

**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 Archives 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 Editors:

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**Front Cover:**

Drawing of Delancey Hospital by Aylwin Sampson.  
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See Heather Atkinson's article 'Cheltenham's Other Hospitals' pp.58





# Cheltenham Local History Society

JOURNAL 23

2007

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## From the Editors

### SUE ROWBOTHAM

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THIS YEAR I AM DELIGHTED to be able to tell you that Sally Self has joined me as co-editor of the Journal. Sally was born and educated in Hampshire, before studying in London for four years' teacher training and degree. After teaching in Surrey for four years she moved to Cheltenham in 1976. She taught at Elmfield Junior School (now Gardner's Lane) for 13 years before transferring to Charlton Kings Junior School where she was Deputy Head until she retired in 2005. Sally's main interests are local history, gardening, voluntary work for the National Trust, reading and research. Welcome Sally!

Three of our longest-established members; Aylwin Sampson, and Peter and Judy Smith have celebrated significant events in 2006-7 so we thought that we should celebrate too, with a review of the many ways in which they have helped to document the history of Cheltenham and to share that knowledge with others. Our thanks to them for all their help and support of the Society over the years. We must also thank all the new and established contributors who have taken time to write an article for the Journal this year – a wide range of fascinating topics as always - from floods to best-selling novelists, from scandal to the wonders of 'new' technology. We all know how difficult it is to tear ourselves away from busy lives and fascinating research for even a few minutes to put pen to paper or finger to keyboard – so thank you everyone!

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. We are happy to discuss your ideas with you. If you have never written an article before, and do not know quite where to begin, please let us know. We are happy to help in any way we 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 24 is 31 Dec 2007.

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 the Editors if you would like advice.

# Aylwin Sampson – artist and writer

SALLY SELF

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AYLWIN SAMPSON has been associated with the Cheltenham Local History Society since its foundation in 1982. Formerly Publicity Officer, Chairman, *Journal* editor, Secretary, Arts Council Executive Committee representative and our member on the Conservation Area Panel, his contributions as the Society's illustrator have continued to the present day. All his pictures, in that instantly recognisable 'Aylwin' style, have tremendously enhanced the appeal and added to the depth of understanding of many articles. He is also the designer of the Society's logo, which adds to the prestige of all the publications. These drawings are now historical documents in their own right, and will, in future years, provide a record of Cheltenham's development.



Aylwin and his wife Pamela at the Society Buffet evening at Sacred Hearts on 26 May 2006.  
Photo courtesy of Geoff North.

Born in Sussex, Aylwin was educated at Durham University, where he read philosophy, political theory and modern history. His enthusiasm for this last subject has led him to be deeply involved in the history of Cheltenham; he has led walks around the town, given series of lectures and talks on the history of the area and published numerous books and articles. After the Second World War, during which he was in the RAF, he trained in graphic design at Nottingham and Leicester. A schoolmaster in Southampton for eleven years, he moved into higher education, qualifying as a librarian and obtaining posts at Taunton and Aberystwyth. He finally moved to Cheltenham, and was Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, thus neatly combining his many skills, and enabling him to tour the countryside during the vacations. From these tours came the string of books for which he is famous: books on churches and cathedrals, cricket grounds, race courses, rowing clubs and the towns of England and Wales. These amalgamate informative, straightforward text, atmospheric illustrations, in ink and chalks and impeccable calligraphy, to produce appealing books.

The Society has benefited in so many ways from his membership and to celebrate this and his eightieth birthday, last year, we are publishing an alphabetical list of his *Journal* illustrations.

Queen's Circus  
by Aylwin Sampon.  
Published in *Journal* 4 (1986)



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# Peter and Judy Smith – young at heart

## SUE ROWBOTHAM

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ALMOST EVERYONE in Cheltenham Local History Society must know Peter Smith, a quiet, unassuming but determined driving force behind the Society, and his ever-supportive wife Judy

Peter and Judy have been regulars at Society events since they attended the Society's second meeting back in 1982. Peter served for eight years as a Committee Member,

the last five as Publicity Officer. He has been a member of the *Cheltenham Examiner* newspaper indexing project since its inception in 1989, and has been team-coordinator for many years, seeing the project to its successful completion in 2006. This splendid resource has nearly 50,000 abstracts from *Examiner* reports from 1839-1913. If you would like to know more about the index contact either Jill Waller or Sue Rowbotham.



Peter and Judy Smith celebrate at the Society buffet in May 2006.  
Photo courtesy of Geoff North.

Peter and Judy moved to Cheltenham in 1962 and soon established themselves in the town. Peter was a founder member of both the Lansdown Probus Club and Leckhampton Local History Society, and played an enthusiast part in the activities of both. He also became a regular fund-raiser for the Cheltenham Samaritans and a member of the Church Watch for St Mary's Parish Church.

In 2001 Peter was given the Alderman Charles Foster MBE award in recognition for his voluntary work in Gloucestershire and in particular for his untiring efforts for the Civic Society. Peter joined the Civic Society in 1971, and from 1995 until 2006 he was the Civic Society's Plaques Officer, responsible for the blue plaques commemorating well-known residents, such as Edward Wilson, Sir George Dowty and Dr Edward Jenner, and the green plaques commemorating events and locations, such as St James' Station (on the entrance to Waitrose). His meticulous records also cover the many other plaques and memorials across the town.



Anniversary celebrations  
with members of the Society.  
Photo courtesy of Geoff North.

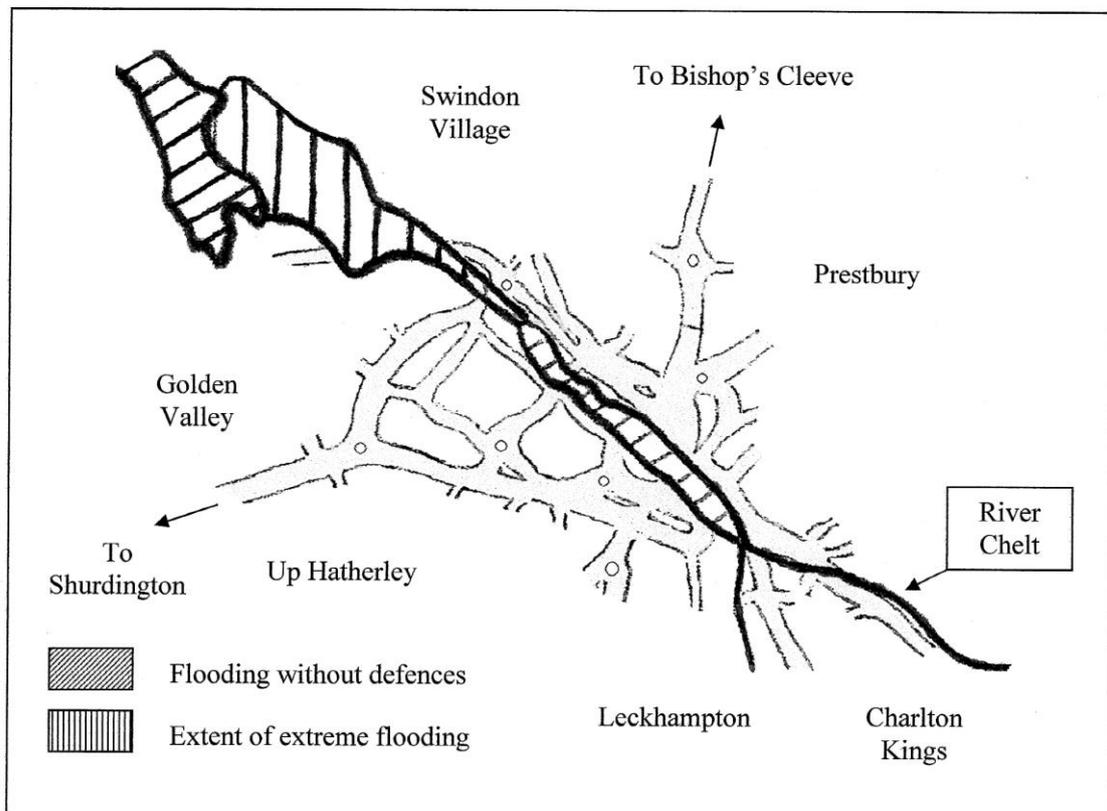
Peter and Judy celebrated both their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and Peter's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2006 – and we celebrated with them at the Society's buffet in May that year. Peter and Judy – your unflagging enthusiasm for your adopted town is an example to us all. Congratulations and thank you.

# Under water: Flooding in Cheltenham 1731 – 1985

MICK KIPPIN

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UNLIKE THE SURROUNDING AREA OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Cheltenham is not known for flooding; the river Chelt and the Hatherley Brook hardly compare to the Rivers Severn or Avon! However, this does not mean to say that the town does not flood – it does. The Chelt is a very short, steep river and it is prone to quick flooding.



Map showing flooding on River Chelt before the new defences were built.

In the hills above Dowdeswell about a dozen smaller streams feed into the Chelt. At this point the river corridor is some 5½ miles wide, but this soon narrows to a bottleneck of just 1½ miles as the river enters the built-up areas of Charlton Kings and Cheltenham, not widening out until it has left the Town. The river can react very quickly to heavy rainfall and flooding can occur within as little as two hours.

Since 1731 there have been at least eleven occasions when Cheltenham has found itself at the mercy of a large volume of water: June 1731, June 1830, July 1855, May 1862, August and October 1883, March 1889, June 1931, March 1947, May 1979, August 1981 and most recently August 1984. I have chosen just the most severe of these to concentrate on in this article.

### June 1731 and 26 June 1830

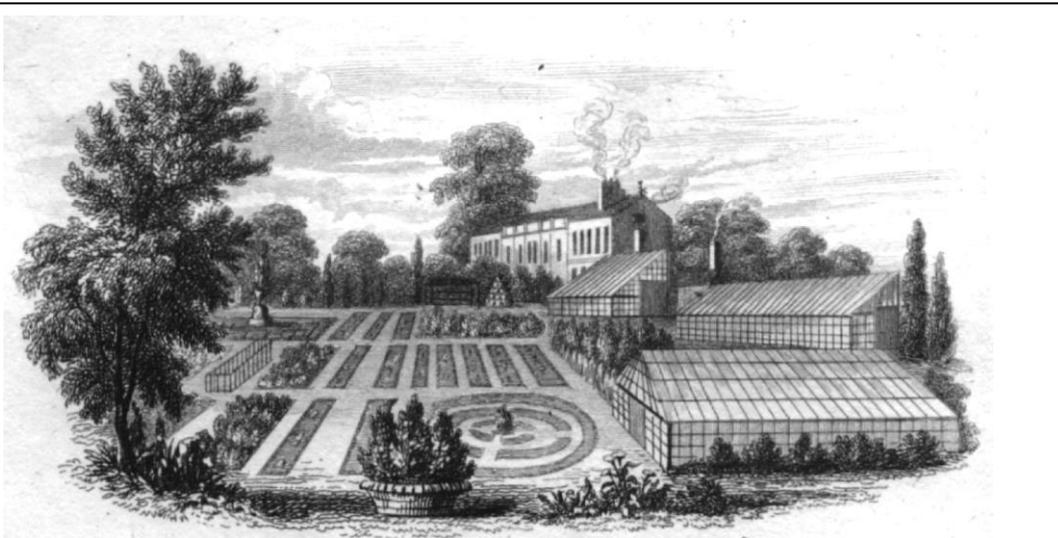
Unfortunately Cheltenham's local press does not go back far enough for us to read about these early floods; nor are they mentioned in *The Gloucester Journal*. Even the historian John Goding seemed to be short on prime source material. Of June 1731 he says, 'Hailstones, the size of golf balls fell, killing livestock and causing £2000 of damage to property'. Luckily for Cheltenham the earliest instances of flooding caused considerably less damage than a similar event would do today. Much of the town was still open field until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Goding's source for the 1830 flood would appear to be a comparison between 1830 and 1855, written in *The Examiner* after the Great Flood of 1855.

*'The great storm and flood of 26<sup>th</sup> June 1830 was very similar to that of Thursday last, except that the waters then swept through fields instead of through streets. Where the Promenade now stands was then a piece of waste land or meadow.'*

### 14 - 26 July 1855

The flooding of July 1855 was without doubt the worst experienced by the town in the 273 years since the earliest recorded flooding of 1731. The bad weather started on 14 July when severe thunderstorms flooded a number of streets and houses. Newly laid sewers in Bath Road burst causing a lot of damage to property. The bad weather came to a head on 26 July, when there was almost twenty-four hours of continual torrential rain. Early estimates of the damage to property put the cost at about £10,000. The 1855 flood began, as it had in 1830, in the hills above Dowdeswell when the river Chelt became overfull and burst its banks. The water had been building up in the river all day of Thursday 26 July until about 5 o'clock in the afternoon when it just couldn't hold anymore. According to the local press:

*'a vast body of water rushed down the valley until it met Charlton Mill. Sweeping over the mill-dam, it carried away a portion of the bridge and then washed away about 10,000 square yards of a potato field.'*



Many visitors came to admire exotic plants, such as rice, bananas and breadfruit which grew in Jessop's Nusery. On 26 July 1855 tons of bricks, gravel, wood and mud were swept along by a raging torrent from the River Chelt that destroyed much of the nursery, submerging parts of the site under seven feet of water. Illustration from an advert in Griffith's *Historical Description of Cheltenham* (1826)

This tidal wave of water then swept through Charlton Kings and on into the Bath Road, Cambray, Rodney Terrace, the Promenade, Royal Crescent and St. George's Place. Jessop's Gardens were particularly badly affected. The gardens were inundated from two different directions. One stream broke through from St. George's Terrace in the east, while a second even more damaging torrent forced its way down from Bayshill in the south. The whole of the ground was soon under water and the usually exotic gardens were turned into '*a wilderness of water.*' The Chelt at this point had taken a completely new course, the usual channel being blocked by an accumulation of sand, sewage and other rubbish.

The flood was at its height between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, when the Promenade was a broad expanse of water from Imperial Square up almost to the Colonnade. Passage through the Promenade was impossible on foot as the water was almost waist high! Even after the water left the Town Centre there was still too much of it to simply drain away and the low lying land extending from Alstone into Arle, Staverton and even as far as Boddington was, in places, under water.

### **6 – 7 May 1862**

Heavy rain on these two days again caused damage to property close to the river Chelt. Sandford Park area was completely covered and the flooding spread to St James' Square, where an obstruction in the river at the lower end of the square forced the river to overflow and find a new path. Mr Brydges' nursery suffered some £40 damage. Pittville Lake also overflowed and several fields in the Swindon Road area were under water. *The Looker-On* considered this to be the heaviest rainfall and flooding since that of 1855, although they did comment that, 'It is, doubtless, in great measure owing to the improvement which has taken place in our drainage, that so serious a result did not, in this instance, ensue.'

The problem of the obstructions caused by the four mills along the river Chelt was brought up for discussion at a Council meeting on 3 June 1878. Councillor S. Onley, supported by Councillor A. Paul, stated the obvious when he said that someone must be at fault in connection with the floods and that it was the Council's responsibility to determine whom and to correct it. He requested that the whole question of flood alleviation be referred to the Sewage and Drainage Committee for a full report to be made to the Council.

### **23 October 1882**

1882 was another bad year for flooding with property in the town being affected in August and then again in October. On 30 August Mr Frederick T. Ewens of 18, Promenade Villas, wrote to the editor of the *Cheltenham Examiner*,

*'Sir,  
Can nothing be done by the members of the Town Council to prevent the periodical floods of water, which do so much damage and cause so much inconvenience to persons living in the centre of the Promenade?'*

*'On Friday evening last [24 August] the bottom part of my premises was flooded with water, and my neighbours were all in a similar plight. This state of things has existed for many years, but I think it is time that this matter was looked into and some remedy found for a state of things which is not very creditable to a Town of this magnitude.'*

On 23 October the town experienced another extremely heavy downpour, which after about three hours of continual rain turned to snow. Once again *The Examiner* compared this to the flood of 1855; 'Cheltenham has experienced nothing more serious than the overflow of the Chelt 27 years ago.' The main reasons for the flooding were considered to be:

- a) the size of the culvert where the river Chelt runs underground between Regent Street and the Promenade. This is only 15ft wide and 3ft 9in high at its smallest and is totally inadequate to carry away the volume of water in these conditions,
- b) the four milldams along the river's course seriously impede the flow of water. The fall from Barrett's Mill to the floodgates at Alstone Mill was just 6ft 5in, while it would be over 20ft if the floodgates were removed.

In 1883 the Council began serious improvements to ease the flow of the river Chelt into the town. In October of that year the Mayor 'turned the first sod' in the construction of the Dowdeswell reservoir and the completed reservoir was officially opened three years later. This now provides somewhere for flood waters to go rather than simply pouring over the riverbanks and into the town. If the reservoir had been there in 1855, the damage would not have been nearly as serious.

### 9 March 1889

*'An alarming flood, the like of which has not been seen in Cheltenham for a considerable number of years, occurred this evening when the river Chelt overflowed its banks and volumes of water rushed along its course causing immense damage to property, more especially in the districts of St Luke's, the Promenade, Bayshill and St James' Square. At the time of going to press crowds were still witnessing the torrents of water, which were, happily, fast subsiding and rendering all possible assistance.'*

*Cheltenham Looker-On*

The following Saturday (16 March) the paper reported, 'the flood of the previous Saturday was a trifling affair compared to the floods in other parts of the Country.' Taunton, Nuneaton, Leicester and Bristol were mentioned as having been particularly badly flooded.

### 14 June 1931<sup>1</sup>

During the afternoon of Sunday 14 June 1931 Cheltenham was hit by a torrential downpour; almost 1½in of rain fell in little more than two hours. Neither the sewers nor the river Chelt were able to cope with the rush of water and much of the Sandford Park and Bath Road area was under a considerable depth of water. Harp Hill on the edge of the Battledown Estate was more like a cascade than a road.

### 12 March 1947

The flooding in 1947 was different from earlier floods in that it was not caused by torrential rainfall, but by thawing snow and ice. On 29 January Cheltenham recorded its lowest temperature since January 1940 (22 degrees of frost), Moreton-in-Marsh recorded the lowest temperature in the UK – 32 degrees of frost. The whole area had heavy snow falls for several days and on 5 March some 500 vehicles were stranded on the Andoversford – Northleach road in what were being reported as the worst ever blizzards in the Cotswolds. The following day only two roads out of Cheltenham were still open and all schools in the town had been closed. By 8 March the temperature was rising and a thaw was imminent.

Soon the rivers Severn and Avon had burst their banks and Evesham and Tewkesbury were badly flooded. Cheltenham did not suffer quite as badly, but the river Chelt had burst its banks in several places and the amount of water coming off of Leckhampton Hill caused several houses to flood. By 15 March *The Echo* reported that the Town was free from flooding.

### 30 May 1979

On Wednesday 30 May almost 2in of rain fell on Cheltenham over a 24-hour period. To add to the resulting flooding problems, the Fire Station found itself marooned in a lake of water and appliances had difficulty in getting out. By lunchtime the Police had received 120 distress calls. The Salvation Army's relief operations were also hampered when the Bath Road Citadel became another victim of the rising waters. The Council had to re-house several families from the Bath Road area as the conditions in the area began to pose a serious health hazard.

The town suffered a second torrential downpour on 27 December and the emergency services found themselves severely stretched dealing with flooded houses. Residents in the George Readings Way area of Hesters Way were especially angry at having to 'mop up' for the second time in one year. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ken Hammond arranged for a supply of plastic bin liners to be used as sandbags to try and keep the water at bay.

### Conclusions

After the floods of 1979 Cheltenham Borough Council began investigative work and carried out initial improvements along the course of the river Chelt. If a flood of a similar scale were to occur again it could be potentially devastating; it is estimated that some 600 properties are now at risk in the event of a flood similar to that of 1855. In 1995, the Chelt's status was upgraded to that of a Main River and responsibility for the river was handed over to the Environment Agency. It is this Agency that is currently involved in developing the Chelt Flood Alleviation scheme. Hopefully – despite the many misgivings over the work in and around the Cox's Meadow area – this Scheme should keep our Town dry.

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<sup>1</sup> See photographs on p.14.



**THE GREAT STORM IN CHELTENHAM**

On Sunday afternoon Cheltenham and district was visited by a deluge of rain, about one and a third inches falling in little over two hours. The sewers and the River Chelt were alike unable to carry off the rush of water, and extraordinary scenes were witnessed in the streets, many of which were flooded to a considerable depth.

1.—All basements of houses in Bath-parade were flooded, and the residents were working up to a late hour baling out with buckets.

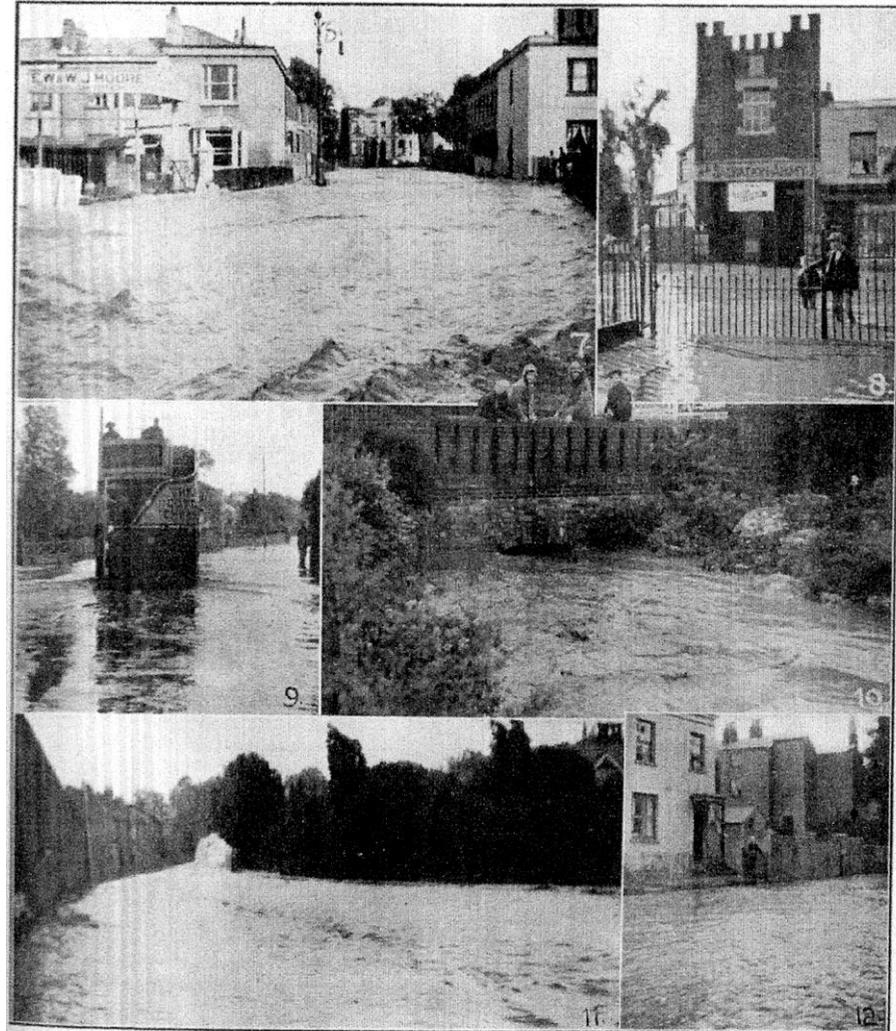
2.—Sandford Mill-road was absolutely impassable for a time, and the motor car on left was stranded until hauled out by ropes.

3.—A resident (in oil-skins) in Old Bath-road, is probing for the grating to see if it was blocked. This water came from the Chelt.

4.—A motor-cyclist going through water in Old Bath-road. Note the flood of water pouring out of Charlton Park, on left.

5.—Mr. Leslie Paynter emptying his gum boots after wading in to rescue a motor-car.

6.—The Salvation Army Bteracks were flooded out, and no service could be held. Here are members of the congregation, after sweeping the water out.



**THE GREAT STORM IN CHELTENHAM**

Floods occurred in places where none had previously been experienced. Harp Hill, Battledown, was like a river; Bath-parade at one time was completely swept by water; and Prosbury-road, near the borough boundary, was submerged to a considerable depth.

7.—Bath-parade looked like a sea at one time, an extraordinary appearance.

8.—Bath-road, outside the Salvation Army, was quickly used by paddlers.

9.—Prosbury-road was negotiated with difficulty by the Cleeve Hill 'bus service (near borough boundary).

10.—The Chelt in Sandford Park was a seething torrent, and could hardly get through the bridge.

11.—Harp Hill, Battledown, was more like a cascade than a road.

12.—Another scene in Bath-parade.

No. 7 photograph by Mr. J. Hall, 12 Sandford-street; Nos. 3 and 12 by Mr. Coles; No. 9 by Mrs. Whiteside, and No. 11 by Mr. W. A. Davis.

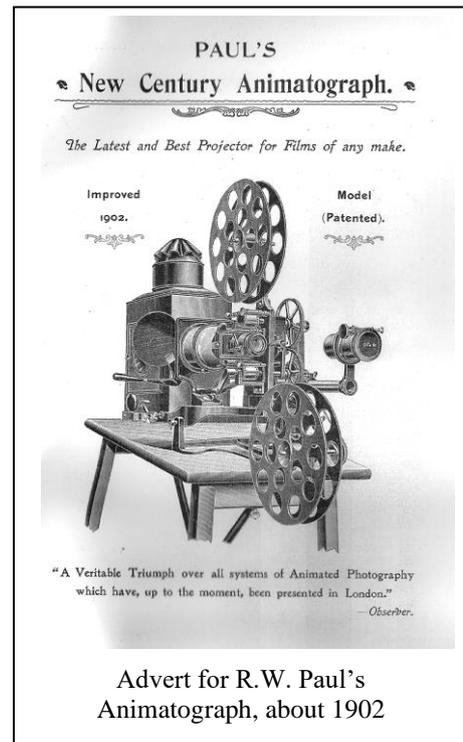
# The early history of cinema in Cheltenham

## Part one - 1896 to 1899

JOHN ELLIOTT

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ON 28 DECEMBER 1895, A MOMENTOUS EVENT in the history of the cinema took place in Paris when the Lumière Brothers hired a small hall in the basement of No 14, Boulevard des Capucines. It was the first projection of film to a paying audience of more than one. Only a year later citizens of Cheltenham were present at what was probably the first major performance in the town of what were then called 'animated photographs'. The Cheltenham Cricket Club needed funds for laying and equipment of new grounds and to supplement the subscription lists it organised a series of entertainments at the Assembly Rooms on 30 November and 2, 3 and 4 December 1896, which included animated photographs. The Club had the advantage that the films had been made by and were being shown by Mr Paul using his newly developed projector called the Theatrograph or Animatograph. Mr Robert Paul, a skilled English electrical instrument-maker, had been persuaded to build a copy of Edison's Kinetoscope (which was not protected by patent in England) and went on to make his own filmstrips with his own camera. He gave the first performance of the Theatrograph at Finsbury Technical College in February 1896 and later he gave regular shows from March 1896 in London at the Egyptian Hall and the Alhambra Theatre of Varieties across the road from the Empire Theatre where Lumière films were being screened.



Local Cheltenham papers responded with lengthy, detailed, technical and admiring descriptions of the mechanism deployed and how Mr Paul had glorified and magnified the Edisonian kinetoscope. *The Echo* of 27 November 1896, for example, included the following quote from an article in a recent number of the *Strand Magazine*.

*'Briefly explained, the whole thing amounts to this: hundreds of photographs are taken with amazing rapidity – say, twenty a second – on an enormous length of transparent celluloid ribbon. These photos are subsequently shown magic-lantern fashion also with extreme rapidity, the results being 'living pictures' which completely baffle description; they MUST be seen to be appreciated.'*

It then went on to describe the camera and the projector. A similarly lengthy description of the system appeared in *The Cheltenham Examiner* of 2 December. This paper's technical section concluded by reminding its readers of the delicacy of the mechanism and the requirement for it to have rested on concrete and reassuring them that, although the lantern

had on this occasion to be manipulated from the orchestra, there is no appreciable falling off in the quality of the pictures in the Assembly Rooms.

Mr Paul had brought with him a large number of films from which selections were made. They were of two kinds – the record of actual scenes and the record of rehearsed movement. As an example of the latter, there was ‘the mirth-provoking pantomime of the Soldier’s Courtship’ or the rescue from a river launch. Clearly the transcripts from fact were the more popular and aroused the descriptive talents of the *Examiner* reviewer, particularly one displaying a cave on the coast of Galicia, when he writes,

*‘Under the rugged archway of the cave, the sea tumbles and foams and as the angry waves sweep in, the rocky promontories break them into sheets of feathery spray which fall upon the heaving surface of the flood within – a grandly realistic scene to which the imagination has little difficulty in adding the deep diapason of the ocean and the shrill Aeolian music!’*

Other realistic films were the arrival of the Paris express at Calais and the Prince of Wales at the Derby. The latter was of more interest to *The Echo*.

*‘Of course, Mr Paul didn’t know that the Prince of Wales was going to win the Derby. He merely went to get the finish of the great race, having less concern with the ‘blue ribbon of the turf’ as such, than with the black ribbon of film which would show to countless multitudes one of the most popular events of the Victorian age. At all events our inventor was on the spot with the result that he deposited some 80ft of celluloid ribbon, containing about 1,280 unique instantaneous photographs of this historical race.’*

TO-NIGHT !

TO-NIGHT !

TO-NIGHT !

ASSEMBLY ROOMS, CHELTENHAM.

—

THE ORIGINAL

A N I M A T E D P H O T O G R A P H S ,

UNDER DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE,

In Aid of the Funds of

THE CHELTENHAM CRICKET CLUB.

—

HIGH-CLASS CONCERTS.

—

MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY,

NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 1ST and 2ND.

COMMENCE AT EIGHT O’CLOCK.

Ticket Holders admitted at 7.20.

Tuesday afternoon special exhibition at 3 o’clock.

Prices—2s 6d, 1s, 6d. Plan of Seats at Woodward’s  
Music Warehouse, Promenade.

—

Advert from *Gloucestershire Echo*  
30 Nov 1898

The result of these performances proved to be a pronounced monetary success. The Cricket Club Committee was also fortunate in enlisting the support of the Ladies’ College and a special viewing was given for the benefit of the students there. As a local paper noted, ‘their enthusiasm was unbounded and they encored nearly everything there and at the end the Lady Principal publicly expressed her thanks’.

After the last picture had been shown on the final evening, the National Anthem was played, the Committee appeared on the platform and bowed their acknowledgement for the support received and then (from *The Echo*) ‘quite English this –adjourned to supper and to mutual congratulation and perhaps to count their gain’.

A few weeks later, on Boxing Day 1896 and the following three days, other

performances of Mr Paul's 'very latest machine and the newest animated photographs, now drawing immense audiences in London' (the *Looker-On*) took place this time at the Corn Exchange, together with a variety show headed by Lieut. Walter Cole, the famous ventriloquist. The *Cheltenham Mercury* noted that the animated photographs 'appeared to please as much as ever, the audience demanding repetitions of most if not all of them'. An advertisement in the *Echo* informed the local populace that doors would be open at 7:30 and that performances would commence at 8:00 with carriages at 10:20. Reserved and numbered seats were 2s, with second seats 1s and back seats 6d.

Clearly there were financial advantages in showing this new form of entertainment and other distributors appeared. One such was Mr William Slade who toured and showed films around the county in 1897 and 1898. He was a Worcester boot and shoemaker who had a shop (12 Promenade Villas) and premises in Cheltenham (6 Montpellier Grove). He was in partnership with a Mr M.E. Baring of 2 Montpellier Terrace. The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television at Bradford holds correspondence between them (including their original business deal) and between Slade and L. Gaumont, the French cinema entrepreneur. There are bills of sale and receipts for the purchase of both equipment and films from various countries including Fuerst Brothers the sole agents for Lumière in the UK. The itinerary provided for me by the Museum shows that in May 1897 he gave performances in Stroud, Cheltenham, Llanelli, Matlock and Ludlow.

One major event for Slade was the show he gave in the Winter Gardens on 23 and 24 June 1897 to celebrate the Jubilee. Since it was impossible to shut out daylight at the Winter Gardens, Mr Slade was not able to show his films until 8:00.

*'The people then crowded in and several successful exhibitions were given, the view being that these were away the best yet seen in Cheltenham, those of the Prince's visit being remarkably good and evoking much enthusiasm. The show also included artistic films, mostly of local subjects. Mr Manington acted as manager and Mr Slade had the assistance of his daughter and of Mr Yates at the piano'.*

Gloucestershire Echo

Soon after this the Cricket Club, clearly recalling the success of the previous year and wishing to remove the remaining debt on the new cricket ground, organised further showings of animated photographs at the Assembly Rooms. These concentrated on events associated with the Jubilee. The advertisement in the *Looker-On* of 10 July 1897 was certainly intended to excite the public with the prospect of:

*'A Most Wonderful Reproduction of Paul's Theatrograph showing in Marvellous Manner the Royal Procession – Incidents in Different parts of London – the Grand Ceremony at St Paul's with H M the Queen and the Royal Princes and Princesses – the different Home and Colonial Troops (a stirring sight) – the enormous crowd and splendid decorations – the Great Fire Brigade Review by H M the Queen'.*

An additional incentive was the presence of the Town Band, which played at each performance. In addition there were films of the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales to Cheltenham showing HRH and staff with the Band of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, moving up the Promenade to the Queen's Hotel. This was described as 'being a most beautiful and interesting animated picture of great length'. It is a pity, as far as I can

determine, no copy of this film of a major local event survives. So successful was the Cricket Club initiative that performances were continued beyond the advertised dates.

Clearly films of the events of the Jubilee and the visit of the Prince of Wales to Cheltenham were of great local interest and there was competition for local support. While the Assembly Rooms were showing their films on 15, 16 and 17 July, at the Corn Exchange from 14 July to 21 July, William Slade was showing 'the Only Perfect Exhibition of Animated Photographs' of similar scenes and in the *Echo* issue of 10 July both had large adjacent advertisements. Slade made a particular reference in his advertisement to accomplishing what had never been done before, namely showing a picture of 18ft 6in square at the Winter Gardens (so one assumes the same was meant to apply to his performance at the Corn Exchange). His advertisement concentrates on the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales to the town and lists the local places and celebrities that can be seen. The former includes the Ladies' College, the Gentlemen's College and the Medical Staff, and the latter, the Mayor and Mayoress (Col and Mrs Rogers) and Dr Humphreys.

The attraction of a London entertainment was clearly a draw, then as now, and the *Examiner* of 2 March 1898 advertised a performance at the Corn Exchange of 'The Cinematograph Animated Photographs. The largest, most realistic and up-to-date pictures ever shown out of London. Direct from Maskelyne and Cooke's Egyptian Hall, London'. Sue Rowbotham confirms that the Maskelyne Company did tour with Paul's and other animated films round the country. Some of Paul's earliest films, made in 1896, were of Cheltenham-born John Nevil Maskelyne spinning plates and several of David Devant performing a variety of magic tricks. David Devant performed with Maskelyne and Cooke's and became Maskelyne's partner in 1904, on the death of Alfred Cooke.

Even Mr Poole's Myriorama shows started to include animated photographs and in March 1898 we find the *Looker-On* noting that 'the month of March rarely passes without Poole's Myriorama establishing itself for a short period at the Assembly Rooms', adding that, 'on this occasion a speciality will be the performance of some animated photographs'. In the advertisement of H.F. Poole's Myriorama, prominence was given to a:

*'Special Attraction – the Largest and Best Animated Photographs now before the public, the Myriograph or Improved Cinematograph, being a combination of the best machines invented for the production of Living Pictures. Grand specially selected Series of the Latest Films, Majestic, Realistic and Comic. Don't miss the Series. The Splendid Orchestral Band of Solo Performers will perform Music of the Nations.'*

Appendix One of Mr H.J. Powell's book *Poole's Myriorama* also notes the appearance of Animated Photographs in this and later Myriorama shows.

**T**HEATRE AND **O**PERA **H**OUSE,  
CHELTENHAM.

Immense Attraction for TO-NIGHT (SATURDAY),  
CINEMATOGRAPH VIEWS of the  
**V**ISIT OF  
**H**ER **M**AJESTY THE **Q**UEEN  
to  
**S**OUTH **K**ENSINGTON,  
MAY 17TH, 1899,  
To ~~lay~~ the Foundation Stone of the Victoria and  
Albert Museum.

Splendid view taken opposite Hyde Park Gates,  
of the Royal Carriages and Escort, showing  
the Prince of Wales and Her Majesty the  
Queen at close range.

The above Pictures will be introduced in  
Miscellaneous Programme, which includes—  
**CHURCH SCENE** from "Much Ado About  
Nothing", also  
**TWO DANCES** and **SONG AND CHORUS**,  
**SCREEN SCENE** from "School for Scandal,"  
**RECITATIONS** and **SONGS** by **MR. DARELL  
SMITH, &c.**

**ORDINARY TIME AND PRICES. EARLY DOORS  
OPEN AT 6.45.**

Advert from *Gloucestershire  
Echo* 20 May 1899

Mr W.H. Hawling was another local man who gave exhibitions of Animated Photographs. One such occasion took place at the Theatre and Opera House when, following a week's performances of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* by a local amateur company, a miscellaneous entertainment replaced the play on Saturday evening, 20 May 1899 (to attract a popular end-of-the-week audience it was suggested). This included animated photographs, which were not received with unalloyed enthusiasm by the *Echo* reviewer.

*'As a rule these were eminently successful, the subjects being well selected such as "Nelson's Column on Trafalgar Day" and including several of a comic character which much amused the audience. Unfortunately the representation of the visit of the Queen and the Prince of Wales to South Kensington did not prove to be an altogether successful film but it was sufficiently good to give a general idea of the arrival of the royal visitors.'*

The *Cheltenham Examiner* of 24 May was less critical and after first detailing the subjects, 'Nelson's Column on Trafalgar Day', 'Market Scene in Paris', 'Scot's Guards at Drill', 'Indian Club Swinging', 'The Miller and the Sweep' (a mirth provoking comedy) and the state visit of the Queen to South Kensington which was of course loyally received', it went on to observe that 'the Pictures were excellent and free from the dazzling effect of many cinematographs'.

I hope that the above, certainly, incomplete, review of the growth of cinema in Cheltenham in the first few years, from the first 'animated photograph' performance in aid of the Cricket Club in November 1896 to the end of 1899, demonstrates both the range of films shown and the increasing popularity of this new form of entertainment and instruction. The next few years will show no diminution of public interest in the 'cinematograph' as the number of distributors, subjects and venues increases. The South African war will become one of the first to be recorded on film and I hope to show in my next instalment how not only filmmakers and distributors but also the Government responded to the challenge of the new medium.

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## 'Audacious and inexplicable robbery' February 1824

MIKE GRINDLEY

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*'Some villains climbed over the outside gates of the Cheltenham Prison and actually stole a game cock and two game hens from the dark cell where they were roosting. There were at the time nine prisoners in custody in the upper cells, by some of whom the thief was heard. A reward was offered next day, and on Saturday night the fowls were replaced! – the robber returning in the same manner, and escaping a second time without detection.'*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 12 February 1824, as given in the *Century - Old Chronicles* column in *Cheltenham Chronicle* 9 February 1924. Access courtesy of Cheltenham Reference Library.

# Eminent Cheltonians commemorated at Leckhampton

ERIC MILLER

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## *Introduction*

LECKHAMPTON WAS AN ISOLATED SPOT until the age of the motor car. However, at its church of St Peter there are memorials to many 19th-century and early 20th-century Cheltonians, some of them of national renown. Though much the same might be said of the churches at Charlton Kings<sup>3</sup>, Swindon Village and Prestbury, the collection at Leckhampton is unusually rich and is a revealing reflection of the social history of Cheltenham. Some of the names mentioned in this article are well known, but the achievements, misfortunes and tragedies of others, now all but forgotten, deserve to be retold: ‘the world knows nothing of its greatest men’<sup>4</sup>.

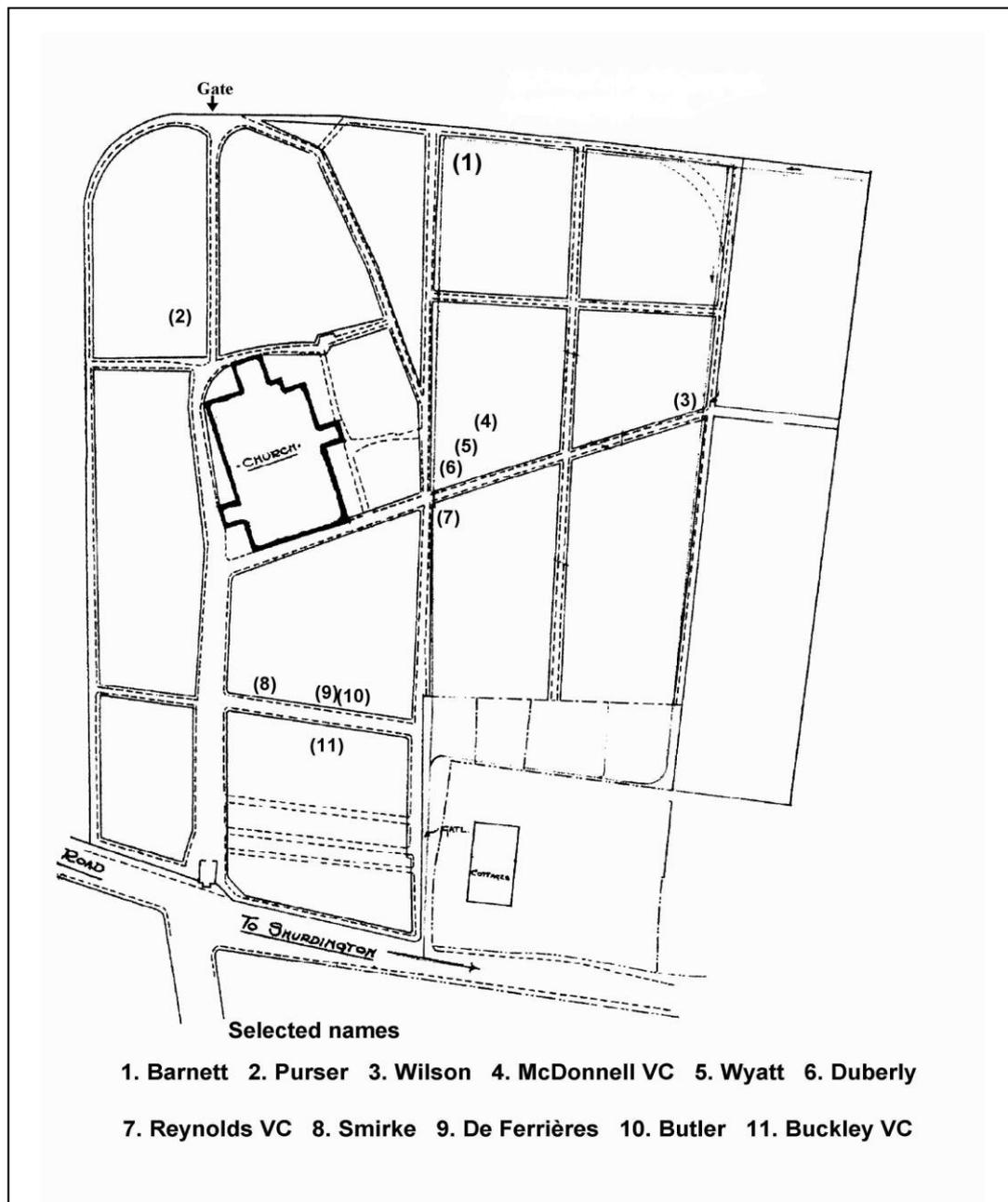
Not all of these ‘Cheltonians’ were actually born in Cheltenham. Some had settled in the area on retirement, perhaps having served in the Indian Army or East India Company.<sup>5</sup> Others were ‘birds of passage’, again perhaps with empire connections and renting a house in between tours abroad. Many would have known each other, if not already from their past careers then at least as members of Cheltenham’s fashionable society. A few of their names are listed in the *Cheltenham Looker-On* as attending hunt balls, and certain of the gentlemen belonged to the New Club. Their activities and achievements were sometimes reported in the local press, and occasionally in a national newspaper, and a few remain ‘eminent’ to this day by being listed in the *Dictionary of National Biography* or similar compendiums.

Some of the gentry, professional men and the more prosperous tradespeople lived in the parish itself, in the large detached villas that sprang up beside Leckhampton Road and in The Park area. Others had been residents of Cheltenham but, as subscription lists suggest, worshipped at Leckhampton, or may have chosen Leckhampton as their final resting place simply because there was no space left in the graveyards of the town churches where they were parishioners. In a number of cases the dead person also has a memorial in the church where he worshipped or in whose parish he lived, notably at Christ Church<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, even after the municipal cemetery in Bouncers Lane was opened in 1864 the middle classes may have been reluctant to be buried there.

The task of establishing who is buried at Leckhampton and in which plot has been greatly helped by a survey of the churchyard carried out in 1914 by the architect Leonard Barnard (mentioned again below), who marked and numbered individual plots and the associated names on a detailed plan.<sup>7</sup> Although the Cotswold stone of many of the graves is badly eroded and the inscriptions are difficult to read, Julian Rawes on behalf of the Gloucestershire Family History Society has recorded meticulously the wording on about 600 graves, which include the majority of the significant Victorian burials<sup>8</sup>, and I and others have added to this work. The inscriptions sometimes also mention a person’s occupation, place of origin and

address, which help towards further research in press articles, gazetteers and the internet. Certain of the graves are marked on the plan reproduced below.

This article mentions in bold type, with their dates, a selection of names that are likely to be of most interest. There is no room here to do more than sketch in the salient details of their lives, but in due course it is intended to publish a much more comprehensive list in book form.



*Plan of churchyard – St Peter's, Leckhampton*

### *Lords of the Manor*

Members of the Norwood and Trye families, as lords of the manor of Leckhampton, have their memorials in what is now the Lady Chapel of the church. Several of them had influence beyond their own neighbourhood, such as William and Henry Norwood and a father and son both named Charles Brandon Trye.

**William Norwood** (1548-1634) was also lord of the manor of Cheltenham from 1589 to c.1616 through his marriage to Elizabeth Lygon of Madresfield Court, and as such he took an active part in Cheltenham borough administration. His grandson **Colonel Henry Norwood** (1614-1689) fought on the Royalist side during the Civil War. After the beheading of Charles I he went to America to help establish the colony of New England, where the exiled King Charles II appointed him Treasurer of Virginia. He took part in the expedition that led to the capture of New Amsterdam (now New York) and was later appointed as Lieutenant-Governor of Tangier; his attitude at that time drew a disapproving comment from Samuel Pepys in his *Diary*. After returning to Gloucestershire in 1669 he was elected as one of the MPs for Gloucestershire and was later its mayor.



William Norwood.  
Detail from portrait by  
Cornelius Jansen.  
CAGM.



C.B. Trye  
Courtesy of  
Leckhampton LHS

There is a small memorial plaque to **Charles Brandon Trye, FRS**, (1757-1811), the first of the Trye family to be lord of the manor of Leckhampton. He is buried near the family's main seat at Hardwicke Court and is also commemorated with an imposing monument in Gloucester Cathedral. He was Senior Surgeon at Gloucester Infirmary and supported Dr Edward Jenner in his work on smallpox vaccination. He saw the commercial potential of the Leckhampton quarries in supplying stone for Cheltenham's early 19th-century building boom, to be delivered via an extension to the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad.

A stained-glass window commemorates his second son, **The Reverend Charles Brandon Trye II** (1806-1884), who as well as being lord of the manor was Rector of Leckhampton for 53 years from 1830. He had the village school built, twice enlarged the church, was a magistrate, served on the Cheltenham Board of Guardians, and was Chairman of the Leckhampton Local Board. He was a founder of Cheltenham College, and he and his brother provided the land on which the 'daughter' church of St Philip and St James was built.<sup>9</sup>

### *A Cotton King and Queen*

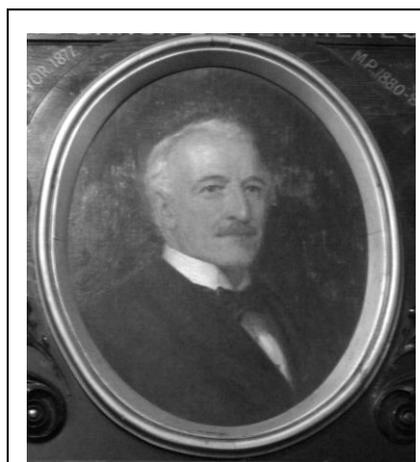
**John Hargreaves** (1842-1900) was the tenant of Leckhampton Court from about 1872 and was able to buy it in 1894 when the estate was put up for sale. He and his wife, née **Edith Platt** (1849-1882), took an active part in the social life of Cheltenham and the county. They were prominent at the hunt balls, and senior military men and aristocrats were among their guests at the Court (and, so it is reported, the future King Edward VII when Prince of Wales). John Hargreaves was an officer in the Gloucestershire Yeomanry and a member of Cheltenham's New Club. More significantly, each came from an important Lancashire family. The Hargreaves had made their money chiefly as carriers for the cotton trade, but Platt Brothers (Edith's father and uncle) employed 7000 people in Oldham and were the largest manufacturers in the world of cotton spinning and weaving equipment, which they exported throughout Europe. They were generous benefactors to their local communities, not only in Oldham but also at Llanfairfechan, where they built a country mansion, the railway station that served it and a church.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Last Beat of Drake's Drum*

**Sir Francis Henry Drake** (d.1839, aged 83) is commemorated by a memorial tablet in the Lady Chapel. Surmounted with a representation of the *Golden Hind*, it claims that he was the 'last surviving male descendant of the great circumnavigator'. On the other hand, according to *Burke's Peerage*, an uncle of same name had been the last baronet, and though Leckhampton's Sir Francis assumed the title on his uncle's death, the legitimacy of this claim is doubtful, as his father's marriage, in Newfoundland, was not officially recognised. He evidently felt himself morally entitled to the baronetcy, however. His name lives on in Drake House, which he built as his home. (It was lived in more recently by **Sir Charles Irving**, MP for Cheltenham 1974-1992, who can legitimately be included in this article, for after his death in 1995 his cremated remains were dropped from the air over Leckhampton Hill.)

### *Mayor, MP and Benefactor*

**Baron Charles Conrad Adolphus du Bois de Ferrieres** (1823-1908) was born in the Netherlands, but his mother was English; the surname de Ferrieres was of French Huguenot origin. He lived in England from infancy and spent 50 years in Cheltenham, at Bays Hill House (now demolished, where George III stayed during his visit to the town). He was naturalised in 1867. He was made Cheltenham's second Mayor in 1877 and was its Liberal MP from 1880 to 1885. He was a member of the Board of Guardians for 36 years and was a leading Freemason. His obituary notice stated that there was 'scarcely a society or charitable institution in the town that [had] not benefited from his support'. He is best remembered for his gift to the town of the Art Gallery and paintings from his father's collection.



Baron de Ferrieres. Portrait in Cheltenham Art Gallery. By permission of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum

He encouraged the Gordon Boys' Brigade, always employing one of the lads to ride on the box seat of his carriage. He made gifts to various churches in the town and county, especially of stained-glass windows, to be found in Cheltenham Parish Church, Gloucester Cathedral, Cheltenham College Chapel and Chepstow Parish Church.<sup>11</sup> He is buried at Leckhampton alongside his father, the first baron, who died at Bays Hill House during a visit in 1864.

At Leckhampton there are in all five stained-glass windows in his or his father's memory. Considering that the baron was childless, it is of note that the subject of one of them is 'Suffer the little children to come unto me'. They all incorporate his initials and a Masonic emblem.

### *Antarctic Hero*



Dr Edward Wilson.  
Chelt Art Gallery & Museum.

The memorial to **Dr Edward Adrian ('Ted') Wilson** (1872-1912) is probably the one most visited in the whole churchyard. His tragic and heroic death, together with Captain Scott and three other companions on their return from the South Pole, is the stuff of legend and has been described in numerous books.<sup>12</sup> He is truly a 'local boy', as during his teens his parents bought The Crippetts, then a farm, for his mother to pursue her interest in breeding cattle and rearing poultry, on which she was a noted authority. In its surroundings he was free to develop his precocious love of nature and his skill in painting and drawing, which he later exercised on Scott's Antarctic expeditions of 1901-04 and 1910-13, when he was Chief Scientist. Examples of his watercolours and other memorabilia are displayed in Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

Ted Wilson is commemorated on a granite cross on his parents' grave. His father, **Edward Thomas Wilson** (1832-1918) was also a doctor, a general practitioner and consultant at Cheltenham General Hospital and a founder of the Delancey Hospital. The epitaph reads 'He went about doing good'.

### *Russian Connections*

Ted Wilson's mother (1841-1930) was born in Russia as **Mary Agnes Wishaw**. The Wishaws were one of several interrelated Anglo-Russian trading families that flourished in St Petersburg before the Revolution. Her father, **Bernhard Wishaw** (1779-1868), and various relatives resettled in Cheltenham during the late 19th century, and several of them were buried in Leckhampton Churchyard.

Bernhard Wishaw was an imposing figure, six feet tall, with a red beard but no moustache or whiskers. He was a senior partner of the firm Hills and Wishaw, by far the oldest in St Petersburg, and when he entered the Exchange there, everyone in the building would bow with great respect. He came to Cheltenham in about 1851 and at first lived at Keynsham House. His son **Bernard** (without an 'h') **Wishaw** (1821-

1900), one of Mary Agnes's seven older brothers, knew Tsar Nicholas II and often walked with him on the quays in St Petersburg.<sup>13</sup>

Bernhard Wishaw's sister **Elizabeth** (1787-1866) and his brother-in-law, **James Yeames** (1779-1864) came to live at Acomb House (now demolished) in Charlton Kings. James Yeames had been HM Consul-General at Odessa and was an uncle of Sir William Frederick Yeames RA (also born in Russia), the painter of 'And when did you last see your father?'<sup>14</sup>. (Edward Wilson and he were distant cousins and may have inherited their artistic talent from a common ancestor.)

### *Military graves*

There are many military graves, among which there are at least 30 generals and seven admirals, but pride of place goes to three holders of the Victoria Cross:

**Captain Cecil William Buckley, Royal Navy**, in the Crimean War. In 1856, then a lieutenant, he volunteered with two others to make a commando-style landing on a beach controlled by the Russian army. Despite considerable opposition, they managed to set fire to corn stores and ammunition dumps and destroy enemy equipment. All three were awarded the VC. Five days later Lieutenant Buckley took part in another such raid. He died in Madeira in 1872 and is commemorated on the grave of his widow at Leckhampton.

**William Fraser McDonnell**<sup>15</sup>, during the Indian Mutiny. He was a member of the Bengal Civil Service and one of only five civilians to hold the award. In July 1857 he and 35 troops were escaping from rebel attack in a boat that had been sabotaged and was without oars. Under incessant fire, he climbed out to free the rudder and guided the boat across the river to safety. He afterwards remained in India for a time and was Judge of the High Court in Calcutta from 1874 to 1876. He retired to Cheltenham, also his birthplace, where he died in 1894.

**Major Douglas Reynolds, Royal Field Artillery**, during the First World War. The son and grandson of army officers, he was a professional soldier and had fought in the Boer War and served in India. He won his award for two separate acts of courage, in August and September 1914, for rescuing an artillery piece under heavy fire and single-handedly silencing an enemy battery. Subsequently he was twice injured and died from the effects of gas poisoning in February 1916, aged 34. He was also made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He is commemorated on his father's grave and his name is on the war memorial in Christ Church, Cheltenham.<sup>16</sup>

### *Planters and Pioneers*

In an article in *Journal 9*, James Toomey described the lives of three indigo planters who retired and lived as neighbours in Cheltenham, all of whom died within the space of twelve months and were buried almost next to each other. These were **James Cox** (1820-1892), **David Russell Crawford** (1810-1892) and **George Nevile Wyatt** (d.1891 aged 73). James Cox was sent to India to help at his uncle's plantation at the age of 15 and returned 25 years later, having made his fortune. In 1884 he moved with his family to Cheltenham, where he bought Thirlestaine Hall (now the headquarters of the Chelsea Building Society), close to the home of David Russell Crawford.

George Nevile Wyatt and his wife **Augusta Warren Wyatt** (d.1905 aged 81) lived at Lake House in Thirlestaine Road (now owned by Cheltenham College and renamed Southwood House).<sup>17</sup> George Nevile Wyatt had been a churchwarden at St Luke's, Cheltenham, but in 1884 their daughter Annie married the Reverend William Clifford Aston, a son of the Vicar of St Luke's. In 1894 the patronage of the living at Leckhampton was up for sale, and was bought by Mrs Wyatt (by then a widow). When there was a vacancy in 1895 she was thus in a position to arrange the appointment of her son-in-law as the incumbent. This act of nepotism was perhaps forgivable, as Clifford Aston brought energy and good fellowship to the village. He is best remembered for inspiring the building of the Parish Hall as a centre of its social life.<sup>18</sup>



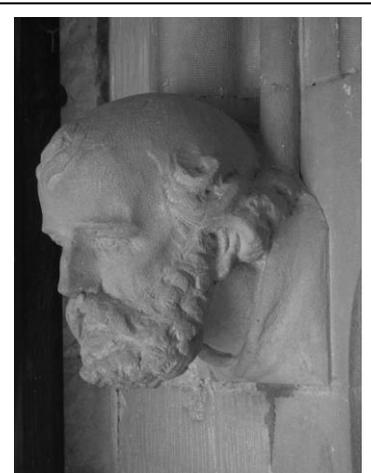
Henry Godfrey,  
aged 26.  
Courtesy of  
Tony Warner.

Next to the grave of John Hargreaves lies a fellow member of the New Club, **Henry Godfrey, JP** (1824-1882), of Karenza (a building now renamed 'Lake House', owned by Cheltenham College). He came to live in Cheltenham in 1864 and had moved to Clare Villa by 1870<sup>19</sup>, renaming it Karenza in honour of his Cornish-born wife. Reports in the *Looker-On*<sup>20</sup> state that he was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 1875, that he was churchwarden first at St James's and then St Luke's, where he was also choir master over a period of ten years, and that he gave part of the garden of Karenza as a site for St Luke's mission room (the first Emmanuel church, in Naunton Parade). Not even in his obituary is there any mention of his earlier life. He was born in India but educated in England. He sailed to Australia at the age of 18 and, with very little previous agricultural experience went on to establish a sheep station of 64,000

acres and was later involved in lucrative gold trading. He left letters, diaries and art work that gave an invaluable picture of pioneering life at that time; these are deposited in the Victorian State Library in Melbourne. His wife, née **Mary Polwhele**, died as recently as 1931, aged 96. (I am grateful to Tony Warner, a descendant of Henry Godfrey living in Australia, for this additional and unexpected information. I was pleased to be able to pinpoint the grave for him when he visited Leckhampton recently.)

### *Three Architects...*

**John Middleton** had already built St Mark's when he was commissioned in 1865 to enlarge St Peter's, Leckhampton. In due course, as head of a busy architects' practice, he designed four more churches in the town and others further afield, as well as private houses.<sup>21</sup> Though the medieval origins of the church are still evident, the tag 'if you seek my monument, look around you' can be applied to him, especially as a sympathetic carving of a bearded man's head, which serves as a label stop in the porch, is generally reckoned to represent Middleton.

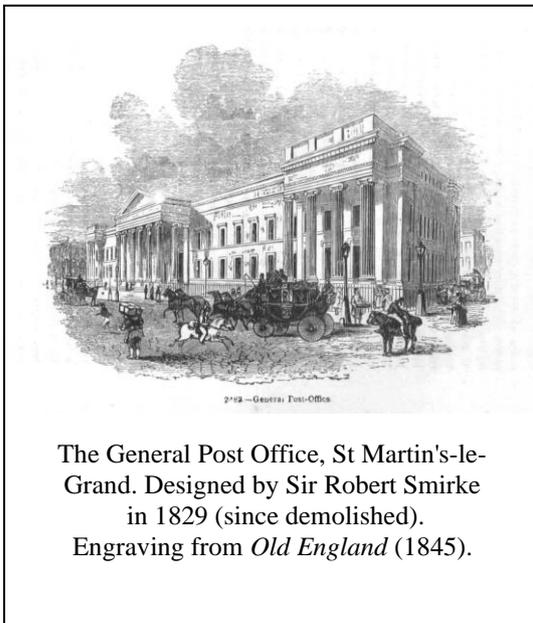


John Middleton.  
Carving in porch of  
Leckhampton Church.  
Photo by Eric Miller.

**Leonard William Barnard** (d.1951 aged 80) of The Bittams (burnt down in 1937), in Crippetts Lane. He was the son of the noted local historian Major Robert Cary Barnard, for whom John Middleton had designed Bartlow (now demolished owing to subsidence) on Leckhampton Hill. He was also an uncle of the artist, the late **Major Tom Barnard**, of The Giffards, opposite the church. Leonard Barnard volunteered to fight in the Boer War as a member of the Artists' Rifles, and his letters home made graphic reading.<sup>22</sup> He became the senior partner of Middleton's old practice and designed buildings at The Ladies' College and Cheltenham College and War Memorials including the one at Leckhampton. He also designed the pulpit for Leckhampton Church in 1913, ornamented with beautifully carved figures of angels playing musical instruments.



Leonard Barnard.  
Detail from photo of  
Leckhampton Church Lads'  
Brigade, 1910.  
Courtesy of Mrs Joyce Barrett



The General Post Office, St Martin's-le-Grand. Designed by Sir Robert Smirke in 1829 (since demolished). Engraving from *Old England* (1845).

**Sir Robert Smirke RA** (1781-1867). As Architect to the Board of Trade, he designed the British Museum, the Royal Mint, the General Post Office in St Martin's-le-Grand and other imposing public buildings. Locally, his work included the County Halls at Gloucester and Hereford, the Judge's Lodgings at Gloucester, Hardwicke Court, parts of Cirencester Park and, by contrast in Gothic style, Eastnor Castle. On his retirement he moved to Cheltenham where at first he lived at No 1, Italian Villas (now Lansdown Court); his address when he died was 20 Suffolk Square (later known as Bunwell).

Two of his brothers are commemorated at Leckhampton: **Thomas Smirke** (d.1870 aged 82), and **Sir Edward Smirke** (1795-1875), who had been noted staying with Sir Robert at Italian Villas in 1851. Sir Edward, a barrister, had been Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales, Recorder of Southampton and Vice-warden of the Stannaries of Cornwall and Devon.<sup>23</sup>

### *... and an Engineer and Polymath*

A plaque in the Lady Chapel commemorates **George Backhouse Witts** (d.1912 aged 64) of Hill House. He was brought up at Upper Slaughter, where his father had been Rector, as had his grandfather the Rev. F.E. Witts, the



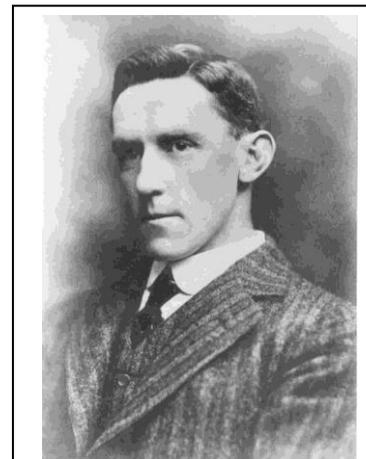
G.B. Witts.  
*Chelt. Looker-On*  
14 Sep 1912.

‘Country Parson’ whose diaries were edited by David Verey. He was a civil engineer by profession and designed and carried out the construction of the railway from Cheltenham to Bourton-on-the-Water. He was a man of great character and many interests and a friend of Dr Wilson, senior, and of Robert Cary Barnard. An enthusiastic archaeologist, he discovered 28 Stone Age skeletons in a long barrow at Buckholt Wood and published a handbook of archaeology for the county.<sup>24</sup> He was Honorary Secretary of the Cotswold Hunt for 26 years, a JP and a member of the County Council. As Chairman of the Leckhampton Parish Council he was referred to as ‘the unofficial lord mayor of Leckhampton’. Once, he rounded off a lecture about the geology of Leckhampton Hill by singing ‘George Ridler’s Oven’ and other Gloucestershire ballads.

### *Doctors of Medicine*

**Dr Disney Launder Thorp** (1805-1888) and his wife **Eleanor Thorp** (1814-1902) of Lypiatt Lodge are buried in a grave that retains its elaborate wrought iron railings. The doctor is also commemorated in two stained-glass windows, one of which illustrates the parable of the Good Samaritan. He was a Senior Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, and President of Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution from 1841 to 1844. His obituary refers to ‘the very many poor who had privately partaken of his bounty’ and also to ‘his devoted widow, animated by the same generous spirit’. She left money to provide coals and warm clothing ‘for the poor people in the parish of Leckhampton’ and also paid for the conversion of the Gordon Lamp from gas to electricity.<sup>25</sup>

**Harold Lloyd Davies** (*d.*1920, aged 51), was a greatly respected general practitioner of the old school; the present-day surgery in Moorend Park Road ‘Lloyd Davies House’ is named in his memory. He worked in Delancey Hospital and, during the First World War, at the Leckhampton Court Red Cross Hospital. After dealing with many cases of sickness during the post-war influenza epidemic, he himself caught the disease and died of pneumonia. ‘Everybody knew him ... not only a physician, but a friend’ read his obituary in the Leckhampton parish magazine.



Dr Lloyd Davies  
Courtesy of the  
Leckhampton Surgery

### *Clergymen and Scholars*

Among the numerous clergymen and their families the following names stand out for their other interests and achievements:

**The Reverend Joseph Fenn** (1819-1884), Vicar of Christ Church from 1859 and sometime Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge. He was active in the affairs of the town, for example supporting the establishment of a public library and campaigning for a better water supply. He helped found the church of St Stephen’s. The route of his funeral procession from Christ Church to Leckhampton was lined with hundreds of people, and clergy of all denominations attended.<sup>26</sup>

**The Reverend Joseph Esmond Riddle** (1804-1859). From 1840 until his death he was the first priest-in-charge at St Philip and St James's Church, Leckhampton. After obtaining a first class degree in classics at Oxford, he taught Latin and brought out several Latin dictionaries. He wrote numerous books and religious tracts defending evangelical principles against the Tractarian movement. These included scripture readings, sermons and prayers, a guide to liturgy and a history of the Papacy, *Letters from an absent Godfather*, *Manual of Christian Antiquities*, and *Illustrations of Aristotle on Men and Manners from the Dramatic Works of Shakespeare*. A tablet in his own church refers to 'his simplicity of character, his integrity, and his kindness of heart'. His widow moved to Rose Cottage, in Moorend Road, and worshipped at St Peter's. She gave the original clock for the Leckhampton Parish Hall. In her 1871 Census return she said that her income was 'derived from dividends and profits of a copyright' – clearly, from her late husband's books.

**The Reverend Edward Pryce Owen** (d.1863 aged 76) of Bettws Hall, Montgomeryshire, and Roderic House, Suffolk Square. He had for eighteen years been Vicar of Wellington, Shropshire, but withdrew from the ministry to devote himself to painting and drawing. His obituary refers to his etchings 'in the style of Rembrandt' and the 300 paintings of his own and others collected during his travels in Italy. In 1881 his library and the choicest paintings were advertised for sale by Phillips in London. There were also thirteen folios of topographical sketches, 31 manuscript volumes of his own sermons and 76 of his father's, Archdeacon Hugh Owen, who was joint author of what is still the standard history of Shrewsbury.<sup>27</sup> In 1882 Roderic House was bought for use as a boarding house by Cheltenham Ladies' College.<sup>28</sup>

### *Some Outstanding Women*

Any list of intrepid Victorian women travellers would include **Frances ('Fanny') Duberly** (1829-1902). She is buried at Leckhampton in the same grave as her husband **Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Duberly** (1823-1890), who as a captain in the 8th Hussars was the Regimental Paymaster during the Crimean War and the Indian

Fanny Duberly on her horse 'Bobs', before Sebastopol, with Captain Henry Duberly.  
 Photograph by Roger Fenton.  
 By permission of the British Library  
 (ADD.47218A f146)



Mutiny. She accompanied him throughout, being referred to as ‘the officers’ darling’, and wrote books about her experiences. A great horsewoman, she witnessed the Charge of the Light Brigade and was one of the first to ride into Sebastopol after the siege.<sup>29</sup> During the Mutiny she is reputed to have ridden over three thousand miles to visit cantonments. She and her husband eventually settled in Cheltenham, at St Clair in The Park, and Fanny’s obituary refers to her great circle of friends in the town.<sup>30</sup>

**Marian (Marianne, or Mary Anne) Burlton Bennett**

(d.1867 aged 52), a daughter of Frind Cregoe Colmore of Moor End, Charlton Kings.<sup>31</sup> She was known in her youth as ‘the Belle of Cheltenham’ – very appropriately, to judge from the portrait reproduced here. In 1833 she is said to have eloped with William Antony Burlton Bennett<sup>32</sup> and married him at Coldstream. He was a cricketer, regarded as a very promising batsman, who played a number of games for the MCC and other notable teams of the period. While an undergraduate at Cambridge, he had reportedly fought a duel at Boulogne.<sup>33</sup> Marian became the subject of a scandalous divorce case that came before the House of Lords in 1852. Using various assumed names, she had run away with another man. Her husband pursued her across France, Italy and Spain and back again before finding the two together in Horsham.<sup>34</sup> The older of her two sons, **Captain William Frind Charles Burlton Bennett** (d.1876 aged 42), is buried in the same plot. A Captain W.C.J. Burlton Bennett, who was a tenant of Leckhampton Court in 1870-71<sup>35</sup> was possibly the younger son.

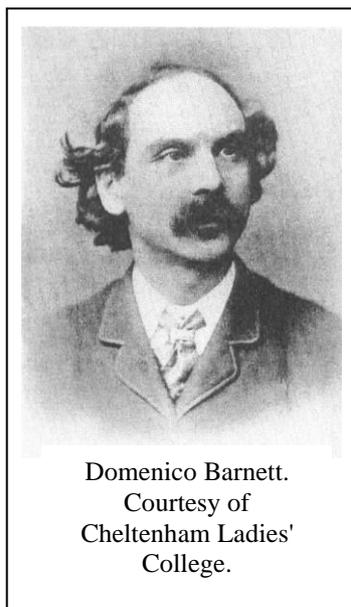


Marian Colmore, the Belle of Cheltenham. Detail from portrait miniature, CAGM.

A complete contrast is **Evangeline (‘Eva’) Butler** (1858-1864), the daughter of Josephine Butler, the social reformer, and the Reverend George Butler, then Vice-Principal of Cheltenham College. One day in August 1864 the couple were returning to their home at the Priory, London Road, when Eva ran to welcome them from the nursery, fell over the banisters and never recovered consciousness. This tragic experience lived with Josephine for the rest of her life and may well have inspired her campaigning ardour. Soon after the incident George Butler was appointed as Principal of Liverpool College, and it was in Liverpool that Josephine began her ministry among prostitutes and other exploited women, providing a shelter for them and campaigning against their degrading treatment under the Contagious Diseases Act. Eva’s grave is tended today by Beverley Grey, Josephine’s great-niece, who provided some insights into the Butlers’ family life in *Journal* 16.<sup>36</sup>

***Musicians, Father and Son***

**John Barnett** (1802-1890), who spent fifty years as a singing master in Cheltenham, is described on his tombstone as ‘Father of English Opera’. He was born at Bedford, the son of a Prussian jeweller, and was a cousin of the German composer Meyerbeer. He composed many songs and ballads and directed musical farces at the Lyceum in London, where the Grand Romantic Opera *A Mountain Sylph* was first performed in 1834. Though regarded as his best work, it was parodied by Gilbert and Sullivan in *Iolanthe*.<sup>37</sup> In 1841 he moved to Cheltenham, where he established himself as a



teacher of singing, both at The Ladies' College and privately. He had many addresses but finally settled at Cotteswold, on the side of Leckhampton Hill.

John Barnett's wife was the daughter of the 'cellist Robert Lindley, a long-standing friend and colleague of the double bass virtuoso Domenico Dragonetti after whom their son **Domenico Dragonetti Joseph Barnett** (d.1912 aged 70) was named.<sup>38</sup> He was Professor of Music at The Ladies' College for 44 years until his death at Cliff Cottage, not far from Cotteswold. He studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire and was described as a brilliant musician and teacher who nevertheless 'found it hard to suffer fools gladly' and 'would tear his hair out and hurl music on the floor, in agony at his pupils' imperfections', while the clerk in the stationery office acted as a chaperone.<sup>39</sup>

### *A Mercer and Churchwarden*

**Alexander Shirer** (1801-1866), of South Court was head of the firm of Shirer and Macdougall, which advertised as hosiers, linen drapers, haberdashers, lacemen, silk mercers and tailors<sup>40</sup> and later became Shirers and Lances. In the 1851 Census Alexander Shirer and his two sons gave their occupation as 'mercet'. For many years a churchwarden at Leckhampton, he is commemorated in a stained-glass window, and another nearby is a memorial to his two daughters: Elizabeth, aged nine, and Margaret, who was only one day old. The window portrays St Elizabeth and St Margaret above the Raising of Jairus's daughter. Alexander Shirer was widowed twice, and the girls were daughters of his third wife.

### *A Link with the National Trust*

An inscription near the entrance to the National Trust property at Toys Hill, Kent, states that the ground was given in memory of Frederick Feeney, 'who ... is buried in the churchyard of Leckhampton near Cheltenham'. An adjoining piece of land was presented by Octavia Hill, the Trust's founder.<sup>41</sup> **Frederick Feeney** (1858-1897) was a son of John Frederick Feeney, a Protestant Irishman, one of the founders of the *Birmingham Post*. After his father's death he settled in Cheltenham, where he had been a pupil at the College, and devoted his considerable private means to 'useful social, philanthropic and religious work'. Though called to the bar in 1887, he did not practise other than as a JP. He was a member of the Cheltenham Board of Guardians and later the Borough Council, and at the time of his death was Deputy Mayor. Though he was a leading Conservative, he was popular with supporters of all parties. He was particularly concerned with the administration of Poor Law and took a deep personal interest in the welfare of workhouse boys as they went out into the world.<sup>42</sup> He was also a Freemason and a member of the New Club. He was commemorated by a stained-glass window at All Saints Church, where he had been a churchwarden, and at All Saints School the gymnasium was equipped in his memory.<sup>43</sup>

### *A Blacksmith*

The inscription on the tombstone of **William Bushell** (*d.*1886 aged 80) reads ‘53 years blacksmith in this parish’. He lived and had his workshop in Norwood Terrace, Bath Road (since occupied by Garden Irrigation Supplies and other adjacent shops). In front was a weighing machine and behind his back yard ran the quarry tramroad (at least, until the rails were taken up in 1861). He was thus well placed to attend to the horses that pulled the wagons to and from the hill, among many others. His father, brother and three sons were all smiths.<sup>44</sup>

### *The Oldest Man in England*

Contemporary correspondence in *The Times*, headed ‘oldest man in England’, discussed the reputed age of **Richard Purser** (*d.*1868 aged 111). He had no birth certificate but, as proof of his age, he claimed to have been taken by his mother at the age of four to see ‘an illumination in honour of the coronation of George III’ (ie in 1760, which would have put him in his 112th year when he died). The *Cheltenham Examiner* reported that he worked as a labourer up to within a few weeks of his death, his scanty earnings being supplemented by an annual grant of £5 from the Crown and by ‘occasional gratuities from his wealthier neighbours, who sympathising with his great age felt pleasure in contributing to lighten his burden’.



Richard Purser, shortly before his death at the age of 111.  
Courtesy of C.W. Purser.

### *A Tale of Espionage and Murder*

When you leave the church by the north door you cannot fail to notice the Byronic bust of the 19-year-old William Joseph Gale, illustrated below. Beneath it is the poignant inscription:

*Died Near Nazareth, September 14th, 1877. He fell among Robbers.*

What actually happened? And why is the incident commemorated in Leckhampton Church? None of the local newspapers made a mention, but an account appeared in *The Times* shortly afterwards, headed ‘Murder in Syria’.<sup>45</sup> The events occurred in Palestine when it was part of the Ottoman Empire, though European representatives were evidently able to act on their own authority. The story is both contemporary and Biblical, though sadly there was no Good Samaritan to come to the youth’s aid.

William Gale had been working on a farm run by a German colony at Haifa. (In modern terms, this could perhaps be compared with working on a Kibbutz while taking a gap year.) The British Consul-General at



William Joseph Gale.  
Sculpture in  
Leckhampton Church.  
Photo by Eric Miller.

Beirut, for whom he sometimes acted in a semi-official capacity, was anxious to obtain information about a band of marauding Bedouins, and William Gale undertook to find out all he could. He went to Nazareth and from there made his way to Tiberias and back, presumably gathering intelligence on the way. On his return to Haifa he became isolated from some muleteers who were accompanying him for that part of the journey and was not seen alive again.

An extensive search was made with the assistance of the Governor of Acre, involving the Consul-General, the Consul from Jerusalem and officers from a ship of the Royal Navy. Evidence that he had been murdered was found in a wood – a fragment of a shirt, his walking stick and a mutilated skull. Some Bedouins and inhabitants of the villages through which he might have passed were questioned and a judicial commission was set up. Circumstantial evidence pointed to one man who was known to possess a hatchet and had disappeared from his village, but those questioned refused to cooperate and the commission was dissolved without reaching any conclusion.

William Joseph Gale's connection with Leckhampton was at first a mystery but can perhaps be explained. His father was the artist William Gale (1823-1909), a Royal Academician who specialised in Biblical subjects. He was based in London and frequently moved address.<sup>46</sup> Of the few Gales listed in Cheltenham directories at that time, only one husband and wife had links with Leckhampton. These were John Gale (another retired planter from India) and his wife, of Oakfield, The Park. They are known to have worshipped at St Peter's, and John Gale was buried there in 1886; they could possibly have been related to William Joseph. Though the boy had not been a pupil at Cheltenham College (which would have been a distinct possibility), in 1878, the year after his death, his younger brother Benjamin was enrolled there. Further, in 1881 both Benjamin and a younger sister were living in Leckhampton, as lodgers at Cliff Cottage, Leckhampton (coincidentally, where the above-mentioned Domenico Barnett would live later).

A further twist to this story is that at least from 1878 to 1881 the artist William Gale was living at 30 Osnaburgh Street, St Pancras. The Census return shows this to have been the home of the sculptor Thomas Brock (1847-1922) later *Sir* Thomas, knighted for the many important public monuments which he had produced. The grandest was the monument to Queen Victoria outside Buckingham Palace; locally, he carved the statue of Robert Raikes in Gloucester. He specialised in portrait busts, often with a romantic air about them – not unlike the one of William Joseph Gale, which is so life-like. Therefore, though there is no maker's mark visible on the statue, not even on the back, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Thomas Brock might have been asked by William Gale to produce this memorial to his son.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Family and military historians and other specialists will already be well aware of the details relating to the people in whom they are interested. However, the general reader must surely be surprised at the range of notables associated with little Leckhampton. The men and women featured above have now gained fresh posthumous glory and with the passage of time their lives can be seen in sharper focus. The fact that many of

them would not have reached pensionable age if they had lived in modern times is enough to put their busy lives into perspective.

The choice of subjects has been arbitrary and others might have proved equally deserving and revealing. Furthermore, the gentry among them were able to enjoy their richer lives only thanks to the many domestic servants and tradespeople that waited on them. Since a parish churchyard is a repository of the history of a whole community, they too deserve to be commemorated at a future opportunity.

<sup>3</sup> See O'Connor, D, *Lives Revisited*, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Attributed to Sir Henry Taylor, 1800-1886.

<sup>5</sup> In the 1851 Census of Cheltenham and its surroundings (enumeration districts 1972 and 1973) some 143 residents were recorded as having been born in India and 169 in the East Indies.

<sup>6</sup> See Rudman, S, *Victorian Legacy*, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> The original plans and accompanying list of names are held in the Gloucestershire Archives, P198/1 CW 3/25.

<sup>8</sup> The inscriptions can be read on the Leckhampton LHS website <www.llhs.org.uk>.

<sup>9</sup> For more detailed accounts of the Norwoods and Tryes see Hart, G, *A History of Cheltenham*, 1965, Moore-Scott, T, *The Manorial Estates of Leckhampton*, 2002 (article in *Gloucestershire History*) and Miller, E, *Leckhampton Court – Manor House to Hospice*, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> See Eastham, R H, *Platts Textile Machinery Makers*, 1994; Williams-Ellis, E, *The Carrier's Tale*, 2004; and Miller, E, *The Hargreaves of Leckhampton Court* in *Leckhampton LHS Research Bulletin* No 3 (2004).

<sup>11</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 21 March 1908.

<sup>12</sup> See for example Seaver, G, *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic*, 1933, and Edward Wilson, *Nature Lover*, 1937, and Wilson, D M and Elder, D B, *Cheltenham in Antarctica*, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> According to his grandson James Whishaw, in *A History of the Whishaw Family*, 1935. See also its addendum by Lance Drayton (1997). The Leeds University Russian Archive includes papers relating to the family's life in St Petersburg and also its involvement in drilling for oil in the Crimea.

<sup>14</sup> It hangs in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

<sup>15</sup> Some sources show the name spelt with 2 ns. Both McDonell and McDonnell are carved on the family grave.

<sup>16</sup> See Devereux, J and Sacker, G, *Leaving all that was Dear*, and Rudman, S, *Op Cit*.

<sup>17</sup> Brian Torode points out that G N Wyatt bought Lake House from Mordaunt Ricketts, also a former indigo planter.

<sup>18</sup> For more on the patronage see Miller, E, *The History of Leckhampton Church*, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> *Annuaire* 1870.

<sup>20</sup> 22 May 1872, 7 July 1875, 1 March 1882, 10 May 1882.

<sup>21</sup> See Barnard, L W, *Ninety Years Past*, 1949, and a forthcoming book by Brian Torode.

<sup>22</sup> See Miller, E, *Leckhampton Yesteryear*, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*. A stained-glass window in his memory at Truro Cathedral mentions the last of these appointments.

<sup>24</sup> *TBGAS* Vol 35 Part I (1912)

<sup>25</sup> *Looker-On*, 10 June 1899.

<sup>26</sup> Rudman, S, *Op Cit* and *Looker-On* 6 July, 2 August and 15 November 1884.

<sup>27</sup> Correspondence with Mary Paget.

<sup>28</sup> *Looker-On*, 18 July 1863, 14 May 1881 and 22 April 1882.

<sup>29</sup> See also Robinson, J, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers*.

<sup>30</sup> *Looker-On* 29 November 1902.

<sup>31</sup> See O'Connor, D, *Op Cit*.

<sup>32</sup> His second name is sometimes spelt with an 'h': Anthony. The surnames are sometimes hyphenated as Burlton-Bennett.

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to Howard Milton of Kent County Cricket Club and Catherine Malcolmson and Malcolm Underwood of St John's College, Cambridge, for some of these details.

<sup>34</sup> *The Globe and Traveller*, 26 May 1852.

<sup>35</sup> *Royal Directory* and *Annuaire*.

<sup>36</sup> See also Wainwright, D, *Liverpool Gentlemen – a History of Liverpool College*, 1960. George Butler's name lives on as one of the houses at the College (where the author of this article was a pupil).

<sup>37</sup> *Oxford Companion to Music*, etc.

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<sup>38</sup> Correspondence with David Lindley, a descendant.

<sup>39</sup> Clarke, A K, *A History of the Cheltenham Ladies' College*, 1953.

<sup>40</sup> *Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide*, 1850.

<sup>41</sup> *The Times*, 21 July 1898

<sup>42</sup> *Echo*, 25 March 1897

<sup>43</sup> Johnstone, S P, *All Saints Church*, 1967

<sup>44</sup> Census returns, Cheltenham directories and correspondence with Jim Gainsford of Sydney, Australia, a descendant of the Bushells.

<sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 9 November 1877 and 10 January 1878. I am indebted to the late Dr John Garrett, who drew these accounts to my attention in 1991.

<sup>46</sup> Johnson, J, and Gretnier, A, *Dictionary of British Artists 1880-1940*.

<sup>47</sup> Alan Brooks, who wrote about Leckhampton Church in *The Buildings of England* series (Penguin, 2002), agrees that my suggestion is 'eminently plausible'.

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## An unusual view of Cheltenham

JILL WALLER

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LONG AGO CHELTENHAM ACQUIRED A GENTEEL IMAGE of retired colonels and public schools, and over the years its publicists were pleased to promote this. From time to time attempts have been made to present a more realistic view of the town, with its many contrasts, but the view that it is a superior place, because of its ex-colonials and educational facilities, has persisted. It may therefore come as a surprise that it has also been considered an inferior place for exactly the same reasons.

In the autumn of 1924 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* published extracts from a newly-published book<sup>1</sup> by Col. B. de Sales La Terriere, who viewed Cheltenham with distain. Col. La Terriere had grown up at Alstone Lawn<sup>2</sup>, a mansion that stood on the site of what is now Pates Avenue. His family was known in the area for their sporting prowess, particularly in the hunting field. The *Chronicle* did not feel able to publish the Colonel's outspoken opinions in full, as they 'might conceivably give offence', but did include the following:

*'I was about four when we came to live at Alstone, a small property then about a mile out of Cheltenham. My mother had lived all her life with a Mr and Mrs Prescod, and had been practically adopted by them. Mr Prescod owned plantations in the West Indies, and was – before a sentimental wave liberated the slaves (the only available labour) a very wealthy man. I always understood he had some £40,000 a year. However, sentiment destroyed all the prosperity of the West Indies.'*

After this introduction, which would certainly not be considered politically-correct today, the Colonel went on to describe what he despised about Cheltenham. It was a view the *Chronicle* took pains to point out that it did not share:

*'Those were the palmy days of Cheltenham, when it really was a fashionable resort, where people with money to spend came to enjoy themselves. Everything was altered and spoilt when the College was built, and the system of "day-boarders" with education "on the cheap" was started. Small private schools sprang up all over the*

*place as feeders for the College, and the fashionable residents and visitors were soon ousted by a host of Anglo-Indians, and others of the same class, with crowds of children and two-pence halfpenny to live on; and most of the fun and fashion departed from the place never to return.'*

On another page in his book La Terriere put his somewhat narrow view again:

*'There were not many nice people living at Cheltenham when I first remember it, as by that time the villa residents and the little people from India had crept in in shoals to get their families educated on the cheap; thus people who had settled there as a pleasure and hunting centre had been swamped out.'*

Further on the Colonel once more described the town and its inhabitants:

*'Cheltenham was very strange and a thing apart from any other. As then constituted it really dated from the foundation of the College. One old Indian after another came and settled there and their impecunious relations followed suit. They bred families all educated in the schools in Cheltenham, while their fathers and mothers walked up and down the promenade and waited to die! The boys generally went to India, the girls waited for them, marrying them when they came home, and this having been going on for three or four generations, resulted in a population mainly living on pensions, most of whom had never been out of Cheltenham, except to go to India, and have no ideas or interests except in those places. The grandchildren of the first settlers are now also walking up and down the Promenade – waiting to die!'*

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<sup>1</sup> La Terriere, B. de Sales (Exon of the Yeoman of the Guard), *Days That Are Gone: Being the Recollections of some Seventy Years of the Life of a Very Ordinary Gentleman and his Friends in Three Reigns* (Hutchinson, 1924)

<sup>2</sup> See Waller, Jill, 'Christina Rossetti's Cheltenham Connection', *CLHS Journal* **18** (CLHS, 2002) pp.70-74

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## A police court sketch - 1885

### VIC COLE

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*This article is an exact transcript of an amusing article from the Cheltenham Free Press dated 22 August 1885, except that to make it more easily readable, paragraphs have been inserted where thought appropriate.*

**'Attend the court, and thou shalt find in that place the manners of mankind'**

*'I SUPPOSE THE MOST POPULAR PLACE OF AMUSEMENT IN CHELTENHAM is the Police Court. Go there when you will, in wet or dry, in sunshine or in tempest, and you will be as sure to find as 'large and appreciative' an audience as if you visited the theatre or Assembly Rooms under the happiest circumstances. Perhaps the company will hardly be so select a character as you would wish, but what matter? It will at least be a very picturesque and enlightening one, and will afford plenty of variety into the bargain. A motley assembly,*

truly, one would imagine that they revelled in the details of crime, and perhaps a rather large percentage of them have, before this, personally adorned the dock, a circumstance which would enable them, to follow the proceedings of the Court, not only with keen zest, but with something of the authority of a critic. These spectators of the business are of all ages, and are generally rather tightly packed, for the "pit" accommodation is really scanty, considering that the matinee is free. True, they don't object to a little crowding at the door, it reminds them of the gallery entrance on boxing night, and the exuberant use of elbows is an exercise they enjoy; but it must be rather awkward on a Monday morning, when you are expecting a near relative to have a prominent part in the programme, to be told by a grim visaged constable at the entrance that "the ouse is full." It is gratifying to think, however that such heart rending disappointments are not often experienced, but in tight corners, must expect a squeeze.

'To say that all these people suffer from contusions of their optics, would be an exaggeration, but black eyes are pretty well represented in the throng, especially, sad truth, among the women. In the matter of dress, our friends here seem to be superlatively indifferent to fashion, but, as a rule, they are warmly and decently clothed, and whilst there is poverty enough and to spare, utter detestation is decidedly conspicuous by its absence. How in the world some of them get a living, is one of those deep mysteries which, "no fellow can understand," nor ever hope to. You will see them a little before eleven on Petty Sessions days, congregated outside the Police Station, smoking their dirty little clay pipes, discussing with the policeman on duty the prospects of a lively sitting, or calling to mind tender reminiscences of some old dock favourite, now at Portland. They belong in fact, do these people, to the genus "loafer", living upon the odd pence and silver which they manage somehow to acquire in a lazy sort of way, whilst others, more degraded and lazy still, are content to be clothed and fed out of the earnings of their friends.

'There is another kind of visitor to the Court, and he is a curiosity in his own particular way. He appears to be a retired grocer or haberdasher, who is possessed of a little money and abundance of time, and thinks he cannot employ his mornings better than watching the shady side of life. Accordingly, with the regularity of clockwork, and while with a countenance of semi-official importance, he takes up his accustomed corner, and, nodding platonically to the myrmidons of the law who may happen to be pressed, divests himself of his surtout and hat, and pulls out yesterdays paper, adjusts his antiquated eye glass, and proceeds to make himself comfortable, pending the arrival of the magistrates.

'So much for the audience, meanwhile, the Court assumes an aspect of bustle and preparation, and judging from the cluster of policemen at the rear, who all look very much as if they had each a case, the Bench is promised a lengthy sitting. The Clerk, an elderly gentleman of dignified and quiet manner, seats himself before his desk; the Superintendent arranges his charge sheets and summons, glancing ever and anon at a Brobdignagian book as if in search of material information, that book, bye the bye (generally kept in his office), is an awful volume, fraught with dire consequences to evil doers. It is an infallible encyclopaedia of local reprobate, and it tells you everything about them that is bad and nothing that is good. Should a prisoner be a little chary, just a trite delicate, about acknowledging some previous conviction, the sight of this volume undergoing a rapid search by the practised eye of the canny Superintendent, settles the difficulty at once. Its official appearance and size are irresistible. But it is very seldom that the Chief of Police needs to consult this oracle, for he knows the Cheltenham Newgate Calendar pretty well by heart, and has at his finger's ends the biographical and family connections of the most suspicious



# Jane and Cassandra Austen in Cheltenham 1816

CAROLYN GREET

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*This article was originally published in the Jane Austen Society Report for 2003<sup>1</sup>. It also formed the basis for the keynote lecture entitled 'Cheltenham at the time of Jane Austen's visit' that Carolyn gave at the Jane Austen Society Annual Conference held at the Carlton Hotel, Cheltenham on 8-10 September 2006. Our thanks to Carolyn and to the Jane Austen Society<sup>2</sup> for allowing the article to be reproduced here.*

IN THE SPRING OF 1816 novelist Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra paid a visit to Cheltenham, primarily for the sake of Jane's health. Other members of the family had previously visited the little town, including their eldest brother James and his wife, as Jane had mentioned in a letter of 1813: 'They travelled down to Cheltenham last Monday very safely & are certainly to be there a month...'<sup>3</sup> Three to four weeks was the average period to spend where the main object of the stay was to take the waters, though for many visitors the therapeutic value of the stay was secondary to the social, and visits of several months were not uncommon.



Late 19<sup>th</sup> century engraving  
of Jane Austen based on  
sketch by her sister  
Cassandra.  
Wikipedia.

Cheltenham was then in its fashionable heyday. Following the immense boost to its popularity provided by the five-week visit of George III and his family in 1788, money had poured into the small market town and much rebuilding had taken place, though major expansion was delayed until the end of the Napoleonic war. The town was small and rustic compared with Bath, and virtually all its buildings were still grouped together along the single mile-long High Street. Jane and Cassandra would have found the town as yet unlit by gas – this came two years later, in 1818 – with a single set of Assembly Rooms, a theatre, several libraries, an expanding variety of shops (many of which opened solely for the Season) and naturally a considerable number of lodging houses.

*'I tell him he is quite in luck to be sent here for his health...'<sup>4</sup>*

By 1816 the original Spa Well – the Royal Well, as it was by then known – had been augmented by several others, though was still one of the best patronised. Situated at some distance south of the High street and surrounded by a small paved square, it had an elegant Long Room with a balcony on which musicians played every morning between 7.30 and 9.00 a.m., an 'elegant repository' of prints offered by Mr Fasana from Bath and a beautiful double avenue of elms – the 'Well Walk' – which

led up to the medieval parish church some three hundred yards away. The waters of this well, like the others on the south side of the High Street such as Lord Sherborne's and Montpellier, were saline; on the eastern side were two chalybeate wells. The waters of the various wells varied slightly in their composition, but the general advice to those drinking was the same: 'The principal benefit is derived from drinking it at the pump early in the morning, when the temperature, volatile principles, and iron, enhance the value of the remedy; and the early walk in the pure cool air enables those who pursue the salutary practice to eat a hearty breakfast'.<sup>5</sup>As for quantities, 'some can only bear two or three glasses in a morning, while others drink three or four before breakfast'.<sup>6</sup> The effect of the water is decidedly laxative, so four glasses before breakfast was probably exceptional. Early risers reached 'their' wells by 7.00 a.m. and the peak time for drinking was until 9 a.m.

It is impossible to say which well Jane patronised; during Cassandra's second visit to Cheltenham in September later that year, Jane wrote to her 'The Duchess of Orleans, the paper says, drinks at my pump'<sup>7</sup> but that offers no clue. On balance it seems likely that she patronised either the Royal Well or Montpellier; the former provided a pleasant stroll without being too far, and the waters were generally considered to be rather more palatable than those of the other wells. Montpellier provided five pumps, each offering a slightly different type of water, which might explain Jane's mention of 'my pump', implying a different one from that patronised by Cassandra. There is no specific indication that Cassandra took the waters at all, but virtually all visitors did so, even if only cursorily. At neither well were visitors charged, though they were expected to make a donation. If Jane visited the Royal Well she would have known Hannah Forty, who had been pumper here since 1772 and died a few months after her visit, in August.

*'I do not think I should be tired, if I were to stay here six months'*<sup>8</sup>

The Cheltenham Season extended from May to October though it was at its height from July to September. Jane and Cassandra arrived before the fashionable whirl really began and Jane clearly preferred this quieter period: 'But how very much Cheltenham is to be preferred in May!' she wrote to Cassandra in September.<sup>9</sup> Although the exact dates of the sisters' visit are not known, it appears that they were in Cheltenham for three to four weeks, from half-way through May to the first half of June. The weather was not particularly good, but the *Cheltenham Chronicle* commented on 23 May 'Notwithstanding the unusual variableness of the weather, our well-walks and promenades have begun to boast of a more numerous company than we ever remember so early in the season' and there was plenty to attract those who wished for an active social life.

*'...a very agreeable young man, introduced by Mr King...'*<sup>10</sup>

The Assembly Rooms presided over by the Master of Ceremonies Mr King<sup>11</sup> were the main focus of activity. At the time of Jane's visit there must have been some anxiety about the usual programme of summer balls, for the existing Assembly Rooms, built only six years earlier when the previous ones became inadequate for the increasing number of visitors, were being rebuilt yet again. The first Summer Ball of 1816 was announced for Monday 20 May, the second a week later; then there was the usual Ball in honour of His Majesty's Birthday on Monday 3 June, after which balls

were to be held on Mondays and Fridays in the usual way.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile a larger and far grander Ballroom was under construction on the site next door: this was opened in July by the Duke of Wellington, after which the old Rooms were demolished and rebuilt with additional facilities, replacing the previous cramped rooms for tea, billiards, cards, backgammon and reading. The early balls of 1816 must therefore have been held in some discomfort, while rebuilding and alterations were in progress.

*'...it was a play she wanted very much to see...'*<sup>13</sup>

Presumably Jane's state of health ruled out dancing, even had she wished to attend a Summer Ball, or indeed one of the Card Assemblies which had been set up at the request of some of the ladies; these were held on Wednesdays. Alternative amusement was offered by theatrical performances, which in 1816 took place in the building opened 11 years previously. This had replaced the small theatre opened by John Bowles Watson in 1782, where in 1788 the royal party attended several performances. Increasing visitor numbers encouraged the manager to buy a plot of land in Cambray, just behind the High Street on the south side, and erect a new and much larger theatre, opened in 1805. Tickets were more expensive than in many provincial theatres, box seats costing 4s., pit 2s. 6d. and gallery 1s. There were three performances a week, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and though the main summer season had not begun at the time of Jane and Cassandra's visit, they would still have been able to see a variety of attractions. On Saturday 18 May the main drama was *The Merchant of Venice* with Mr R. Hall as Shylock, followed by *The Romp* in which the part of Priscilla Tomboy was played by Miss Hatton (who died in October the same year). A week later came *The Play of John Bull; or, An Englishman's Fireside*; in this Mr Hall played Peregrine, Mrs Alsop played Lady Caroline Braymore, and the lead role of Job Thornberry was taken by 'an Amateur', as was frequently done at the time. The second piece of the evening was *Catherine & Petruchio* – presumably a version of *The Taming of the Shrew* – again with some parts taken by amateurs. The evening was a benefit for Miss Costello, and the prices of both boxes and pit were increased (to 5s. and 1s.6d. respectively), a total of nearly £100 being taken.<sup>14</sup> Another curious – though typical - juxtaposition of pieces came next: on Thursday 30 May *Julius Caesar* was followed by the farce of *Matrimony*. Saturday 1 June brought an evening dedicated to comedy: Mr Bologna of Covent Garden, 'universally acknowledged the first pantomime performer in the kingdom', and Mr Norman in 'a comedy never acted here, called *Rich & Poor*'. The part of Rivers was taken by Mr Hall, that of Zorayda ('with songs') by Mrs Alsop. That was not all, for 'In the course of the evening Mr Hall will give his much admired IMITATIONS, with the WHISTLING ORATOR, or a Dissertation on the Letter S, with Lines, written by himself, for the Occasion', and the entertainment concluded with the Grand Pantomime of *Don Juan*. How one would like to know Jane Austen's reactions, especially to the versatile Mr Hall. After all that, Sheridan's comedy *A Trip to Scarborough* on 8 June seems rather tame.

*'...here are a variety of amusements, a variety of things to be seen and done all day long...'*<sup>15</sup>

Other attractions in the town included puppet shows – the 'English Fantoccini' – given every weekday during the Season at the little Sadlers Wells theatre in St George's Place; and a Masquerade 'upon the Plan adopted in the Metropolis, and to

be given in honour of His Majesty's Birthday, and the late ROYAL NUPTUALS of PRINCE LEOPOLD and PRINCESS CHARLOTTE', for which John Bowles Watson had acquired a large supply of 'Character Dresses, Masks etc.' from London. Mr Dinsdale, an artist who had taken up residence in Cheltenham, opened an exhibition of paintings daily at his house in North Street from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m., with no charge for admission. For the more intellectual there was a discussion of vaccination on 30 May, and an exhibition in the grandly named Saloon of Arts where the 'principles and practice of Aërostation<sup>16</sup> will be rendered familiar by pleasing philosophical experiments'; this was open daily from 10.00–4.00 and 6.00–9.00, admission 1s.6d.

*'The library of course afforded everything...'*<sup>17</sup>

'Your Library will be a great resource', wrote Jane to Cassandra in September 1816, and Cassandra certainly had plenty from which to choose, for by 1816 Cheltenham boasted at least six. One of these was at some distance from the main area of fashionable shops<sup>18</sup> but the others were all in prominent positions. Jones' Library, on the corner of North Street, was one of the oldest established; the Regent Library (near the present Regent Street) was currently being run by Stokes Heynes, though he was declared bankrupt a year later; Robert Hincks, who advertised that he was 'Librarian to HRH Duke of Gloucester', took over another established library and in the spring of 1816 bought up the neighbouring premises, opening his enlarged library in June. Probably the largest concern was that sometimes referred to as Cheltenham Library, though after Samuel Bettison took it over in March 1816 it was generally known by his name. This had a reading-room 80 feet long, and over 100 London, Irish and provincial papers were taken weekly.<sup>19</sup> 1816 was a good year for libraries; yet another opened in March, run by C. Campbell at a new shop created out of the old Lower Rooms which had become redundant in 1809.

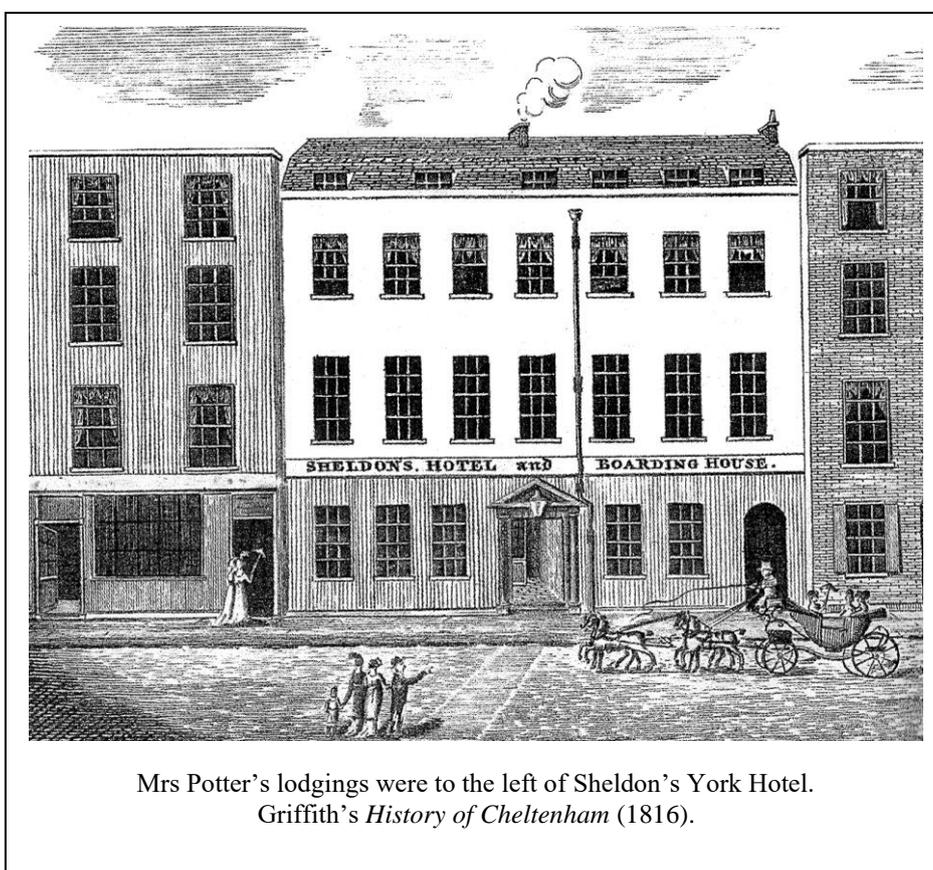
*'...all the useless things in the world that could not be done without...'*<sup>20</sup>

As for shops in general, as Griffiths' *New General Cheltenham Guide* published in 1816 commented: 'the shops are handsome, and many of them sufficiently splendid to gratify the most extravagant taste'. Silk-mercens, goldsmiths, perfumers and sellers of lace were all to be found close by, as was the sophisticated 'Confectioner & Ice Shop' of John Gunton, who catered for many of the social gatherings in the town. Drapers, milliners and perfumers abounded, and there was even one seller of ready-made dresses', unusual in such a comparatively small town.

*'...if we do go, we must be in a good situation...'*<sup>21</sup>

With visitor numbers increasing yearly – estimated at 12,000 in 1816 – the pressure on accommodation was considerable. By that time there were several hotels and boarding houses, some of them quite sizeable, but many visitors were still dependent on finding lodgings in private houses large or small. On Cassandra's second visit, in September, Jane was indignant on her behalf: 'Three guineas a week for such lodgings! I am quite angry'.<sup>22</sup> A few days later she wrote again: 'I hope Mary<sup>23</sup> will change her Lodgings at the fortnight's end; I am sure, if you looked about well, you would find others in some odd corner, to suit you better.' She then added the vital clue to the site of these unsatisfactory lodgings: 'Mrs Potter charges for the *name* of the High Street'.

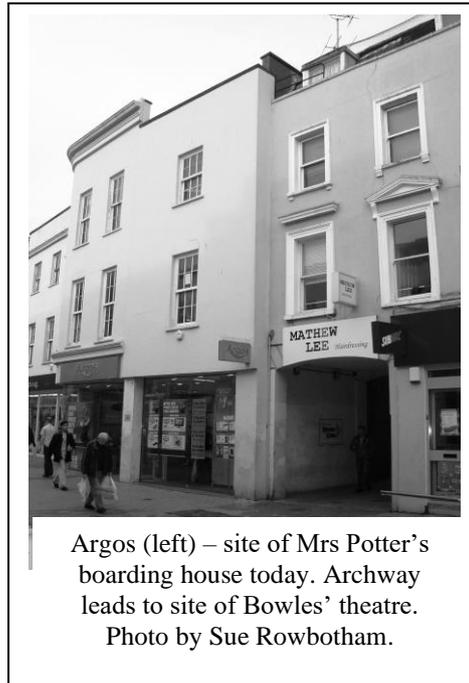
Mrs Potter's lodgings were on the north side of the High Street, towards the eastern end of the fashionable stretch and next to a small passage now known as Grosvenor Terrace. On the opposite side of the passage was Sheldon's York Hotel, the first hotel of any size at this end of the town; some five years previously it had expanded by taking in John Bowles Watson's original tiny theatre, which was located down the passage. The Assembly Rooms were to the south of the High Street, about 80 yards further down; these were often referred to as the Lower Rooms to distinguish them from the old Upper Rooms, a rival set of Assembly Rooms immediately opposite Mrs Potter's lodgings, which had closed in 1809. A guide book published in 1818 contains a print of the York Hotel: the building to the left of it is presumably the Potter lodgings. Obviously the accuracy of the drawing cannot be guaranteed, but the frontage of the hotel largely survives and is certainly very similar to that depicted, so it is reasonable to suppose that the other buildings are also shown correctly. The lodging house was later incorporated into the York Hotel, whose fortunes fluctuated during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup>



While Jane's criticism of Mrs Potter for 'charging for the *name* of the High Street' was somewhat unfair – at the time *all* lodgings were along the High Street – she perhaps had a point about the charges: although the 1816 Guide declared that 'charges, considering the celebrity of the place, are reasonable and satisfactory' and that 'general terms of the Boarding Houses are about £3 each person, per week', the largest and best-known boarding-house, Smiths, in fact charged only two and a half guineas, and indeed in August that year Sheldon's York Hotel next door to Mrs Potter's actually reduced its rates from three guineas to two and a half.

There is no way of telling whether these are the same lodgings where Cassandra and Jane herself had stayed earlier in the year, but it is a reasonable assumption; visitors frequently took the same lodgings time after time, and these were well-placed for all the amenities. Indeed Cassandra seems to have been less bothered by the drawbacks than Jane: ‘I am very glad you find so much to be satisfied with at Cheltenham. While the Waters agree, every thing else is trifling’.<sup>25</sup> Her main complaint appears to have been an intrusive piano-player, presumably another lodger in the house, for Jane adds ‘Success to the Pianoforte! I trust it will drive you away.’

‘...a post-office, I think, must always have power to draw me out...’<sup>26</sup>



Argos (left) – site of Mrs Potter’s boarding house today. Archway leads to site of Bowles’ theatre.  
Photo by Sue Rowbotham.

The final place that must be mentioned in connection with the sisters’ visit is the Post Office. This had recently moved from a central position near the Assembly Rooms to one slightly further east, a shorter walk in fact for anyone staying at Mrs Potter’s. Post from the south-east came in every day except Monday at about 11.00 a.m. and the letters could usually be collected at the Post Office by 11.45. The post for London went out every day except Saturday at 4.15 p.m.; letters were to be given in to the office by 3.30 ‘or delivered to the bellman.’

Finally, a word about the Potters. James Potter had been in business in Cheltenham as grocer and draper since at least 1787, apparently in partnership with his father John. The town’s first Directory, published in 1800, lists just one Potter, described as ‘shopkeeper’, who like so many others let lodgings. If he is the James Potter who married Lucinda Timbrell in 1789, she was presumably the Mrs Potter at whose lodgings Cassandra and perhaps Jane stayed in 1816. The second Directory of the town, published in 1820, does not mention the Potters; by then they had either moved or given up the business – one wonders how far this could have been due to the high prices charged by Mrs Potter.

<sup>1</sup> Greet, Carolyn S., ‘Jane and Cassandra in Cheltenham’, *The Jane Austen Society Report for 2003*, pp.47-54

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.janeaustensoci.freeuk.com/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Letter 96, 6 Nov 1813 (*The Letters of Jane Austen*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, Oxford, 1965)

<sup>4</sup> *Northanger Abbey* (Folio Society, 1960) Chapter.8

<sup>5</sup> *The New and Improved Cheltenham Guide* (1810).

<sup>6</sup> *The New Guide to Cheltenham* (1822).

<sup>7</sup> Letter 144, 4 Sep 1816

<sup>8</sup> *Northanger Abbey* (Folio Society, 1960) Chapter 10

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *Northanger Abbey* (Folio Society, 1960) Chapter 3

<sup>11</sup> Cheltenham shared him with Bath.

<sup>12</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 May 1816.

<sup>13</sup> *Northanger Abbey* (Folio Society, 1960) Chapter 12

<sup>14</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*. 30 May 1816.

<sup>15</sup> *Northanger Abbey* (Folio Society, 1960) Chapter 10

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<sup>16</sup> *Érostation* – the science of hot air or gas balloon flight.

<sup>17</sup> *Sanditon* (Folio Society, 1963) Chapter 6

<sup>18</sup> G.A. Williams who moved the following year to a prime position at the corner of the new Assembly Rooms; this was for many subsequent rooms one of the foremost libraries in the town.

<sup>19</sup> Griffiths, *New General Cheltenham Guide* (1816).

<sup>20</sup> *Sanditon* (Folio Society, 1963) Chapter 6

<sup>21</sup> *Persuasion* (Folio Society, 1961) Chapter 6

<sup>22</sup> Letter 145, 8 & 9 Sep 1816.

<sup>23</sup> Cassandra was in Cheltenham with Mrs James Austen.

<sup>24</sup> A small public house, the *York Tavern*, survived behind the premises until the 1930s.

<sup>25</sup> Letter 145.

<sup>26</sup> *Emma* (Folio Society, 1962) Chapter 34

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## Cheltenham's Parks and Gardens – 'in the news' 1887 and 2007

GEOFF NORTH and ELAINE HEASMAN

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JOURNAL 22, PUBLISHED IN 2006, INCLUDED AN EXTRACT from the *Illustrated London News* of 20 October 1866 giving an account of 'The Launch of the Cheltenham Lifeboat' on Pittville Lake. A request was made by the Editor of the Journal for more reports considered to be of significant interest for publication in a national paper or periodical.

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the *Illustrated London News* held a commanding position in the market-place. It was seriously challenged by *The Graphic*, founded in 1869 by William Luson Thomas, a wood-engraver who believed that illustrations had the power to influence public opinion on political issues. Thomas recruited a team of gifted artists including Luke Fildes, Hubert von Herkomer, John Millais and Frank Holl. Although circulation of *The Graphic* never reached that of the *Illustrated London News*, by 1871 57,000 copies a week were being produced and in 1882 the company owned three buildings, 20 printing machines and employed over 1,000 people. On the death of Thomas in 1900, Hubert von Herkomer wrote that,

*'there was a visible change in the selection of subjects by painters in England after the advent of The Graphic. Mr Thomas opened its pages to every phase of the story of our life; he led the rising artist into drawing subjects that might never have otherwise arrested his attention; he only asked that they should be subjects of universal interest and of artistic value... It was a lesson in life and a lesson in art.'*

In our collection, we have one page from *The Graphic* of 13 August 1887 (page 175/6), part of an issue featuring 'CHELTENHAM ILLUSTRATED'. Three of the illustrations, of Montpellier and Pittville Gardens, are reproduced here. The high quality of the prints in these early papers never fails to amaze and the fact that so many have survived in such good condition is something to be considered today when looking at printing processes and the various types and weights of paper available to produce our own Journal.

William Luson Thomas, for whatever reason, wanted to portray daily life as it was and as it could be seen by his artists. The idyllic scene of children playing by the lake in Pittville Gardens 120 years ago is not really very different to that which we know today. Obviously the horse and carriage and lone rider on horseback, the boys in sailor suits and the girl carrying a hoop, are representative of a bygone age, but the gardens are still visited daily by children anxious to play, feed the ducks and perhaps sail a boat, albeit nowadays more likely to be by remote control!

In 2007 the newly formed group 'Friends of Pittville' are working with the Cheltenham Borough Planning group to obtain funding for the restoration and development of the Pittville Park estate. The support of the local community in this venture is critical and those interested are invited to visit the Friends' website at [www.friendsofpittville.org](http://www.friendsofpittville.org)

The scenes in Montpellier Garden, however, bear little resemblance to present day activities. There is a certain grandeur in the view of the more affluent of society promenading or standing in groups engaging in polite conversation whilst the bands play in the bandstand. Tennis is being played in the background whilst archery is taken seriously by ladies in elegant attire in the second print. In the 1880s tennis, croquet, archery and gymnastics were catered for and the Annual Lawn Tennis Tournaments held here were very popular. Cheltenham Archery Club, founded in 1856 by Horace Alfred Ford, 12-times winner of the National Championship, met in Montpellier Gardens and stored its equipment beneath the bandstand. Ford was instrumental in turning archery from a fashionable pastime into a serious sport. It was also considered to be healthy exercise for the young ladies of the day, the toxophilites claiming of the sport:

*'It lengthens life, it strengthens limbs,  
It adds to Beauty's glow,  
Disease flies off on rapid wing,  
From him who twangs the bow.'*

Archery continued in the Gardens until 1934 when the introduction of free access to the Gardens made shooting impractical.

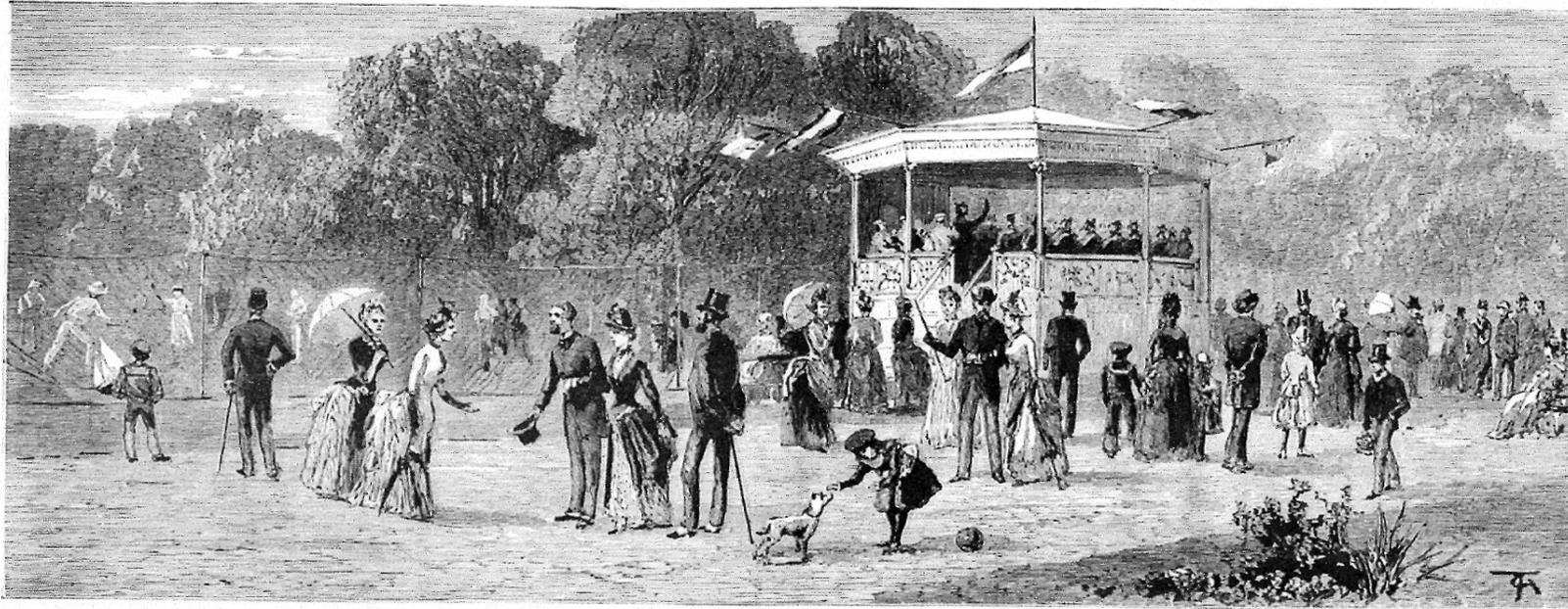
In 2006/7, following a Heritage Lottery Fund Award given in 2003, much redevelopment and reconstruction is being carried out in Montpellier Gardens to recreate many of the original features and to enable the Gardens to continue to be enjoyed by future generations. Celebrations are planned for the summer of 2007.

## **References**

*The Graphic*, 13 Aug 1887.

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MONTPELLIER GARDENS



ARCHERY IN MONTPELLIER GARDENS

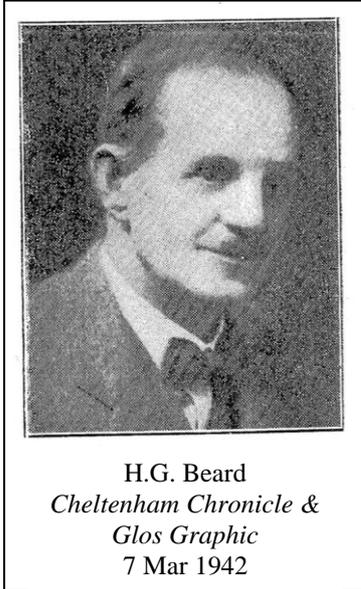


FITVILLE GARDENS

**‘CHELTENHAM ILLUSTRATED’ – Park scenes from *The Graphic* 13 August 1887**

# The Coliseum: Part 2

## ROGER BEACHAM



**‘Most Daintily And Tastefully Decorated In The  
Wedgewood<sup>1</sup> Style,  
Toned In French Grey And White’**

is how the *Cheltenham Looker On*<sup>2</sup> described the refurbishment of the Hippodrome following H.G. Beard’s acquisition of the theatre<sup>3</sup>. Renamed the Coliseum it re-opened on 12 January 1920 with a variety bill, the Mayor and Mayoress occupying a box at the first house. During the succeeding weeks the programme was similar to that provided by Gillsmith, of revue and variety (usually styled ‘vaudeville’). In early March the former organist of Glasgow Cathedral, G.T. Pattman, made the theatre literally shake and shudder when he played his own composition *The Storm* on his powerful 12-ton organ<sup>4</sup>. Following Pattman’s engagement the stage was occupied by an amateur revue, in aid of charity, organised by Miss Brown-Constable. It included an act by C.H. Brewer, son of the organist at Gloucester Cathedral, entitled *Piano and I*. Seven weeks later he returned at the beginning of his professional career with *Musical Monocle Monologues*. The local press commented ‘...all that Mr Brewer needs is just a little more vigour of action... would stamp him as an artist of no mean accomplishment and promise.’ He later became a producer for the BBC.

**COLISEUM, CHELTENHAM.**  
General Manager & Proprietor, **MR. H. G. BEARD.** Resident Manager, **MR. H. GREENLAND.**  
Musical Director - **MR. J. H. SHACKLETON.**  
Telegrams, Coliseum, Cheltenham, 415. Phone, Cheltenham, 415.

**GRAND RE-OPENING PROGRAMME**  
WEEK COMMENCING  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 12th, 1920.**  
**TWICE NIGHTLY, 6.45 & 8.50.** Doors open 6.30 & 8.30. No Early Doors.  
Seats Booked without Extra Charge.

**The Famous BARTLE QUARTETTE,**  
In Versatile Musical Act. Introducing **ESSIE & BABBS** with their Gold Concertinas  
Talent! Humour! Versatility!

**THE FANJACKS,** Refined Gymnastic Novelty.  
**VERA ROONEY,** the Chic American Comedienne and Dancer.  
**KITTY SINCLARIS & HARRY DALVA,**  
The Novelty Dancers.  
**PAT TREVOR & ETHEL WARE,** Comedy Entertainers.  
**COLISEUM GAZETTE.**  
**BILLY ROGERS,** an Original Comedian. "The Labour Leader."  
**THE TWO TOMBOYS,** in Comedy Humpsti-Bumpsti Act.

PRICES—Pit, 5d.; Pit Stalls, 9d.; Circle, 1/8; Stalls, 1/8; Dress Circle, 1/10;  
Orchestra Stalls, 1/10. Boxes for 4, 8/10. Extra Seats, 2/- each.

Advertisement for the re-opening of the Coliseum on 12 January 1920  
Courtesy of Cheltenham Reference Library.

Within a very short time Beard succeeded, where Gillsmith had failed, in obtaining a dramatic license, provided that he undertook ‘not to perform such plays as had been produced at the legitimate Theatre as apart from a music hall’<sup>5</sup>.

In May, in his first appearance here, the Bristol born singer and light comedian Randolph Sutton was a great success in the revue *The Dream Girl*. Film matinees were introduced in June for the summer months, with stage performances in the evenings. The comedians Jimmy Nervo and Teddy Knox, who had both appeared as solo artists at the theatre in its days as the Hippodrome, became a comic duo in 1919 and appeared at the Coliseum in September 1920. ‘Fantastic frolics’ proclaimed the advertisement, but the *Echo* reviewer disagreed. After praising the vocalist Jean Andrews, he wrote ‘we may pass over much of the comedy element’. In 1932 Nervo and Knox appeared at the London Palladium in the original ‘crazy week’ and became members of the Crazy Gang. October saw the engagement of the veteran Charles Coborn at the head of a variety bill but the *Echo* reported that he ‘was far from well and suffering considerable physical disability’<sup>6</sup>. Coborn entered a local nursing home and from the Tuesday his place was taken by a Canadian entertainer, W.V. Robinson.

From June until the end of September 1921 only films were shown. The theatre, cleaned and re-carpeted, re-opened with a live show on 10 October when Lewis Waller presented the musical *Afgar* ‘direct from the London Pavilion’ though without the London cast. The following day the *Echo* reported that:

*‘in future a much higher class of entertainment is to be associated with the Coliseum. That of the deteriorating music hall is to quietly disappear and, in the place of the lower class of revue, we are to be lifted to the higher artistic plane of light opera and musical comedy, and productions that will appeal to the best tastes.’*

24 October saw the production of ‘the first real legitimate play that has ever been put on at this house’, Lechmere Worrall’s comedy *Skittles* with Enid Erle, John Le Hay and Ronald Sinclair. In November William Le Baron’s, *The Very Idea* ‘the original West End production in its entirety’ with Easten Pickering recreating the role he had played at the St Martin’s Theatre. On Boxing Day that year the first pantomime staged at the Coliseum, *Babes in the Wood*, began a twice nightly two week run. On 23 January 1922 a second pantomime, *Cinderella*, from the Elephant and Castle Theatre, London, began a week’s run, ‘entirely overshadowing’, the previous pantomime and ranking, ‘as one of the best pantomimes we have had in Cheltenham for sometime’.

Mr and Mrs Walter Saltoun’s company were engaged for an indefinite period for a ‘series of dramatic plays’, opening on 8 May 1922 with *Seven Nights in London*. The following week the Mayor and members of the Council attended the first production of *A Mormon’s Future Wife* by Saltoun and his wife Aimee Grattan-Clydes. Other productions, many of which were written by the Saltouns, included *Soiled*, *A Fight for a Wife*, *What is a Home Without a Mother*, and *Her Forbidden Sacrifice*. The company’s run was interrupted at the beginning of June when the revue *Bubble and Squeak* played for a week. The Saltoun company’s engagement ended on 15 July with *The Man She Bought*.

Joseph Poole's pantomime, *Dick Whittington*, which opened on New Year's Day 1923, ran for one week only and was criticised by the *Echo* as 'more of a revue than a pantomime'. Randolph Sutton returned to the Coliseum in March 1923 with his own company in the revue *Spare Parts*. In July the theatre's usual fare of variety, revues and light plays, was varied by the visit of *The Gay Beggars*, a costume concert party presenting '18th century songs, dances and comedy with favourite numbers from *The Beggar's Opera* inspired by the production at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith'. Also performed was *The Waterman*, a ballad opera by Dibden first performed at the Haymarket in 1774. The visit of the concert party and Nigel Playfair's notable revival of the opera at Hammersmith, led Beard to engage the Old English Opera Co. in September 1923 to perform 'the original version' of *The Beggar's Opera*, with costumes and scenery designed from William Hogarth's paintings. Featuring Harry Crofton as *Captain Macheath*, Betty Hamilton as *Polly*, Chrystine Pienne as *Lucy* and Wilfred Brandon as *Peacham* it was performed twice nightly. Cheltenham had another opportunity to see *The Beggar's Opera* the following week when the Opera House presented another company with 'the exact version as played at the Lyric Theatre'!

The week beginning 1 October 1923 featured Datas, the memory man, in a variety bill. Born William Bottle in 1875 he fell ill with a chest complaint while working as a boilerman. During a long stay in hospital he passed the hours memorising facts from encyclopedias and reference books, later using his memory skills to great effect on the halls. The pantomime that year was Mr and Mrs H.B. Levy's *The House That Jack Built* which ran for 10 days and was immediately followed by a second pantomime, *Dick Whittington and his Cat*.

Box Office open from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. Phone 415.

Proprietor & General Manager: MR. H. G. BEARD.  
Resident Manager: MR. A. H. GREENLAND.  
Musical Director: MR. J. H. SHACKLETON.  
Stage Director: MR. F. MERRILL.

NO EXTRA CHARGE FOR BOOKING.

Doors open at 6.30 and 8.40.

No Early Doors.

Coliseum theatre programme.  
Courtesy of Cheltenham Reference Library.

In April 1925 the local press made much of the fact that a peeress was appearing at the Coliseum. Ada Springate, a low comedienne who appeared under the name of Lynda Martell, had met the Old Etonian actor Percy Vernon (in real life Lord Lyveden) when they both appeared in Cape Town. They married at Camberwell Registry Office and spent their honeymoon in Cheltenham. Lord Lyveden occupied a box to watch his new wife perform but sadly, their time together was short, for he died at Christmas the following year.

An act of great interest to Cheltonians arrived at the end of January 1926. The illusionist Captain Clive Maskelyne and his sister Mary came from St George's Hall, London, to the Coliseum to begin their provincial tour. The Maskelyne entertainment had originated in Cheltenham with Clive's grandfather John Nevil Maskelyne, who was born in the

town in 1839<sup>7</sup>. In March 1926 after an interval of 7 years, Will Garland returned to the theatre with a new South American revue, *Coloured Lights*. With the outbreak of the General Strike in May the revue company *Sacked Again* was prevented from travelling from Bolton and a scratch variety company appeared instead. The week following the *3 Boys Full* company was also prevented from travelling and again a week of variety was presented. In September John Henry, the first comedian to become a national personality through radio, appeared with his wife Blossom. The quack doctor and hypnotist Walford Bodie, ‘a man of forbidding appearance, with staring eyes and waxed mustachios’, appeared in October 1926 in *Fun on an Ocean Liner*, an act he had previously presented here in January 1917.



## MASKELYNE

:::: DIRECT FROM ST. GEORGE'S HALL, LONDON. ::::

**C**APTAIN CLIVE MASKELYNE, head of the famous Maskelyne's Mysteries, is making his first appearance in the provinces at the Coliseum Theatre Next Monday. His programme will include "The Spirits are Here," and "Through the Eye of a Needle,"—one of the most baffling illusions of recent years. Capt. Maskelyne will be supported by a company of Renowned London Vaudeville Artistes. This visit is of more than usual interest, as the Maskelyne family originally came from Cheltenham. The entertainment provided next week will be of an exceptionally high order, and the Cheltenham public are strongly urged not to miss this opportunity.

WEEK COMMENCING

**Coliseum Theatre, Monday, 25th January.**

CHELTENHAM.    ::    'Phone 415.    6.40 p.m. ——— and ——— 8.40 p.m

(NO EXTRA CHARGE FOR BOOKING.)

Advertisement from *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* 23 Jan 1926.  
Courtesy of Cheltenham Reference Library.

In January 1928 the theatre played host to the revue *The New Splinters* in which ‘all the women are men’, with the cabaret artiste Douglas Byng as the ‘leading lady’. It had its origin in a First World War concert party *Les Rouges et Noir*. The revue *The Golden West*, telling the story of the abduction of a pretty girl from an Arizona ranch, opened on 23 January 1928. The *Echo* commented that Hilda Baker, who played Polly, was ‘a wonderfully versatile artist, and the cleverness of her character studies, as well as the aggressiveness of her comedy will be appreciated’. Hilda was then aged 21 but had to wait until the 1950s when television made her – as Hylda Baker - a household name<sup>8</sup>.

Mrs Kimberley and Frank Fortescue produced the pantomime *Cinderella* which opened for one week on 7 January 1929. It was an unwise choice for *Cinderella* was also the pantomime at the Opera House. The eccentric comedian Wilkie Bard appeared in a sketch as *Mrs Higginbottom* in April. In June and July that year a repertory season was presented by one of Frank Fortescue’s companies with Paul Lorraine as the leading man. Opening with Walter Howard’s *The Story of the Rosary*, plays such as *East Lynne*, *One Night in Paris* and *Ignorance*, which was

advertised as 'for adults only', were presented twice nightly. During August 1929 a season of cine-variety was presented until on 9 September the revue *Tally Ho* opened. Fewer companies were now travelling on the road while the cinema, 'the rival from the tin box, had become all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing in every Gaumont and Cameo and Cinedrome'<sup>9</sup>.

In an attempt to stem the tide of audience losses the Opera House introduced a twice nightly season, but this failed and the theatre was sold to Cinema House Ltd. It re-opened on 30 September 1929 as a picture house with 'Cheltenham's first real talkie' *Bulldog Drummond*. Companies which would probably have played at the Opera House, now appeared at the Coliseum which advertised itself as 'Cheltenham's only Playhouse. No Talkies: No Canned Music'. Instead of a pantomime a stage circus was presented at New Year 1930. Later that month Ivy Close and Frederick Keen appeared in *Interference* 'from the St James's Theatre', and in February a company presented two comedies over two weeks, *The Perfect Wife* and *The Optimist*. The *Echo* commented on 'two such admirably acted plays... drew so thinly on the public patronage'.

*Charley's Aunt* was staged on 31 March by the 'No.1 company from Daly's Theatre' with Ivan Menzies and Jevan Brandon Thomas. This was followed by *The Princes Cabaret* headed by Lydia Kyasht, one of the great ballerinas of Imperial Russia who had also danced with Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*<sup>10</sup>. The 58 year old Harry Tate appeared with his son Ronnie (Harry Tate, junior) in April 1930 and in May that year the theatre's architect, H.T. Rainger, appeared as the *Rev. Dr Doran* in the Operatic Society's production of *Nothing But the Truth*, giving 'an excellent character study'. The Fortescue Players returned on 12 May with *The Hypocrites*, the company again headed by Paul Lorraine. The plays performed included *David Garrick*, *Nell Gwynne*, *Tainted* and *East Lynne*, ending their visit on 28 June with *Her Bridal Night*.

*Hot Chocolates*, the American revue featuring an all black cast opened on 30 June 1930 featuring Ike Hatch and Elliott Carpenter at the piano, Oscar Logan 'the jazz king' and the Bandanna Blossoms. The brilliant, eccentric actress Sydney Farebrother headed the cast of *Passing Brompton Road* in September 'direct from a season at the Criterion Theatre'. At the end of that month the Polish-born Stanislas Idzikowski, who had danced with Pavlova and Diaghilev, headed a company billed as 'the Covent Garden Russian Ballet' with *Les Sylphides* and *Spring Ecstasy*. The Coliseum orchestra needed to be augmented for the engagement in October of *Lilac Time* starring Hughes Macklin as *Schubert*. With a once-nightly performance which was unusual for this theatre, Beard was only 'just able to cover his costs' at the end of the week's run. The comedy *The Man in Dress Clothes* performed in December 1930 included 'some capital performances on the comedy side by Max Miller'.

A local branch of the British Empire Shakespeare Society had been formed in 1909. From 1925, whilst on the staff of Dean Close School, the Shakespearian scholar George Wilson Knight became an active member. Performances were usually given at Holy Apostles Church hall but at least three matinee performances were given at the Coliseum; *Macbeth* in November 1927, with Knight as Malcolm; *Romeo and Juliet* in November 1929, with Knight as Benvolio and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in November 1930, with Knight as Eglamour.

Hay Plumb appeared as *Charles Corner* in the comedy *A Warm Corner* in February 1931, to be followed by *Cape Forlorn* ‘entire production and effects from the Fortune Theatre’. Appearing as *Kingsley* was Arthur Howard who in 1935-37 was a member of the repertory company established at the Winter Garden.

In March came the news that live entertainment was to cease at the Coliseum. The resident manager, A.H. Greenland, was reported as saying:

*‘our experience has been the same as that of most other towns in the country. Everywhere people seem to be drawn more and more to the mechanical form of entertainment and the result is that our old established theatres are rapidly disappearing.’<sup>11</sup>*

The final plays to be staged were Noel Coward’s *Hay Fever* and *I’ll Leave It To You*. The theatre closed on 11 April 1931 with, as it had opened, a variety show, Rupert Ingalese’s *Show Scintillating*. With the orchestra dismissed and minor alterations to the building the Coliseum re-opened on 13 April as a cinema with *Hit the Deck*. However this was not quite the end of live performances as Beard honoured his arrangement with the Operatic and Dramatic Society allowing them to perform from 27 April two plays: Ian Hay’s comedy *Sport of Kings* ending the run with Agatha Christie’s *Alibi*.

Harry Beard died at his home in The Park on 28 February 1942<sup>12</sup>. The Opera House, recalled from its use as a picture house, now flourishes as the Everyman Theatre. After many years as a cinema and then a bingo hall and snooker club, The Coliseum now stands empty and decaying, its future unknown.

I gratefully acknowledge help received from my colleague Christopher Rainey, Kay Munday of Walsall Archives, Jan Marsh of Bournemouth Library, and my mother. Terry Moore-Scott kindly established that nothing about the theatre was held at Cheltenham Museum.

<sup>1</sup> sic

<sup>2</sup> *Cheltenham Looker On* 17 Jan 1920 p.18. The *Gloucestershire Echo* 13 Jan 1920 p.3 stated that the interior was re-decorated ‘throughout in white, picked out with old gold, with panelling of French grey and white’. At the same time a portion of the pit was taken to form eight rows of pit stalls.

<sup>3</sup> Henry George Beard, who owned a bakery in Gloucester had also, in 1919, bought the North Street cinema. On moving to Cheltenham he first lived at Charlton Court, London Road, afterwards moving to Flat 1, Queensholme, Pittville Circus Road, and in 1939 to Arundel Lodge, The Park.

<sup>4</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 6 Mar 1965 p.6, reminiscences of E.F. Merrell, former stage manager. This was the first of several visits Pattman made to the Coliseum.

<sup>5</sup> *Cheltenham Looker On* 10 Apr 1920 p.9.

<sup>6</sup> In his autobiography *The Man Who Broke the Bank* (1928) Coborn recalls appearing very early in his career in pantomime at the Old Wells theatre in Cheltenham.

<sup>7</sup> Rowbotham, Sue, ‘Maskelyne and Cooke: Cheltenham’s Men of Mystery’, *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* 18 (CLHS, 2002) pp.13-20

<sup>8</sup> Jean Fergusson, *She Knows You Know!* (1997) pp.43-4

<sup>9</sup> J.C. Trewin, *The Turbulent Thirties* (1960) p.17

<sup>10</sup> She claimed to have been the first person to have danced Fokine’s *Dying Swan*. In the 1960s her daughter, Lydia Ragosin (Lydia Kyasht junior) came to live at 43 Tivoli Rd.

<sup>11</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo* 9 Mar 1931.

<sup>12</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo* 28 Feb 1942. Harry Beard’s obituary.

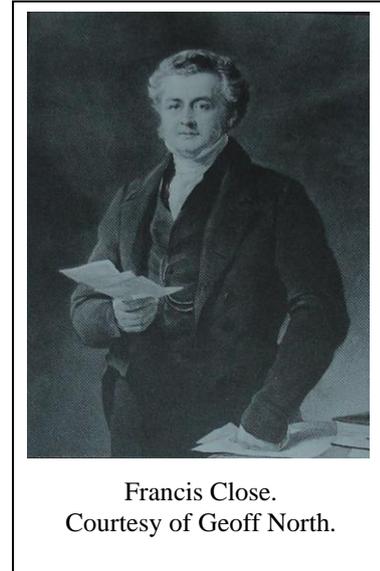
# ‘This diabolical act’ – the presentation of a dead baby to Francis Close in 1844

ALAN MUNDEN

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IN THE JOURNAL ARTICLE 'Albion House – the First 200 years'<sup>1</sup> a passing reference was made to the incident when a dead baby was presented to the Rev. Francis Close. Sadly there were at least two occasions when Close was accused of fathering illegitimate children.

The first case was brought before the magistrates and then dismissed. The Irish women who accused Close returned to Ireland and confessed that the father was a drunken Cheltenham lawyer. The second incident occurred in February 1844 when Close was at the height of his powers as the perpetual curate of the parish church. A basket, sent from Birmingham and apparently containing fish was delivered to his home, The Grange, next to Christ Church. It was received by the parlour maid Sarah Doleman and opened by the cook Harriet Blant. She immediately took it to Close in his study. The basket contained a few fish and a small black coffin containing the corpse of a dead boy aged about nine months. On it was a note – 'Behold thy likeness'. The body was taken to the workhouse and subsequently buried. In his register the sexton recorded, 'Buried: an infant from the workhouse. Name unknown. Brought by Edward Artus. It was sent by the Birmingham Railway to the Rev. F. Close on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst'. Soon a public inquest was held in the Clarence Hotel and the incident was widely reported in the local press. The case was investigated by the coroner and a reward was offered for information, but none was forthcoming and the case was closed. However the incident back-fired on the perpetrators. First the jury at the coroner's court signed a declaration expressing their abhorrence at what had happened, and then a large petition of personal support was presented to Close.



Francis Close.  
Courtesy of Geoff North.

Who had committed this terrible crime? Close had a number of enemies who objected to his Evangelical faith, his dominant leadership in Cheltenham, his opposition to the races and to all activities that broke the Sabbath. Contrary to popular myth he had no objection to the railways (he found them a most delightful means of travel) but he was opposed to Sunday travel, and to trains bringing undesirables into Cheltenham. Those who sent the dead baby to Close hoped to destroy his name and his reputation, but failed to do so.

Close later recorded the whole incident in his private journal. Some of the information, like the time of year and the comment about the mayor and corporation are incorrect, but what he felt about it is expressed in his own words.

*I was sitting in my study one fine summer morning making preparations to receive a large missionary party at dinner that day, and to attend at two important missionary meetings, when an old servant who had lived with us many years came in with a fish-basket under her arms, and said, "Master, some kind friend has heard you had a missionary dinner, and has sent you this fish, and I thought I would bring it to you to open." It was an ordinary fish basket, with a fish's tail hanging out of it. We hastened to open it, when what was our horror to discover that instead of a fish it contained the body of a fine child with nothing on it but a little lace cap upon its head and apparently not long dead.*

*'My faithful servant immediately proposed that we should shut it up again, and that I would let her dispose of it, and I would never hear anything more about it. "No" said I, "Harriet, that will not do. There are plenty [who] know about it already. The wretched creatures who have sent me this know of it, the Devil knows of it, and happily God knows of it. You must not do that; you must not hide it; but I tell you what you can do, put it down in our cellar, lock it up till tomorrow, for I have too much upon my mind today to attempt to think of it.'*

*'She did so. The next morning I sent for a constable, and gave him a note to one of the chief magistrates (Cheltenham had not a Mayor and Corporation at that time) stating to him what had happened, and asking his advice as to what I should do. He said, "Send the body to the workhouse with the servant who took it in, for there must be a Coroner's inquest upon it".'*

*'It was too evident that this atrocious and cruel insult to me and my family, inflicted evidently by no low caste persons, was maliciously intended to damage my character. But I felt strangely easy upon the subject, and was able entirely to commit it entirely into the hands of [Almighty God] who had allowed these wicked men to break in upon the peace and happiness of my domestic circle. The event proved that I had no just cause for alarm or even uneasiness. The Coroner's inquest was held, the matter was publicly sifted, large rewards were offered for the discovery of any person or persons who had been connected with this act, but beyond the fact that the basket, with every appearance of a fish basket, had been booked in London at the Great Western Station, nothing ever transpired that could lead to the discovery. Nearly £1,000 first to last was offered by the parish officers, by the magistrates, and by me, but all in vain.*

*'But mark the result. It seemed as if the whole population of Cheltenham rose up as one man indignantly to protest against this brutal act, and I received such an address so full of kindness and expressions of regard and sympathy signed literally by thousands, by persons of all ranks and classes, by dissenting ministers and clergymen, by magistrates, in fact I know not any class of persons that was omitted, that the event proved that this diabolical act which was attempted manifestly by those whose vices I had condemned, and whose sinful pleasures, especially of the race-course, I had been the means of successfully overthrowing, had only redounded more than ever to my credit and gratification, and placed me in a public position far higher and more influentially than I had ever before occupied.'*

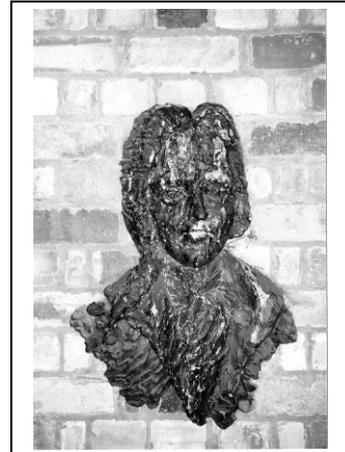
<sup>1</sup> Maslin, Tom, 'Albion House – the First 200 Years', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* 22 (CLHS, 2006)

# Percy Braisby and the pottery figures

LESLIE BURGESS

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IN IMPERIAL GARDENS at the back of the Town Hall there is a modern walled garden called the 'Skillicorne Garden' or 'Skillicorne Memorial Garden'. A visitor peering through the locked gate would see a garden and a small walled pond. At the far end there is a wooden shelter and, above the benches is a portrait bas-relief of Henry Skillicorne (1678-1763). The bas-relief was produced by a local potter, Percy Braisby. Percy was the head of the technical illustrators' and authors' department at the Gloucester Aircraft Company. He also taught at Cheltenham College of Art and had his own pottery at Sandford Mill.



Bas-relief of Henry Skillicorne by Percy Braisby.

Photo courtesy of Russell Self

Percy decided, in the middle of the 1950s, to make a group of pottery figures. These figures would be based on well-known characters that could be seen around and about the town. He intended to display them in the Art Gallery. There was one small group within the group known as the 'Spa Harp Trio'. They were three men who were ex-First World War service men who played musical instruments. One played a harp, one a flute and the third a cornet. They performed popular songs or songs from the shows and had routine routes so that they could be seen and heard in the same part of town at approximately the same time each week. They always stood close to the edge of the kerb (not to hinder passers by), with the two wind instrumentalists standing and the harpist sitting on a stool. They were known locally as the 'Thirsty Three', or less charitably as 'The Topsy Trio' because they frequently stood in the near vicinity of a public house. At a certain point in their performance one of them would stop playing and take a collecting box into each shop in the street, making sure that none was missed.



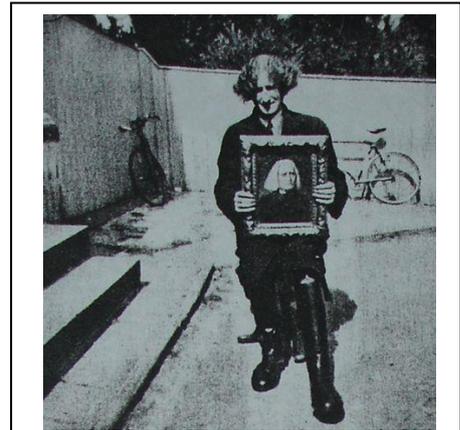
The Spa Harp Trio performing in Montpellier Walk about 1948.  
Photo by Eric Franks ARPS APAGB.

Another of the group was Vladimir Levinski. For information about him I must thank John B. Appleby who was not only a personal friend of his but wrote in detail about him in his entertaining book 38, *Priory Street and All That Jazz* (1971), a book which is now, unfortunately, out of print. Levinski believed he was the reincarnation of Liszt. Easily recognisable in the town, he wore a long, black, woollen overcoat (regardless of the weather), jackboots, sported a monocle, had long red hair and in his mouth was an almost permanent cigar.

As a pianist audiences found Levinski both brilliant and temperamental. There was the time when he played at the Town Hall. He gave a magnificent performance but after a while something must have displeased him for he suddenly strode off the stage, throwing sheets of music about him as he left. At other times he played at the Cheltenham Rotunda, The Winter Garden Pavilions at Malvern and on these occasions, if

someone tiptoed to their seat because they were late after the interval, Vladimir would slam down the lid of the piano and hurl abuse at the latecomers. There was the time when he played at London's famous Wigmore Hall. On his billing he was named 'Vlaimir Landinski, the Paganini of the piano'. As to how the London music critics found him can be assessed by the fact that the word 'fiasco' featured in a number of articles to describe his performance. Later, at the Croydon Civic Hall, a press report makes interesting reading:

*'Levinski sat down to play (ten minutes late) and that was only the start of it. For another ten minutes, sitting at his piano, he posed for photographs. The audience laughed and cheered and cried "Bravo". At seven fifty pm (twenty minutes late) he started to play. Later, he was besieged by autograph hunters and then he invited the assembled audience into his dressing room for a sherry. After a stampede for the tiny quarters backstage, it took the police to restore law and order.'*



Vladimir Levinski  
poses with his portrait of Liszt.  
Photo from 38, Priory Street  
and All That Jazz.

Back in Cheltenham he decided to leave his hotel, the 'Royston' in Queen's Parade, just opposite what was the 'Savoy' and is now the 'Kandinski'. He asked two of his friends (one of them was John Appleby) to help him move his grand piano from his second floor room to the pavement, facing Bayshill Road. It was a difficult job particularly as none of them knew much about moving furniture especially a grand piano, but eventually they managed it, leaving behind three broken banisters and with a streak of white paint along the piano. Vladimir was jubilant and sat there in the street and played to his two friends as a reward for their efforts. Quite a number of people had gathered to watch and many of the residents looked from their windows, they felt pleased that he was leaving – for one thing they did not appreciate the sounds of him practising into the early hours of the morning and, in addition, they did not care for his habit of walking down to Montpellier Post Office wearing his pyjamas and dressing gown to catch the midday post. As well as his playing attracting the attention of passers-by it came to the notice of the police who brought the recital to its conclusion, but Vladimir stayed with his piano and bedded down on it overnight. The next day Barnby Bendall removed the instrument to a place of safety and Vladimir chose other places to stay. I heard a rumour that one person, whom Percy Braisby had chosen as a pottery figure, had taken exception to the fact and was considering legal advice but I certainly don't know whether there is any truth in that. I do know, however that, like Vladimir, nothing more was heard about them after a while.

### ***Editors' Update and Query***

Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum have confirmed that Percy Braisby contributed to exhibitions at the Gallery and also held several one-man shows there in the 1930s and 1950s. There are currently two pottery pieces by Percy Braisby on display in the Gallery. The first is a small earthenware figure of a potter at his bench, attributed to Braisby at Montpellier Terrace. The second is a shallow dish, decorated with six fish, made in the studio at Sandford Mill as a wedding present for a Mrs Base of Tewkesbury and given to her by Braisby in 1956. Unfortunately we have been unable to ascertain whether Percy Braisby ever completed the group of pottery figures as described by Leslie Burgess above and, if so, whether they were ever exhibited in Cheltenham. Do any members of the Society have any more information?

# Cheltenham's other hospitals 1918-48

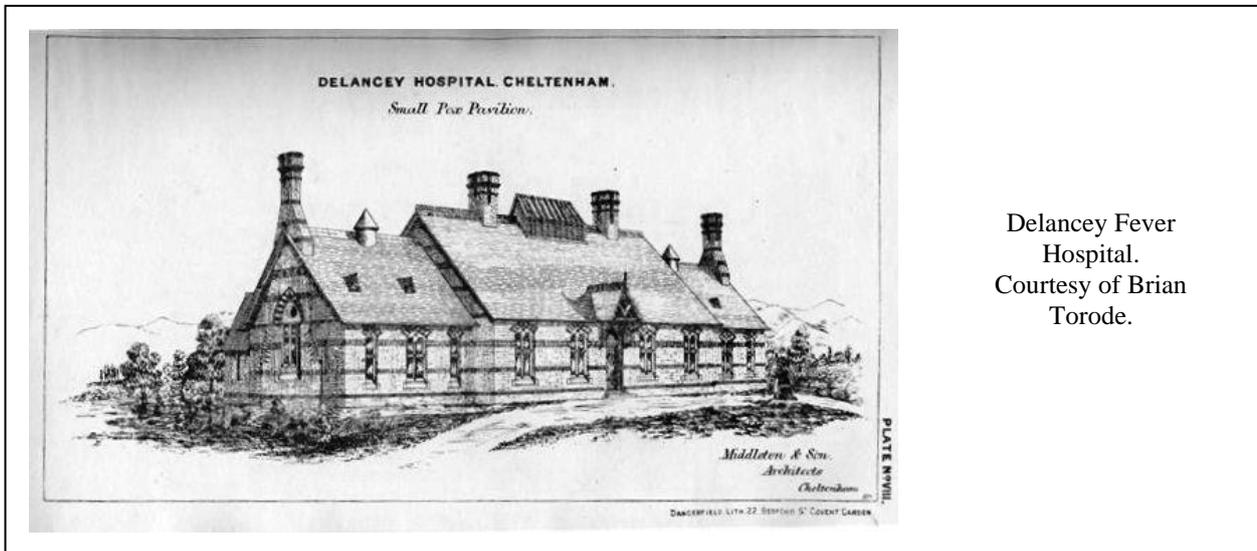
HEATHER ATKINSON

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*Extracts from Chapter 4 of Heather Atkinson's MA Thesis entitled 'Cheltenham: A case study in hospital provision 1918-48'.<sup>1</sup> In her study Heather describes the town's health care in the national context, and traces the changes in health provision in Cheltenham from the end of the First World War when woefully inadequate provision for the vast numbers of war casualties provoked demand for a change in hospital services, until the inauguration of the National Health Service on 6 July 1948 when all hospitals and general practitioner services were nationalised and became free at point of entry. A copy of Heather's complete thesis can be borrowed from the Society Library.*

THIS ARTICLE DESCRIBES THE SPECIALIST HOSPITALS in Cheltenham, which were maintained by different sources of funding from those of the General Hospital, and which changed during the period as a result of legislation. Voluntary hospitals included the Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, and the Children's Hospital. The Victoria Home, a small maternity home and training school for midwives and district nurses, was mainly funded by charity. Delancey, the isolation hospital had several sources of funding as it took patients from a large area. These hospitals varied in their bed capacity, and the largest of these was Delancey.

## *Delancey Fever Hospital*



Delancey Fever Hospital.  
Courtesy of Brian Torode.

Delancey was originally built from a bequest from Susan Delancey, supplemented by local fundraising. It was purpose-built as an Isolation (Fever) Hospital in 1871 in Leckhampton, a village on the southern outskirts of Cheltenham. Interestingly, there was local controversy about its site, as there was a suggestion of it being built on a vacant site in Swindon Road, next door to the Poor Law Infirmary. This caused an outrage, as its proximity would be bound to taint it with the Poor Law.<sup>2</sup> Delancey Hospital provided a service for residents of Cheltenham Borough, Cheltenham Rural District and Charlton Kings Urban District, each of these councils having representation on the Hospital Board.<sup>3</sup> In 1915, the hospital was passed to the Charity Commission, and managed by the Trustees, although the Cheltenham and Charlton Kings

councils remained responsible for 'defraying any insufficiency in funding.'<sup>4</sup> The hospital provided 74 beds, and had its own ambulance to convey infectious cases to the hospital.<sup>5</sup> A decontamination service was also available here for treating infected clothing and linen. Items were collected from patients' homes, decontaminated, and returned in a different vehicle.<sup>6</sup> Homes would also be fumigated as part of the Public Health provision. By 1925, the hospital also provided isolation beds by arrangement to Winchcombe, Stow, Cirencester, Tewkesbury, Northleach, Tetbury, Lechlade and Shipston-on-Stour.<sup>7</sup>

Under the terms of the Local Government Act (1929) Section 63, Delancey Hospital was drawn into the County Council scheme for provision of isolation beds. With the exception of tuberculosis and smallpox cases, provided for separately at different hospitals, the County Council paid Delancey a capital sum, an annual retaining fee as well as weekly payments for patients' maintenance and treatment. The County Council also had representation on the Hospital Board, and directed that accounts would be settled quarterly, and any disputes would be subject to arbitration.<sup>8</sup>

The Medical Officer of Health's Report of 1925 provides details of the staff, which seems meagre, but presumably extra nurses were called in as necessary, as at the Poor Law Infirmary. Nursing Staff included the Matron, Ward Sister, Home Sister, Assistant Nurse and seven Probationers. Domestic staff included one Cook, two Kitchen Maids, Head Laundress, Assistant Laundress, three Ward Maids and two House Maids. The Lodge Keeper was also the Ambulance Driver, and there was one gardener. Longhill Smallpox Hospital, built 4 miles away at Elmstone Hardwicke in 1923 had only a resident Caretaker, and staff were sent from Delancey when required.<sup>9</sup> Patients with tuberculosis needing admission to hospital were treated at a sanatorium at Cranham, which lay in a very rural setting between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

### *The Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital*

The Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital was originally built in North Place, Cheltenham in 1889, a classical style building, which befitted its importance as a voluntary hospital, 'founded for the gratuitous relief of the indigent poor'.<sup>10</sup> The hospital relied heavily on subscriptions and donations, in cash or in kind. In 1919, gifts included knitted eye bandages and medicine bottles, as well as eggs and vegetables. That year, income was £1851, and expenditure £1730, which by 1920 had turned into a loss of £440. Consequently, in 1922, the Boards of Governors of the Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital and Cheltenham General merged, probably because of the difficulty in attracting local funding for two separate hospitals. By 1923, it was reported that 'the agreement with Cheltenham General Hospital has worked advantageously'.<sup>11</sup> Under the terms of the merger, the Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital would take all patients with such conditions, lose its Matron, and would be run by a Sister-in Charge.

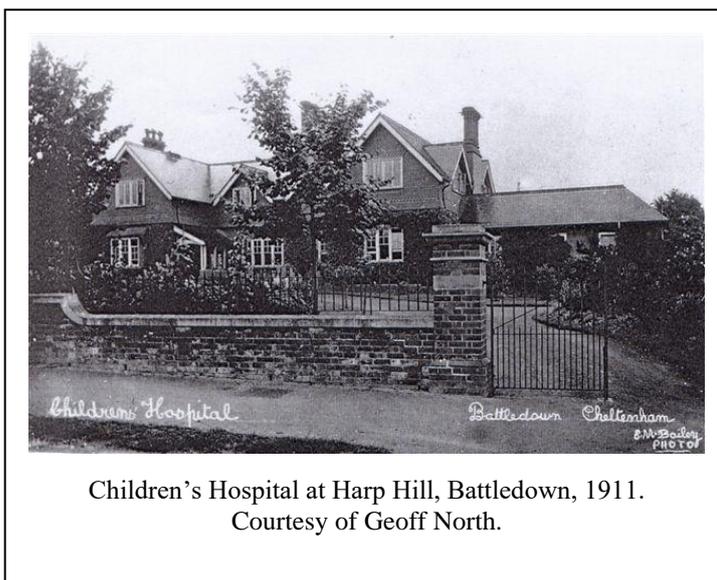
Although the hospital had only 15 beds, patients undergoing more complicated surgery, such as cataract removal, or ear surgery, stayed approximately seven days, at a cost of 7 shillings a week, for an average contribution of 2 shillings per week in 1922. The vast majority of patients were treated as day-patients, at a cost of two shillings and three pence, with patient contributions averaging tuppence-halfpenny in 1921 and fourpence-halfpenny in 1923.<sup>12</sup> The Education Department paid the costs of all schoolchildren treated at the hospital.<sup>13</sup> Insurance schemes or Friendly Societies provided some in-patient cover. Jack Crook, whose father paid into the Postal workers' scheme, had his tonsils and adenoids removed there in 1918, aged four, and remembered it as 'a dismal place'.

*'...I was taken from my mother by a nurse, and still clothed, I was escorted into the Theatre and placed on the operating table. No pre-med or injection! I was then covered with a thick red rubber sheet. Chloroform was then poured onto a gauze pad which was then placed over my mouth and nostrils quickly followed by a rubber mask which was placed firmly and held on my face....After the removal of my adenoids and tonsils I was returned to my mother who carried me back home again, I still being unconscious!'*<sup>14</sup>

The Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital continued at North Place, although for administrative purposes it was an integral part of Cheltenham General. A new purpose-built block was opened in 1937 on the Cheltenham General site, providing many more beds and specialist operating theatres and out-patient facilities.

### ***Cheltenham Children's Hospital***

Another voluntary hospital was the Cheltenham Children's Hospital at Harp Hill, Cheltenham.<sup>15</sup> This was purpose-built in 1902, providing an operating theatre, and 48 beds in its two wards. The hospital stood in extensive grounds, providing fresh fruit, flowers and vegetables, and later, a tennis court for the staff. The hospital was mainly for children suffering from chronic conditions, who were in hospital for months at a time. They were under the care of honorary medical and surgical staff, appointed by the Board. Children suffering from acute diseases, and especially those needing more complicated surgery were treated at Cheltenham General.<sup>16</sup>



Children's Hospital at Harp Hill, Battledown, 1911.  
Courtesy of Geoff North.

Like Cheltenham General and the Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, the Children's Hospital also depended on donations, legacies and investments for capital and maintenance needs. From the only records available, pertaining to the mid-1930s, the average monthly running cost of the hospital was £200. In November 1935, a legacy of £1000 was received. At that time, the current account was in debit. Four accounts were held, current, building, legacy and cot. As a result of the legacy, improvements were planned for the grounds; an estimate for a tennis court (£60), driveways (£25) and rose trees and fruit trees (£3 12s.). A further donation of £1,200 in 1937 paid for an isolation ward.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The Victoria Home***

The Victoria Home was funded by charity. As a result of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee Fund, The District Nursing Association and The Queen's Institute were set up in 1889. In Cheltenham, a small district nursing and midwifery service existed prior to this, but the Fund allowed for a larger property to be purchased for £700, and for it to be adapted.<sup>18</sup> The Victoria Home in St James' Square, Cheltenham was an approved Training School for midwives and for district nurses. It provided a small number of lying-in beds, but mainly provided domiciliary services. The 1925 MOH Report states that midwives from the Home 'attended nearly three

quarters of all the lying-in cases in the town'. In 1925, they attended 479 cases, 117 needing medical aid. There were 24 practising midwives there 'all trained and supervised by the County Authority'.<sup>19</sup> The MOH report also mentions proposed plans to extend the accommodation to provide more lying-in beds.<sup>20</sup> A Visitor's report for September 1924 found 'everything in perfect order...they thoroughly deserve electric light installed to make it perfection'.<sup>21</sup>

During the period of study, the Delancey Hospital and the Children's Hospital continued as before, as did the Workhouse Infirmary, renamed the Cheltenham Institution in 1930. There was an increase in the demand for maternity beds, due to increase in the population of the town as well as a developing trend for hospital deliveries. Maternity provision was a responsibility of the local authority since the 1929 Local Government Act. Sunnyside Maternity Home was opened in Cheltenham in the 1940s, to supplement the beds available at the Victoria Home.

The *Hospital Survey*, published in 1945 was a critical study of every aspect of hospital buildings and services. Cheltenham General, the Cheltenham Institution, Delancey, and the Children's Hospital, were all subject to scrutiny by the government inspectors, compiling reports for post war reconstruction. Details of these reports will be found in Chapter 6 of my thesis, where also the impact of the Second World War on the smaller hospitals is described.

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<sup>1</sup> Published Oct 2003 for University of Gloucestershire.

<sup>2</sup> GRO, G/CH 8a/15. The Guardians were keen to have the isolation hospital nearby, but there was overwhelming public opposition to this scheme.

<sup>3</sup> Powell, M., 'An Expanding service: Municipal Acute Medicine in the 1930s' in *Twentieth Century British History* Vol.8, No.3, 1997, pp334-357, p.336. Delancey was representative of a rural facility.

<sup>4</sup> GRO, HO7 21/1

<sup>5</sup> GRO, CBR Box 69.

<sup>6</sup> MOH Report (1930) p.10.

<sup>7</sup> MOH Report (1930) p.12.

<sup>8</sup> GRO, HO7 21/1.

<sup>9</sup> MOH Report (1930) p12, 13.

<sup>10</sup> GRO/HO5 8/2 Cheltenham Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, Annual Report (1919) front cover.

<sup>11</sup> GRO/HO5 8/2 Annual Report (1923) Chairman's Report.

<sup>12</sup> GRO/HO5 8/2 Annual Report (1923).

<sup>13</sup> MOH Report (1930) p.9

<sup>14</sup> Jack Crook, (unpublished memoirs) (1993). I am grateful to Rev. Brian Torode for providing me with this information.

<sup>15</sup> The Children's Hospital was established in 1876, at Sherborne Villa, Sherborne Place, before moving to Belmont House, Winchcombe St. Cheltenham in 1878, and finally to Harp Hill.

<sup>16</sup> MOH Report (1930) p.9.

<sup>17</sup> GRO/HO6/5/2 Cheltenham Children's Hospital, Minutes of Meetings of Finance Committee, November and December 1935.

<sup>18</sup> GRO/CBR/C3/6/1/4/1 A further £700 was needed for building work and equipment.

<sup>19</sup> MOH Report (1930) p.10.

<sup>20</sup> 'lying-in' refers to the 10-14 days following childbirth, when mother and baby are at greater risk.

<sup>21</sup> GRO/HA6/29 Visitor's Book. Sept. 1924: n.b. Electricity was finally installed in 1933.

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# Victorian Tivoli Road

JILL BARLOW

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*Jill's article is a sequel to 'Tivoli Road – an Early History' written by Eric Woodhead and published in Journal 22 (2006) pp.35-8.*

IN 1830 THE LAND WHICH IS NOW TIVOLI ROAD was an arable field called Marybone Park. Within ten years it had become, if not perhaps the height of fashion, at least a suitably genteel place in which to live or take a house for the summer season. By 1860 29 detached or semi-detached villas were listed in the *Annales* and many of the residents were taking the trouble to record their names in the book in Montpellier Library to ensure that their comings and goings were reported in the *Cheltenham Examiner* and the *Cheltenham Looker-On*. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of the residents of the road conformed to the Cheltenham cliché – retired Indian army majors and elderly ladies living on their own means. There is little evidence in the census returns that many of them still needed to earn a living.

Marybone Park was sold in 1831 by Pearson Thompson to a partnership of Thomas Henney, John Brown and Thomas Griffiths. By 1832 they had laid out a road 40ft wide which was to be called Marybone Park Place. This name was used only briefly and by June 1835 title deeds were referring to the 'newly formed road called Tivoli'.

Most of the land was sold off in 50ft frontages which cost £200 each in 1832. The road behind the plots on the west side (now Tivoli Lane) was originally intended to be 12ft wide. This soon became 6ft and eventually at the southern end disappeared into the house gardens. The developers also bought part of a field called Morfords which was copyhold land (now the end of Dagmar Road). This was added to the back gardens of 37 and 39 Tivoli Road and every time the property changed hands, according to ancient custom, buyer and seller were summoned to the manor court and the Lord of the Manor received a halfpenny as a heriot.

Thomas Griffiths died in 1836 but his heirs together with Messrs Henney and Brown seem to have made a successful business of selling off their land. Some of those to whom they sold were less so. In September 1832 the builder Thomas Newman, who had built one of the first houses in the road, was bankrupt. In 1833 Thomas Hale Bennett, who bought several plots, sold a house which he agreed to complete 'except the plastering painting papering and bell hanging and the supplying of the grates to the three best rooms and chimney pieces therein'.<sup>1</sup> The list of work still left undone ran to three pages. It seems likely that it was the same Mr Bennett who, while building the Queens Hotel in 1837, went off 'no-one knows whither' leaving his workmen unpaid.<sup>2</sup> He defaulted on the mortgage for no. 39 in 1845 and in 1856 was bankrupt and sentenced to nine months in prison.<sup>3</sup>

Title deeds specified that houses should be built in line with those already erected and should have iron railings along the whole frontage. Captain Harrison's house, Ivy Lodge (no. 3) was held up as a pattern for all later building. In 1836 Tarlogie Lodge East and West (nos. 2 and 4) were already being offered for sale as 'two elegant, uniform villa residences' with drawing room and dining parlour both over 20ft long, six bed chambers, servants' hall, kitchen and convenient basement offices, cellaring, water closets etc.

The covenants imposed on 37 and 39 Tivoli Road were probably typical of those throughout Cheltenham: no wells to be sunk for the purpose of procuring mineral or medicinal waters or salts, no bricks, tiles, clay pipes or lime to be burned from or on the land, but in a slightly surprising addition, the inhabitants of these houses were also barred from having a skittle alley.

Many of the houses were bought as 'buy to let' investments and rented to the visiting gentry. It is therefore difficult to establish who owned the property except from the original house deeds but in 1865 a bill for repairs to the footpath was sent to the owners.<sup>4</sup> It reveals that Tivoli Gardens at the southern end of the road belonged to W.N. Skillicorne, R.S. Lingwood, solicitor and Lord of the Manor, owned Tivoli Lawn and J Parkinson who lived in Kemerton Lodge (no. 35) also owned the two houses next door.

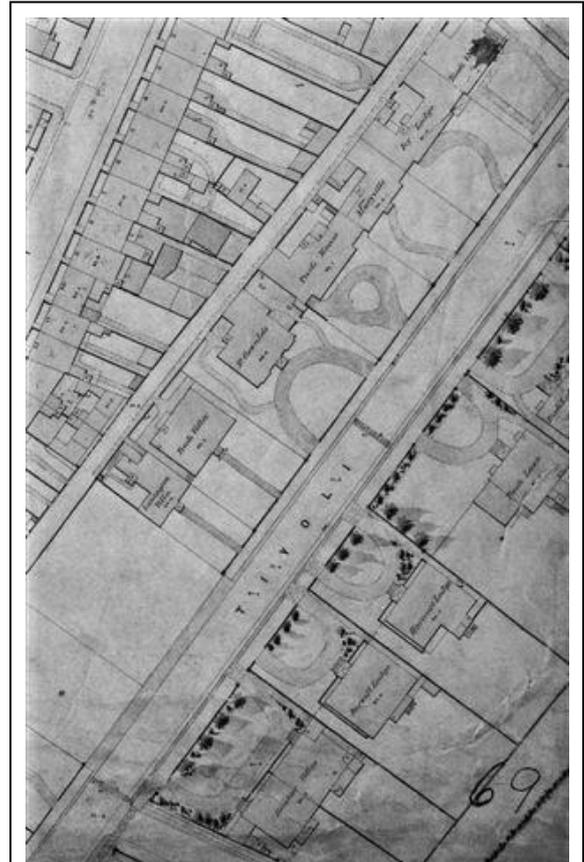
The *Annuaire* for 1837 lists the first fashionable arrivals in the road, giving their address simply as 'Tivoli'. The houses gradually acquired names but since at least two were called Tivoli Villa and there was more than one Tivoli House in addition to Tivoli Lawn, Tivoli Lodge, Tivoli Cottages, Tivolian Villas and Tivoli West, there was still room for confusion. The houses at the north end were numbered 1 to 10 Tivoli Villas, no. 1 being Harley Lodge which stood on what is now the grass triangle separated from the rest of Tivoli Road by Andover Road.

One of the earliest residents, Captain Manley at Tivoli Lodge (no. 6), was certainly part of fashionable Cheltenham. In 1833 and 1834 he stood in as Master of Ceremonies at a ball in Montpellier Rotunda and 'his great good humour and obliging disposition ... won the favour of all the ladies'. He is listed as attending the annual Bachelor's Ball in 'full dress'.<sup>5</sup>

Houses in the road were advertised as being close to Cheltenham College, which opened in 1841. Some of the first residents were families renting houses so that their sons could attend the College as day boys rather than boarders. Many stayed only a year or two, often moving to other addresses in the area or even in the same road.

The links with the army and India were strong. The fathers of College boys who lived in the road between 1841 and 1901 included five major-generals, a brigadier, seven colonels and four majors. There were also several doctors, a dentist, the explorer Captain Charles Sturt and a surgeon named Harry Potter.

One College boy who went on to a most distinguished career was Robert Threshie Reid, son of the former Chief Justice of Corfu, who lived at Tivoli Lawn (no. 8) from 1860 to 1864. He became MP for Hereford and then for Dumfries, Solicitor General, Lord Chancellor and Earl Loreburn.<sup>6</sup> There is even a lake in Canada named after him.



North-eastern end of Tivoli Road.  
Detail from Old Town Survey  
1855-7 Sheet 69.

The houses which are now numbers 5 and 7 were run as a private boarding house for College boys by two College masters from 1869 to 1874. At the time of the 1871 census there were four 15/16 year old boys boarding there. At the same time there were seven teenage girls residing at Madame du Beau's Academy for Young Ladies in the house which is now number 1. Doubtless there were strict rules to prevent fraternisation. Tivoli House (no. 7) had already served as a school from 1844 to 1846 when the Misses Havell received Young Ladies to impart to them 'knowledge of the Idioms and Phrases of the French and Italian languages' and to teach them the value of studying 'Historical, Chronological and Geographical Maps'.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the College connection, it was a road dominated by women. In every census from 1871 to 1901 more than half the heads of household were widows or spinsters. Every house had at least two female servants, usually a cook and a parlour maid, with a nurse if family members were very old or very young. Only one butler is mentioned. In 1871 a 10 year old boy lived at number 10 with his governess, his older sister, his mother, his grandmother and two maids.

Many of the ladies were keen to do 'good works' and appear in the *Examiner* donating magazines to the hospital or entertaining poor children to tea, or in the St Stephen's Parish Magazine arranging church flowers or running Sunday School classes. In September 1871 Miss Elizabeth Baillie of Burwell Lodge (no. 12) wrote to the Town Commissioners offering to pay for a drinking fountain and lamp to be set up 'where it will be most appreciated'.<sup>8</sup> She suggested Lansdown, at the meeting of the seven roads. The offer was accepted but the announcement in the *Examiner* of 15 November that Miss Baillie's drinking fountain would be placed in Clarence Street proved to be premature. On 29 November she wrote 'I must be allowed to say I do not much like the proposed site in Clarence Street and I must also state that I did not give authority to any one to say that this site would be approved of by me.' I don't know if she eventually relented, but the drinking fountain in Lansdown was paid for by the Misses Whish.

Campaigning on the national stage, Mary Hume-Rothery (no. 22) was a prominent speaker for Josephine Butler's Ladies' National Association, arguing that women should have not only the vote but complete legal equality with men. In 1874 she and her husband founded the National Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League, protesting against the compulsory vaccination of children against smallpox.<sup>9</sup>

In 1878 when the historian Sir Charles Oman moved to Tivoli Road with his mother he could still describe it as being 'in the outskirts of Cheltenham'.<sup>10</sup> St Edmunds (now demolished) was 'a pleasant two-storeyed villa ... with a classical portico in the real Cheltenham style'. Most importantly, it had a garden large enough for his mother to keep bees and chickens. There were still two nursery gardens in the road so the lucky residents could think themselves almost in the country yet so conveniently close to the fashionable pastimes of Montpellier.

<sup>1</sup> GRO D2216 Box 9/1 Papers of Messrs Griffiths McQuilham

<sup>2</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On* 1837

<sup>3</sup> *Examiner* 28 May 1856

<sup>4</sup> GRO CBR B2/5/3/11/2

<sup>5</sup> *Cheltenham Looker On*

<sup>6</sup> Skirving, E.Scot *Cheltenham College Register 1841-1927*

<sup>7</sup> *Cheltenham Annuaire*s

<sup>8</sup> GRO CBR B2/10/2/23

<sup>9</sup> Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

<sup>10</sup> Oman, Sir Charles, *Memories of Victorian Oxford* (Methuen 1941), p71

# The case of Jean Jacques Le Roi and Rachael Wolff

MIKE GRINDLEY

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THESE MEMBERS OF THE SMALL FRENCH COMMUNITY in the Montpellier area of the town were involved in a painful dispute in late 1823. The *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 20 November that year has the following:

*'On the night of Monday last the "small boutique" kept by a young Frenchwoman and her mother immediately above the Sherborne Spa, yet near the entrance to the Montpellier Promenade and Pump Room, was broken into by some dastardly miscreants, and plundered of nearly all the store these poor creatures were possessed of. A quantity of eau de Cologne, several trinkets, toys, etc. – the very means of their existence – were stolen from them, and they are now reduced to very great misery.'*

A fortnight later the same paper shed further light on this matter:

*'At the opening of the Old Well Walk, exposed to every inclemency of the weather stands a temporary shed which contains the trifling merchandise of Jean Jacques Le Roi, a poor but honest Frenchman... We lately stated that the "little boutique" kept by Rachael Wolff, at the entrance of the Montpellier Walks, was said to have been robbed; in consequence of which Le Roi's lodgings were searched by virtue of a warrant granted on the oath of the said Rachael Wolff, that she "had probable cause to suspect and did suspect, that the said articles were concealed in the house or shop of Le Roi". ... Her "probable cause" of suspicion was neither more nor less than she thought this inoffensive creature was the only enemy she had in Cheltenham! It pains us to say a word prejudicial to a female – but where character is at stake the humblest individual has a right to all the redress we can afford him. This young woman admits that she did not believe he stole her goods, but has sworn she suspects they were concealed in his house. We never heard more respectable testimony than has been voluntarily tendered by Mr Tatlow of the (Montpellier) Museum, from whom Le Roi rents the Octagon building<sup>1</sup>, adjoining the Montpellier Promenade; Mr Frederick Phelps who has known Le Roi for many years; and Mr (George Arthur) Williams, of the Library; all of whom declare that his probity and integrity are unimpeachable. And yet in consequence of these unjust and most injurious suspicions the poor fellow...wanders about almost bewildered, imagining that even the sale of his little stock is diminished by this shameful approach, which, to a man who has served in the French navy and been wounded in the battles of his country, must be a source of the deepest humiliation. To compensate his sufferings, and to repair any injury his trade may have suffered, a Subscription has been opened.'*

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<sup>1</sup> Very probably the Octagon Turret. See article by Stephen Blake and Oliver Bradbury in *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **13** (1997), pp.43-4, showing its early 19<sup>th</sup> century location at about the present entrance to Montpellier Walk. Location appears identical with the 'Grotto' in Thompson's Walk (as shown on the 1820 Post Office Map), which was occupied by James White, toy and fancy man, according to Gell and Bradshaw's 1820 *General Directory for the Town of Cheltenham*, p.149.

# Mayors of Cheltenham Borough Council

## 1876 - 2007

### PETER SMITH

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*Our thanks to Peter for compiling this very useful reference. Would anyone be willing to volunteer to put together a short biography of each Mayor, particularly the lesser-known early ones? If so please speak to one of the Journal Editors. See inside front cover for contact details.*

Date	Status	Name
1876 – 1877	Alderman	William Nash Skillicorne
1877 – 1878	Alderman	The Baron De Ferrieres
1878 – 1879	Alderman	Henry Willmott
1879 – 1882	Alderman	William Nash Skillicorne
1882 – 1887	Councillor	George Parsonage
1887 – 1888	Councillor	John Haddon
1888 – 1891	Alderman	Newman Burfoot Thoyts
1891 – 1893	Alderman	John Charles Griffith
1893 – 1895	Alderman	Edward Bestbridge Wethered
1895 – 1898	Alderman	Richard Rogers
1898 – 1901	Alderman	George Norman
1901 – 1903	Alderman	Richard Rogers
1903 – 1904	Alderman	John Charles Griffiths
1904 – 1905		George Dimmer, Esq.
1905 – 1907	Alderman	William Nash Skillicorne
1907 – 1908		George Dimmer, Esq.
1908 – 1909		James Tynte Agg-Gardner, Esq
1910 – 1912	Alderman	Charles Henry Margrett, C.B.E.
1912 – 1913		James Tynte Agg-Gardner, Esq. <sup>1</sup>
1913 – 1915	Alderman	William Nash Skillicorne
1915 – 1918	Councillor	Thomas Rees Jones
1918 – 1921	Alderman	John David Bendall
1921 – 1923	Councillor	Clara Frances Winterbotham, M.B.E.
1923 – 1926	Councillor	Walter James Manser Dicks
1926 – 1930	Alderman	Charles Henry Margrett, C.B.E., J.P.
1930 – 1932	Alderman	Peter Philip Taylor
1932 – 1933	Councillor	Capt John Henry Tyre, C.B.E., R.N.(Retired)
1933 – 1935	Councillor	Edward Lawrence Ward
1935 – 1937	Councillor	Daniel Leopold Lipson, M.A.
1937 – 1938	Councillor	Capt John Henry Tyre, C.B.E., R.N.(Retired)
1938 – 1941	Councillor	John Howell, C.B.E., F.R.C.S.
1941 – 1943	Councillor	T. Wilfred Waite
1943 – 1944	Alderman	A.S.F. Pruen
1944 – 1946	Alderman	Clara Frances Winterbotham, M.B.E., J.P.
1946 – 1949	Councillor	Horace Trinley Bush, J.P.
1949 – 1951	Alderman	Percy Tyler Smith
1951 – 1952	Alderman	Arthur James Bettridge, O.B.E
1952 – 1954	Councillor	Theodore Leslie Thompson
1954 – 1955	Councillor	Alfred William Mann

Date	Status	Name
1955 - 1956	Alderman	Lt. Col. C.W. Biggs, O.B.E.
1956 - 1957	Alderman	George Readings
1957 - 1959	Councillor	Charles Graham Irving
1959 - 1961	Councillor	Arthur George Dye, O.B.E.
1961 - 1962	Alderman	Francis Louisa Carter
1962 - 1963	Councillor	Alfred Ernest Trig
1963 - 1965	Councillor	David Henry St Lawrence Morris
1965 - 1967	Councillor	Bertram Walter Taylor
1967 - 1968	Alderman	Hiram Frederick William Bishop
1968 - 1969	Councillor	The Rev. Charles Henry Markham, O.B.E.
1969 - 1970	Alderman	May Nugent Phyllis Dent
1970 - 1971	Councillor	Ernest James Morris Eldridge, O.B.E., T.D.
1971 - 1972	Alderman	Charles Graham Irving
1972 - 1973	Alderman	Terence Mostyn Joyner
1973 - 31 Mar 74	Alderman	Aimbury Dodwell
1974 - 1975	Councillor	David H. James-Martin Jones, M.B.E.,M.A.
1975 - 1976	Councillor	Leonard Felix Frederick Gaylard
1976 - 1977	Councillor	Victor George Stanton
1978 - 1979	Councillor	John Anthony Aston
1979 - 1980	Councillor	Dudley George Aldridge, C.C.
1981(May-Jul)	Councillor	Miss K.M. Godwin
1981 - 1982	Councillor	Mrs J.M. Watson
1982 - 1983	Councillor	F.G. Herbert
1983 - 1984	Councillor	R.S. Marchant, C.C.
1984 - 1985	Councillor	G. Bingham
1985 - 1986	Councillor	P.G. Pennell, J.P.
1986 - 1987	Councillor	D.N. Perry, T.D.
1987 - 1988	Councillor	G.J. Wakeley
1988 - 1989	Councillor	Mrs M.A. Stafford
1989 - 1990	Councillor	E.J. Phillips
1990 - 1991	Councillor	W.V.P. Bullingham
1991 - 1992	Councillor	J.H. Pennington
1992 - 1993	Councillor	B.J. Cassin
1993 - 1994	Councillor	R.A. Wilson
1994 - 1995	Councillor	Ms D.M.A. Griggs
1995 - 1996	Councillor	L.C. Freeman
1996 - 1997	Councillor	Mrs P.M. Thornton
1997 - 1998	Councillor	L.G. Godwin
1998 - 1999	Councillor	Rev. Jeremy M. Whales, S.Th.,M.A.
1999 - 2000	Councillor	D.J. Banyard
2000 - 2001	Councillor	Mrs D.N. Pennell
2001 - 2002	Councillor	C.R. Lloyd
2002 - 2003	Councillor	Kenneth Buckland
2003 - 2004	Councillor	Keith Barnes
2004 - 2005	Councillor	Rob Garnham
2005 - 2006	Councillor	Brian Chaplin
2006 - 2007	Councillor	Jackie Fletcher

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards The Rt. Hon. Sir - Privy Councillor.

# Some milliners and dressmakers in Cheltenham in 1851

ANTHEA JONES

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IT IS NO SURPRISE that a large number of milliners, dressmakers, corset and stay makers, and sempstresses were at work in Cheltenham in 1851. In a town with a large fashionable clientèle, there was a demand for dresses, hats and underwear to be made or altered, and there were approximately 1500 women in these trades at the time. Collectively they will all be referred to as milliners. The Cheltenham Local History Society *Journal* in 1987 carried an article by J. Hamblett on evidence provided to the Children's Commission in 1865 by three Cheltenham employers in millinery and dressmaking, and a mother's comments on the situation of her two daughters who lived in their employer's house.<sup>1</sup> These businesses were small scale 'sweat shops': pay was low, hours long, and the girls and women who lived-in were wholly in the power of their employer.

It seemed an interesting idea to see whether the 1851 census of Cheltenham gave any support to these claims. It does. On the schedule delivered to each householder, the name, age, relationship to the head of the household, and occupation of everybody in the house on census night were to be entered, but there are many for whom no relationship is indicated. Some were in the Orphanage, some were pupils in boarding houses, and so on. Could others be in the sort of situation described in the Children's Commission report? Using the Gloucestershire Family History Society transcripts of the census enumerators' books, I looked for households with more than two resident milliners with no relationship entered. I found eight households, and one of them was headed by Mrs Ann Gregory, who gave evidence to the Commission. She lived in Cambray Villa, and employed two milliner assistants and one dress maker against whom she did not enter any relationship to herself as head of the household; they were aged 22, 24 and 25 years. She also had four apprentices living with her, aged between 15 and 23, three described as 'dressmaker' and one as 'milliner' and there was one servant. This was not the largest such household: in one of the Promenade Villas there were eight 'dressmaker assistants', ranging in age from 18 to 28, working for a Miss Allen. Here there was also a cook and housemaid. Two doors away was a similar establishment, with five assistants and one apprentice. Two more Villas in the Promenade had businesses on a slightly smaller scale. The conjunction with Clark & Debenham's shop in the Promenade, now Cavendish House, is obvious. There were two similar businesses in the High Street, and one in Montpellier Street. Readers of the *Journal* may like to see these entries, and they are set out below. These needlewomen were not children, but young women.

It might be an interesting project to examine more generally what are the implications of the failure to enter information about relationship in the 1851 census schedules.

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<sup>1</sup> Hamblett, J., 'The condition of milliners and dressmakers in Cheltenham, 1865', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* 5 (1987) pp.41-43.

Table 1: Some of the milliners recorded in the 1851 Census for Cheltenham

SCHEDULE	ADDRESS	ST. NO.	NAME	REL	STATUS	AGE	OCCUPATION
713003	High Street	365	VOILE Thomas	HD	M	40	Milliner & Laceman
713003	High Street	365	VOILE Martha	WI	M	31	Milliner & Laceman's Wife
713003	High Street	365	VOILE Frances Amelia	DA	U	10	Attends School
713003	High Street	365	VOILE Maria Louisa	DA	U	9	Attends School
713003	High Street	365	STEPHENSON Sarah	CL	U	34	Sister-In-Law
713003	High Street	365	GOODHEW Sheaily Harriet	VR	U	36	Milliner & Dressmaker
713003	High Street	365	DANCEY Mary	-	U	18	Milliner & Dressmaker ( )
713003	High Street	365	PHILLIPS Hannah	-	U	22	Milliner (Assistant)
713003	High Street	365	CASE Jane Rosena	-	U	23	Shop Assistant (Assist)
713003	High Street	365	HOOK Lydia Voss	-	U	33	Shop Assistant (Assist)
713003	High Street	365	FROST Elizabeth	SV	U	31	House Servant
716019	High Street	380	FIELD Henry John	HD	M	30	Draper
716019	High Street	380	FIELD Elizabeth	WI	M	29	Milliner
716019	High Street	380	FIELD Emily Jane	DA	-	2	Draper's Daughter
716019	High Street	380	HOWELL Sarah Phoebe	-	U	21	Assistant Milliner
716019	High Street	380	CLARE Elizabeth	-	U	23	Assistant
716019	High Street	380	CORTLAND Margaret	-	U	19	Assistant Milliner
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON John	HD	M	37	Laceman & Milliner
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON Lucy	WI	M	30	Laceman & Milliners Wife
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON Lucy	DA	U	8	Scholar
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON John	SO	U	6	Scholar
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON Edward	SO	U	5	Scholar
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON Henry	SO	U	2	Scholar

SCHEDULE	ADDRESS	ST. NO.	NAME	REL	STATUS	AGE	OCCUPATION
734134	Promenade Villas	4	CAPLETON Ann Elizabeth	DA	U	1	Scholar
734134	Promenade Villas	4	PUSEY Catharine	-	U	25	(Assistant) Milliner
734134	Promenade Villas	4	HILL Elizabeth	-	U	28	(Assistant) Milliner
734134	Promenade Villas	4	BROWN Elizabeth	-	U	20	(Assistant) Shop Woman
734134	Promenade Villas	4	MILLARD Eliza	-	U	22	(Assistant) Milliner
734134	Promenade Villas	4	BINGIBAL Maria	-	U	24	(Assistant) Shop Woman
734134	Promenade Villas	4	LEGG Margaret	AP	U	16	Shop Woman
735138	Promenade Villas	6	DOWLING Catharine	HD	M	38	Milliner Dressmaker &c.
735138	Promenade Villas	6	SMART Elizabeth	-	U	21	Milliners Assistant
735138	Promenade Villas	6	COKER Elizabeth	-	U	20	Assistant Milliner (Ass)
735138	Promenade Villas	6	TIPTON Emma	-	U	18	Assistant Milliner (Ass)
735138	Promenade Villas	6	ADAMS Catharine	-	U	19	Assistant Milliner (Ass)
735138	Promenade Villas	6	ROGERS Sarah	-	U	17	Assistant Milliner (Ass)
735138	Promenade Villas	6	HARPER Ellen	-	U	17	Assistant Milliner (Ass)
735138	Promenade Villas	6	RUDGE Eliza	SV	U	19	House Servant
735138	Promenade Villas	6	PENNY Mary	NC	U	3	Visitor
736141	Promenade Villas	10	ALLEN Sarah	HD	U	49	Dress Maker & Milliner

<i>SCHEDULE</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>ST. NO.</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>REL</i>	<i>STATUS</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>
736141	Promenade Villas	10	FOLEY Sarah	-	U	28	Dress Makers Assistant
736141	Promenade Villas	10	JAMES Sarah	-	U	23	Dress Maker's Assistant
736141	Promenade Villas	10	STURMAN Sarah B.	-	U	20	Dress Maker's Assistant
736141	Promenade Villas	10	MARRIOTT Sarah	-	U	18	Dress Maker's Assistant
736141	Promenade Villas	10	KINGTON Ann	-	U	23	Dress Maker's Assistant
736141	Promenade Villas	10	TILLEY Sophia F.	-	U	21	Dress Maker's Assistant
736141	Promenade Villas	10	MORRIS Helen	-	U	18	Dress Maker's Assistant

Table 2: Key to Table 1

<i>COLUMN</i>	<i>ABBREVIATION.</i>	<i>MEANING</i>
REL (relationship to head of household)	DA	Daughter
	HD	Head of Household
	SO	Son
	SV	Servant
	VR	Visitor
	WI	Wife
STATUS (marital status)	M	Married
	U	Unmarried

# Glimpses of Cheltenham in 1806

## RUSSELL SELF

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*Thanks to Russell for these extracts from Ruff's Beauties of Cheltenham (1806).*

***Dr Johnson in a letter dated 1803 writes***

*'Cambray, not four years ago, a pleasant meadow, but now nearly covered with houses has extended the limits of the south-east part of the town. Here Mr. King, the Master of the Ceremonies, has erected a villa, which in point of taste and elegance may vie with any modern building whatever. Here also is the new theatre, a thing much wanted, as the smallness of the old one afforded but a poor opportunity to the manager of exerting himself, or to the public of rewarding his zeal, which has been unremitted in furnishing the place with the superior productions of the London boards. Hither also one of the banks is removed, and some shewy shops nearly finished give life and spirit to the whole and add the "utile dulci"'*

### ***The Plough***

*'We do not wish to make invidious comparisons; but certainly it is but justice to Mr. Bickham, to say, that his inn, "the Plough", may vie with any throughout the west of England. His house is spacious and commodious, and his accommodations for stabling on a very extensive and convenient scale.*

*'The coffee-room, after the London plan, is also a very great acquisition; and, indeed, we have reason to think that, from the spirited manner in which this hotel has been conducted since Mr. Bickham has become its master, the most complete success will crown his exertions. The Plough drives to the Bell, Gloucester.'*

### ***Sadler's Wells; or, Puppet Show***

*'As a species of dramatic entertainment, we must not forget Mr. Seward's exhibition of the Fantoccini, with all the merriment of panoramic achievements. Mr. Seward has for several years visited Cheltenham with his Sadler's Wells in miniature. The whole apparatus is well got up, and affords a pleasing variety to the more serious and just representation of human nature on Mr. Watson's theatre. The scenery, painted by his sons, is very neat. The performance is every night in the week, except Saturday. However trivial this sort of dramatic exhibition may appear, it is well known that many a high lord and lady, when they seek this humble, but genuine scene of drollery (like suns of superior lustre condescending to illuminate a lower hemisphere) express, by their applause, the high gratification they receive.'*

# Recent books and articles on the history of Cheltenham

List compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

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Badham, John, 'The Development of Catholic Education in Cheltenham 1818 to 1939', *Gloucestershire Catholic History Society Journal* **48** (2006), pp.3-22.

Edgell, Tim, and Sandles, Geoff, *Gloucestershire Pubs and Breweries (Images of England series)*, Tempus Publishing Ltd., Stroud, 2005. £12.99. Section Two (pp. 29-50) covers the Cheltenham Breweries.

Green, Chris (ed.), *Discovering Alstone. Volume 1*, published by Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project (Cheltenham Borough Council), 2006. 88pp. £3.00. Aspects of the history of the Alstone area, researched and compiled by Margery Hyett, David Edgar and Jill Waller.

Greet, Carolyn S., 'Jane and Cassandra in Cheltenham', *The Jane Austen Society Report for 2003*, pp. 47-54.

Heasman, Elaine, *Walk around historic Cheltenham*, published by the Francis Frith Collection for Ottaker's Bookshops, 2005. 48pp. £5.99.

Miller, Eric, *The History of Leckhampton Church and its Parish*, published by St. Peter's Church, Leckhampton P.C.C., 2006. 76pp. Unpriced. A revised and enlarged edition of a booklet first published in 1987.

Sale, Jane, 'An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Squire', *Gloucestershire History* **19** (2005), pp. 2-8. Information on William Baghott of Prestbury and John Prinn of Charlton Kings.

Sale, Jane (ed.), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin* **51** (2005), 60pp. £3.50. A wide range of notes and articles on Charlton Kings, by a variety of authors, including metal detecting finds from Greenway Lane (John Bromley), Ryeworth Field (Jane Sale), the Charlton Kings Horticultural, Poultry and Industrial Society (Don Sherwell), the work of the Charlton Kings Urban District Council in the 1930s (Mary Paget) and the history of several local houses, including Emily Place (Mary Wilcox), 153 Cirencester Road (Jane Sale) and Bafford Grange (David O'Connor). *Research Bulletin* **52** (2006), 65pp. £3.50 includes articles on Sir Richard Vassar-Smith (Mary Southerton), the Smiths of Balcarras House (David O'Connor), the Napoleonic Wars and their impact on Charlton Kings (Jane Sale), evacuees in Charlton Kings 1939-45 (Ann Hookey), the development of the Ledmore Estate (Jane Sale) and the north side of Church Street (Mary Paget).

Spence, Carolyn, and Brown, David, *Thomas Robins the Elder (1716-1770). An introduction to his Life and Work*, published by The Everything Curious Company, Unit 130, Edgar Buildings, 3 George Street, Bath, 2006. 31pp. £8.00. Includes information about Robins' view of Charlton Park.

Wills, Jan (ed.), 'Archaeological Review No. 28, 2003', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **122** (2004), p.179 and 'Archaeological Review No. 29, 2004', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **123** (2005), pp.158-9 have short notes on a number of archaeological evaluations and watching briefs in Cheltenham and Charlton Kings.

Worsley, Peter, *Tales of the Red Triangle. A Social and Pictorial History of Cheltenham YMCA 1855 – 2005*, published by Cheltenham YMCA, 2005. 200pp. £10.00.

## Gloucestershire Archives: Cheltenham Area Accessions, 2006

JULIE COURTENAY, Senior Cataloguer, GA

'Gloucestershire Archives' is the new name for Gloucestershire Record Office following its co-location in 2006 with the Gloucestershire Collection (formerly held at Gloucester Library). We now preserve an unrivalled resource for local history in the county on one site.

Details of our holdings including all recent accessions can be found on our website [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives). The following list covers those new accessions relating specifically to Cheltenham. Please note that several of these collections are not yet catalogued in detail and it may be necessary to make an appointment to see them.

**Bartosch and Stokes of Cheltenham, architects:** practice files for projects in Gloucestershire and elsewhere, project numbers 415-2647, 1977-2001 (28 boxes) (D7266)

**Bristol Tramways and Carriage Co Ltd, Cheltenham branch:** sports club minutes, 1929-1946 (D10524)

**Cheltenham Borough Council:** Built Environment building control files for Riverside House, Cheltenham May-August 2005; Charlton Manor, Charlton Kings December 2003-July 2005; Charlton Kings Baptist Church August 2005; Cheltenham Film Studios, Hatherley Lane October 2004-July 2005 (DC143)

**Cheltenham Borough Council:** full electoral registers for Cheltenham, 2004-2007 (Q/Rer)

**Cheltenham Borough Council:** programmes and related papers for Cheltenham festivals and musical events 1980-2003; anonymous reminiscences of experiences in Cheltenham (including musical events) (c.1939-1942), written 2006 (DC145)

**Cheltenham and District Association for Disabled People:** correspondence and minutes, including

papers relating to the founding of the Association in connection with the International Year of Disabled People 1981, 1980-1987 (D10693)

**Cheltenham Horticultural Society:** minutes 1979-1988, 1990-2004; secretary's correspondence and papers 1993-2004; newsletters 1991-1999; papers concerning shows 1972-1998; membership cards and programmes 1991-1997; history of society (1834)-1984; judges' sheets for scoring gardens and allotments not dated [late 20th century]; constitution and membership rules not dated [late 20th century] (D10456)

**Cheltenham General Hospital:** Oncology Information and Support Service: minutes of management committee 1998-2000 and correspondence and papers of Dr C. Roch-Berry, chair, concerning its inception 1998; report on activity of service in its first year 1998-1999 (HO3); personal papers of Dr C S Roch-Berry of Cheltenham, cancer specialist, 1960s-1990s (D10640)

**Cheltenham General Hospital:** pharmacopoeia, [late 19th century-early 20th century] (HO3)

**Cheltenham, St Aidan (Anglican):** licence for reading of banns and solemnisation of marriages 1978; papers concerning works and maintenance of St Aidan's vicarage 1982-1999; incumbent's papers concerning St Aidan's churchyard 1990-1995 (P78/15)

**Cheltenham, St Barnabas Anglican Parish:** marriage register 1978-1992 (P78/16)

**Cheltenham, St Mark, Anglican Parish:** records including registers of baptisms 1963-1996 (all including baptisms at St Aidan, St Barnabas and St Silas), 1996-2002 (St Mark only); marriages 1992-1998; banns 1993-2001; baptisms at Emmanuel, formerly Rowanfield Fellowship, 1986-2004; vestry and parochial church council minutes 1863-1998 (include notes on history of parish); parish hall/men's institute committee minutes 1912-1921; parish magazines 1926, 1928, 1959-2003 (P78/8)

**Civil Service Retirement Fellowship:**

Gloucestershire Branch secretary's records, 1980s-2004 (D10766)

**J.T. Darby of Cheltenham, architect:** architect's drawings of All Saints School, Cheltenham, not dated [1890] (D10544)

**Christopher Davidson of Cheltenham, solicitors:** deeds of 7 (formerly 3 Blenheim Parade and 3 Caledonia Terrace) and 11 (formerly 5 Blenheim Parade) Evesham Road, Cheltenham, (1827)-1999 (D6791 )

**Diocese of Gloucester:** quinquennial inspection reports for churches including All Saints, 1995; Holy Trinity, 1989 and St Aidan, 1988 (GDR)

**Dowty Group of Cheltenham:** records and memorabilia kept by A E (Bert) Ashton, architect and head of the Group's Property Department, 1949-2004 (include Dowty Equipment annual report 1949 (1 doc); loose photographs of Dowty Rotol , Staverton, showing exterior and interior during construction of extension, 1961-1962, interior equipment 1965, aerial view, undated; Dowty Group illustrated brochure, 1976; photograph album of the opening of the George Dowty Memorial clubhouse, 1977 (designed by A E Ashton; album presented to A E Ashton); Dowty Group UK property portfolio prepared by A E Ashton, 1988; Group Services land and buildings maintenance budget prepared by A E Ashton, 1994 (Cheltenham and Ashchurch sites) (1 file); order of service for funeral of Sir Robert Hunt (former Dowty chairman) at Leckhampton, 2004; also photograph album entitled "Rotol August 1943 until..." showing the products, staff and facilities at the site; album of photographs of Arle Court sitenot dated late 20th century; photographs of mining equipment including pit props; landing gear;

propellers; and other Dowty products, machinery, and equipment and staff (D8347)

**East Glos. NHS Foundation Trust:** records of the Information Unit comprising statistical returns for both local hospitals and others in the SW regional health authority, business plans, reports, pamphlets and newsletters, c. 1973-c.2002 (HA)

**Gloucestershire 2000 Photographic Archive:** Cheltenham Local History Society Millennium Photographic Project (D8855)

**Gloucestershire County Council:** Business Management Property Services files, including files relating to Cheltenham Fire H.Q., 1983-1987 (K1925)

**Gloucestershire County Council:** Community and Adult Care: Arts development files, 1990s, including Indian Association (Cheltenham) (K1929)

**Gurney family archive:** effects of the late Winifred Gurney of Cheltenham (d 1984), nurse and teacher, sister of Ivor Gurney [Gurney Archive number 49824], including photographs of family and friends not dated [late 19th century-mid 20th century] with pictures from teaching and nursing career; examination certificates in music 1900-1901, first aid 1910-1911, nursing and midwifery c.1917-1922 and war service as a nurse 1917-[1919]; (these records may only be viewed with the written permission of the depositors, the Trustees of the estate of Ivor Gurney) (D10500)

**The Historical Association, Cheltenham and Gloucester Branch:** accounts, minutes and other records, 1970s-2005 (D10557)

**The Historical Association, Cheltenham and Gloucester Branch:** minutes 1928-2001; accounts 1952-1962; membership records 1970s-1990s; correspondence and papers including meeting programmes and newsletters 1980s-1990s (D10557)

**Holy Trinity C of E Primary School:** clerk to governor's correspondence and papers 1989-2002 (S78/14)

**J.P. Maloney of Coleford, solicitor:** deeds and related papers of Cheltenham 1974-1996 (D10470)

**30 Montpellier Villas:** deeds and related papers, 1905-1961 (D10622)

**The late John Moore of Tewkesbury, (1907-1967) writer, broadcaster, poet and conservationist, c.1930-c.2003:** additional papers including those concerning his involvement in the Cheltenham Literary Festival (D8451)

**R.W. Paterson of Gloucester and Cheltenham, architect:** photographs of St George's Place, Cheltenham, not dated [1952] (includes a view of the exterior of the Jenner house; probably of the Jenner house; a view from the spire of St Matthew's Church; a view of St George's Place showing St Matthew's with the spire, shortly before it was taken down (D10526)

**Miss Poole (later Mrs Clissold) of Cheltenham:** receipted bills from Shirer and Haddon of Cheltenham, drapers and house furnishers, for personal clothing, fabric and furniture, 1921-1927 (Miss Poole worked for Shirer and Haddon, and the receipts for furniture represent the total furnishings for her flat in Cheltenham when she married December 1925) (D10465)

**Spirax Sarco of Cheltenham, engineers:** records relating to equipment manufactured by Spirax Sarco used by William Bartlett & Son of High Wycombe, furniture manufacturers, including promotional literature and records relating to maintenance of equipment, 1966-1996 (D10476)

**St James' Church of England School:** log book 1865-1893; admissions register 1888-1926, 1949-1964; medical register, 1915-1959 (S198/1)

**Tanner family of Cheltenham:** notes, pedigrees, photographs, copy and original documents concerning the Tanner family of Cheltenham, 19th century-20th century, compiled by Mrs Audrey Freeman (D10591)

**Wilson family of Cheltenham:** news cuttings books compiled by Dr E T Wilson, late 19th century, with index; albums of photographs by E T Wilson, 1860s-c.1903; childhood sketchbook of E A Wilson, 1870s-1890s; scrapbooks of news cuttings concerning Antarctic expedition, telegrams and letters of condolence sent to Wilson family after E A Wilson's death in the Antarctic, 1912; volume of photographs and folder of sketches of Antarctic expedition 1901-1904; pamphlets concerning E A Wilson and the Antarctic expedition, 20th century (collection transferred from Cheltenham Library) (D10725)

**Dr Ray Wilson of Coaley, antiquarian and local historian:** copy plan of property in Alstone, Cheltenham, including mill, sold to Cheltenham Gas Company by Baynham Jones, undated [mid-late 19th century] (D7453)

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## Railway excavator passes through Cheltenham: 1839

MIKE GRINDLEY

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*'Early last week<sup>1</sup> an engine for excavating the ground for the railways arrived in Cheltenham. On making its appearance in the High Street, it excited considerable attention, and passed along on a carriage prepared for the purpose, drawn by 12 horses. It was conveyed along the Promenade, through the new opening near the Queen's Hotel, into the Old Well Lane, and thence to the railway of the Cheltenham and Great Western Union, at the end of Lansdown Place. The engine has been appropriately named The Excavator, and is between 11 and 12 tons in weight. It has been provided by the contractor, Mr Oldham, for the purpose of proceeding more rapidly with the works along the Gloucester line.'*<sup>2</sup>

This is probably the first recorded use of the short road at the foot of what became Queen's Circus, connecting Old Well Lane (later part of Montpellier Street) with the Promenade. The *Cheltenham Looker-On* of 21 July 1838 refers to this 'new road now forming into Old Well Lane'. The excavator would be the early Victorian equivalent of a Pickford's abnormally heavy indivisible unit load!

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<sup>1</sup> About 8-9 July 1839

<sup>2</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle* 18 Jul 1839. Access courtesy of Cheltenham Reference Library

# Members' Interests and Research Topics

## ELAINE HEASMAN

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

*Please ensure that you fill out and return the slip giving your interests each year or these will not be included in future lists. This is especially important when you pay by standing order and are not reminded that your membership is due for renewal.*

To be put in touch with a member please contact Elaine Heasman tel. 01452 857803 or e-mail: [elaineheasman@hotmail.com](mailto:elaineheasman@hotmail.com).

<b>MEMBER(S)</b>	<b>INTEREST(S) AND/OR RESEARCH TOPIC(S)</b>
Eileen Allen	Pates family; Priory Terrace, Carlton Street, Hewlett Road; Charlton Kings; Swindon Village
Eva Bailey	Cheltenham & the Indian connection; The Park; Christ Church
Jan Baltzersen	The Commemoration of the War dead
Roger Beacham	Theatres; Prestbury; Lillah Mc Carthy (actress)
Steven Blake	The building of Regency Cheltenham particularly Bayshill, Lansdown, Pittville, Suffolk Square & St. Margaret's Terrace
John Bond	The well in Well Place and any linked systems
Sue & John Brasher	Tivoli Works/Prinbox Works, Tivoli; W.H. Brasher 1865-1942
Veronica Braund	Cheltenham Schools & Colleges 1800-1960
Derek Brown	History of Leckhampton
Robert Brown	Cheltenham's Railways (particularly Cheltenham to Kingham line); Warden Hill area; New Street coal-yard
Hazel Butler	Prestbury – history, buildings racecourse etc.
Vic Cole	Pubs; Victorian murders
Joyce Cummings	St. Paul's, St. Peter's & Fairview areas – “The work engines of Cheltenham”
Rosemary Dean	Sir Salusbury Pryce Davenport, Rear Admiral of the White
Jenny Eastwood	Social conditions in Stanhope, Waterloo & Worcester Streets in St. Peter's; the travellers who over-wintered in St. Peter's
Tim Edgell	Breweries & Pubs of Gloucestershire – memorabilia, adverts, photos etc.
John & Iris English	The English family from 1855-57; The English Riding School, Montpellier Spa Road; the Thynne family; location of graves & tombstones in the area; records of jockeys at Cheltenham racecourse
Alan Gill	Early flying in the Cheltenham area; Cheltenham & Englefontaine after WWI
Carolyn Greet	Cheltenham High Street before 1850; Cheltenham's markets
Mike Greet	Isaac Bell (gardener & poet 1800-c1851); medieval Cheltenham
Mike Grindley	Portland Square & Albert Place district; 19 <sup>th</sup> century fires in Cheltenham; Montpellier Arcade & Queen's Circus
Des Hardman	Civil War

<b>MEMBER(S)</b>	<b>INTEREST(S) AND/OR RESEARCH TOPIC(S)</b>
Bret Harris	Transport (especially rail); natural history; church history; local politics; cricket
Elaine Heasman	Non-conformity in Cheltenham (photographs, articles & memorabilia <u>urgently</u> wanted for CLHS display in October 2007); 'Cheltenhams' worldwide & any link with Cheltenham; Cheltenham's Lifeboats & benefactors; history of the Playhouse site; Joseph Hall; Cheltenham ephemera (all dates)
James Hodsdon	Cheltenham street & place-names; Cheltenham manor court records
Barbara Holden	Medieval farmsteads in Gloucestershire; Southam's early 'cider-making' farms
Gordon Jones	Yeomanry & cavalry in Gloucestershire particularly the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (RGH)
Jill Julier	Hewlett Road area; Libertus Road area
Mick Kippin	The Volunteer Movement in Gloucestershire 1794-1908; Medals to people from Cheltenham
George Marchant	Victorian Elementary Schools in Cheltenham
Eric Miller	Leckhampton; Russian connections with Cheltenham
Lyn Mitchell	Bennington Hall Sunday School; Cheltenham in Girls' School Stories 1900-1950
Alan Munden	Francis Close; Anglican churches of Cheltenham; Jane Cook; Edward Walker; Charles Jervis
Mary Nelson	Up Hatherley; Cheltenham's trees
Geoff North	Voluntary Aid Hospitals in Cheltenham 1914-1919; the 'Glostors' & any military interest with Cheltenham; Marianne North, Victorian artist & traveller; The county of Gloucester and Cheltenham Horticultural Society in the 1850s
Pamela Osborn	Puppet Theatre; Malvern Place
Steve Osmond	Chronology of British Isles (full dates where possible: day, month & year) – 500pp so far!
Ken Pollock	South Town (Bath Road area); Leckhampton fields; The Park
Ronald Prewer	Family History – Dix, Dicks, Prewer; St. Paul's district; St. Peter's district; Cheltenham old town
Mike Rigby	Fairfield House estate; Capt. Robert Younghusband; Colonel John Riddell; St. George's Square
Derek Rowles	Tivoli Road
Sue Rowbotham	Maskelyne family; W.D. Slade; Christchurch Schools; Constance family; entertainment; especially circuses & magicians
Aylwin Sampson	Thomas Shoter Boys in Cheltenham; Tivoli Road; The Park
Russ & Sally Self	History of Arle; Cheltenham maps and books
Peter Stephens	Cheltenham postcards; Casino Place; Black & White coach station
David Street	Family history
Brian Torode	Pearson Thompson; John Middleton; William Hill Knight; Masters of Ceremonies; Tivoli
Christine Tustin	Architectural history of Cheltenham
Jill Waller	Alstone; Cheltenham property deeds; trade & industry in Cheltenham; pre-spa history
Eric Williams	Thos. Pickernell & Adam Lindsay Gordon; Up Hatherley pre-1066 to present day; deserted villages

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## Errata - Journal 22

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### ***'Recent books and articles on the history of Cheltenham' by Steven Blake p.51***

The price of the *Swindon Village Collection 7* (2002) was inadvertently given as £4.00 on p.52 of Journal 22. The correct price is £8, to cover the cost of the laminated covers and reproduction of photographs. If you would like a copy of this or any other book from the *Swindon Village Collection* please contact Eileen Allen by email [emallen@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:emallen@blueyonder.co.uk).

### ***'The Coliseum' by Roger Beacham pp.6-9***

Apologies to Roger for omitting these acknowledgements from his article.

'I gratefully acknowledge help from Susan Barker, my colleague Christopher Rainey, Jan Marsh Local Studies' Librarian Bournemouth Library, Kay Munday Local Studies' Assistant Walsall Library and my mother. Terry Moore-Scott kindly established that nothing on the Hippodrome was held at Cheltenham Museum.'

