Saturday night's performance together with their costumes and scenery. No one had seen them leave and it was later assumed that they returned to their homeland⁷.

Following the German invasion of Belgium Britain declared War on Germany on 4 August 1914. The world was to change forever. One of Gillsmith's first acts was to arrange a series of Sunday evening lectures and concerts at the Hippodrome, to raise £250 for a Red Cross Ambulance to be sent to the front. By 21 December the ambulance had been purchased and was displayed outside the theatre. At the beginning of the War the *Looker-On* reported that crowds gathered daily outside the Hippodrome to read and discuss the war news while the audience inside cheered at the martial pictures and joined in the chorus of the patriotic songs⁸. In November 1915 the Bristol Recruiting Band led a series of meetings around the town, on Sunday 7 November giving an evening concert at the Hippodrome which raised funds for Christmas boxes for wounded soldiers.

The Labour leader Ben Tillett visited Cheltenham in 1917 lecturing at the Hippodrome on Sunday 22 July on *How and When We Shall Win the War* to a large audience who, at the end, joined together to sing *Land of Hope and Glory*. In January 1918 'the great war sensation' *Over the Top*:



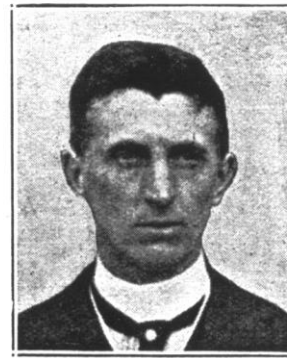
'... a melodramatic musical comedy in which a host of wounded and discharged soldiers who have recently returned from France and done their bit, will take part in a most realistic battle'

played at the Hippodrome. The orchestra was led by W.E. Glen VC 2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment who proudly wore his VC ribbon with his evening dress. The *Echo* reporter, not finding Glen in the list of Victoria Cross holders, reported the matter to Gillsmith who contacted the military authorities and the police, and at the Tuesday evening performance Glen, a fraud, was arrested and led away, appearing before the magistrates the following morning⁹.

In 1918 the Mayor and Town Council invited the many American airmen based in the county to celebrate 4 July in the town. Following a short service at the Parish Church, from the spire of which flew both the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, they were entertained to lunch in the Pillar Room of the Town Hall. In the evening they

were admitted free to the play at the Opera House and the revue *It's Terrible* at the Hippodrome. With the signing of the armistice hostilities ceased at 11 a.m. on 11 November 1918. Amid the celebrations Gillsmith ordered that the Doxology be played followed by the national anthems of the Allies, at the beginning of the two evening performances of the revue *Great Scott*.

After April 1919 Gillsmith ceased to advertise regularly in the *Echo*, making it difficult now to trace productions. In July Harry Ray presented the revue *Pickles Mixed* and in August Harry Roxbury, a former favourite at the Hippodrome, returned after a long tour of America, Australasia and South Africa, with the revue *Mary Had A Little Lamb*. At the time of Gillsmith's death the *Echo* commented 'the Hippodrome undertaking in its latter days was, we believe, not a very great success.' In October the *Echo* announced that the Hippodrome had been sold for between £15,000 and £16,000 to a Gloucester business man, H.G. Beard¹⁰. Gillsmith left the town and in 1921 came the shocking news that he had been arrested in Southport charged with theft and embezzlement. He had attempted to rent premises to 'practise psycho-analytical palmistry and dream delineating' borrowing the rent and other monies from a ladies' hairdresser. Gillsmith was found guilty and sentenced to six months' hard labour¹¹. He died at Bath on 7 July 1928¹².



MR. CECIL GILL SMITH,
of 4 The Paragon, Bath,
who died on July 7th, aged
between 50 and 60. He
will be remembered in
Cheltenham as the pro-
prietor of a skating rink
at the Winter Garden,
Cheltenham, and after-
wards as proprietor of the
Hippodrome (now the Coli-
seum) from 1913 to 1920.

Gillsmith's obituary in the
Cheltenham Chronicle
14 Jul 1920
(Courtesy of Cheltenham
Reference Library)

¹ Smith, a Yorkshireman by birth, lived for some years in Walsall where he married Amy Birch in 1897. Cecil Gill were his forenames but he often called himself Gillsmith (see 1918 electoral register for 26 Imperial Square). From 1909 he leased the Winter Gardens, firstly as a roller skating ring and from 1910 as a cinema. His lease ended when he and the Borough Council were unable to agree on terms. In 1912 he had attempted to build a variety theatre in The Promenade (see Beacham, Roger, *The Theatres that Never Were*, *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **20** (2004), pp. 51-53). In the building of the Hippodrome he was assisted by F.J. Bennett, sometime proprietor and editor of the *Gloucestershire Echo* and *Cheltenham Chronicle*.

² Originally a furniture warehouse, see Rowe, George, *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* (1845) p.50. See also photograph in *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* 29 Dec 1934.

³ *Cheltenham Looker-On* 25 Nov 1916 p.10

⁴ At the Town Hall Vanbrugh played in scenes from Sheridan Knowles' *The Hunchback* as well as Alicia Ramsay's comedietta *Her Wedding Night*. The seat prices 3s (15p), 2s (10p) and 1s (5p) were less than those charged at the Hippodrome matinee 5s (25p), 4s (20p), 2/6d (12 ½p) and 1s (5p).

⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo* 15 Jan 1965 Letter p.10

⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle* 20 Feb 1965 p.9

⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle* 27 Feb 1965 p.6 reminiscences of E.F. Merrell, former stage manager at the Hippodrome. Merrell incorrectly places the event in Aug 1914.

⁸ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 22 Aug 1914 p.8

⁹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 Jan 1918 p.4

¹⁰ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 13 Oct 1919 p.4. This may have been precipitated by Frederick Bennett's removal to Bournemouth during the War where, for a short period, he edited the *Bournemouth Times*. Obituary in *Bournemouth Times* 3 Nov 1939

¹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 Nov 1921 p.4

¹² *Gloucestershire Echo*, 9 Jul 1928 p.5

The Launch of the Cheltenham Lifeboat as reported in the Illustrated London News

GEOFF NORTH and ELAINE HEASMAN

IT IS INTERESTING TO KNOW that reports on local events such as this were considered to be of sufficient interest to be published nationally. I would like to compile a list of all reports on Cheltenham that appeared in the Illustrated London News, so if you are aware of any others please let me know [Editor].

Having recently acquired a copy of *The Illustrated London News* of Saturday, October 20, 1866 with page 396 of the *Supplement* intact, it was fascinating to read the detailed account of the launch of the 'Cheltenham' on Pittville Lake which had taken place the previous week and to discover the lovely engraving as pictured here. During the lifeboat's subsequent service at Burnham-on-Sea 'she' was launched 14 times and saved 36 lives. The boat was sold in 1888 and it is not known what happened to 'her' after this date.

'A pleasing demonstration took place at Cheltenham last week on the occasion of the public presentation and launch of the Cheltenham life boat. Some months since it was suggested in the local journals that a fund might be raised for the purpose of defraying the cost of a life-boat and its equipment, to be presented to the National Life-boat Institution. A committee was formed to carry out this object; and, a public appeal being made, the benevolent people of the town and neighbourhood at once responded, and the whole sum required was soon forthcoming. The Life-boat Institution decided to station the life-boat at Burnham, near Weston-super-Mare, on the Bristol Channel, where it was considered that a life-boat station was much needed. It was arranged that, before being forwarded to its destination, the life-boat should be brought to Cheltenham, to afford the people of that town an opportunity of seeing the boat. Accordingly, the life-boat was sent there last week, the Great Western and the Bristol and Exeter Railway Companies kindly granting a free conveyance to the boat over their lines. On Wednesday week, the day fixed for the launch, a grand procession was formed, which marched through the town with the life-boat to the Pittville Spa Gardens, in the lake of which gardens the launch of the boat was to take place. The volunteers mustered in great strength, with their bands; so did the Foresters and Odd Fellows, and the Fire Brigades. The procession was enlivened by an array of flags, the large banners of the Odd Fellows and Forresters being especially prominent. The life-boat, mounted on its transporting-carriage and drawn by a fine team of horses, was, of course, the centre of attraction, and made a very noble feature of the show. The boat was manned by a crew of seamen, who each wore the cork life-belt furnished by the institution to the crews of its boats. The procession went through the principal streets of the town, and everywhere the upper windows and housetops were crowded with spectators, the shops being very generally closed. Dense crowds of people filled the streets and occupied every doorstep and position whence a good view could be commanded. The procession must have been over half a mile in length. The sun shone brightly during its progress,



Launch of the Cheltenham Lifeboat as seen in the *Illustrated London News* published on 20 Oct 1866
(Geoff North and Elaine Heasman's private collection)

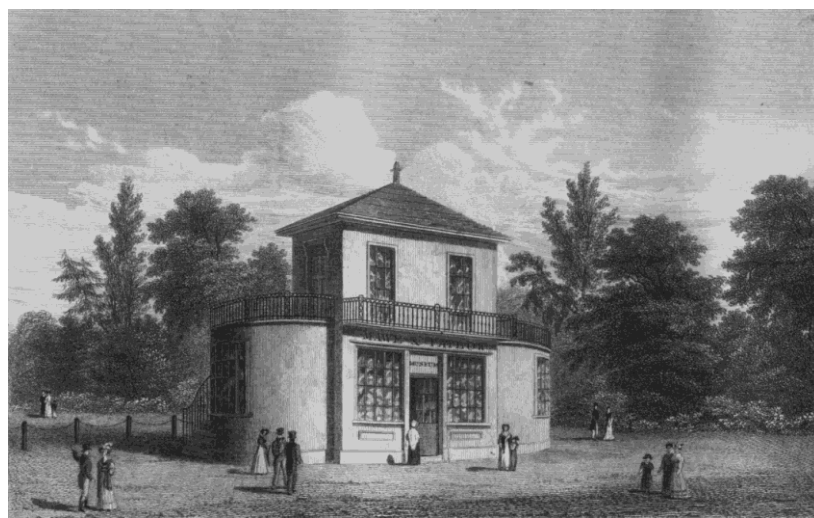
and, enlivened by the ringing of bells and the music of the four bands with the procession, it was a very pleasing and exhilarating scene. Upon the arrival of the procession at the gardens it was found that the margin of the lake was already deeply lined with spectators. The boat having been drawn to the water's edge, the High Bailiff, Mr. George Parsonage, addressed the company, and called upon the Rector to ask a blessing on the boat. The Rector having offered prayer, the congregation standing with uncovered heads, Mr. Charles Schreiber, M.P., presented the life-boat to the National Life-boat Institution in an appropriate speech. Captain Ward, R.N., inspector of life-boats to the National Life-boat Institution, received the boat on its behalf. Lady Charlotte Schreiber then named the boat the "Cheltenham". The life-boat, with the crew on board, was then launched off the carriage into the lake with much ease and celerity by means of the hauling of ropes attached to the boat. The bands struck up "God Save the Queen"; the volunteers re-formed, and the immense crowd dispersed, much gratified with the interesting ceremony they had witnessed. At the close of the proceedings, a public dinner took place in the evening, at the Plough Hotel.'

References

For further information about lifeboats in Cheltenham see also Cheltenham Local History Society Journal 13 1997, *Cheltenham and the Lifeboats*' by Betty Greene. This article included extracts from the local newspaper the *Cheltenham Looker-On*.

Mawe and Tatlow's Museum

SUE ROWBOTHAM



Mawe and Tatlow's Museum, Montpellier Walk c.1826.

John Mawe, a diamond importer and acknowledged expert on mineralogy, published many reference books on these subjects and is still widely quoted today. The illustrations from his books are highly sought after.

‘He went about doing good’: the life of Dr Edward T. Wilson (1832-1918)

DAVID ELDER

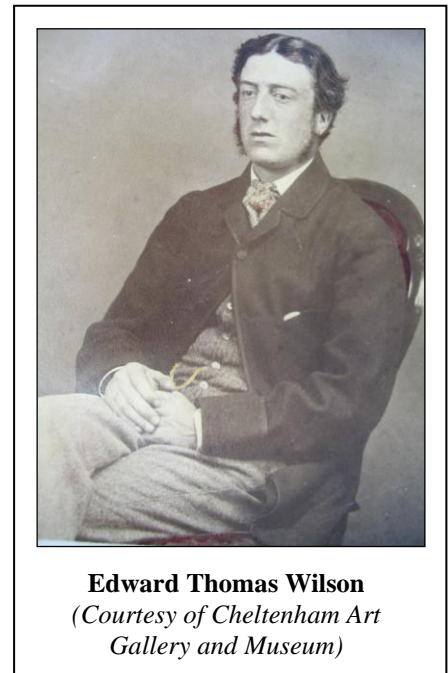
THE NAME DR. EDWARD WILSON IS WELL KNOWN IN CHELTENHAM and further afield as the Antarctic explorer, artist and scientist who died with Scott at the South Pole in 1912. That was Edward Adrian Wilson. However, his father, Edward Thomas Wilson, also achieved wide recognition for the good work he accomplished throughout nearly 60 years that he lived and worked in Cheltenham.

Introduction and early years

Although father and son differed in many respects, they also shared much in common: they both studied natural science at Oxbridge, they both undertook medical training at St. George’s Hospital in London, and they were both interested in Antarctic exploration and discovery. However, it was perhaps partly due to the fame endured by his son that the achievements of Edward T. Wilson have largely been forgotten. Therefore, in an attempt to correct this situation this article covers the life of Edward T. Wilson and the unique contribution he made to Cheltenham town and society between 1859 and 1918. It draws mainly on the two volumes of autobiographical memoirs¹, comprising more than 450 pages of handwritten notes, which are housed in the Wilson collection of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

Edward Thomas Wilson was born in Liverpool on 16 December 1832. He notes amusingly that he unconsciously won a bet by arriving on this earth just before a child of some of his parents’ friends who had been married on the same day. His mother was Frances Stokes and his father, who was another Edward Wilson, was a wealthy landowner who descended from a line of wealthy Quaker industrialists. However, a series of bad investments meant that his children did not inherit vast fortunes but were forced to work for their living².

It was when Wilson was four that the family moved to Lydstep Haven, about four miles from Tenby in Pembrokeshire. Their house was practically on the beach, being separated from the sea only by a high pebble ridge. Here he played in caves with his brother, Charlie, learned how to shoot as well as scull a boat with a single oar. His father encouraged him to keep natural history collections of birds eggs, crabs, and flowers. He recalls how life at Lydstep was ‘wild and free’ though, he added, ‘it undoubtedly tended to make us shy and retiring.’



Education and training

At the age of eight he attended the cathedral school at St. David's where the teaching was 'mechanical but good ... but driven into us at the point of the cane'. Birching on bare hands, he remembers, was administered daily and no-one could escape! In 1845 he left St. David's and went to school in Shaw Street, Liverpool not far from the famous Everton toffee shop which took due toll of his pocket money. He considered the teaching at Shaw Street to be pretty poor, with standards and targets dictated according to social classes: the upper school, for example, was geared for those destined for university, the middle school for upper class commercial education and the lower school was reserved for the trading classes.

In 1851 he left Liverpool for Exeter College, Oxford to study classics and then natural science. Despite being taught at one of the best universities in the country, again he found cause to criticise teaching standards. In particular, he recalled a 'cold, unsympathetic teacher of Aristotle', who was in the habit of stopping his lectures exactly as the clock struck, not even finishing the sentence he had just started and resuming it next time with the precise word which ended the last lecture! However, there were also lighter moments, such as the time when an alligator was obtained for one of the dissection classes when, 'in the interests of science' steaks from the animal were distributed to each of the dons, with disastrous results since it led to the college being 'much disturbed throughout the night'.

In 1855, after achieving a first class in natural science, he considered what to do next. As previously stated, he had been heir to a vast fortune but a series of bad investments meant that he would have to work for his living. Firstly, he contemplated joining the army, like his brother Charlie, but thought this would lead to an idle life given that at the time there was little prospect of war. He disliked law but was attracted to the church. However, after discussing the issue with Dr. Acland, a family friend, medicine was finally chosen. And so, he enrolled as a physician student at St. George's Hospital in London.

From a medical history point of view his biographical notes give fascinating insights into the development of medical thinking and practices of the day. Then, as now, huge advances were being made, and it was an exciting time to witness many of the innovations, some of which were successful, as well as others which were not. In 1858, for example, during a visit to the Charité in Paris he witnessed some of the early experiments in electrical dentistry: a patient's tooth was extracted after he had been given an electric shock, which was followed by a loud shriek from the patient. The dentist tried to persuade the audience that there had been no pain whatsoever but then Wilson describes how a kindly surgeon stepped forward and pronounced, 'Messieurs il a suffert diablement', after which, he commented wryly, little more was ever heard of electrical dentistry again!

Move to Cheltenham

Following completion of his medical training, Wilson applied successfully in 1859 for a vacancy at the Branch Dispensary in Cheltenham. Although he found the work interesting, he was soon laid up with Scarlet Fever, after suffering from the medical profession's occupational hazard of coming into contact with contagious diseases. When he went to obtain treatment for this he vividly recalled the terror and disgust of the doctor's servant when directed to put leeches to his gums, which was an accepted part of the treatment for scarlet fever at the time.

However, upon his arrival in Cheltenham Wilson was generally able to lead an exhilarating bachelor lifestyle. He rarely got tired, describing a typical day as starting with a run

of two or three miles before breakfast, followed by dispensary work in various parts of the town, then a long walk or a row from Tewkesbury to Upton in the afternoon, a dinner party, or possibly a dance to wind up, where he 'might be found merrily engaged in a polka or gallop towards the early hours of the following day'.



Mary Agnes Wilson, née Whishaw
(1841-1930)
(Courtesy of Cheltenham Art
Gallery and Museum)

It was at one such dinner party when he noticed a pretty young lady called Mary Whishaw, who was the daughter of a retired Russian merchant living at Keynsham House. Their romance blossomed and in 1865, when Wilson was 32, they got married at St. Luke's Church. Mary was an 'energetic and forthright'³ character, an accomplished horse rider, gardener, and painter as well as a respected authority on poultry farming.

Initially, they set up home in Montpellier Terrace, but then moved a few hundred yards around the corner to Montpellier Parade to live in a large detached villa called Westal, the site of which now sadly lies buried beneath the entrance to the Eagle Tower car park. Also, still likely to remain buried there are fragments of the Giant's Causeway from County Antrim. For Wilson recounts the story of how, when the family was living in Pembrokeshire, ships from Northern Ireland used to quarry limestone from the local cliffs and, upon the request of Wilson's father, once brought over some of the stones from the Giant's Causeway. These, he recalls, were then transferred to their final resting place

in the garden at Westal. It is highly likely, therefore, that part of Northern Ireland's natural heritage still lies buried under the concrete of Montpellier!

When they lived at Westal the family also rented the farmhouse at the Crippetts⁴ at the top of Crippetts lane, largely so that Mary could indulge in her passion for farming. It was a 120 acre farm that employed 10 farm labourers. For 15 years it was a successful farm business despite their experience of employing drunken bailiffs⁵. It was at the Crippetts that the family was able to relax most, practising various outdoor pursuits such as shooting and helping out with farm activities such as haymaking. Wilson was a devoted family man and spent much of his energy in helping to bring up his nine surviving children.

Quest for clean drinking water

He was also a highly dedicated medical professional who was not only keen to use his skills for the benefit of his fellow citizens, but also to champion various causes for the common good. In this respect, one of his greatest passions, about which he felt most strongly for the obvious health benefits it would bring, was the quest to bring a reliable supply of clean drinking water for the town. By 1865 the increasing population was already placing heavy demands on the existing supply and this was coupled with deterioration in its overall quality. Something had to be done, and two possible solutions were put forward: one was to bring the Boxwell springs from South Cerney but this was rejected by the Oxford authorities who were alarmed at the thought of diverting the springs from the Thames into the Severn with the abstraction of one

million gallons of water per day. The other scheme was one proposed by the Waterworks Company which involved obtaining the water from the River Severn itself. In view of the fact that Cheltenham's supply could not be obtained from the watershed in the local district, and the town could not trespass on neighbouring supplies, the *Looker-On* urged its readers to support the following proposal to obtain it from the Severn:

*'...though the water thence procured may not, in the first instance, be quite so pure as that of the mountain rivulets which had formerly sufficed for the necessities of the Town, it is, unquestionably, better than that with which the inhabitants have been recently supplied from the sandbed; and, at all events, cannot be inferior to that which the Metropolis⁶ receives from the Thames, and upon which a population exceeding two millions are wholly dependent.'*⁷



The Wilson family. Left to right: Back row - Polly, Lilly, Ted; Middle Row - Edward Thomas, Mary with Gwladys, Nellie; Front row - Elsie, Jim, Ida, Bernard (with Minnie)
(Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum)

However, Wilson did not agree, commenting that 'drinking supply like Caesar's wife should be above suspicion.' He backed up his arguments further through writing letters to the local press, sparking off further debate which even led to him being called to give evidence in front of the relevant House of Commons committee at which, to justify his concerns, he produced photographs showing fungal growth in the Severn water tanks at Worcester. The debate dragged on for many years with no conclusive decision being taken. However, Wilson was still very concerned about the impact this was having, particularly on the poorer quarters. In August 1868, for example, he made house visits to Coach Road⁸ where many poor families were found to be ill, with practically no water at their disposal. His report on this situation led to improved sanitary conditions for that area.

Leading medics continued to vehemently oppose the use of the Severn to supply drinking water but eventually the Severn lobby won through and in September 1896 Severn water was turned on for use in the town. It was made permanent a year later. 'The less said about that the better', Wilson wrote in his journal.

Another cause he supported vociferously was the District Nurses Association. Indeed in October 1867 he was the leading light in establishing a nurses home in the Christchurch district which eventually developed into the District Nurses Association. He was also instrumental in enlarging their operations through purchasing a house in St. James's Square with money raised during the Queen's Jubilee in 1887. He also championed the 'new order' of hospital nurses, as shown by this witty verse he penned for Mary Jones, a colleague, who once spent Christmas with the family at Westal:

*'The nurses of old were odious creatures
'Gamp' their name and coarse their features*

*With their bottle and 'broolly' they took possession
And laughed in the face of the old profession
But we've changed all that, and the Nurse of today
Would look on the Gamps with grim dismay
She is neat and tidy and trim as can be
A soothing sight for the sick to see
With a sweet low voice and a gentle touch
She comforts the patient just as much
Possibly more than the Doctor's potions
Or the diligent rubbing of all his lotions
So I've bought her a book which may help to cheer
Long hours of watch in the coming year.'*

However, of all his achievements for the town the one which gave him greatest satisfaction was the creation of Delancey Hospital as an isolation and fever hospital⁹. At the time there were very few fever hospitals and where these existed, according to Wilson, they were 'only fit for cattle, not human beings'. Therefore, the contribution which this hospital made to the health of the town cannot be underestimated: the smallpox block alone, for example, which was opened in 1874, succeeded in protecting the town from that disease for over 40 years. As Secretary of the Trustees, Wilson was closely involved in the running of the hospital. In June 1889 he strongly opposed the Cheltenham Improvement Act as this included a clause allowing the Town Council the right to share in the management of the hospital as he saw this as a deliberate attack on the Delancey Trustees. He felt very bitter about this whole episode and by July 1913 thought that the hospital had simply been 'thrown to the wolves' through lack of support. The final nail in the coffin, he felt, was in 1915 when the Delancey Trust was finally wound up and handed over to a new governing body.

Another occasion when Wilson confronted the town authorities was in 1867 when he advocated the need for Cheltenham to appoint a Medical Officer of Health. But he ran up against strong political objections, the thinking being that if a town was so unhealthy as to need a Medical Officer of Health then it could never be frequented as a watering place! Ironically, when such a position was in fact created in 1884, although Wilson was put forward as the strongest candidate, the job was given to someone else who, though being congenial, did not possess the necessary technical qualifications. After that his 'faith in Town Councils was shaken' forever.

The family GP

However, outside politics there was much to enjoy about his work as a GP. He writes fondly about the many friends he made through his work. Probably his most eccentric patient was George Perton, a retired Birmingham jeweller who lived in Prestbury and drove in a brass-mounted chariot, where he received the doctor, providing him with copious notes of all his symptoms covering the past few weeks. Wilson remembered that whenever he wrote a prescription Perton would always say, 'Now remember no water, we can get it cheaper in Prestbury'. There was also Miss Beale, headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College, whom he counted as a very close friend. When she died in 1906, he remembered how, during one consultation, she took the thermometer out of her mouth and said, "Now tell me all the news", and then promptly put it back in.

A passionate voice for Cheltenham

A constant theme that runs through his life is wanting to do the best, not just for his patients but also for the town. For there were other projects in which he sought to become involved, in an attempt to make lasting improvements for the town. For example, in 1887 he suggested the purchase of Montpellier Gardens as a project for the Queen's Jubilee, something which although not taken forward then, did come to fruition 10 years later. He also participated in many attempts to re-launch the town as a spa. It was no surprise, therefore, that in 1891 he was asked to nominate himself as an alderman with a view to being elected as Mayor the following year. But although he was offered financial assistance to help with this, nevertheless he declined, stating that 'my talents, whatever they be, certainly do not lie in the direction of Municipal Government'.

He also served on many professional committees, including the Council of the Gloucestershire branch of British Medical Association for nearly 40 years. In 1901 he was offered presidency of BMA but did not accept because of family commitments and the expense that this involved. However, he did volunteer to produce the BMA guide to the town which was published in 1901 as part of the town's celebrations for hosting the conference. The guide provides interesting insights covering a wide range of subjects (history, geography, sport, arts, climate, flora and fauna) and includes detailed facts and figures. For example, the population at this time was just under 50,000 but he estimated that the town had more than enough space for 150,000¹⁰. The guide also successfully promotes the town as a desirable place of residence. For example, quoting the author of *The golden decade of a favoured town*, the introduction reads:

*'Not a manufacturing chimney is seen. No polluting smoke veils her graces from the spectator's eye, or defiles her when seen. Built chiefly of stone, she reclines white-robed and easefully on the green plain, and lifts into the pure sky above her nothing but a church spire or scholastic tower – signs that characterize her as a place where religion, culture and refinement hold principal sway.'*¹¹

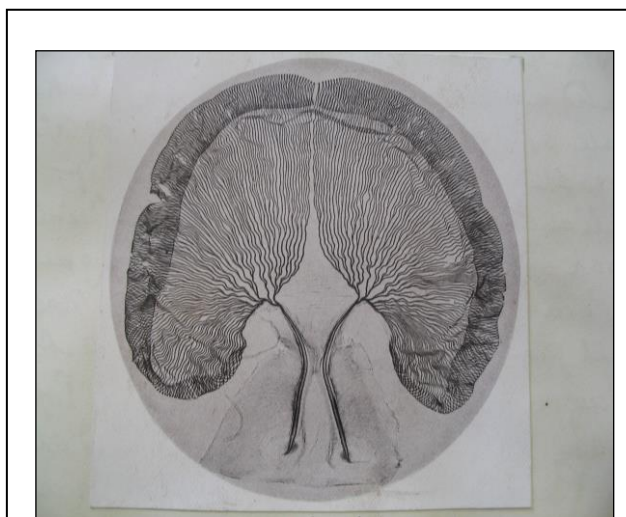
In the guide he also refers to attractions such as the College museum which, at that time, was open to the public on Tuesday afternoons and which was a place where he used to provide regular voluntary help. Indeed he was involved in helping to arrange and organise one of its principal attractions, the collection of skulls from Belas Knapp¹². In 1901 the town still did not have its own museum but this was yet another subject that exercised Wilson's mind, and so he campaigned vigorously for establishing a town museum, particularly through organisations such as the Natural Science Society. He started his lobbying from 1891 onwards but it was not until 1907 that he finally achieved success and it was fitting tribute to his commitment and determination that he was given the honour of proclaiming the new museum open¹³.

Another institute that he supported with great passion was the subscription library in Crescent Road. In 1896 its membership was 270 but this declined to 157 in 1905 and further decreases in membership led to it being closed in 1908, with its stock transferred to the free library¹⁴. Wilson commented that 'Free lovers of books in Cheltenham will never have again what here was lost to the town – a truly comfortable literary club at a very moderate expense.' The *Cheltenham Examiner* amusingly reported that 'on the morning of the sale two habitués quietly read the newspapers in the newsroom almost until the chairs they sat in were brought under the hammer.'¹⁵

The talented amateur and true pioneer

Apart from his work, his family and the good causes he espoused he also found time to absorb himself in a range of hobbies and interests. These included fishing, shooting, natural history, and photography. Photography, in particular, was an area where he developed specialist skills and knowledge. In fact, many of the techniques he used were pioneering for the day such as those relating to photomicrography, the science of photographing microscopic objects. He even wrote several papers on the subject¹⁶. Also, it was he who helped to found the town's first Photographic Society¹⁷ in 1865, becoming its first secretary.

Other interests included rowing. In 1860 he formed a boat club for Cheltenham College though, according to the annals of the club, the idea was started during a memorable picnic by the River Severn at Tewkesbury during the previous summer 'in the full enjoyment of fine weather, fair scenery and most unexceptionable sandwiches and sherry...'¹⁸. As part of the training for rowing Wilson went for morning runs with the College masters and boys across Shurdington fields and even raced up the tram incline of Leckhampton Hill without once pulling up¹⁹. He was proud of his general fitness and the fact that he could run a five-minute mile.



Tongue of a cricket.
An example of Wilson's photomicrography
(Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery
and Museum)

He was also one of the leading figures in Cheltenham's Natural Science Society, becoming its president in October 1889. He submitted more than 20 papers for the society on subjects ranging from evolution, natural history, exploration (e.g. Antarctica) and archaeology (e.g. the long barrow men²⁰). He also belonged to the Friends in Council, a club that he formed with several close friends with similarly wide-ranging interests. They would take it in turns to organise outings or present scientific papers or debate issues of topical interest. On one occasion, he recalls how a club outing was arranged to the house of John Walker, a wealthy old bachelor, where a learned talk on the dynamics of the game of billiards was expected. However, after a few preliminary remarks by the host on the social advantages of the billiards table, the group was invited to a practical application of the game as being preferable to a paper!

A Retrospect

In October 1915, as he was approaching his eighty third birthday, ill health was beginning to take its toll, but he felt the need to take a comprehensive look back over his life and review all his successes and failures. He called it 'A Retrospect'. It was originally intended to be read only by members of his family. Although only seven pages long, it comes as a great surprise to the reader, coming as it does after two large volumes of rich, life-affirming memories. In this rather scathing self-analysis he berates himself for having made several major mistakes. He is emphatic, for example, given his time again, that he would have done things differently. On a professional level he would not have come to Cheltenham at all but would

have sought to live somewhere with a well-respected medical school, probably Liverpool or Oxford, where he was once offered a post at the Radcliffe Royal Infirmary, but not London for he 'loathed London and London life'. Instead his happy marriage and the birth of numerous offspring had led him to put down deep roots in Cheltenham.



Cheltenham College boat club
(Wilson is on the back row, second from left)
(Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum)

In terms of making career choices he regrets the decision to cover a wide remit - science, medicine and sanitary work - which meant dissipating his energies too broadly rather than focusing on a single subject where, with wholehearted application, he felt he could have been more successful: 'What with boating at Tewkesbury, walks and photography life was taken too easily - and society in an idle town took much valuable time.' He also felt acutely that he missed out a good deal through not being sent to public school.

Weighing up his strengths and weaknesses he recognised that,

had he joined the army, as his brother Charlie had done, he would have made an excellent subordinate officer, largely by dint of his willingness to work hard and not shirk responsibility. But he added, 'God help the army that I was ever called upon to command.' Rather poignantly he felt the absence of some kind of mentor, 'someone to guide and advise but there was no-one, no-one at school, no-one at Oxford, no-one at the hospital, no-one in Cheltenham.'

Given that he came from a family of high achievers and, without doubt, felt overshadowed by the success of his brother's career²¹ and the fame of his son (whose loss he felt acutely), it is likely that it was the lack of public recognition for his pioneering work that disturbed him most and led to this rather sad, dissatisfied picture of his life.

A final tribute

However, although the 'Retrospect' paints a negative picture, it is quite clear that Cheltenham would have been a much poorer place without him. When he died in 1918 the *Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Graphic* made the following tribute:

*'No man has done so much as he to stimulate and promote the intellectual life of the town of Cheltenham in which he lived since 1859. He was a great science pioneer, taking extreme interest in natural science, was an enthusiastic antiquarian, a patron and constant benefactor of the Free Library and Museum, a governor of the Ladies' College, a founder of the Delancey Hospital and Victoria Home.'*²²

He was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's, Leckhampton. The inscription on the gravestone reads simply, 'He went about doing good'.

Acknowledgements

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¹ E.T. Wilson, *My Life. Volume I: 1832-1888. Volume II: 1889-1916*. Illustrated, hand-written. Two black leather volumes with gold lettering. (Wilson Collection Ref. 1995.550.35 A & B). All quotations are from these 2 volumes unless otherwise indicated.

² For further details on the Wilson family background see D.M. Wilson and D.B. Elder, *Cheltenham in Antarctica: the life of Edward Wilson*, (Reardon Publishing, 2000), pp 6-7.

³ *Ibid*, p 7.

⁴ Today the Crippetts is divided into two separate houses. The earliest reference to the building is in *Rudder's History of Gloucestershire* (1779) and shows that there was an ancient farm at the Crippetts which in the late 16th century became the home of the Gwynetts family. According to *Gloucestershire Place-names* (A H Smith), the name 'Crippetts' derives from Cropet or Crupet, a common Middle English surname in 13th century Gloucestershire.

⁵ The first bailiff, Mr. Lockton, was soon discharged for being drunk once too often, and was replaced by Mr. Griffin who lost the farm large sums of money through his drunken carelessness. He got his come-uppance when he was sent to Andoversford to sell some pigs and got so drunk that he fell out of his trap, hit his head, and nearly lost his life in the process!

⁶ London

⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 25 Feb 1865 p.120.

⁸ Coach Road no longer exists, having been redeveloped.

⁹ The hospital was funded by Miss Delancey, an old benefactor who famously asked what she could do to help the town when she was staying at The Plough Hotel. All in all she bequeathed £5,000 for the hospital which was designed by local architect John Middleton.

¹⁰ This is approximately 40,000 less than Cheltenham's current population.

¹¹ E.T. Wilson and J. Sawyer, eds., *A guide to Cheltenham. British Medical Association, Cheltenham meeting, 1901*. (Norman, Sawyer and Co. 1901), p.1-2.

¹² This collection is now housed in Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

¹³ Initially, the museum just contained a small but interesting collection of local fossils.

¹⁴ A. Varley, *A history of libraries in Cheltenham from 1780 to 1900*. Thesis submitted for Fellowship of the Library Association, 1968.

¹⁵ 'The passing of a library', *Cheltenham Examiner*, (6 August 1908).

¹⁶ One example is 'How to photograph microscopic objects', which was published in *Popular Science Review* in 1867.

¹⁷ The society is, in fact, the seventh oldest in the country.

¹⁸ Cheltenham College Boat Club, 1860 p.2

¹⁹ He comments in his journal that as a doctor he should have known better.

²⁰ This paper contains an amusing story of an enterprising dentist who came across a Neolithic skull at Notgrove and started to practise his art on it. Fortunately his conscience was pricked sufficiently enough to return it to the burial chamber, complete with a gold filling!

²¹ Charlie became Major General Sir Charles Wilson, a noted figure in Middle Eastern exploration.

²² Published on 4 May 1918.

Albion House – the First 200 Years

TOM MASLIN

TOM TAKES A LIGHT-HEARTED LOOK AT ALBION HOUSE, one of the town's oldest residences. Better known to many as The Liberal Club, it was erected 200 years ago during the tumultuous years of Napoleon and the famous victory at Trafalgar.

Albion House stands in North Street at the very centre of Cheltenham. He may look fairly ordinary to you. People pass him every day without a glance. For 200 years Albion (for that is what we shall call him) has been observing life from his busy vantage point. He was born to look along a little track known as Back Lane. As the town expanded, the lane grew busier and more important. Albion remembers with a blush of pride when it was renamed after him as Albion Street. In common with many senior citizens, Albion gets tetchy with the youngsters who have grown up around him. Though the planners in the Municipal Offices claim to venerate the good looks of his generation, he is left to squabble with brash young glass and concrete neighbours.



Albion House 1826

This engraving was published when the house was situated on the outskirts of Cheltenham.

The Parish Church can be seen in the background.

(Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum)

For his first eighty years, Albion sheltered a succession of provincial worthies, many of whom had neither the money nor the will to pamper him. He was harshly treated, so in neglected middle age his spirit soared when he was adopted and rejuvenated by the local Liberal Party. He got confused when his new residents painted *LIBERAL CLUB* in huge letters, across his face. My

name is *Albion* he kept reminding himself. Over the following hundred years or so, his association with the local Liberal Party flared into life, stuttered, cooled, was rekindled and finally died, so Albion was gratified when his proper name was recalled and he was renamed *The Albion House Social Club*.

Though Albion is elderly, his early memories remain clear. He was born in 1806 and began his life named *Albion Villa*. He was conceived by Theodore Gwinnett during the reign of George III and the Napoleonic wars. Albion is proud of his name, which springs from a splendid word meaning 'England' or 'Britain'. The French referred to their old enemy as 'Perfidious Albion'; - 'The treacherous English'. So the name had a distinctly patriotic ring to it, echoing Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805.

Albion is shown on an 1806 map of the town with a note *Markham, now Gwinnett*. Thomas Markham is depicted as substantially controlling most of the land which now lies between North Street and Bennington Street. Gwinnett, who was Clerk to the Commissioners, forerunners of the existing Town Council, adopted a half acre plot on which Albion grew up. Gwinnett lived with Albion until 1823. Albion recalls that it was around this time that the extensions to the south (the High Street side) were added.

Albion was purchased by Rev Edmund Carr who lived there until his death in 1834. Albion was bequeathed to Carr's daughters, but they chose to not to live with him, but rented him to various tenants. Albion settled down to an interesting few years, as members of the medical profession came to stay. Two doctors occupied him, later followed by a practising surgeon who stayed for ten years. Albion remembers his dismay on overhearing a story from one of these medics, Dr. Hawkins. Apparently, Hawkins was involved in a tragic interlude relating to the Rev Francis Close. A powerful local figure, Close displeased many with his crusading defence of strict moral values. One morning a mysterious parcel arrived at Close's house. He opened it to be confronted with the small, cold body of a dead baby. Dr Hawkins was summoned to inspect this sad package. Unfortunately, there was little he could do but to provide a formal medical conclusion of the unfortunate infant.

In 1865, when Anna Carr sold Albion for £1,400, the town was expanding into the surrounding countryside. Edmonstone House had been erected together with its neighbours Nash Cottage, Gordon Cottage and the long gone Shrubbery Cottage that nestled just behind him. Although Albion was quite pleased when these new friends came to stay, he remembers when in 1867 his new owner, Dorothea Wright, tempted by £100, sold a strip of his *Pleasure Gardens* to the neighbours for access by horse and carriage. (This land now forms the lane that runs beside the car-park). A second strip of land was sold in the same year for £50, to create a little lane around Albion's South side to Shrubbery Cottage. This new path skirted Albion's front window which gave light to a room with a flight of steps down to a cellar (now covered). Although a restrictive covenant was agreed, ensuring the continuation of light and air to the underground room, Albion could sense trouble. He had lost ownership of the land right up to his walls. Surely it was only a matter of time before an upstart neighbour crowded right up beside him. (Albion was right and today he is jostled by the Job Centre and his front window peers into a fenced off area.)

Two years later at auction, Thomas Steele Esquire, successfully bid £1,405 for Albion. Although delighted when Steele came to stay, Albion's joy gradually faded because he was still not receiving the attention that he craved. Worse was to follow when Steele moved out and abandoned him to the mercies of a resident caretaker. Albion was neglected, cold, dirty and

unwanted. He lost track of the years. He craved a caring owner. Time dragged by until one day a man came to look at him and went away. Some more people arrived. They had earnest whispered conversations and departed again.

A few weeks later, Albion's front door burst open to the excited chatter of several men, some accompanied by their wives. They peeked into all his rooms and spoke of unknown delights. Words like *Culture*, *Reading Rooms* and *Radical Politics* sprang from their lips. Albion listened spellbound as they spoke optimistically of the future. It was 1886. Steele had sold him to the Cheltenham Liberal Club Company for around £1,000. Albion learnt that he was to replace the Reform Club and was to become the home of the local Liberal party. He was delighted to hear that he would house the best club in town and challenge the dominance of the New Club in the Promenade, the Conservative Club just across the way in Albion Street and the Masonic Lodge in Portland Street.

A satirical piece in the local Tory press noted that the Liberal Two Hundred and the Junior Liberal Association had *raised the wind* (the money) and erected a tattered and torn flag outside Albion House. With deep irony and mixed metaphors they continued:

'The thousand strong neighbouring Conservative Club could wither in the scorching rays of the Liberal Club and come tumbling down like a pack of cards.'

News that the Club might include a gymnasium provoked further Tory mirth.

'The prospect of the Liberals, unable to move in unison on any subject, jumping up and down in step, red faced and panting, conjures up an image of unparalleled delight.'

As plans for the new Liberal Club progressed, a Parliamentary election loomed. The Conservative MP, Agg Gardner, was opposed by Mr Biggs, a stranger from out of town. The Conservative pack howled that putting up a Liberal opponent was damned unsporting, because the electioneering would be bad for the image of the Town and discourage visitors! It was June and Albion burst with pride. He had never accommodated such activity. In the event, Agg Gardner was re-elected, so the new Liberal Club was to be inaugurated with a Conservative MP again representing Cheltenham.

Although the assembly hall and gymnasium were beyond their resources, plans for the Billiard Room progressed rapidly. True to their convictions, the Directors only invited local builders of a Liberal persuasion to tender for the work and R.R. Skemp won the contract. Skemp, who was a deeply religious man, sported a fierce black beard and built large houses in Eldorado Road and Lansdown. He was sufficiently important to have manhole covers embossed with his name and some can still be seen today. He belonged to Salem Church and taught Sunday school children at Gas Green. His transport was a tricycle, but each Sunday he walked to his devotions from his house in Leckhampton, holding that it was unseemly and a bad example to the children to ride a bike on the Sabbath. Skemp felt particularly at home as the final structure took on a whimsical resemblance to a small chapel. The cost of these adaptations was to total £525.

Adverts were placed in the *Cheltenham Examiner*, *Free Press* and *Citizen* for three weeks to publicise the opening:

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Opening of the Cheltenham Liberal Club, at Albion House, North Street. This Club, which is central, convenient and most comfortably furnished, will be open for the use of members on or after January 1st 1887. MEMBERS CAN BE ENROLLED and subscriptions paid at the Club every weekday evening from Monday December 13th between the hours of 7 and 9.

To stimulate interest, the Liberals produced three pamphlets entitled:

1. *Disestablishment*
2. *Free Education*
3. *Three Acres and a Cow.*

The first social event was a *Christmas Tree Entertainment Afternoon* for the children followed by an evening party for adults, which took place on 27 December. Albion was ecstatic. His life was transformed. His walls rang with the delighted shrieks of children. His evenings would never be the same.

The Club formally opened on a cold New Year's Day. A curious group of men dithered at Albion's door, and then let themselves inside to see what was on offer. There was a bar. Several diversions included billiards, pool, bagatelle, a coffee room, a chess room and reading rooms, warmed by coal fires. Members could keep up to date with papers ranging from the weighty *Times* to the less demanding *Funny Folks*. Local news was carried in several weekly periodicals. The dedicated Liberal activists initiated a programme of political education at the Club. The majority of members found better things to do like playing billiards and drinking beer. The activists expressed disappointment in the following manner:

'Several attempts which have been made to hold meetings for political discussion have not met with the support for which the Committee hoped.'

The purity of the Club's original ideals soon faded in the light of financial imperatives. The committee finally issued a statement. The muddy inclusion of a double negative displayed the compromise of pressures from differing opinion within the Club:

The rule to exclude persons not of Liberal politics should not be too rigidly enforced.

In July, a Lawn Tennis faction was formed and a court was rolled and marked out. Soon tiring of lobbing balls at each other, the young bloods sought permission to allow lady guests to play. The Committee met and huffed and puffed. 'Mr Chairman, the spectacle of shrieking young ladies disporting themselves in the pleasure garden has no place in a political Gentlemen's Club', howled one old fogey. There was a glazed hush as this simple observation fired home. Young ladies jumping about, they mused. Hauling their thoughts back, the Chairman called for a proposition which was soundly supported:

'...the ladies be allowed to play tennis.'

To foil political spies at election time, the Committee instructed the Curator (The Club Steward) to ban any Tory visitors.

*'How do we recognise a Tory?' the curator, not unreasonably, enquired.
'By the ribbons he sports.'*

The curator pursed his lips and politely waited for realisation of the unlikely prospect of Tory spies descending on the club adorned in their party colours.

As Albion had predicted all those years ago, he now had a neighbour erected tight to his southern wall. When Albion listened carefully, he could hear muffled noises and the sound of voices. Next door, Mr Dix's warehouse and workshops stored all sorts of alarming commodities, including inflammable oils and paints. At midnight on 21 July 1894 a furious fire broke out. The workshops were completely gutted and the damage was estimated at between £2,000 and £3,000. The incident was sufficiently serious to be discussed by the town's Street and Highway Committee who questioned the organisation and speed of the Fire Brigade. The illusion that Senior Liberals held the key to success rumbled on for years. Committee members sighed:

'If the gentry would only take a more active role, then the prosperity of the club would be assured...'

But it was not that simple. To be candid, the gentry saw little merit in riding down from their mansions to the rather colourless Club, apart from at election times of course, when the prospective candidates would put in appearances for publicity and support from the loyal Club activists.

Albion listened to guarded conversations as an election loomed. On voting day there were many comings and goings. Whispered instructions were heard in the hallway and Albion distinctly heard the clink of coins. Though he did not quite understand, he too, felt the excitement when it was announced that the Liberals had a new MP, Richard Mathias.

Wounded at losing and galvanised by the tiresome taunts of the Liberals, the local Conservatives held a post mortem on the recent events. As the local Parliamentary candidates had a statutory duty to keep their costs below £560 the official returns presented by Mathias' agent, showing a total expenditure of £557, were carefully scrutinised.

Observers were quick to point out that there seemed to have been a plethora of printed hand-bills and cabbies clip-clopping around the Town on Election Day, their horses decked out in ribbons bearing the Liberal Colours, while conveying voters to the polls. The consequence was a petition to unseat Mathias which culminated in a four day hearing, at Cheltenham County Court.

A stream of poorly educated cabbies followed each other into the witness box. They were no match for the smart prosecution lawyers.

Lawyer: 'Did you convey folk to the polling stations?'

Cabbie no 1: 'Yes.'

Lawyer: 'And who paid you for this service?'

Cabbie no 1: (rubbing his head) 'Well, it warn't the Liberals, sir, because my 'orse wouldn't budge for a Liberal.'

Lawyer: 'How does your horse know a Liberal?'

Cabbie no 1: (Brightening up) 'That's easy, sir. If you try to put Liberal ribbons on 'im, nothin'll move 'im'

Lawyer: 'Ahh! So your horse is a Conservative!' (Laughter in court).

A second cabbie was examined.

Lawyer: 'Were you paid for services on that day?'

Cabbie no.2 'Well, I were concerned about the propriety of paying for private cabs, so I went 'ome and looked out me old copy of 'Every Man His Own Lawyer' (more laughter in court)

On being asked for his receipt book, he replied that he had left it at his house and was ordered to hurry home and fetch it. When he returned, the lawyers gathered round a table in a tight circle and scrutinised his offering. Suddenly they pounced. Here was some more damning evidence.

Lawyer, waving the book aloft: 'I put it to you that your book is written in cipher!'

Cabbie: (Nonplussed) 'No'

Lawyer, pointing to an entry and pausing for dramatic effect: 'Look! It says here, Cypher.'

The locals in the courtroom cottoned on at once and howled with delight, much to the surprise of the visiting Judge and solicitors. What they were not to know was that the book referred to James Cypher, who was well known and owned a garden nursery in Queens Road near the railway station.

Appropriately, the case concluded on 1 April 1911 and the court found the petition proved. Mathias was told that the court did not consider that he had been directly involved, but he was ordered to forfeit his seat in Cheltenham. At the resulting bye-election, the Liberals lost to the Conservative challenger by only 4 votes.

On a fine sunny morning in 1928 the Borough of Cheltenham Electricity Committee took a gentle stroll up North Street. They stopped outside Albion and peered through the foliage surrounding his lawns. The Secretary was supervising a long overdue pruning operation and stared back.

'Good Morning', he said.

'You enjoy a fine big garden', boomed the Borough of Cheltenham Electricity Committee. 'We are very nice people and will give you £100 for a rookery nook in the corner'

'What for?' growled the startled secretary.

'Why, to erect a monument to modern technology', they informed him.

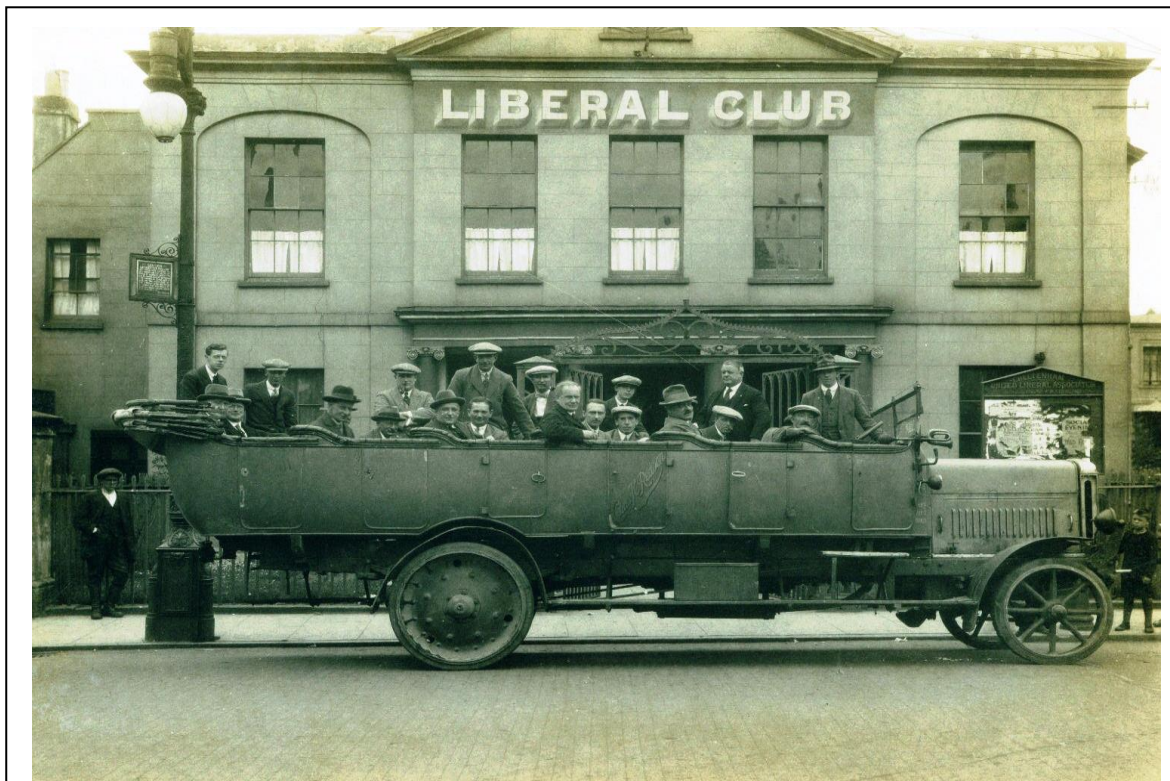
'Will this monument elegantly complement our gracious old building?'

'Yes, yes' they replied impatiently. "We will call it An Electricity Sub Station.'

Bus queues outside the Club continually caused congestion on the narrow pavement. So again, in 1955, the Borough Council functionaries took an expedition up North Street and pondered. The boundary wall was (and still is) set back by six feet in exchange for £75. Relations between the Club and the local Liberal Party faded and stuttered over the years, eventually fracturing completely.

Albion was often privy to letters or phone calls from people complaining about the closure of coal mines in Wales, the state of public transport and the perceived deficiencies of

Jeremy Thorpe, in the mistaken belief that Albion was still the headquarters of the local Liberal party. So in 1993, Albion was happy to hear that the name of the Club was to be renamed after his proper title, *The Albion House Social Club*.



Liberal Club outing by charabanc in the 1920s or early 1930s
(courtesy of Cheltenham Liberal Club)

Planning permission was granted for a function room to the rear North side of Albion in 1994, which included 'Schedule 106' order of repairs and renovations. The planners further insisted that the dome topped window at the foot of the main staircase be retained, which explains the sloping roof in the corner of the function room. The new room opened in time for the winter skittles season.

Albion can sometimes be a bit haughty when he is confused with his younger Regency relatives. He likes to remind them that he is really a Georgian building. After all, he can remember the dying embers of the slave trade. He can recall the Battle of Waterloo and the birth of the railways. In fact he was born in the same year as Brunel. He is older than Cheltenham's notable trademark Pump Rooms, Rotunda and Promenade. He has lived through Charles Dickens, The Tolpuddle Martyrs and Florence Nightingale. He well recalls the workhouse and the enlightened Reform Bills which eroded the power of the old nobility and granted the vote to the ordinary citizen. He has stood through the Boer War, the first powered flight and two world wars. Albion celebrates his 200th birthday this year. He salutes all those people who have looked after his welfare and in particular the volunteers who have rejuvenated him and continue to ensure that he remains in robust good health.

Robert Passemer, a Pilgrim from Prestbury?

MICHAEL GREET

AN ILLUSTRATION OF HOW FRUSTRATING historical research can be is provided by an example of one of the most interesting class of documents a medievalist comes across: namely, an inquisition in which an heir to an estate provides proof he has reached his majority. Unfortunately these are quite scarce but, if you find one, the details they give of medieval life can be fascinating.

On Thursday next after the feast of St Gregory the Pope, 35 Edward III [18 Mar 1361], an inquisition before the King's Echeator at Gloucester enquired into the proof of age claim of John de Cherleton, cousin and heir of Alan de Cherleton. Walter Toky, 48, said John was born in Prestbury on 12 March, 14 Edward III [1340], and that he was present at John's baptism in the church there by the Bishop of Hereford. John de Mattesdon, 44, said he recalled the date because he was then before the Coroner in connection with an accident; John Frankhomme, 55 [?], remembered because his eldest son was born [then]; John Rous, 56, buried his wife that day; and John Jones, 58, said that on that day Bartholomew [?] de Erggesworthe enfeoffed Robert de Prestbury with a messuage and 20 ½ acres.

Robert Passemer, 48, had set out for 'Sant Jago' (Santiago de Compostela in Spain, the place where St James the Apostle was thought to be buried) on that day. Six others on the jury gave witness, but their evidence is illegible.

This is only the third time I have found details of a pilgrimage to Santiago, also in proof of age inquisitions. The name Passemer [cross (the) sea; compare Parsley, Parsloe, Parslow (cross the water)] was very appropriate for a pilgrim, but he may have adopted the name only after he returned from Spain. There are two taxpayers with the same surname listed in the Lay Subsidy of 1327: in Slimbridge and Brockworth; and also one tax-collector, the Subtaxer for Dunstone Hundred. No record could be found of any of the jury members.

Santiago was, with Jerusalem and Rome, one of the three favourite overseas destinations for medieval English pilgrims. It was of course easier and cheaper to reach than either of the other two. While such a pilgrimage was somewhat unusual at this date such pilgrimages became more common by the fifteenth century. The route could be overland, through France, or by sea to Spain from the south coast. Some Gloucestershire ships traded as far as Bordeaux.

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The St Marks Housing Estate – an introduction to Cheltenham’s first National Housing Scheme

HARVEY FAULKNER-ASTON

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY THE ST MARKS ESTATE IS DIFFERENT to the rest of Cheltenham, why it is named after Poets, or who actually built it. The following article is an introduction to the history of the estate’s beginnings and some of the key people and thinking involved in its formation.



The first houses completed at the Libertus Road end of Tennyson Road.
Official photograph taken on the day of the opening ceremony, 18 Jan 1921.
(*Cheltenham Chronicle and Graphic*, 22 Jan 1921, *Cheltenham Newspaper Co. Ltd.*)

At the outbreak of the First World War, Britain had a national shortage of acceptable housing. Between the turn of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of war, the construction of new housing had been primarily the preserve of private enterprise, with the formation of such places as Letchworth Garden City in Hertfordshire. Local Authorities had clearly identified the need to clear “slum” accommodation, but the mechanisms to promote suitable accommodation in any quantity was lacking. By the end of the First World War there was very little Local Authority accommodation provided. The then Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, made a speech in the House of Commons calling for ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ – this would be a turning point in social housing.

Following on from Lloyd George’s speech, the Housing (Addison) Act 1919 was put before Parliament and used as its basis the findings of the Tudor Walters report. The Report had encompassed ideas from the Garden City Movement and was produced by Letchworth Garden City’s co architect Raymond Unwin. It proposed that well-built and spacious houses in carefully

considered low-density estates should be constructed. Each house built following the recommendations of the Report would have a floor area in excess of 1000 superficial feet and consist of three bedrooms, several living rooms, kitchen, bathroom and water closet. On a typical national Housing Scheme Estate variation was demonstrated by short terraced rows of houses interspersed with the semi-detached units. In latter years, the superficial floor area was reduced but the houses built still provided good quality accommodation. The Housing (Addison) Bill was the subject of Parliamentary debate; the Bill proposed widening the scope of housing subsidies and altering the obligation of local authorities to build houses. Under this Bill local authorities were also required to survey housing need and provide housing based on those surveys.

Cheltenham Corporation's primary response was to form the Housing Committee, as a sub-committee of the Public Health Committee. The Corporation's Public Health Committee dealt with the slum areas within Cheltenham and the formation of the Housing Committee allowed a clear distinction between them. As Addison's Bill was going through Parliament the Housing Sub-Committee was preparing plans for Cheltenham's housing scheme. This resulted in the change of the Sub-Committee's plan from that of limited slum clearance and upgrading, to one of provision of social housing on a major scale.

By March 1919 the Housing Committee had identified and considered the purchase of 'some of the land belonging to Mr (Herbert) Unwin (of Arle Court) which adjoins the Libertus Estate'. The land was situated two miles west of the Town centre, off the Gloucester Road (A40) at the edge of the then Town boundary. The Committee negotiated with Mr Unwin to purchase approximately 100 acres with the intention of constructing 400 houses. The lay-out and design for the proposed estate would be collaboration between the Borough Surveyor and the Cheltenham based architectural partnership of Messrs Chatters, Smithson and Rainger. The proposed plan was approved at a national level by the Local Government Board, this agreement allowed the Corporation to purchase the site. The final site area purchased from Mr Unwin was just less than 116 acres, with an additional small parcel of land of less than 3 acres purchased from Mr T Smith. Mr J G Villar, a Cheltenham based Land Agent, undertook all negotiations for the sale of the land, on behalf of Messrs Unwin and Smith; the approximate cost to the corporation being £11,000.

Once the site was purchased, the Corporation was encouraged by various public groups to commence the erection of houses as soon as possible. The groups included a deputation from the National Labour Party and members of the Workers Housing League. Interestingly the League, keen to see accommodation provided, made the suggestion to the Committee that they should also consider obtaining and converting 'large empty houses into flats and army huts should also be obtained'. As well as the public groups noted, the Committee, following recommendations issued by the Ministry of Health, requested various women's organisations to select members to form a Woman's Advisory Committee. The role of the Advisory Committee was to comment on the proposed plans and specification. Several reports are recorded as being received, and some of the recommendations were incorporated into the house designs.

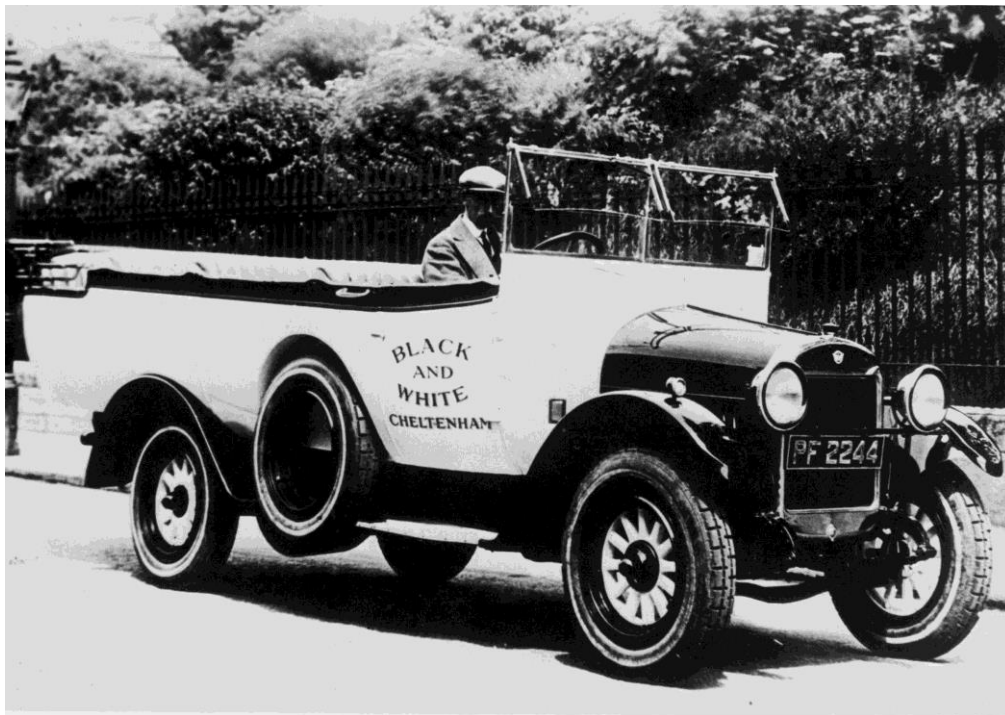
Tenders were invited and received from several local building contractors. The contracts to build the new houses were let to A.C. Billings & Sons Ltd, Collins & Godfrey, William Drew and W.T. Nicholl Limited. The Mayor, Alderman Bendall, cut the first sod on the National Housing Scheme site on 22 April 1920. This was commemorated by the planting of an oak tree at the east junction of what would be Byron Road and Milton Road. The first houses to be built were located in Tennyson Road and Libertus Road. The official opening, by the Mayor, of the St

Mark's Housing Estate was on 18 January 1921; prior to this the Committee had agreed to name the roads after English Poets. Construction work on the Estate would continue for at least the next 15 years.

The St Mark's Housing Estate is an important turning point in Cheltenham's social housing. Although the Corporation had built all but a very small number of the houses on the Estate they were not all to be assigned to Corporation/Council Tenants. The Committees Minutes record that many of the houses that received funding under later Housing Acts were sold to private individuals. The Estate today still maintains a mix of tenants and owner occupiers.

Cheltenham Borough Council identified the Estate as being of architectural and social importance and formed the Poets Estate Conservation Area in 2001 after formal discussion with residents. The Estate continues to mature and makes a positive contribution to Cheltenham's varied architectural landscape, reflecting in a small way the pre First World Garden City layouts.

The author, himself a resident of the St Mark's Housing Estate, would welcome any memories, photographs or snippets of history relating to life on the estate that any readers would be willing to share with him.



George Readings, founder of the Black and White Coach Company, driving the first vehicle operated by the company, a 14-seater Reo, which operated short tours from Nov 1926.
(From Black & White A Pictorial Reminiscence 1926-1976)

Barnby, Bendall – a Mystery Solved

ERIC MILLER

IN MY EARLIER ARTICLE ON BARNBY, BENDALL & CO¹ I left unanswered the question ‘Who was Barnby?’ An indistinct photograph of a board of honour showing portraits of some early members of the firm includes two gentlemen with the surname Barnby. In one case a mustachioed individual is identified simply as ‘Barnby’ and in the other the initials are indistinct. The photograph is reproduced below². Later, in 1902, a company prospectus referred to a Mr F. Barnby, residing in London, as the firm’s buyer of second-hand furniture. These mysteries have now been largely solved, thanks to help and advice from Philip Bendall of Bath, who has made a comprehensive study of his family’s history and who approached me after seeing a reference to my article on the Cheltenham LHS website³.

The essential clue is that the Barnby and Bendall families were linked both commercially and – twice – by marriage. In 1866 Thomas Barnby, a Birmingham draper, married Marianne (or Mary Ann) Bendall, daughter of Samuel Bendall the founder of the firm, at Leckhampton church. Then, in 1871, Marianne’s brother Peter, who had been involved in running the business from about 1870 onwards, married Thomas’s sister Isabella. The latter marriage took place only a few weeks after the death of Thomas and Marianne’s father, also called Thomas, a confectioner of Balsall Heath in Birmingham. It was not until the 1880s that the name of Barnby was added to the firm’s title. In these circumstances, it is likely that Thomas Barnby, junior, was a director until his death in 1887.

Census returns shed light on the enigmatic ‘Mr F. Barnby, residing in London’. He will have been Frank Archibald Barnby, listed in 1881 as the second son of Thomas and Marianne⁴. In 1901, the year before he was first mentioned in company literature, Frank was the manager of a toy and fancy goods shop, living at an address in Kilburn. The evidence suggests that he combined his regular job with acting as second-hand furniture buyer for the Cheltenham-based firm of which his uncle was a director⁵.



Some early members of the firm. Samuel Bendall is in the centre, ‘Barnby’ second row on the right, and ‘(X.X.) Barnby’ is third row on the left.



Barnby, Bendall road train, c. 1900.
Can anyone identify the house in the background?

It was pleasing that my earlier article elicited such a constructive response. The exercise serves to illustrate the relevance of family history records and census returns to the local historian.

¹ Miller, Eric, 'Barnby, Bendall & Co. Ltd. Furniture Removals and Storage 1839-1976', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **19** (2003)

² Unfortunately the photographs of the two Barnbys cannot be enhanced with any clarity[Editor]

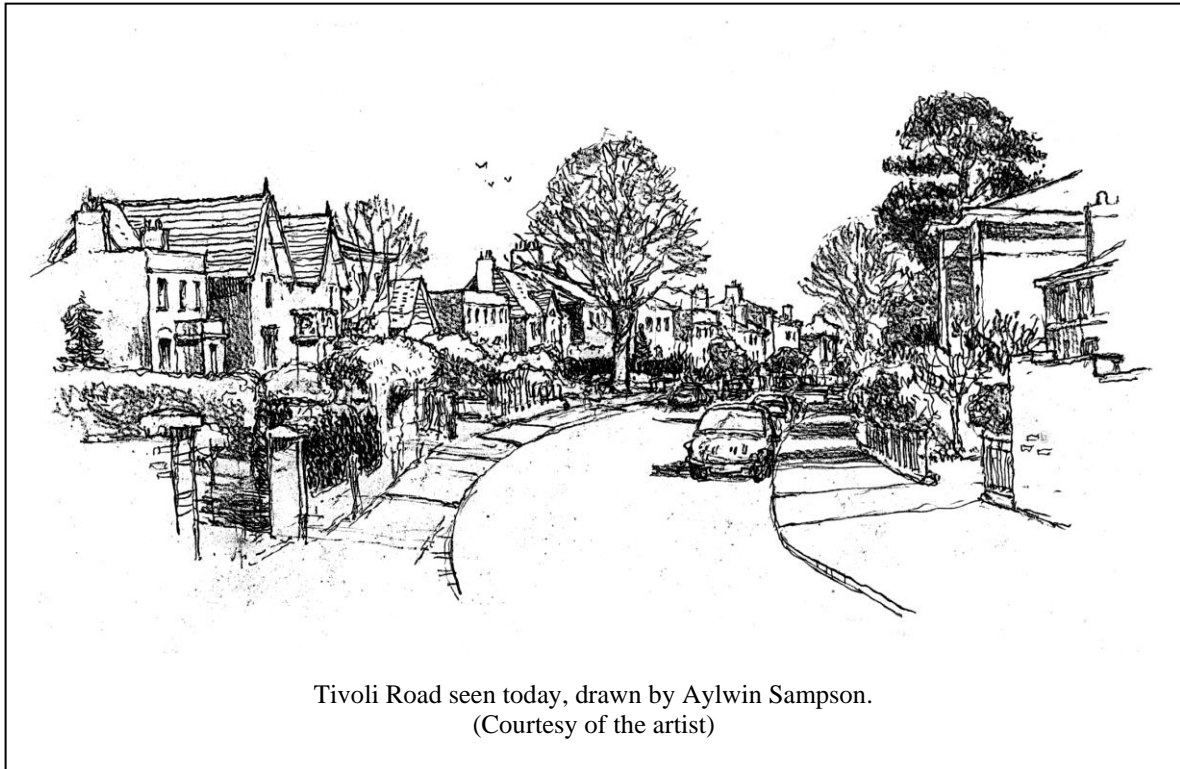
³ Philip Bendall's family study also includes the distantly related Bendalls of Leckhampton. Details of some of their activities will be found in publications of the Leckhampton Local History Society.

⁴ The 1881 Census return reveals further connections with Cheltenham: Thomas's wife Marianne was born there, as were an assistant in Thomas's shop, Ellen Powell, and a visiting commercial clerk, Thomas Pottinger.

⁵ The candidate suggested in my earlier article – Fredrick (*sic*) G. Barnby, living in the Windsor area – should therefore be discounted.

Tivoli Road – an Early History

ERIC WOODHEAD



Tivoli Road seen today, drawn by Aylwin Sampson.
(Courtesy of the artist)

THE DEEDS, DATED NOVEMBER 1842, OF NO. 9 TIVOLI ROAD (formerly known as *St Oswalds* and more recently *The Folly*) include an Abstract of the title of Mr Thomas Hale Bennett to a piece of land part of Mary bone Park in the parish of Cheltenham contracted to be sold to Mr Moreton. The deeds were prepared by a Cheltenham firm of solicitors called Williams. Mary bone Park (sometimes referred to in some other deeds as Mary-bone Park and in others as Mary Bone Park) was a narrow strip of land. The northern part of the west side was bounded by Westfall Furlong, the southern part of the west side by an area of land known as Morefords, and the eastern side by an area known as Lower Grotten. The southern end of Mary bone Park was Westal brook. The northern end was bounded by a branch of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Railway leading to Leckhampton. That narrow strip of land is now Tivoli Road with its associated houses.

The Abstract is important, for it purports to set out, from the material available in 1842, the previous owners of Mary bone Park. The first reference to the ownership of Mary bone Park by that name is found in an Indenture (Agreement) made on 13 April 1807. According to this the personal representatives of the late John Delabere sold to Henry Thompson of Tottenham High Cross in the county of Middlesex, inter alia:

...all those the Closes or parcels of land called Mary bone Park and Lower Grotten ... and part of which said Close called Mary bone Park is therein [i.e. an earlier Agreement] stated to have belonged to Mrs Stokes widow, and that the other part of Mary bone Park formerly belonged to Thomas Giles and his wife.

The land owned by Mrs Stokes

Mrs Stokes – Mary Stokes of Cheltenham – was a widow and the relict of the Rev. George Stokes of Cocheston in the County of Pembroke, deceased,. She was sister and heir of Martha Mitchell, spinster, deceased and also the surviving sister and heir of of John Mitchell late of Cheltenham. In May 1755 she agreed to sell to William Prinn the following for £2,120:

All that messuage or Tenement and Farm called Gallipot Lodge with the barns stables outhouses court yards backsides gardens orchards and Appurtenants thereunto belonging and all that other Messuage or Tenement and farm with the barns stables outhouses yards backsides gardens orchards and Appurtenants thereto belonging and Closes or Parcels as well un-inclosed as inclosed of arable land meadow or pasture ground and all Commons etc. belonging hereto All which said Messuages premises are therein described to be lying and being in the Tything of Westfall Naunton and Sandford Alstone in the parish of Cheltenham and to contain by estimation 160 acres thereabouts and to be then in the occupation of Richard Hooper and Edward Ireland as Tenants thereof at the respective yearly rents of £90 and 2/6.

At this time John Delabere, a Cheltenham solicitor, was buying up parcels of land to consolidate and enlarge his estates. On 6 April 1756 he agreed to purchase those lands and buildings from William Prinn for £2,120: Mrs Stokes was a party to this transaction because her sale to Prinn had never been the subject of a formal contract.

The Abstract is silent as to the ownership of those lands and buildings before the sales to Prinn and Delabere. It is possible that they were owned formerly by Edward Michell of Powers Court.

The land owned by Thomas Giles

The apparent chain of title leading to that part of Mary bone Park owned by Thomas Giles and his wife is contained in the Abstract, although Mary bone Park is not mentioned by name. It commences with an indenture dated ‘7th March 12th of Eliz. 1570’. It is between Thomas Packer, Gent[leman], of Cheltenham and Walter Brush, Yeoman, of Westfall in the parish of Cheltenham. In consideration of £58 the former ‘did give grant bargain and sell’ to the latter:

...one Messuage or Tenement situate lying and being in Westfall aforesaid called or known by the name of Milwards house and one close of pasture whereon the Messuage or Tenement stands And also 9 acres of arable land situate lying and being in the parishes of Westfall aforesaid and in Naunton and Charlton Kings in the said county of Gloucester. All which said Messuage and Tenement and 9 acres of land first before mentioned situate lying and being in Westfall Naunton and Charlton Kings aforesaid with the Appurtenants were lately belonging to the late Chantry or Service of St Katherine within the parish Church of Cheltenham aforesaid and were then or late parcels of the possessions thereof and were then in the tenures or occupation of the said W. Brush and which said Messuage or Tenement and 9 acres with the Appurtenants Daniel Petre and Alexander Petre late of Tewkesbury in the County of Gloucester, Gent among other things lately had and purchased of our late Sovereign Lord King Edward the 6th by his Letters patent and under the Great Seal of England bearing date at Westminster the 17th day of April in the 7th year of His Highness’s Reign and the same by

good and sufficient Assurances in the law Did bargain sell give grant and confirm to the said T. Packer his heirs and assigns forever To hold the same with the Appurtenances unto and to the use of the said W. Brush his heirs and assigns for ever.

It was executed by T. Packer ‘Livery of Seizein indorsed’¹.

On the ‘28th of October in the 31st year of Elizabeth’, Brush, in consideration of 100 marks of lawful money of England sold to Garvwin (?) Hilton a Gentleman of Barwescott, Berkshire the following: ‘The said premises with the Appurtenances and the Reversion etc. And all the Estate etc. And all Deeds etc.’

On the ‘8th July in the 11th year of James 1st’ William Hilton, a Gentleman of Westall (presumably the heir of G. Hilton) sold to Walter Cleevely a Husbandman of Westall for a consideration of £110 ‘All and singular the said Messuage or Tenement And the said Close or Meadow or pasture whereon the same stood with the Appurtenants.’

On 1 April 1652 Walter Cleevely sold, to his son and heir Thomas Cleevely² and Eleanor (the son’s wife):

All that the said Messuage of dwelling house situate and being in Westall aforesaid with the Barns stable and other Appurtenants thereto belonging which said Messuage or Dwelling House was then formerly known by the name of Milwards house And also that Close of Meadow or pasture and orchard with the Appurtenants adjoining the said Messuage and then or lately in the Tenure of the said W. Cleevely.

It would appear that Thomas Cleevely and his wife Eleanor had a daughter, also called Eleanor. She married a yeoman called Thomas Giles of Westall. They appear to have had a son called Thomas Giles. The latter was heir apparent to his father. According to a deed dated 9 October 1724, the father and son (Eleanor, by now, had seemingly died) rented the premises mentioned above to Mary Packer, spinster of Cheltenham for a down payment of £20 10/- and ‘at a rent of a peppercorn’. The rental period was for 1000 years with the provision that it was subject to redemption by the two Giles’ on payment of £21 10/-.

It is not known how long Miss Packer rented the premises, but it must have terminated before 28 November 1753 when Thomas Giles, the son, and Ann, his wife, sold to John Delabere for £63 10/6d.

All same last mentioned premises described as being in the possession of the said T. Giles having a lane or alley on the east side a house and Orchard then lately belonging to one I. Averis but then in the possession of the said John Delabere on part of the west side a small parcel of land belonging to the said Earl of Essex on the other part of the west side And a green or common called Westall Green on the north side thereof.

Presumably the ‘same mentioned last premises’ are those set out in the sale, on 1 April 1652, by Walter Cleevely.

The estates of John Delabere

John Delabere died in about 1793 leaving his estates and other items in the hands of two trustees – Henry Markham and Thomas Markham. His will was somewhat complicated and the main beneficiaries were his son, the Rev John Delabere, his daughter Rachel and their ‘descendents lawfully to be gotten’. In the event, neither of them married and there were no descendents.

Mary bone Park appears to have remained arable land, in the possession of the then-alive beneficiaries of John Delabere until 1807. They then twice put up for sale, by public auction, their entire inheritance. At the second auction Henry Thompson Esquire of Tottenham, High Cross, Middlesex contracted to purchase ‘divers of the lots mentioned in the particulars of sale at several sums of money amounting altogether to the sum of £15,200’. One of those lots was Mary bone Park. Henry Thompson made a will on 9 December 1819. After his death the will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 13 December 1820. His interest in Mary bone Park was left, in equal shares, to his two sons Henry Teshmake Thompson and Pearson Thompson, both of Cheltenham. On 4 December 1824 Henry T. Thompson, now of Cockermouth Castle in Cumberland, surrendered his half in Mary bone Park to his brother Pearson.

On 7 October 1831 Pearson Thompson sold to Thomas Henney and John Brown, both of them of Cheltenham and each one a Gentleman, the consideration being £1,542:

All that piece or parcel of land heretofore Arable called Mary bone Park situate lying and being in the parish of Cheltenham aforesaid containing by estimation 7 acres, 2 rods, 34 perches (be the same more or less) bounded on the north by a branch of the Cheltenham and Gloucester railway leading to Leckhampton on the south side a by a brook on the east by the land now or late belonging to the said Henney and Brown and on the west by other land belonging to the said Pearson Thompson called Morfords and Westfall Furlong subject nevertheless to the right of way next the hedge dividing the said piece of land from the ground of the said Pearson Thompson of the width of 12 feet for him the said Pearson Thompson his heirs assigns and his and their tenant owners and occupiers to and from two pieces or parcels of land belonging to the said Pearson Thompson and then or late in the possession of Messrs Baldwin and Carter and others called Morfords and Westfall Furlong to pass Trespass on foot and with horses carts and carriages at all times thereafter.

Having purchased Mary bone Park Henney and Brown began to sell parts of it for the building of houses, alongside a road known firstly as Mary bone Park Place, then Tivoli and finally as Tivoli Road.

¹ A delivery of a feudal possession.

² According to the Abstract the name is now Clevely

1116 Bandsman William Tarling

MICK KIPPIN



William Tarling's Boer War medals

THERE HAS BEEN A BRANCH OF THE TARLING FAMILY in Gloucestershire since at least the middle of the 18th century. William Frederick Tarling was born in Cheltenham in 1878, the eldest son of Frederick Tarling and Caroline Smith. After leaving school he started his working life as an office boy for the post office; he was also an apprentice hairdresser at some stage before joining the British South Africa Police (BSAP) on 23 July 1900. The BSAP were a paramilitary, mounted infantry force originally raised by Cecil Rhodes as the British South Africa Company Police. They eventually become the national police force of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

William served as a bandsman with the BSAP during the Boer War. Whilst in Africa he was involved in an incident in which the Colonel's pet monkey was accidentally shot. Apart from the briefest mention of this incident in a letter from William's

grandson, Robert Purdy Tarling, nothing else is known of this intriguing event! However, it would appear that William left the BSAP as a result and may then have worked briefly for the South African railways before returning to England. He was still in southern Africa in 1914, when he married Janet Caskin in Bulawayo. Janet originally came from Merthyr Tydfil in Wales, but may have been living in Southern Rhodesia at the time she met William. For his service during the Boer War, William received the Queen's South Africa medal (no clasps) and the King's South Africa medal (two clasps). These two medals are now in my collection.

William returned to England soon after his wedding and enlisted into the British Army on 1 December 1915. He gave his address as 4 Tavistock Place, Cheltenham¹ In answer to the question on his Attestation papers, *'Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military?'* William answered *'No'*. Did he not consider his service with the BSAP as relevant? On account of his age (37) William was posted to 36 Training Reserve battalion as 26061 Private Tarling.

William spent the whole of his First World War service in the United Kingdom, so did not earn any further medals to add to those for the Boer War.

On 18 January 1918 he was due to be posted from the Training Reserve to the Labour Corps in Plymouth, but the postings board considered him unfit for further war service on account of severe varicose veins in his legs, which caused him pain when standing or marching. The varicose veins had apparently started to become a problem in about 1910 whilst in Johannesburg, South Africa, which would tie in with his working for the South African railways. Since the problem had not been caused by William's army service he did not receive a



BSAP embroidered cap badge.

pension, but was granted a gratuity of £9 10s 0d; he also received Silver War Badge serial N° 348500. William was discharged in Exeter on 8 March 1918. After the war, William played the violin for silent movies where he met Mrs Edith Purdy, a pianist from the Royal Academy of Music. At the time, Edith was married, but she was later able to marry William and they went to Canada for a short time, where their two sons, William Frederick junior and Patrick were born. The pair later formed the musical duo, Purdy & Tarling. William also played violin with the Crystal Palace Hotel band after the First World War. During the Second World War he worked at Central Ammunition Depot at Bromley in Kent. William retired in 1951 and the family settled in Whitchurch, Hampshire. He died in 1963 and is buried in the Church of England cemetery in Whitchurch.

Sources

William Tarling's First World War service papers, TNA WO/364

The Census, 1881 and 1891

Kelly's Directory for Cheltenham, various dates

The Andover Advertiser, 29 Mar 1963

¹ Kelly's Directory for 1907 shows that this was his father's address.

Titanic Disaster – Cheltenham Man Lost

'ALL HOPE OF THE SAFETY of Mr Francis William Somerton, the young Cheltenham engineer, has been abandoned. Mr Somerton, who was only 30 years of age, was a native of this town, and the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Somerton of Petersham, Gloucester Road¹. He was educated at Christ Church schools, and afterwards went through a course to train as an engineer at Whitehead's Torpedo School, near Weymouth. About eleven years ago he went to America and obtained a good appointment at Canastota, New York State. Last December he returned home and brought his young American wife with him, having been married a twelvemonth; and in January was one of the guests at Christ Church Old Boys Dinner. For a short time he was at work in Rugby, but those works were closed down through the coal strike, so he accepted a good offer from the American firm by whom he was formerly employed, and was on his way to take up his duties again in Canastota when the Titanic was wrecked and he lost his life.'

Gloucestershire Echo 22 Apr 1912.

¹ Petersham is now no 242 Gloucester Road. Francis' parents were William H. and Hannah Somerton. William was a clerk at the Gas Works, Gloucester Road in the 1881 census, and a 'weigh clerk' at the Gas Works in 1891.

Cheltenham's Blue Coat School

DAVID YOUNG

THERE ARE THREE REASONS FOR MY INTEREST IN THIS SCHOOL. As the former archivist of Christ's Hospital¹, the original 'bluecoat school', I often had to reply to enquiries received from people who thought one of their forebears had attended 'the bluecoat school'. More often than not the response was that the name did not appear in the Children's Registers - the admission records, so he or she must have attended 'another bluecoat school'. So I started to compile a list of all known bluecoat schools. To date I have details of over 150. It was later, rather than earlier, in my investigations that I discovered that Cheltenham too had its bluecoat school, and this only because of a passing reference in Simone Pakenham's book about the town². My enquiries revealed that for many years the school was conducted in what is now the gallery in St Mary's parish church. Which leads me to my second reason - I was a choirboy (1957-62) there and each year at Matins on Christmas Day during the service a selected group would process out of the church, via the small door near the altar, scuttle round to the turret in the corner of the north transept, clamber up the spiral stairs and emerge, lined up in the gallery over the north porch to sing a carol. The third reason is that my maternal grandfather and some of his siblings, who lived nearby, attended the school in the 1890s.³



Boys and masters at Cheltenham's 'Blue Coat School' in Devonshire Street, dated 1865
(Courtesy of Gloucestershire County Records Office. Ref. P78/1 Sc 1/9/1)

Cheltenham's :does not appear to have ever been called the 'bluecoat school', even colloquially, but was always referred to as 'the Charity School' or 'Lady's School', and then from the mid 19th century as 'the Parish School', even though a few of the pupils still wore a distinctive blue coat. In some places where such schools have survived e.g. Hereford, Liverpool,

Nottingham, Oldham, (secondary schools) and Isleworth, Bisley, Wotton under Edge, Bridgnorth (primary) 'blue coat' has been retained in the official name of the school.

There were two distinct types of 'bluecoat school'- the earliest were modelled on Christ's Hospital and, of those which survive, continue with similar objectives⁴. The majority, however, were founded in the early eighteenth century with the support of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). The Society, founded in 1699, had, as one of its objectives the education of poor children. It did not itself found schools, rather it encouraged local communities to identify a need and, following recommended guidelines, begin a school in the area. The intention was to provide a basic education, usually of 'the three Rs', to turn out industrious young people who would be God-fearing and capable of working conscientiously and loyally. Some schools included other subjects in their teaching and there are plenty of examples of such children prospering and achieving high office in their community or gaining fame in other ways. A few schools educated girls, preparing them for something better than menial service and with sufficient skills to enable them to earn their own living, often through apprenticeships.

For many families such schools provided not only a good opportunity for children to 'better' themselves but it also relieved the parents of having to clothe the child. The SPCK produced a 'price list' of suggested clothing which included a coat of appropriate hard wearing material. Children admitted were clothed, and often expected to wear the distinctive dress at all times. (For some it may have been their only clothing.) Although the list did not specify a colour, it seems that blue was often chosen; hence the description 'bluecoat' refers to the coat worn by all or some of the pupils. The Cheltenham school falls into this category. In the first twenty years of the eighteenth century some sixty schools with a distinctive uniform were begun. The Cheltenham school was started in 1713, together with five others.⁵

The principal source for the record of the school is a so-called Minute Book⁶ which might be more accurately described as a compilation of material, presumably from sundry loose sheets, put together by Frederick H Richardson, sometime Secretary of the Trustees, and who may be arguably described as the saviour of the school.

Charity schools usually began with a subscription list. Inspiration came from civic leaders, leading churchmen, and sometimes, a mixture of the two. Depending on the relative wealth of the residents in the area sufficient might be donated or bequeathed to enable the money to be invested and the school funded through investment income - hence 'endowed schools'. Often the school depended solely on annual subscriptions from leading citizens and well-wishers. Cheltenham's school fell into this category and always struggled financially. The founders are recorded as the Rev. Francis Wells and the Rev. Henry Mease⁷. They were no doubt inspired by the SPCK. Mr Wells may have been Vicar, or curate, at Prestbury⁸. The Rev Henry Mease, Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, became 'officiating minister' in Cheltenham in 1709 (curate). Although he resigned in 1716, he continued as afternoon lecturer until 1723. In 1719 he set up his own school in the town which continued until 1738 when he was instituted to the benefice of Swindon. He died in 1746. As this school charged fees it could not have been the same as the 'Charity' School⁹.

But what had prompted the founders to take such action? Mr Wells and Mr Mease must have decided that the number of poor children in the town was sufficient to put into practice the recommendations of the SPCK; apart from the Grammar School, there was no other provision

for educating children in the town. Forty one named subscribers contributed £39-4-0 and others made gifts of money or books. Trustees were found and a master, Peter Maurice, appointed at a salary of £15 p.a. The school began in unidentified premises, rented from Mr Thomas Smith, probably in or near to the High Street. In 1729 it moved to the room above the north porch of the Parish Church which at this time was separate from the church; it did not become a gallery until after the school had moved to Devonshire Street.



After the initial burst of enthusiasm maintaining funding was always a problem. Two collectors (of subscriptions) were appointed in 1716, in addition to a Treasurer. In many schools the schoolmaster was also charged with collecting the subscriptions, which, in effect, paid his wages. In some years this was hardly enough received to pay the master's salary let alone accumulate reserves to invest or buy equipment. The master himself was permitted to take a few paying boys and the trustees undertook to make good any deficit in his salary. By the early nineteenth century subscriptions and the Capel bequest were insufficient to meet the master's salary. In 1817 only seven people subscribed. In 1844 it was reported that the schoolmaster, Mr Garn, had neglected to collect any subscriptions and only Mr Nash Skillicorne had contributed. The only guaranteed sources of income were from Lady Capel's bequest and the Townsend bequest. Lady Capel, dowager Baroness Tewkesbury, who died in 1721 aged 79, left the income from lands in Kent to eleven charity schools, mostly in the London area, but also to those in Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. Lady Capel is listed as a subscriber in 1717. There was, however, difficulty in obtaining the annual

amount. The trustees had to arrange for someone to go to London to collect it from the solicitors. The Townsend bequest was directed towards assisting with paying the indentures of boys to be apprenticed and 'rewarding [twelve boys] with a suit of clothes each for general good conduct'. The trustees of the bequest were also to 'have the liberty of nominating two boys annually' for admission.

The school only survived because of the commitment of individual trustees. Meetings were infrequent and much was left to the schoolmaster, including the collection of the necessary subscriptions. Inadequate records were kept so that the rules for governing the charity fell into abeyance. But by the early 1840s concerns were being expressed. At a Vestry meeting, held on 1 June 1843 a committee was appointed 'to collect information relative to the various charities of this parish'. Mr J. Goding writing, robustly, in *Cheltenham Free Press*¹⁰ called for a review of the educational charities of the town. Education was a hot topic - the long running dispute with Corpus Christi College, Oxford, trustees of the Grammar School had recently been re-opened.

The conclusions of the Vestry committee were reported in May 1844. Its members considered:

*'...that the holding of the school in the.....small room over the porch of the parish church is highly indecorous, a nuisance to the immediate residents and injurious to the health of the children. ...Your committee earnestly hope that immediate steps will be taken to remove the school, and that its present nearly obsolete condition will be represented to the trustees.'*¹¹

It is now that Mr Frederick Richardson comes to the fore. As Secretary of the Trustees he must have been aware of the concerns being expressed and may, perhaps, have been a party to them. To him must be given much of the credit for reviving the school and bringing it into proper working order. At a meeting held on 15 August 1844 it was he who addressed, at length, those present and produced a report on the history and present condition of the school. The Rev Francis Close, who as Minister took the chair, acknowledged that there had been misunderstandings about who was responsible for the governance of the school and that, had he realized that the Minister (and others) were, in effect, the trustees, he would have acted sooner. He explained that he had understood that management of the school rested with the trustees of the Townsend Charity and that he, as incumbent, had no involvement with it. There was further confusion because the Sunday School had been conducted by the school master (Garn). Close's excuses seem rather feeble mindful of his enthusiastic labours to promote education in Cheltenham. When the trustee issue arose he had been in the town for twenty years. In that time he had busied himself with setting up other schools - before his arrival a National School had been started in Bath Road (1816) and in 1826 Samuel Wilderspin, the pioneer of infant education, began a school. By 1844 there were four National Schools in the town¹². Why then did he not concern himself with the school on his very doorstep? Even if he did not realise that, as 'minister' of the Parish Church, he was a trustee, he must have been aware of the precarious state of its finances and the inadequacies of its master.

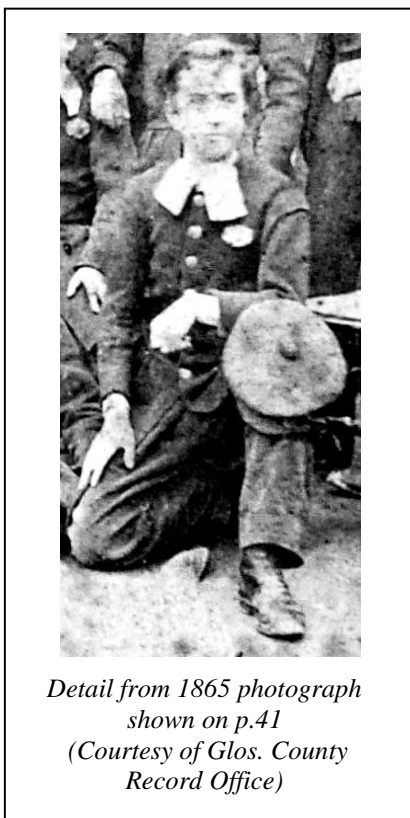
Mr Richardson explained at the meeting:

*'...that there is a very large district of this town, and that the poorest and most crowded, without a Church of England school amongst them. I mean from St George's Place to the Gloucester Road, on the south side of the High Street. Surely if any reason were wanted, this would be sufficient to prove not only the advantage but the necessity of school accommodation in this quarter of the town. By rendering the school more efficient and erecting a schoolroom, the necessity of an additional National School will be avoided'*¹³

Perhaps predictably, Mr Close offered to preach a sermon on the subject of raising funds for his newly discovered object. Not surprisingly this was warmly welcomed!

The August 1844 meeting was the turning point of the fortunes of the school. Largely through the efforts of Richardson, the trustees were made aware of their responsibilities, the problems existing were identified and a plan for the future developed. A site in Devonshire Street was acquired; William Knight was commissioned to design the new school; his plans were approved on 17 March 1846; Mr Thomas Haines, of Winchcomb Street contracted to build it.¹⁴ The Foundation Stone was laid on 24 June 1847 by Mr Close, attended by the boys '40 in number, being decorated with blue sashes and bouquets of flowers and bearing several flags'. Earlier a service had been held in the Parish Church when Mr Close preached a sermon on the text 'Many

shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased' (Daniel xii.v4).¹⁵ It was announced that the sermon would be printed and sold in aid of the fund being raised to pay for a new school building. £300 had been had already been received, to which the government would add £150 (and of which Mr Close 'approved') and about £200 was still needed. Local clergy were asked to organise collections. On 22 November 1847 the trustees "formally took possession of the new buildings".¹⁶ The total cost was about £750, which necessitated another appeal for donations to make up the deficiency.



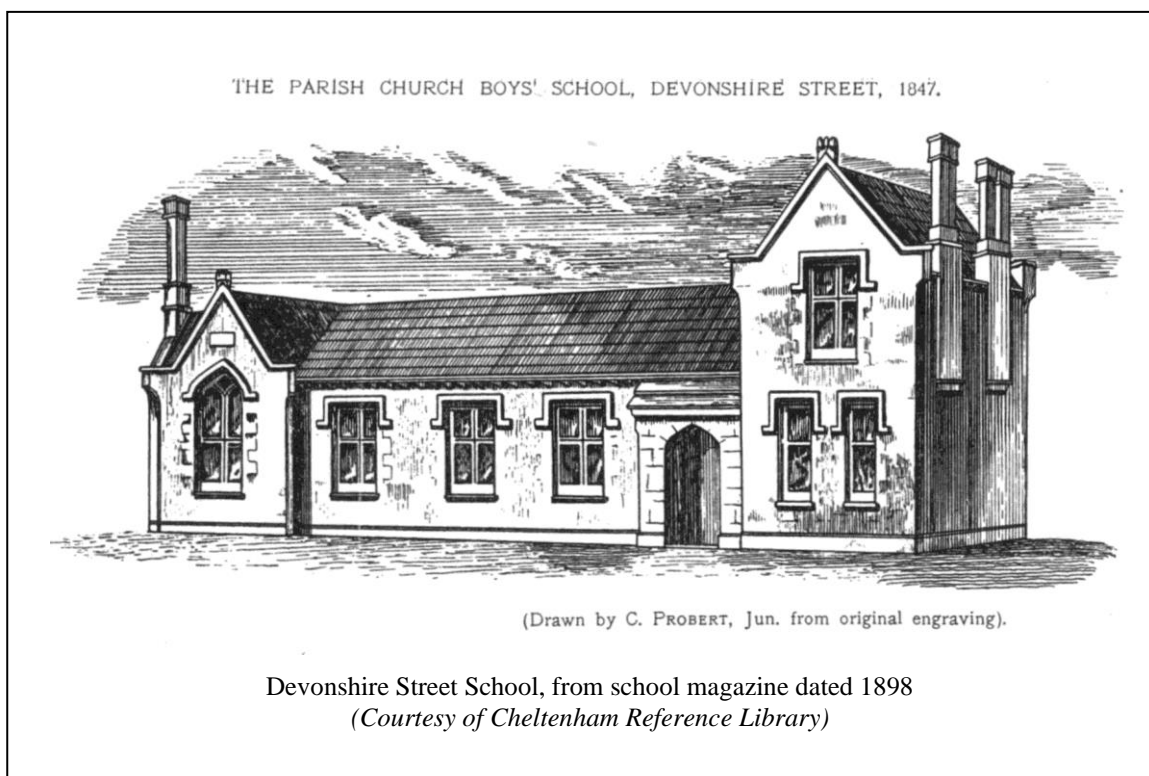
*Detail from 1865 photograph
shown on p.41
(Courtesy of Glos. County
Record Office)*

At the same time that Mr Richardson and his trustees were busy with fundraising and organising the building of the new school they also had to appoint a new master. Mr John Garn, master since 1797 'was incompetent through age' (he was 78!¹⁷) and his son, William, who had assisted and deputed for him, would continue. At the same meeting it was announced that the new school was to be built and 'it would be advisable that the present room be thrown into the church as a gallery for children'.¹⁸ An advertisement in the national press resulted in eight applications and Charles Henry Smith, from Kent, was appointed, commencing his duties in September 1847. He was the first 'trained' teacher to be appointed; his first task was to move the school into its new premises. Soon he recommended that some of the older boys should be examined as possible pupil teachers, and two were formally apprenticed to him for five years. Smith's appointment marks the end of the 'Charity School' as it had been originally intended. Sawyer, in his history of the Parish Church gives 1847 as its end. Thereafter boys' parents had to contribute towards costs and numbers greatly increased. By Michaelmas 1848 there were 106 boys aged between 7 and 14, of whom a few were still clothed in the traditional 'Charity' bluecoat.

In 1851 41 pupils were 'clothed' and, as may be seen in the 1865 photograph above, 22 wore the distinctive uniform. Illustrations of the uniform are few, and there are only occasional references to its appearance. That clothing, i.e. uniform, was given to some, if not all, of the children admitted is without doubt¹⁹. Richardson records that in 1723 the boys wore blue coats, yellow stockings, caps and bands. The boys spun the wool and knitted their own stockings. Early in 1845 'the committee, thinking that grey coats would wear better than blue, the boys were dressed in grey coats, long frocks, grey cloth, with charity school buttons and badge on the left breast'²⁰. They would also wear corduroy trousers, blue caps with blue topknot, a collar and bands in one piece and stout high shoes with white buckles. The whole outfit would cost 1gn. Buttons and brass plates were ordered.²¹ But, later in the year the committee agreed that the boys' coats should 'be blue'²² and, two weeks later, noted that 'Mr Minty of 61 Burton Street, agrees to make the old fashioned long blue frock coat'²³. A photograph taken in 1865 shows 22 boys of various ages wearing blue coats (see p.41). But in that year Mr Francis Wheeler, and a former pupil, was appointed as master. Very soon 'the old charity long coats disappeared'.²⁴

Little is known of the men, and women, who taught the boys. The position sometimes passed from husband to widow or father to son. It was not unusual in schools of this character

for the schoolmaster to be a local man who was literate and probably following some other occupation as well. William Timbrell, appointed in 1746 was succeeded by his brother Edward who was also Parish Clerk. William Powell, who succeeded Benfield in 1773 died in office and his wife took over for a further seven years. The Garn family were masters from 1788 to 1847 and also tailors²⁵. William Pilley, who died in 1894, aged 96, remembered that the boys had to push the master up the narrow spiral stairs into the schoolroom²⁶. Pilley would have been there around 1810 so the master must have been the long-serving John Garn. He described the schoolroom in detail and also the punishments - which appear to have been designed to confine rather than hurt! William Pilley became a tailor and lived all his life in Portland Street.²⁷ Drink problems lead to the dismissal of William Garn, after only two years, he had been seen intoxicated in the presence of his scholars. Francis Frederick Wheeler was a boy at the school and witnessed the laying of the foundation stone of the Devonshire Street building in 1847. He became its head in 1865 and died in office after forty years service.. He was actively involved in the newly founded National Union of Teachers and elected a town councillor in 1893. Three sons and a daughter also became teachers. One of his sons succeeded him as headmaster of the Parish School.



Some readers may have local knowledge of the biographical details of some of the people who are named in this article. Apart from internet sources, I am unable to investigate local sources. So I would be interested to hear from anyone who can tell me more!

I would like to thank Mr Baker who emailed me transcripts of much of the material now in the County Record Office.

¹Christ's Hospital was founded in Newgate Street, London in 1552/3. The boys there were certainly wearing distinctive blue coats in 1554 and the school became popularly known as the "bluecoat school", amongst other

titles. The boys' school left Newgate Street in 1902 to settle at the purpose built school outside Horsham, West Sussex. The girls' school, with a brief break in the mid C18th, was at Hertford from 1673 to 1985, when it merged with the boys at Horsham. For more details on the history of the school see <http://www.christs-hospital.org.uk/24.html>.

² Packenham S. *Cheltenham - a Biography* (1971)

³ Registers Glos. RO P78/1 SC1/5/25

⁴ e.g. Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Bristol

⁵ There may have been an earlier school, possibly founded in 1683, as there is a suggestion that the 1713 school was "re-endowed". Nothing is known of this earlier school.

⁶ Glos. RO P78/1 SC 1/1/1

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Foster J., *Alumni Oxonienses* 1888

⁹ Tindal, Hart A., *The Curate's Lot* (1971)

¹⁰ *Cheltenham Free Press* 3 February 1844. I am indebted to Mr Baker for bringing these reports to my attention.

¹¹ Ibid. 11 May 1844

¹² Hart, G., *A History of Cheltenham* (1981) p.198. Mrs Hart describes The Revd. Francis Close's efforts as 'Herculean'

¹³ 'Minute book'

¹⁴ Builder's accounts included in 'Minute book'

¹⁵ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 30 Jun 1847

¹⁶ Minute book

¹⁷ Notes prepared by Ian Baker, August 2005, a descendent of the Garn family. The minute book records "Death of Mr John Garn aet 79, August 6 1845. Mr John Garn died this day about 4pm, having been Master of the Charity School 48 years"

¹⁸ *Cheltenham Free Press* 24 Aug 1844 and printed report from an un-named newspaper, pasted into the Minute Book.

¹⁹ Minute Book;

²⁰ Ibid. Undated meeting.

²¹ Have any buttons or shoulder plates survived?

²² Minute book 29 Sep 1845

²³ Ibid. 14 Oct 1845

²⁴ *A Cheltenham Bi-centenary 1713-1913 - the Parish Church Boys School for 200 years*

²⁵ Baker, I, Garn notes stocks, fetters

²⁶ *A Cheltenham bi-centenary 1713-1913 - the Parish Church Boys School for 200 years* 1913, pp. 31-36

²⁷ Census returns

School Boy Memories of Wartime Cheltenham

LESLIE BURGESS

DURING THE YEAR 1943 THE NEWS ABOUT THE WAR became more encouraging to read. For example the *Gloucestershire Echo's* headlines were about the RAF's successes in Germany. By the end of August they had bombed Cologne seventeen times and were clearly winning the war in the air. It was not surprising to find that many people wanted to have a break from the stress and strains of the previous years and, maybe, have an August Bank holiday at the seaside. The Government, however, had other ideas. They did not want cars (for those who had petrol) or coaches jamming the roads so they restricted coaches to their normal timetables and made an attempt to encourage people to stay where they were. They asked towns to institute a 'Holidays-at-Home' campaign.

Cheltenham supported this idea with enthusiasm and several events were planned for August Sunday. There was a ramble – the gathering point was St James' Station - on from there to Broadway then lunch at Chipping Campden. Everyone had to bring their own sandwiches for the lunch (because of the rationing!) and then the ramble continued over to Dover's Hill, on to Broadway and then back home. The leader was Mr. Harold Chipp (who was well-known locally). At 2 p.m. there was an open-air service held at Sandford Park and at 3 p.m. and again at 7.30 p.m. the band of the Grenadier Guards played in Montpellier Park. In the evening at the Town Hall the Spa Orchestra performed light music under their conductor Arthur Cole.

I was a schoolboy at that time, and as my friend Bob Brown and I were on school holidays we had an idea. We went to the Town Hall and asked the porters whether we could get a job helping out there. At first no one was keen on the idea until it was pointed out that with all the extra arrangements (the Town Hall was going to be very busy) they could do with as much help as they could get, so we got the job! During the last two weeks of August, up to and including the August Bank Holiday, there was a great deal of activity taking place at the Town Hall. Every morning a recital, lecture or something similar took place and every afternoon there

was a tea dance. Each evening there was a ballroom dance except Sundays when Arthur Cole and his orchestra played. There was plenty for us to do; taking out and putting away chairs, clearing up rubbish at the end of a concert or dance and helping as much as we could. We got on well with the porters. A little nearer to the holiday they received some news. A large marquee was to be erected in the Winter Gardens (now Imperial Gardens) because professional entertainers were going to put on some shows there. The worrying thing was that two porters had to stay all night in the marquee to keep an eye on the property there. This idea was not well-



Town Hall at night, after the war.
(Sue Rowbotham's private collection)

received by any of the porters and they held a discussion, the outcome of which was everyone saying a definite 'No'! It was then that I said 'We'll do it'. (Bob was in agreement with me.) The porters did not think that this would be allowed so 'management' was brought in but they were also doubtful. 'I've got my dog Mick, he'll look after us. He's good at that.' I said. Someone suggested that they could also arrange for the policeman to look in when he was on his rounds and that was the deciding factor - we were in!

The show was aptly called '*Blitz and Pieces*' and there were twelve artists appearing. The show was at 11 o'clock, 3 p.m. and the last was at 7.30 p.m. After 9.30 p.m. when we had collected up all the rubbish and straightened out the chairs we went over to the Town Hall to have some supper and collect our blankets. I went home to collect my dog and then we all settled down for the night. We slept well. I do not know what time the policeman looked in on us although I was aroused by Mick growling. So in 1943 two young schoolboys were allowed by the Authorities to spend all night in the Winter Gardens. I cannot see it being allowed today – can you?

Whilst we were working at the Town Hall we helped the porters put up the black-out curtains. This was a very important job – if even a chink of light could be seen outside the air-raid wardens would notice it and there would be deep trouble for someone. As it was August the daylight hours were long and the evening ballroom dances were well under way before it was necessary to put the curtains up on the balconies. To make things easier for us no one was allowed to go up on the balconies during the evening dance. George, the senior porter, used to take me with him. 'Come on, me lad', he would say as he gave me a big powerful torch to carry. We would go up the main stairs past the notice that read 'ALL BALCONIES OUT OF BOUNDS' and then my job was to shine the torch on and between the seats. If as sometimes happened, we discovered couples who had sneaked in there then George would 'send 'em packing ...' I liked that job!

George had lots of stories to tell about the Town Hall because he had started working there not long after it had been built in 1902. One day he described one of his first jobs. He had to go down into the basement below the main floor and tidy the place up. He went down there with another man and they could both see that this place was nothing more than a rubbish dump, well not exactly rubbish but it was full of bits and pieces that were not being used but might be needed sometime in the future. The main thing that was apparent was that whoever put these items there did not bother to go in, but just 'threw' them in! George and the other porter had difficulty in even making their way into the basement. Suddenly the other porter said 'George, don't touch these walls. Do you see those nails sticking out? Well, definitely don't touch them. Come on, we're going back up.' They made their way back and the porter told the foreman what he had found. When the electricians had made the necessary connections upstairs everything had been correctly done but for some reason they had not bothered with the basement. In order to connect two cables they had merely driven large nails into the walls and wound the exposed cables around them. With all that rubbish around it would have been possible for a spark to start a blaze and as it seemed that hardly anyone ever went down there the Town Hall could soon be in flames. The possibility of a disaster would still wreck the fairly new building and most people would be very upset, except, maybe, the proprietors of the Winter Gardens!

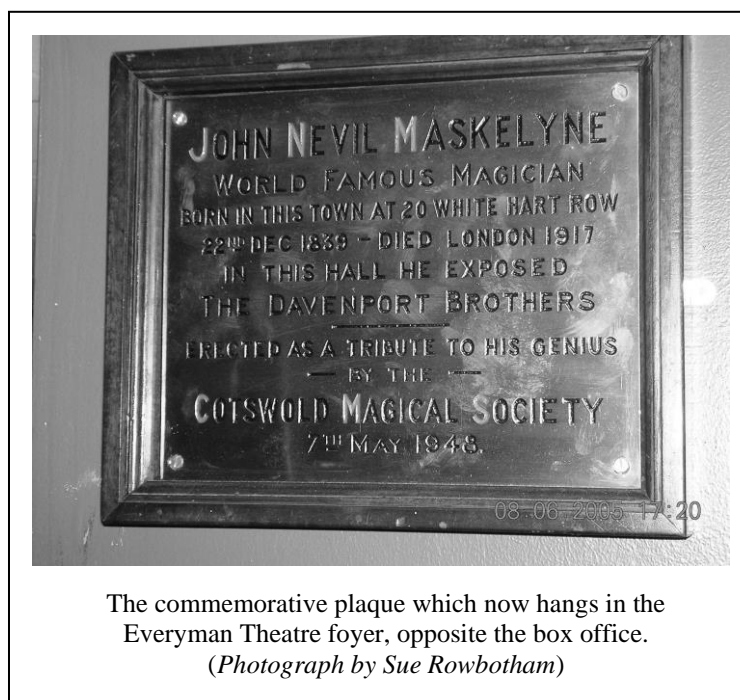
The Cotswold Magical Society and the missing Maskelyne plaque

SUE ROWBOTHAM

ON 6 MARCH 1943 THE MAGIC PRESS REPORTED the formation of a new magical society in Cheltenham. The Society was formed by George Sylvestre and Wilfred Tyler at the *Cotswold* public house, with the support of the landlord Donald King-Higgs. The following week it was reported that all the officers and majority of members of the Cotswold Magical Society were members of the Magic Circle. The Officers were George Sylvestre (President and Chairman), Chris Charlton (Vice-president), Victor Peacock (Vice-president), Harry Vernon (Hon. Secretary), Tom Hayter, Wilfred Tyler, Donald King-Higgs, Tom Waterman and Harry Thompson, all of whom were members of the Magic Circle. Most of the other members also belonged to the Magic Circle. Initial membership of the Society was reported to be 22, and it was agreed that women members would be permitted, provided that they were practicing magicians. On Sunday 4 July 1943 the Society held its first magical séance entitled '*Magic of the Cotswolds*'. Over 300 people attended. Besides local dignitaries there were representatives of the Magic Circle, the British Ring (IBM), the British Magical Society and the Society of American Magicians¹.

On 7 May 1947 the Society erected a plaque inside the Old Town Hall, Regent Street, Cheltenham, to John Nevil Maskelyne, the Victorian illusionist who had been born in White Hart Row² (now White Hart Street) Cheltenham. The plaque commemorated the site in which Maskelyne and a group of other local amateur magicians had attended a spiritual séance by the American Davenport brothers in March 1865. A few months later Maskelyne, a jeweller and watchmaker, and his friend George Cooke, a tailor, had reproduced and bettered the Davenports' act in Jessop's Gardens, Cheltenham³. It

was the beginning of their professional careers as illusionists, which eventually lasted more than 50 years⁴. The plaque was unveiled by Maskelyne's grandson Noel, who had travelled to Cheltenham by train. He had had to leave his train at the Malvern Road station and walk the last part of his journey to the Old Town Hall because the track was blocked by two derailed goods trains⁵.



The Maskelyne plaque was removed from the Old Town Hall when the building was demolished to make way for the Regent Arcade in 1983 or 1984, and for many years its location

remained a mystery. However in 2002 Dougie Gibbard, one of the Society's Officers, managed to trace the plaque and in 2005 it was re-erected inside the foyer of the Everyman Theatre, just a few yards from its original location⁶. The plaque was unveiled by Alan Shaxon, current president of the Magic Circle, on 6 June 2005. Alan wore his official badge of office which includes the names of all the previous Presidents of the Magic Circle, including John Nevil Maskelyne's son Nevil, who was born at 6 Tivoli Terrace, Cheltenham, and Nevil's son Clive.



Alan Shaxon unveils the Maskelyne plaque.
Pictured with him is Rosemary Sansom, current
President of the Cotswold Magical Society.
(*Photograph by Sue Rowbotham*)

The Cotswold Magical Society has been based in Gloucester for many years, Approximately 40 members currently meet in a room above the library at the Hucclecote Community Centre, Gloucester. For further details about the Society visit their web site at <http://www.cotswoldmagicalsociety.co.uk/>

¹ History of Cotswold Magical Society taken from Society's web site at <http://www.cotswoldmagicalsociety.co.uk/>

² Now White Hart Street

³ Now the site of Waitrose

⁴ Rowbotham, Sue, 'Maskelyne and Cooke: Cheltenham's Men of Mystery', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* 18 (2002)

⁵ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 8 May 1948

⁶ Approximately where Mothercare is today.

Recent books and articles on the history of Cheltenham

List compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

Rowbotham, Sue, and Waller, Jill, *Cheltenham. A History*, Phillimore & Co., Chichester, 2004. 134pp. £15.99. A well illustrated account of the town's past from prehistoric times onwards.

Sale, Jane (ed.), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin* **50** (2004). 60pp. £3.50. A wide range of notes and articles on Charlton Kings, by a variety of authors, including an account of the Burton family of Hambrook House and Bafford Grange (David O'Connor), the chapel and Chapel Cottage in Ryeworth Road (C.P. Love), a 1553 Star Chamber case relating to a riot at Charlton Kings, plus notes on local buildings and people.

Simons, Grenville, *Lillywhite's Legacy. A History of The Cheltenham Cricket Festival*, Wisteria Books, Birtsmorton (Worcs). 400pp. £20.00. A detailed history of the Festival from its 19th-century origins to the present day.

Swindon Village Collection **7** (2002) contains a range of articles on Swindon people and properties. 100pp. £4.00.

Torrens, Hugh, 'The life and work of the geologist S.S. Buckman', *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club* **43.1** (2004), 25-47. An account of the life of this leading geologist (1860-1929), who lived for a time at Charlton Kings.

Wilkinson, Philip, *Everyman. The story of a theatre*, published by the Everyman Theatre, 2004. 27pp. £3.50. A well - illustrated history of the Everyman in the context of Cheltenham's theatre history since the 18th century.

Wills, Jan (ed.), 'Archaeological Review No. 27, 2002', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **121** (2003), 273-4 has short notes on a number of archaeological evaluations and excavations in Cheltenham, including the St. James's Square area.

Wilson, David, and Wilson, Christopher, *Edward Wilson's Nature Notebooks*, Reardon Publishing, Cheltenham, 2004. 168pp. £39.95. A lavishly illustrated account of the Cheltenham-born artist's work as a naturalist.

Wilson, Ray, 'GSIA Proposals for the Management of the Industrial Archaeology of Leckhampton Hill', *Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology Journal* 2002, 64-6.

Gloucestershire Record Office: Cheltenham Area Accessions, 2005

JULIE COURTENAY, Senior Cataloguer, GRO

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 2005. Gloucestershire Record Office (GRO) is always pleased to hear about archive material relating to the county and can give advice about preservation. Most of the accessions received during 2005 are not yet fully catalogued so it is best to enquire in advance of making a visit if you want to see any item.

More of the GRO's existing catalogues are going online - you can use the Access to Archives (A2A), a national project website <http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk> as well as GRO's own web pages at <http://archives.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dservea/index.htm>

Aland family of Cheltenham and Waterford (Ireland): Marriage settlement of John Fortescue Aland and Grace Pratt relating to property in Waterford (Ireland), 1707; deed of Arle Court, Cheltenham, 1737, 1707-1737 (D10215)

Bayshill Unitarian Church: Correspondence and papers concerning Bayshill Unitarian Church, including copies of articles from 'Christian Life' on John Goding and John Cooper, (1899-1919); correspondence concerning John Cooper, 1924-1925; letter concerning history of Bayshill Unitarian Church, 1966, (1899)-1966 (D10172)

Brookfield Secondary Special School: Governors' file, 1988-1997 (S78/19)

Cheltenham Borough Council: Extensive deposits including public health reports, 1874-1956, and environmental health reports, 1975-1991; drainage and sewerage plans overwritten on an Ordnance Survey base map, late 19th cent; copy plans of St George's Road railway bridge, produced by engineer's department of Great Western Railway Co., 1892; plans of open spaces and gardens, 1903-1996; weather reports and observations, 1903-1954, 1980s-2000; Cheltenham Arts Festival Ltd minutes, 1948-1959; various committees' minutes and records relating to arts, leisure and tourism, 1986-1996; twinning records, 1956-2001; registers of building plans, 1950-1970; registers of planning applications, 1964-1967, 1970-1973; Post Office advisory committee minutes, 1957-1964; album of term in office of Alderman and Mrs H F W Bishop, Mayor and Mayoress of Cheltenham, 1967-1968; photographs of St George's car park, [1960s]; photographs of drains, sewers etc, 1979-[1990s]; neighbourhood regeneration grants registers, 1979-1998; papers concerning revised list of buildings of

historic and architectural interest, 1983-1991; tree inspections, 1982-1993 and papers concerning project to plant copse to mark centenary of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, 2000-2001; photographs of floral displays for Cheltenham in Bloom, 1983-1994; Lower High Street Regeneration project records including newsletters, annual reports, history and evaluation reports, 1988-2002; various surveys, reports and strategy papers, 1990-2001, including 'Our Town Our Future', 2000, 'Cheltenham Hindu Survey', 2001, a housing strategy for Black and Asian communities, 2001, and 'Modernising Your Council', 2000 (1 VHS video); electoral register, 2004-2005, 1874-2005 (CBR, DC)

Cheltenham Borough Council: Engineer's Department: Copy plans of St George's Road railway bridge, produced by engineer's department of Great Western Railway Co., 1892 (CBR)

Cheltenham Grammar School: School lists, 1945-1946, 1948-1953; 'The Patesian' magazines, 1946-1952; transcript of school lists made by A J Fry, c.2004, 1945-2004 (D10239)

Cheltenham: North Aban Court: Deeds, manorial court extracts and abstracts of title (1731)-1934; sale particulars for land and farms in Staverton, Boddington and area 1911; sale particulars and solicitors' bills for Norton and Courthay Farms 1923-1950, (1731)-1950 (D10434)

Cheltenham: unidentified grocer: Ledgers of grocery business, 1939-1943 (D10163)

Congregational Union of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire: Correspondence and papers about property and charities including Highbury,

Cheltenham, 1913-1981, and Warden Hill, Cheltenham, 1963-1968, 20th cent (D6026)

Christopher Davidson of Cheltenham, solicitors: Deeds of Camilla Cottage, also known as Belstead, 10a Vittoria Walk, (1906)-1989 (D6791)

Dowty Group of Cheltenham: Annual reports and accounts, 1976-1998; staff magazines, 1961-1999; publicity material, 1952-2001, 1961-2001 (D8347)

Elmfield Junior School: Governors' file, 1988-1997 (S78/15)

Everyman Theatre: Leases for properties in Cheltenham, 1974-1985; general administration files relating to bookings, contracts and accounts, 1985-2002; programmes and publicity material, 1987-2005; minutes and correspondence with South West Arts, 1989-1999; papers relating to renovation of a warehouse, 1991-1999; Official Centenary Brochure, 1991, 1974-2005 (D6978)

Fairview Street: Pre-registration title deeds for no.66, 1824-1991, with donor's research notes into history of house, c.2004, 1824-c.2004 (D10191)

Gloucestershire College of Education and predecessor institutions: Cheltenham School of Cookery Committee minutes, 1891-1907 (D10118)

Gloucestershire County Council: Definitive maps for Charlton Kings Urban District, Cheltenham Borough and Cheltenham Rural District, 1950 (K1882); files relating to Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education's application for university status, 1980s (K1867); Cheltenham Environs District Plan, 1982-1986 (K1865); highway plans of landscaping schemes relating to Cheltenham Northern Relief Road, 1991, and Cheltenham South West Link road, 1993 (K1857); memorial folder for Councillor Andrew Pennington, 2000 (K1859), 1991-1993 (K series)

Jessop of Cheltenham, solicitors: Certificates of members of Jessop family as solicitors including extracts from roll books of attorneys of Court of King's Bench and attorneys and solicitors of Supreme Court, (1792) and certificates of Charles Edward Jessop commemorating sixty and seventy years' service as solicitor of Supreme Court, 1992 and 2002, with covering letter from Law Society, 1992; certificates of registration of business name for Jessop and Son and Jessops, 1924-1980; photograph of painting of Walter Jessop (1798-1884), (mid-19th century); copies of genealogical notes, (1930s-1980s), (1792)-1980s (D10211)

Leckhampton, St Philip and St James Anglican Parish: Notes on consecration and history of St Philip's church, 1840, 1840 (P198/2 acc 10210)

Leckhampton, St Philip and St James: Anglican Parish: Registers of St Christopher's Church, Warden Hill: marriages 1965-2001; banns 1965-1995; services 1961-2001, 1961-2001 (P198/2)

Monkscroft Junior and Infant Schools: Governors' files: Monkscroft Junior School, 1988-2001; Monkscroft Infant School, 1988-2001, 1988-2001 (S78/18)

Monkscroft Secondary School: Attendance registers (deposited pending admission registers), 1982-1986 (S78/27)

Mustoe family of Cheltenham: Family papers including letters, birth and death certificates, newscuttings, diaries and deeds relating to properties in Cheltenham, 1874-1979 (D10164)

Pittville School: Attendance registers (deposited pending admission registers), 1986-1988 (S78/21)

St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church: Printed subscription list towards the costs of building church, 1853 (D10307)

Severn Trent Water Ltd.: Drainage plans 1871-1980; book of plans of Leckhampton Sewers 1875; aerial photographs of Cheltenham 1948 (records transferred to Severn Trent by Cheltenham Borough as part of their administration of the sewers), 1871-1980 (D2826)

Mrs Barbara Steele of Lydney and Leckhampton, local historian: Research notes including visit of George III to Cheltenham in 1788, 20th cent (D10388)

Willans, solicitors: Pre-registration title deeds and related papers: properties including Charlton Kings and Cheltenham, 1833-2003 (D5907)

Members' Interests and Research Topics

ELAINE HEASMAN

The Society aims to share knowledge and promote research. With this in mind, members are asked, when joining the Society or renewing membership, to specify any topics being researched or any special interests they may have.

To be put in touch with a members please contact Elaine Heasman Tel. 01452 857803
Fax. 01452 540997 or e-mail: elaineheasman@hotmail.com

If you have any interests or research topics that are not listed here, and you are willing to share that knowledge with Society members, please be sure to let Elaine know. [Editor]

MEMBER(S)	INTEREST(S) AND/OR RESEARCH TOPIC(S)
Eileen Allen	Pate[s] family; Charlton Kings; Priory Terrace / Carlton Street; Swindon Village
Heather Atkinson	Workhouse site, Swindon Rd (to present day); Housing for the poor (1840-1950s)
Eva Bailey	Cheltenham & the Indian connection; The Park; Christchurch
Jan Baltzersen	The Commemoration of the War dead
Jill Barlow	Tivoli Rd; Cheltenham Manor
Roger Beacham	Theatres; Prestbury; Lillah McCarthy; Howlett family, clock & watchmakers; Catholic Apostolic Church; All Saints' Church
Kath & Martin Boothman	History of villas in The Park
John & Sue Brasher	Tivoli Works/Prinbox Works Tivoli; W H Brasher 1865-1942
Paul Burgess	Promenade & its development; Harward family; Thomas Willey printer; Hailing family; Traditions & customs
John Clark	Smith family of 7,8,9, Bennington St; A J Smith & family
Vic Cole	Pubs; Victorian Murders
Mr & Mrs P Conoley	Lewis family; R L Boulton
Hugh Conway-Jones	Gloucester Docks & The Sharpness Canal
Joyce Cummings	St Paul's & St Peter's areas – housing, people etc.; family history; Cheltenham WWI & WW2; Cheltenham in the General Strike
Paul Davies	Roads; Railways; Bayshill Estate
Pat Davis	Pate's Almshouses, Albion St; Up Hatherley; Cheltenham Racecourse
Tim Edgell	Breweries & Pubs of Gloucestershire – memorabilia, photos, information

MEMBER(S)	INTEREST(S) AND/OR RESEARCH TOPIC(S)
David Elder	Edward A Wilson; Edward T Wilson; WWI
Beryl Elliott	Prestbury before 1850
John Elliott	History of Cinema & Cinemas in Cheltenham
Caroline Faulkner-Aston	Archery in Cheltenham
Harvey Faulkner-Aston	Cheltenham Social Housing 1919-1939; Cheltenham's Civil Defence 1938-1945
Alan Gill	Early flying in the Cheltenham area; Cheltenham & Englefontaine after WWI
Betty Greene	Builders "RPD and Co." of Hereford
Carolyn Greet	Cheltenham High St before 1850; Barrett family; Cheltenham markets; Hale family
Mike Greet	Isaac Bell Poet/Gardener (c1825-1851) in Cheltenham; Medieval Cheltenham
Mike Grindley	Portland Sq & Albert Place district; Caffieri family; Cheltenham 19 th century fires, building site crime & accidents; 19 th century Montpellier Walk & Arcade & Queen's Circus
Peter Gunnell	Any information on the moated dwelling, Leckhampton
Alec Hamilton	Samuel Whitfield Daukes (1811-1880), architect
Susan Hamilton	William Jay, architect; Lypiatt Terrace
David Hanks	River Thames; Old pictures of Cheltenham & Gloucestershire
Bret Harris	Transport (especially rail); natural history; church history; local politics; cricket
Elaine Heasman	John Wesley in Cheltenham; Cheltenham's Lifeboats & benefactors; History of the Playhouse Theatre site; Joseph Hall; books, postcards, photographs, ephemera of Cheltenham (all dates); Sport in Cheltenham – photographs & memorabilia wanted for display in 2006
James Hodsdon	Cheltenham street & place names, Cheltenham manor court rolls
Barbara Holden	Southam's Medieval Farmstead incl. church, tithe barn, tudor (earlier) house & farm, buildings. Information on late 1800s sought
Jeremy Jefferies	General history of the town's development
Anthea Jones	Land ownership including glebe land and land tithes at enclosure
Gordon Jones	Yeomanry/cavalry in Gloucestershire particularly the Royal Glos Hussars
Jill Julier	Hewlett Rd area
Mick Kippin	The Volunteer Movement in Gloucestershire, 1793-1908; Medals to people from Cheltenham
Richard Lacock	Quakerism in Gloucestershire
George Marchant	Elementary Schools in Victorian Cheltenham

MEMBER(S)	INTEREST(S) AND/OR RESEARCH TOPIC(S)
Sheila Maxted	Sussex House – history of staff, owners, house
Pauline McGregor Currien	Cheltenham and its relations with India, Burma & Mauritius; Catholic churches/convents; Victorians and the Raj
Charles Meenan	Environmental history
Patricia Meyrick	Demolition of brewery in photographs
Eric Miller	Cheltenham worthies buried at Leckhampton; Prints & engravings of Cheltenham; Russian connections with Cheltenham
Alan Munden	Francis Close & Edward Walker of the Parish Church; Anglican Churches of Cheltenham; Jane Cook; Frederick Robertson
Mary Nelson	Up Hatherley
Geoff North	Voluntary Aid Hospitals in Cheltenham 1914—1919; The ‘Glosterg’ & any military interest with Cheltenham; Marianne North, Victorian artist & traveller
Shane O’Neill	1810 – 1910 Evans, Young & Hawker families in Cheltenham
Gerald O’Shaughnessy	British & European history (research on Royal & Aristocratic families & their contributions to history); Historical poems - member of Cheltenham Poetry Society
Stephen Osmond	Chronology of Cheltenham – <u>full</u> dates (year, month & day <u>or</u> year & month); Chronology of the British Isles – <u>full</u> dates
Pamela Osborn	Malvern Lodge, Malvern Place; Puppet Theatre St George’s Place
Bill Parker	The Old Workhouse in Knapp Lane (formerly Workhouse Lane) c1809
Amber Patrick	Malthouses and the Flour Malting Industry
Peter Phelps	All Saints’ & St Paul’s Churches; Architecture; Art Collections; Central School 1939-1945
Ken Pollock	South Town (Bath Rd. area)
Mike Rigby	Fairfield House; Capt. Robert Younghusband; St George’s Sq; Col. John Riddell; Whinyates family; Thomas Henney
Sue Rowbotham	Maskelyne family; W D Slade; Alstone; Christchurch Schools; Constance family; Entertainment especially circuses
Derek Rowles	Tivoli Road
Diane Ryley	Mills in Prestbury & Cheltenham especially Barrett’s Mill
Jane Sale	Cheltenham Manor records 16 th & 17 th centuries
Aylwin Sampson	Thomas Shotter Boys in Cheltenham; Tivoli Road; The Park
Daphne Sanderson	Textiles 1956-1988; ICI Fibres Research & Development 1970-1985
Sally & Russell Self	Cheltenham Maps – Arle area
Dorothy Seton-Smith	St. Paul’s & St. Peter’s areas
Keith Smith	Cheltenham Ephemera; Postcards; Books; Crested china
Peter Smith	Plaques & Inscriptions

MEMBER(S)	INTEREST(S) AND/OR RESEARCH TOPIC(S)
Margaret Stocker	Palmer family; Gwinnett family; Solicitors in Cheltenham; TB in Cheltenham; Freemasons in Cheltenham
Marilyn Swann	Fairview St in 1800s
Valerie Tomalin	Genealogy; History of Cheltenham; The Thames
Peter Tombs	Trams in Cheltenham
Brian Torode	Pearson Thompson; John Middleton; William Hill Knight; The Masters of the Ceremonies; Tivoli
Jill Waller	Alstone area; Trade & Industry in Cheltenham; Cheltenham Manor Court; Cheltenham House deeds
Phyllis White	Arle Court (old & new); Grovefield Hse 1826-1956; Grovefield Villa, Gloucester Road demolished 1968; Henry Lucy builder/surveyor b.1787
Eric Williams	Up Hatherley: 10 th – 20 th centuries; Adam Lindsay Gordon & Thomas Pickernell; Lost/deserted villages – medieval to present day
Eric Woodhead	Tivoli Rd

JOS. HORWOOD, *PLUMBER*, (from Oxford)

HAVING completed the **WATER WORKS**

At the New Assembly-Rooms, where there are Five Closets, Ladies Basons, Hydraulic & Forcing Pumps, Resorvoirs, Mop-houses, Urine-cisterns, Culverts, Stench And Air Traps, Sluices &c; the whole being left entirely to his judgement; and the Proprietors sparing no expence. The whole being impossible to Stop up or Smell, so commonly complained of; the remedy of this is by applying an Air Sluice, and the simple construction of all the Pipes used in the Building is such, that the severest frost will make no impression.

Jobs of this kind undertaken in any part of the kingdom. – No Cure, No Pay. – Twenty per Cent for Ready Money. Gentlemen may find their own Materials.

Cheltenham June 18, 1811

Advertisement from *Cheltenham Chronicle* dated 20 Jun 1811.

Very few plumbers today would advertise that they gave discount for cash! Note all spelling is as it was printed.

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