



Cheltenham Local History Society

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From the Editor

SALLY SELF

☎ 01242 243714 🌐 see website

IN TERMS OF CHELTENHAM’S HISTORY 2010 has been an exciting year. We have long been aware of the town’s past stretching back to early history, but the discovery, in the Hester’s Way area, of Saxon ditches and pottery, a timbered hall, sunken-featured buildings and two human burials may, according to Neil Holbrook, of Cotswold Archaeology, rewrite that history in terms of Saxon and British control in this area.¹ Further investigation of the finds is expected to reveal a great deal more about the Anglo-Saxon settlement.

I would also make a plea that you continue to support the Society. For under a ‘tenner’ you get three newsletters full of facts pertinent to local history, a 76-page Journal featuring recent local historical research and information, ten meetings, and access to wide ranging expertise on the history of the town and the surrounding area.

I would also like to thank all those who have contributed to this Journal; the authors and illustrators, who are named in the articles, Dr Steven Blake, who drew my attention to the cartoons, (page 37-40), Mary Nelson who took photographs of them, the proofreaders, Sue Rowbotham and Neela Mann, Mike Turner at Top Flight, who gives me much appreciated advice and last but not least my husband, Russell whose patience with my numerous ‘worries’ is greatly appreciated.

Please remember that if you are carrying out original research we are always glad to receive your written work and to give advice and support as necessary. **Articles for Journal 28 can be received any time from April 2011 until the closing date which is 8 January 2012.**

¹ Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Newsletter No. 67, (August 2010), Neil Holbrook, *Anglo-Saxon Hall found in Cheltenham*, see also website www.bgas.org.uk

Strip Cultivation in Cheltenham During the Mid-19th Century

ERIC MILLER

THE ARTICLE IN THE PREVIOUS JOURNAL on ‘Railway Mania in Cheltenham’ described the numerous railway schemes that were proposed for the town but not executed. The plans accompanying the proposals were drawn with great precision and often show details that are not present, or may be difficult to discern, on other charts of similar or earlier date. This article concentrates on a by-product of the research, namely the recognition that strip cultivation was still practised in the mid-19th century not only in the rural surroundings but also within Cheltenham itself. Even more striking is the fact that certain fields that were once laid out in strips have a continued existence to this day as council-run allotments and other sites came under municipal ownership.

In some cases the strips have been built over, but their alignment has generally been preserved in the plots occupied by housing. Where other such areas have been given over to pasture, however, they are still recognisable as ridge and furrow. The width of the strips, or selions, varies but the length is generally about 220 yards, and some have been subdivided. In many cases it is of note that the plots are within reach of a water course.

Study of a number of the railway plans has revealed evidence of strip cultivation in the following areas. (On the maps a solid black line shows the intended route, and a broken or fainter line on either side represents the ‘limit of deviation’. The resulting swathe, usually about 200 yards wide, contains most of the detailed information. To clarify the maps, some present-day street names have been added.)

1. West of Timbercombe Lane in Charlton Kings: 16 ‘garden grounds’ were in the possession of Samuel Carter of Vineyards Farm, and an ‘occupation road’ allowed access by the occupants, of whom three farmed more than one strip. This area is now built over by the houses and gardens of Gadshill Road.

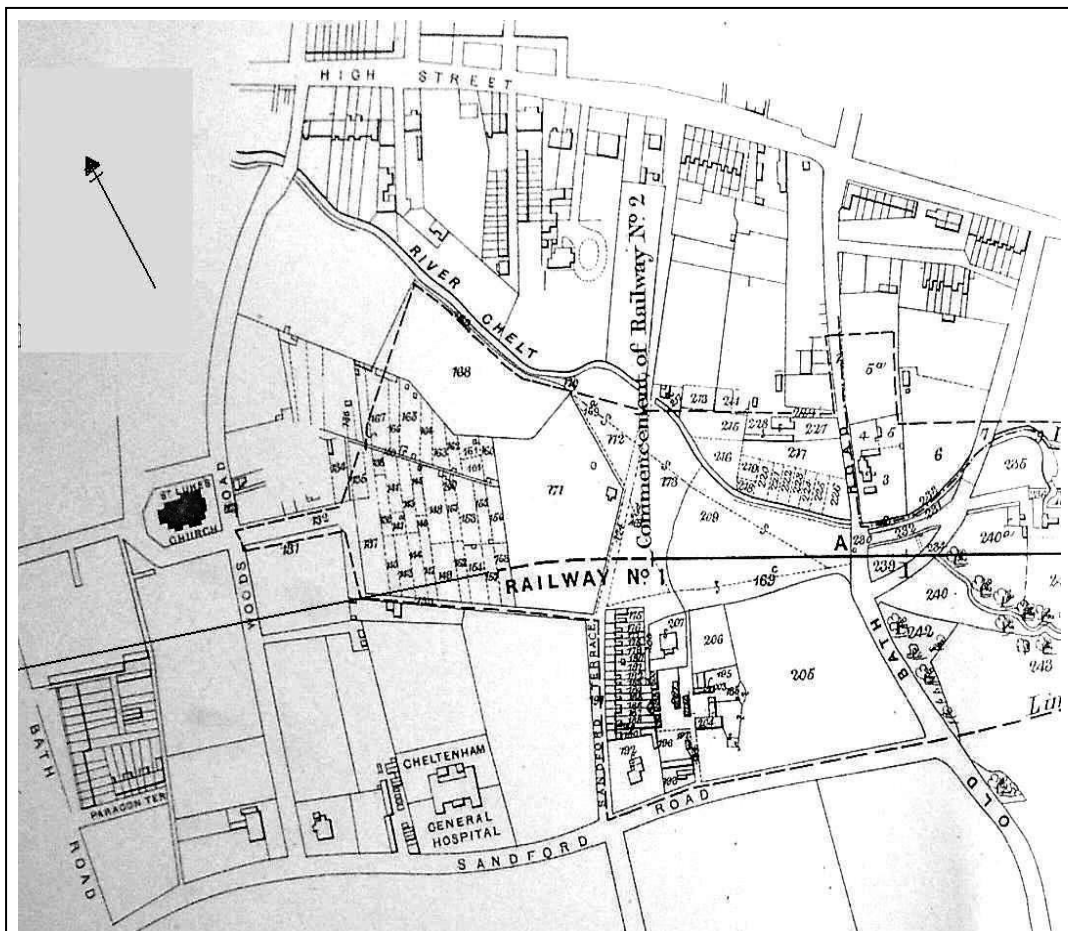
2. In Leckhampton:

a) Next to the Shurdington Road, near Brizen Cottage, where some ridge and furrow can be seen in a pasture field. The plan showed 18 strips running from east to west on the east side of the Hatherley Brook between Kidnapper’s Lane and the Shurdington Road, in an area known as Middle Field.¹

b) At the corner of Hatherley Road and Windermere Road (where the Paragon Laundry used to be). A dozen or so strips (some double width) were shown south of the Westall Brook, at a field called Westall Piece.

3. At the site of Sandford Lido. There were ten strips, each divided into two or three (Map 1, centre). The Lido dates from 1935, but the area in question had been used as

allotments from 1927, when Cheltenham Borough Council purchased it from Cheltenham College.²



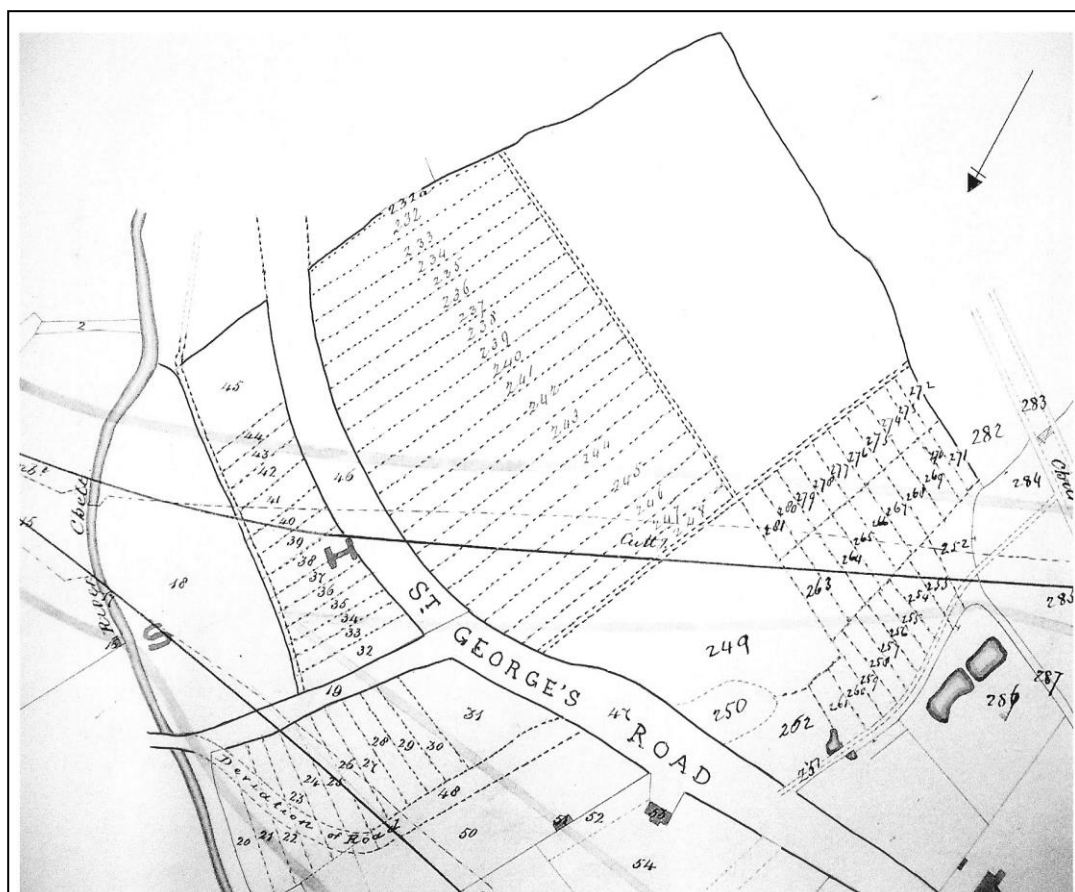
MAP 1: Strips north of the General Hospital, running parallel with College Road (marked as 'Woods Road'), in 1863. The fields to the north, next to the river Chelt, are today part of Sandford Park and the one to the east is a car park.

Gloucestershire Archives (Q/Rum307) edited

4. The section of the **Municipal Cemetery** nearest to Bouncer's Lane, where 11 strips were shown running north-to-south. The plan implied that more strips continued in the direction of Priors Farm Recreation Ground, next to GCHQ Oakley. (The author recalls, in about 1960, seeing bulldozers levelling that field and removing the ridges and furrows.)

5. From **Folly Lane** eastwards across **Manser Street** and **Hudson Street**. Twelve strips ran north-to-south. Further to the west, a series of wider rectangular plots of varying width and length stretched over 400 yards. These survive today as the southern part of the Midwinter Gardens' allotments, between the Prince of Wales Stadium and Gardner's Lane.

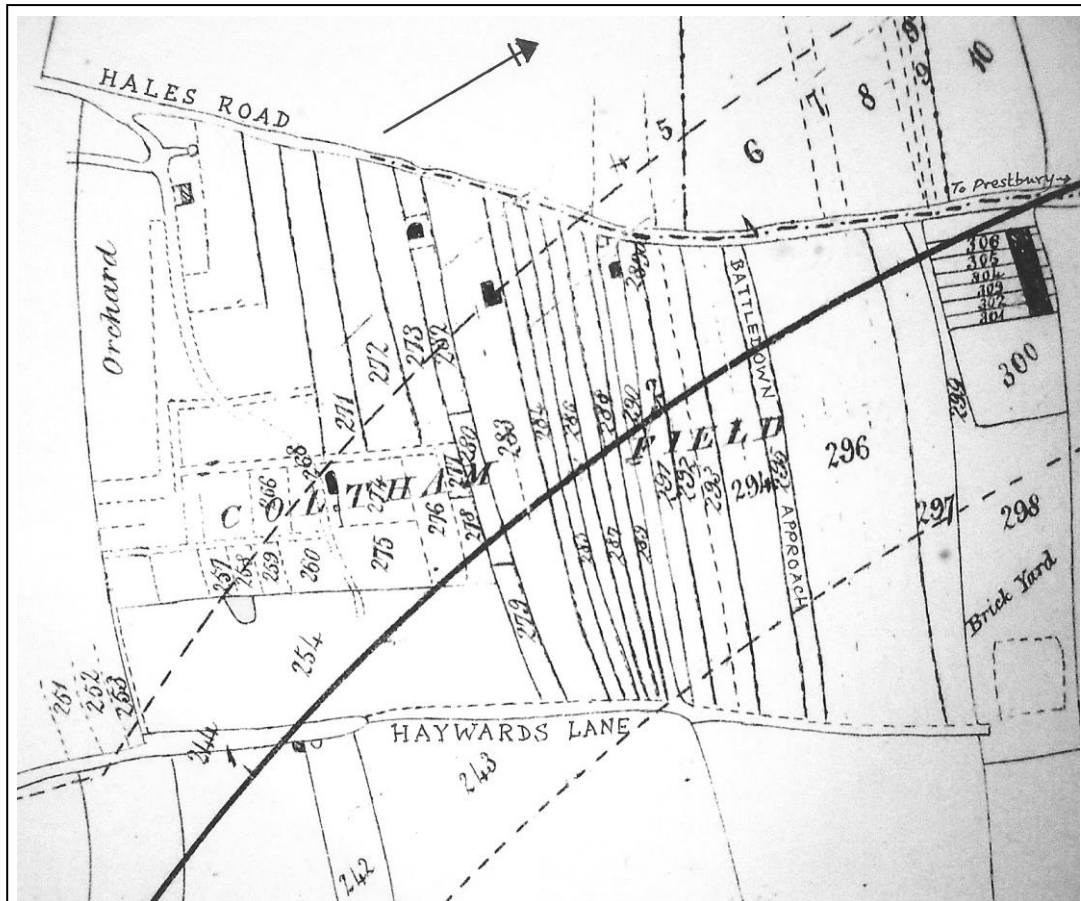
6. On either side of **St George's Road**, (Map 2), in the vicinity of Western Road and Overton Park Road, where some 75 strips were shown on a map of 1843. Described as 'gardens', each was in separate occupation and presumably still under regular cultivation. They were listed as being under the ownership of the Bayshill Company and will have been earmarked as future building plots. Though individually too narrow for any of the villas that were built later, two or more strips will have been combined, but the original alignment was preserved.



MAP 2: Strips laid out on either side of St George's Road, 1843. The road leading off to the left crossed the Chelt to Alstone Mill and became Great Western Road, (now Honeybourne Way) and the 'Deviation Road' became Great Western Terrace. The rectangle at the top right is now the grounds of Astell Residential Home, enclosed by Overton Park Road.

Gloucestershire Archives (Q/Rum180) edited

7. At **Coltham Fields**, (Map 3), an area bounded by Hales Road, Battledown Approach and Haywards Road, some 30 strips were delineated. A block of 24 adjacent ones had a single owner, Elizabeth Lysons Collard. Eighteen more strips were owned by various individuals, two of whom, Jane Cook(e) and her sister Elizabeth Tatham, were grand-daughters of Daniel Cook, who had bought Coltham Fields in 1735.³ Some twenty men were named as occupiers of the plots. Mostly they worked on one plot only, but a few occupied up to four, not necessarily adjacent ones. During the Second World War an area of ridge and furrow surrounding the clay pit at the Battledown Brickworks at Coltham Fields was given over to allotments.⁴



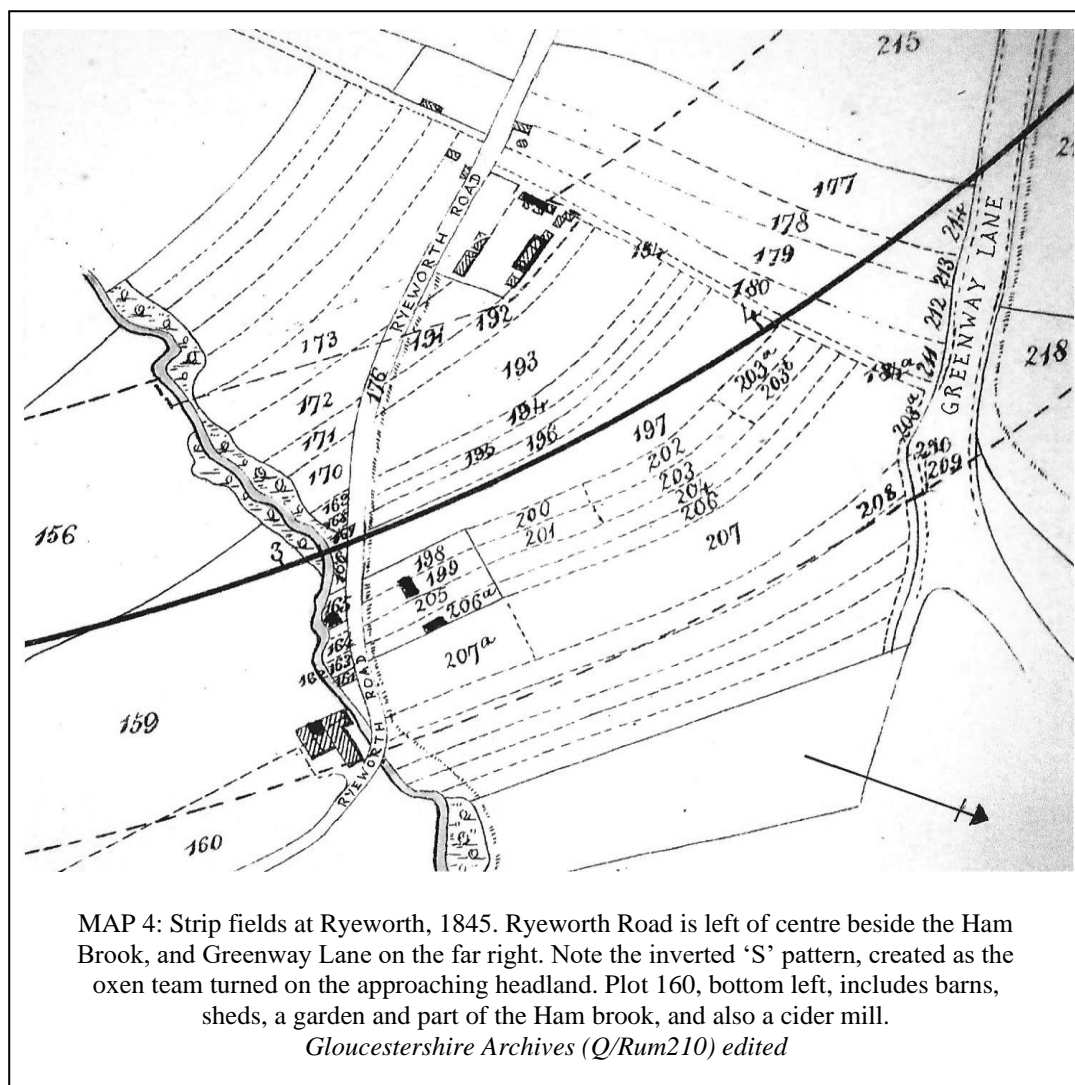
MAP 3: Coltham Fields, 1845. The row of cottages, numbers 300-306, was presumably intended for the workers at the brick yard (Plot 298, centre right). Much of the area was later occupied by the Battledown Brickworks. The orientation of the modern road follows that of the strips and the name of Coltham Fields survives in a road giving on to Hales Road.

Gloucestershire Archives (Q/Rum210) edited

8. The last and most significant area is **Ryeworth**, (see map 4). Some two dozen strips were marked out – described as ‘garden,’ ‘field,’ or ‘garden ground’. There were various owners, and some occupiers worked several strips, one of them as many as seven, though not all were adjacent. Anyone familiar with the area will immediately recognise this as the location of today’s Ryeworth Allotments. A comparison of Map 4 with the same fan-shaped area on Google Maps⁵ shows that the shape of the site is virtually unchanged today. The modern allotments (78 in all, and in great demand!) are at right angles to the original strips, but the overall layout remains unchanged.⁶

The General Enclosure Act of 1845, which provided for land to be set aside for the landless poor in the form of ‘field gardens’ limited to a quarter of an acre, had given added impetus to the allotment movement in England.⁷ However, although medieval strips would clearly have lent themselves to conversion for that use, there is no evidence that this had occurred in any of the areas described above during the 19th century. Indeed, at an auction sale held on 27 June 1850 various lots in Coltham Fields and Ryeworth were simply described as ‘piece of arable land’, ‘piece of garden

ground,' etc. They were then still in private ownership as remnants of the open field system.



The evidence of strip cultivation, and – in the case of areas turned into allotments in the 20th century – of a continuity of use from much earlier times to the present day, is of interest not only in its own right but also because it came from an unexpected source. This is just one of a range of topics on which the railway companies' plans provide information. More observations may be forthcoming in a future article.

¹ Moore-Scott, T, 'The fields beneath', Leckhampton Local History Society, *Research Bulletin*, No 1, quoting observations by Eve Andrew.

² Sandford Parks Lido website.

³ For more on the ownership of Coltham Fields see David O'Connor, Charlton Kings LHS, *Bulletin* 29, pp. 36-46.

⁴ David O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, p.75.

⁵ Google maps are copyright protected, so the relevant area is not reproduced.

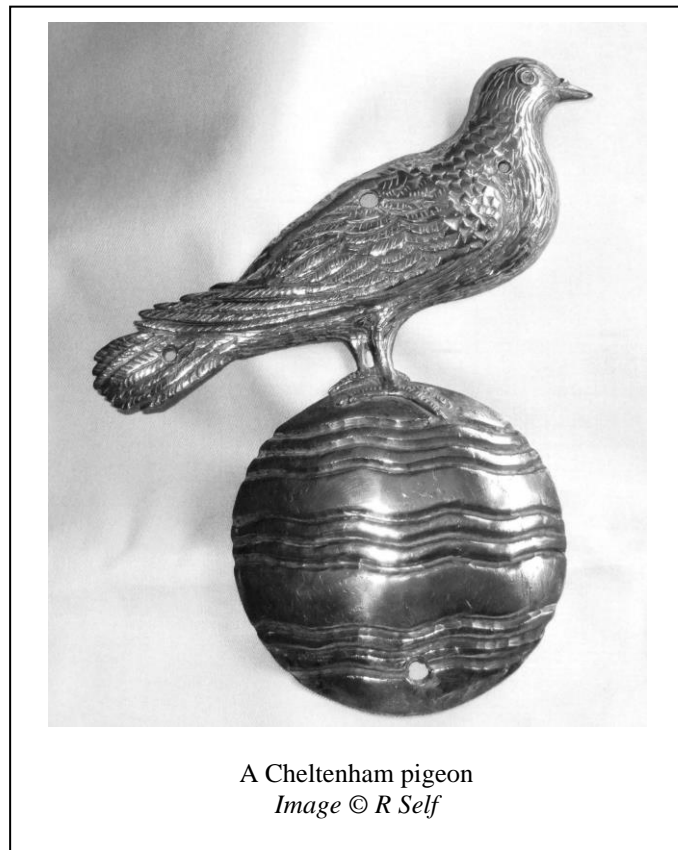
⁶ See also Jane Sale, 'A Common Field called Ryeworth Field,' article on Charlton Kings LHS, *Research Bulletin* 51, 2005.

⁷ Burchardt, Jeremy, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* and *Breaking New Ground: Nineteenth Century Allotments from Local Sources*.

A Missing Pigeon?

SALLY SELF

THIS IMAGE OF A CHELTENHAM PIGEON was sent to me by the late Michael Kirby. The notes on the back intrigued me, but due to his ill health I was unable to obtain any more information than that recorded below. If CLHS members have any further knowledge, we would be pleased to receive it. The copper 3-D 'medallion' is 5¾ inches (145mm) high and 7 inches (175mm) from beak to tail.



The information Michael supplied is as follows:

'I found it in a drawer amongst other things, in my office at the St James's Square Works, of R.E. & C. Marshall Ltd., back in 1979, when the Company effected a Members' Voluntary Liquidation. It is very finely done and I feel by the same hand that made a wonderful dove counterweight for the font cover in All Saints' Church. I don't think the dove is there now and I have no idea what happened to it. [I think it is] late 19th or early 20th century, made for the Borough Arms [but] probably rejected and kept as not being pigeon-like enough. As regards the name of the coppersmith responsible, this is largely guessing, and there is only one person alive who might suggest some names to me. I cannot think why the pigeon was not used unless it was a test piece.'

Do you have any further information on this 'lost' Cheltenham pigeon?

A Chronology of Normandy House: 1800 to 2009

JOYCE CUMMINGS

THIS IMPOSING BUILDING, AT THE JUNCTION of Ambrose Street and the High Street, has existed under several names; Segrave House, the Hospital and Dispensary, St Mary's Hall, Idmiston House and now Normandy House. This chronology aims to collate some of the available information about this imposing house.

- 1800 to 1818** Robert Cox leased a plot of land on the north side of the High Street, near Fleece Lane, (after 1820, Henrietta Street) from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who owned much of the land in that area.
- 1813** Segrave House was built as a private house. Possibly named after Lord Segrave, (later Earl Fitzhardinge, one of the Berkeley family) and one of the leaders of Cheltenham society in the early nineteenth century.
- 1816** The house was the family home of Robert Cox.
- 1818** On the death of Robert Cox, his house, brew house, malt house, court, garden, pasture land, barn and stables were sold.
- 1832** Proposals were made to set up a General Hospital to replace the Dispensary & Casualty Hospital. Funds were raised by public subscription and three sites were considered. However, insufficient money was raised for a new build, so it was decided to purchase and convert Segrave House.



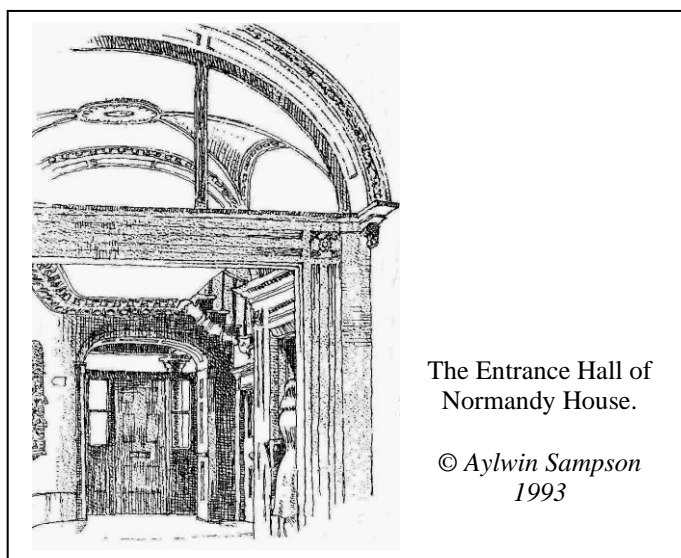
Cheltenham General Hospital and
Dispensary:
*'one of the most extensively useful of
our charitable institutions. It had existed
on a narrower scale since 1831, but its
usefulness was much increased by the
addition of wards for in-patients'*
Rowe's Illustrated
Cheltenham Guide,
Image © Sue Rowbotham &
Jill Waller
**See also front cover for Aylwin's
present day drawing**

- 1837** Segrave House was bought from Robert Capper (President of the Hospital Board). Adjoining land and two cottages were purchased from the Trustees of Pate's Charity for the building of an extension to the existing house.

- 1839** The General Hospital and Dispensary, formerly Segrave House, opened with an added 'tower' extension. The architect was R.W. Jearrad¹: the builders, Messrs. Haines & Son. There were two, much needed, wards, each containing 20 beds. The attics housed operating theatres, and the basement, the mortuary.
- 1840s** The need for a larger Hospital was soon evident: then this need was precipitated by plans for a railway on the site of Seagrave House, which was purchased by the Cheltenham and Oxford Railway Company. By the late 1840s the need for more space became imperative as the Hospital and Dispensary was treating 5000 outpatients and 300 inpatients.²
- 1849** Following the opening of the General Hospital in 1849, the old Hospital building was again on the market for renting. In December, with great haste and without refurbishment, Cheltenham Normal College rented the building for the Women's Department; it became known as St Mary's Hall, and housed up to 80 students.³ The College's General Committee had no money to spend on basic sanitary requirements or a library, and the ward beds were used in the dormitories.
- 1854** It was reported that students would be helped if they worked on paper instead of slates; and despite exceptional educational success, there was concern for the women's health due to long hours of study and lack of exercise. The women did not join the male students for lectures, rather the teaching staff travelled to St Mary's Hall.
- 1857** Mrs Julia Hobart, Housekeeper wrote to Mr Newman, Secretary of the General Committee, complaining of the high cost and lack of productivity of the garden, the need for outdoor space for the students and the desirability of having new carpets.⁴
- 1858** The owners wished to sell St Mary's Hall and the General Committee had to decide whether to purchase, and when the Principal, in his Report, described the slaughtering of cattle in the close vicinity, it was decided to launch an appeal to purchase a site of their own and to erect new buildings.
- 1869** The Women's Department finally closed on 18 June.⁵
- 1881** St Mary's Hall (Segrave House) was used as a furniture broker's warehouse by Mr J. McCarty.⁶
- 1901** It was a furniture warehouse for Shirer & Haddon Ltd.
- 1927** It was recorded as still in use by Shirer & Haddon Ltd. as a depository.
- 1930s onwards** Renamed Idmiston House and used mainly as offices. It housed the Inspector of Taxes for Cheltenham for many years, followed for a few years by the Social Services. It was also used by the insurance company General Accident; the top floor as a Dance Hall during the dance craze era; by St John's Ambulance Spa Division for their weekly meetings.⁷
- 1990** VFB Holidays, a French company selling vacations and renting gites,

purchased it and renamed it Normandy House. Also at this time, they purchased the small classical building in front of Normandy House. This had been used by The Church of the Latter Day Saints in the 1930s, occupied for a short time by a bank in the 1940s, and in 1950 housed the Labour Exchange, (Men's Department for Employment and Productivity) and also the Youth Employment Exchange.

- 1991** Normandy House had a major refurbishment, carried out by Beam Construction.
- 2008** VFB Holidays sold the house to Chaseside Estates Ltd.
- 2009** Normandy House was purchased by Beam Construction and it became their main offices.



¹ R.W. Jearrad, who did not charge for his time, also designed the Queen's Hotel and Christ Church. Interestingly, in 1849, Jearrad designed a washing machine. It was first tried out in St George's Workhouse, Hanover Square, London and proved to be the best invention yet devised for sterilizing the clothes of victims of cholera and other contagious diseases. It could wash six dozen towels in just four minutes. Rowbotham, S. and Waller, J., *Cheltenham, A History*, (Phillimore, 2004), p.98

² The medical staff independent of the resident surgeon comprised three physicians and two surgeons, with the same number working at the Dispensary. Rowe, G., *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide*, 1845.

³ Cheltenham Normal College, later named St Paul's Teacher Training College, is now part of the University of Gloucestershire. During the 1840s the Church entered the teacher training field and decided to include women as well as men. Originally 20 women students were housed in cramped quarters at Monson Villa. More, C., 'A Splendid College', *An Illustrated History of Teacher Training in Cheltenham 1847-1990*.

⁴ "The garden has been very unproductive this year [...] due to inattention of the gardener and cost of seed and manure [...it is] over-run with weeds"; "a broad walk all round the garden would be most desirable for the students, as well as a square plot laid down to gravel"; and "I shall feel obliged if you will allow me to have a new carpet for my sitting room. The present one is much worn, but will answer, cut up into lengths for the dormitories ..."

⁵ 18 June 1869 was the 'last evening in the old St Mary's Hall': the new St Mary's Hall was built on the site of the Old Farm in St George's Place, in readiness for the new term starting on 11 August 1869

⁶ It is believed that J. McCarty was probably Jonadab McCarthy, father of the actress Lillah McCarthy, (article 'An Extraordinary Actress: Lillah McCarthy', Roger Beacham. CLHS, Journal **25**). Jonadab was an antique dealer, see *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham*, P. Smith & S. Rowbotham, p.40

⁷ Author's own recollections.

The Diary of Captain James Shrub Iredell 1793-1872

JILL BARLOW

CAPTAIN IREDELL CO-FOUNDED CHELTENHAM COLLEGE in 1841 and maintained his connection with the school for more than 20 years. One of his descendants has given the College Archives a small diary in which he describes his journeys around England and Wales between 1823 and 1832. He kept a separate diary for his travels on the continent. Although at times he mentions a travelling companion, usually his mother or a fellow army officer, it is a record only of his journeys and not of his personal life. He says nothing about his retirement from the Bombay Infantry in 1828 and the only reference to his wedding to Susanna Smith at Shurdington on 21 June 1832 is 'Having this day lost my liberty, I was led to Chepstow', followed by an account of the route taken from Shurdington.

The following extracts, contain the only descriptions he gives of Cheltenham, although he did record a number of other visits during the period. Full stops have been added to break up the narrative, but otherwise spelling and punctuation are the Captain's own.

1825 June 22nd

'At 3pm left Oxford for Cheltenham which we reached at Nine o'clock, the road was very chalky and dusty, and led through Eynsham, Witney, Burford, Barrington & Northleach. The country Undulating, and the fields being divided by stone walls, instead of Hedges, not cemented together by mortar but piled one upon another, is by no means a good substitute for the green hedges of other counties. When within four or five miles of Cheltenham the scene becomes more interesting: the Hills are larger, Well wooded and the Valleys pretty. The descent of Dowdeswell Hill is very steep but the scenery is grand both in itself and from the sudden fine view of the rich Valley of Gloucester, in which Cheltenham is situated. The town which has a clean and prosperous appearance has of late Years considerably increased and is likely to do so, a great number of Elegant houses being almost finished and others building.

'The waters are considered very salubrious and highly efficacious in bilious complaints. The Season, for drinking the waters, commences in March and terminates the latter end of November, but the fashionable time does not begin before the 20th of August.

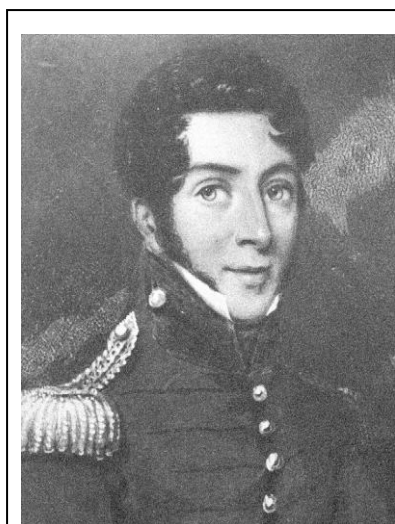
'The Pump Rooms are elegant buildings. They have all a band of music, to amuse the mere loungers. These sometimes perform at noon, and in the Evening to attract the Public to those delightful Promenades. In general they are all well attended. The Montpellier Baths, on the Bath road, are upon an Extensive scale and offer every convenience to the Invalid. The Streets are well paved for the foot passenger

and the centre is Macadamised. The Gas Works afford a most excellent light the whole night.

'The Houses are all roofed with slate and most of them are faced with free stone which makes the town appear to great advantage. The rides about the country are very pretty. The roads leading to Bath, Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Bishops Cleeve are the best, being level, the last a little undulating at first. Those to Cirencester, Winchcombe and London have steep hills to ascend after going two miles & a half from the town. The views from them however are excellent.

July 5th

'Went to the "Theatre Royal", a paltry place to see Master Burke¹, a young gentleman from Ireland, 6 yrs of age, whose performance on the violin is certainly wonderful. He led the orchestra in the Grand Overture to Lodoiska² in a superior style. There is this difference between him and the Infant Lyra³, the latter plays by Ear, the former by note.



Captain James Shrub Iredell
Courtesy of Cheltenham
College Archives

1830 April

'During the three years that I have been absent from Cheltenham, I find great improvements here have taken place, particularly in the vicinity of the Montpellier Spa in the addition to Lansdown Place, where there is a fine promenade for three quarters of a mile in length, i.e. to the new turnpike gate. The Pump Room of Pittville now finished is a magnificent building and the grounds of course increase in beauty with the age of the plantation. Commenced a course of the waters.

'Went to view the Palace, called Thirlestaine House, belonging to R Scott Esq. The greatest elegance & taste is displayed throughout, the cellars are upon a very grand scale & the stables superb. The front windows of the Mansion are formed with two panes of glass in each & these being plate cost £50 apiece. On the whole it is a residence worthy of a Prince & it is only to be regretted that it stands on so small a space as ... acres of ground with a wall all round, & surrounded by a close neighbourhood of cottages. It ought to have been built on an eminence like Pittville & the approach thro' a spacious domain.

'I was fortunate enough to meet several of my former acquaintances & friends. It led to a few invitations to event parties & at Mrs Whitmore's, in the Upper Promenade. I saw a fine & numerous collection of rare antiquities & curiosities which were left to her by an Uncle, Mr Brereton, a great antiquarian. Among these were the following:

- Two pairs of gloves belonging to Queen Elizabeth, one of them supposed to have been worn on the occasion of her going to St Pauls to return thanks for the dispersion of the Spanish Amada.

- a pair of slippers or shoes, worn by Anne Bullen or Boyleyn, with her marriage with Henry the 8th, very small & with spring heels
- a pair of shoes of Queen Anne
- a pocket handkerchief of the celebrated Countess of Desmond⁴, the border broad, & richly worked like the present fashion
- the ruff, or trimming, of a sleeve, at the Elbow, worn by the Unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, made of muslin, & something like the present fashion
- a watch so old as supposed one of the first constructed, it is very small & thick in a Chrystal case
- a most beautiful, rich counterpane, & pillow cases elegantly embroider'd in Gold & flowers in their colours imitated by silk; a splendid gold border of fringe remains on one of the pillows & a similar edging went all round the counterpane but was removed by the Old Lady (Mrs W's Aunt) & sold; it is exceedingly Old, having belong'd to the Whitmore family out of memory
- a Bag made of the bark of trees, it belonged to the Queen of Ottaheite,⁵ who died in this country, and is supposed to have caused the fashion of Ladies wearing reticules.

'There was one public Ball at the Assembly Rooms, which was well attended.



Cheltenham College
Image Geoff North

May 6th

Having benefitted my Health by drinking the Saline Waters, and gratified my wish of seeing a place which I am partial to, added to the pleasure of seeing some friends for whom I have a great regard, I

prepare to leave my comfortable quarters at "The Imperial". On my return to Hampshire, not liking the route which I came, I resolve to go back via Bath and this morning at 6AM I left Cheltenham, in the Mail in company with a Young friend, Jas Campbell Esq of the Bengal Civil Service.'

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Kath Boothman for her help and Cheltenham College for permission to quote extracts from the diary.

¹ The writer of the review of this performance in the *Cheltenham Journal* was full of praise for the child's skill on the violin but 'the appearance of a child, scarcely six years of age, dressed in the habiliments of an old man, with a full-bottomed wig and a three cornered-hat, playing to men of mature age' reminded him 'of the celebrated Dean Swift's hero Lilliput and the Brobdignagians'

² An opera by Cherubini.

³ The 'Little Improvisatrice', another infant prodigy, played the harp. She was supposedly only three years old when she upstaged a young Franz Liszt at a concert in Manchester. Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt Vol. 1* (1983).

⁴ Possibly Katherine Fitzgerald who is said to have been more than 120 years old when she died in 1604, Richard Sainthill, *The Old Countess of Desmond*, (1863).

⁵ Tahiti.

Pigsties or a Green Silk Satin Suit?

Cheltenham Probates 1660-1740

SALLY SELF

This a condensed and revised version of research originally produced for the Advanced Diploma in Local History, Via the Internet, Oxford University, 2007-2008. This article focuses on the Cheltenham aspects, omitting comparisons with Thame and Woodstock (Oxon), the section relating to consumer goods and the methodology of the Microsoft Access database and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

WHEN THE HISTORY OF CHELTENHAM IS MENTIONED, one ‘fact’ that is frequently stated, is that our community was ‘nothing’ before the discovery of the spa water; this may sometimes be qualified by saying that there was but ‘one street and a few pigsties’, but the general assumption is that Cheltenham hardly existed before the 1740s and was insignificant until the George III visit in 1788. The aim of this article, through the study of several primary resources, 1660-1740, is to refute this broad assumption. To facilitate this investigation a *Microsoft Access* database was formed and the statistical analysis used *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheets.

Cheltenham is situated where the floodplain of the Severn Vale rises slightly to meet the Cotswold oolitic limestone escarpment, which lies to the south east of the town. The unit of study for this article is the township of Cheltenham and its abutting tithings of Arle, Alstone, Westal and Swindon. The existence of Cheltenham as a place of habitation was first recorded in AD 803 and the community certainly existed in Saxon times, when it was part of Mercia and on the road from Winchcombe to Gloucester.¹ Domesday records the town’s royal ownership and details of the Hundred of Cheltenham, whilst during medieval times, the town had royal and ecclesiastical landlords. In 1226, Henry III granted to the ‘men of Cheltenham’, a market, a three-day fair, and the ‘Liberty of Cheltenham’, thus giving freedom from certain jurisdictions and taxes.² This had advantages and disadvantages: the absentee landlords left the inhabitants to their own courts, and customary privileges built up over the years but it also meant that the town had no unifying central authority or habitation in the form of a manor house or ecclesiastical establishment.

The ‘myth’ of Cheltenham’s insignificance may partially stem from a quote, a picture, a map and the early Guide books. Often quoted, rather disparagingly, is Leland’s, ‘a longe town havynge a market’ from his *Itinerary* of 1540: however he must have seen Cheltenham at first hand and designated it as a town, knowing from his extensive travels the relative size of communities. The picture reproduced in several local histories, shows the High Street, built up on both sides with rustic timbered and thatched two- and three-storey buildings, with a stream, crossed by stepping stones, running down its centre: it is now believed that this may be a Victorian, probably romanticised, view of the town depicting life around 1740. The Coates’ map, (see p.19) again often reproduced, is a road plan showing, rather like a modern route finder, only stylised information pertaining to travel: oblique stylised buildings to the north and hatched blocks to the south, with annotations on the roadways.³ The Guidebooks referred to are mainly Victorian in origin. Rowe’s *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* is an example: ‘Little more than a Century ago

Cheltenham bore the usual appearance of an ordinary Country Village: there was the Old Church, [...] the Village Inn, with its appropriate significance of “The Plough” rudely delineated, swinging and creaking upon its rusty hinges...’. Others have echoed these sentiments, with such phrases as ‘the town has sprung by magic [...] from an obscure hamlet’.⁴

So given these widely held observations, could the size, functioning and economic diversity of Cheltenham, immediately prior to the expansion of the town following the ‘discovery’ of the spa water, be larger, more varied and complex than the ‘myth’ has led many to believe? Is there evidence of crafts, trades and commercial ventures? In what occupations were they engaged, or what status did they hold? What wealth was involved in the economic sectors?

These questions can, in some measure, be answered from a study of *Cheltenham Probate Records 1660-1740*.⁵ Further evidence of this period can be found in the Hearth Tax and Bishop Compton’s Census (1676), Sir Robert Atkyns *Gloucestershire*, (1712) and the St Mary’s Parish Registers, extant for all but six years of the period. However, before examining the evidence each one holds, one needs to be aware of the techniques used to obtain the information and the scope and limitations of that data.

After an initial assessment of the sources, it was decided to form a *Microsoft Access* database and analyse the information using queries and spreadsheets. A tally sheet for each probate inventory and ‘linked’ will was created, it included; total values for the inventory, calculated values for household goods, malting, brewing and agricultural items; also tallies of rooms, storeys and outdoor buildings, and household goods. From this, a relational database was formed, with a spine table linked to nine other content specific tables. Also added were two ‘stand-alone’ tables of information relating to occupations and the Hearth Tax. There was no need to include either Compton’s Census or information from Atkyns. As information was extracted using queries, the results were sorted and filtered and numerically analysed using *Microsoft Excel*’s pivot tables and statistical analysis package.⁶

Cheltenham Probates 1660-1740					
	Male	Male as % of total	Female	Female as % of total	Total
Wills	194	36.1	56	10.4	250
Inventories	137	25.5	44	8.2	181
Administrations	74	13.8	22	4.1	96
Accounts	2	0.4	3	0.6	5
Guardianships			2	0.4	2
Citations	1	0.2			1
Depositions			1	0.2	1
Papers	1	0.2			1
Total	409	76.2%	128	23.8%	537

It must be remembered that these documents were originally written to fulfil a particular administrative need; they were not written specifically for the local historian! Thus all information has to be used and interpreted in the light of its original intentions. *Cheltenham Probate Records* contains 573 probate documents and a break-down by type and percentages of the totals, by male and female are given

below. Analysis was carried out on 100% of the inventories, and on those wills that were ‘linked’ by name to an inventory; that is about 50% of them. Also used were two of the accounts and all available information relating to occupation appearing in any probate document. Coverage by decade is uneven: the early years are sparse, but later decades have a more even spread of inventories, with inventories and linked wills, administrations and accounts being most common in the last two decades.

Coverage of Probate Papers by decades - 1660-1740						
Decade	Wills	Inventories	Administrations	Accounts	Other	Total
1660s	23	4	0			27
1670s	29	7	2			38
1680s	44	30	10	2		86
1690s	29	26	9			64
1700s	16	26	17	1		60
1710s	43	34	15	2	4	98
1720s	36	27	24			87
1730s	30	27	19		1	77
Total	250	181	96	5	5	537

Not everyone appeared in Probate documents, and survival of the documents varies considerably.⁷ During this period, wills dealt with the disposal of land (realty) and of personal property (personality).⁸ Nationally, only around a third of the population made a will and one must remember that ‘silent majority’: mostly married women and those whose estates were of little value. While ‘social coverage is anything but narrowly restricted, [wills are] socially biased and largely fail to reflect the experiences of either the rural or urban poor.’⁹ Locally, figures reflect this: 24% of the documents concern widows and spinsters, but there appear to be none for married women;¹⁰ less than half state occupation or status – so some of the documents may relate to ‘the poor sort’ and there is some evidence that they are represented in a small number. Wills are also ‘only loosely systematic in their format, which renders a coherent approach to their analysis problematic’¹¹ Again, local wills reflect this: the majority of the bequests are examples of ‘fuzzy’ data that respond best to qualitative interpretation and narrative writing, though some data can be analysed statistically.

It is reckoned that in Gloucestershire around 30% of male estates were the subject of inventories, and the economic information contained in them can be interpreted against a framework of national knowledge. However, there are many caveats attached to the information they hold: appraised value at death does not equate to the value of the testator’s ‘estate’ during life; values are for second hand goods; real estate, goods and chattels could have been dispersed in dowries or the testator could have ‘retired’ and the apparent lack of goods may not be a reflection of the whole life. In Cheltenham, values do appear to have been stable for many goods during the period.¹² That the appraisers were careful is obvious, down to the last ½d, though the addition can be faulty! They were recognised by the local community as skilled at the task, as the same names frequently occur, and apparently shop and agricultural appraisals have been carried out by fellow traders and yeomen.¹³

The Hearth Tax records provide an indication of the number and size of the houses in Cheltenham in 1676.¹⁴ The return gives information for the ‘town’ and the tithings of Alstone, Arle and Swindon. There is no record of Westal, Sandford and Naunton as a separate tithing, so one is uncertain if they have been excluded or more likely included within the ‘town’ of Cheltenham.

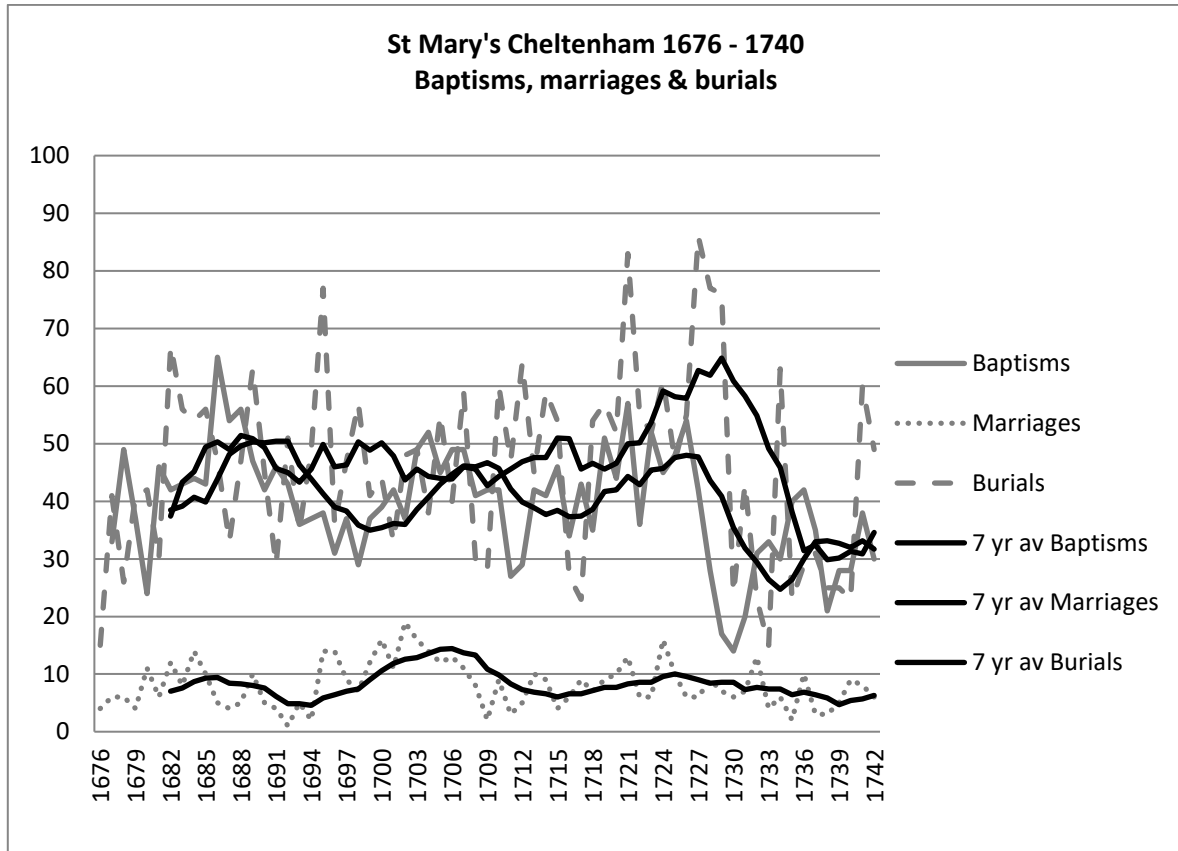
If Swindon is excluded, on the grounds that none of the testators came from there, (though several held land), the town contained 74% of the taxed dwellings, the rest were scattered in the hamlets and farms, throughout the tithings.¹⁵ Of the 285 householders, 27% were exempt. This seems a high percentage of ‘those [not] paying local taxes to church and poor, due to poverty or smallness of estate’ or with a ‘rentable value of 20s or less’.¹⁶ These 60 exemptions, with the presence of 109 one hearth households, are an indication of the smallness and probably poor nature of the housing: in fact the dwellings of that ‘silent majority’ most of whom will not appear in the Probate records of Cheltenham.¹⁷

Cheltenham Hearth Tax 1676												
	Number of dwellings with hearths of									Number of dwellings	Exemptions	% of exemptions
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Chelt’ham town	61	45	32	14	8	3	2	1	1	167	46	28
Alstone	26	7	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	39	7	18
Arle	12	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	19	7	37
Swindon	10	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	17	0	0
Total	109	58	39	16	11	3	2	1	3	242	60	25%

Bishop Compton’s Census also took place in 1676. This records a total of 1068 communicants, 4 papists and 97 non-conformists. If the recommended multipliers of 5.05 for households and 1.65 for communicants are used, the results show the difficulty of arriving at accurate population and household figures during the early modern period; the Hearth Tax indicates a population of around 1525 and the Census just over 1962 – the discrepancy is large and the most likely explanations are that the areas enumerated are not the same or that there has been an error in recording or copying.¹⁸

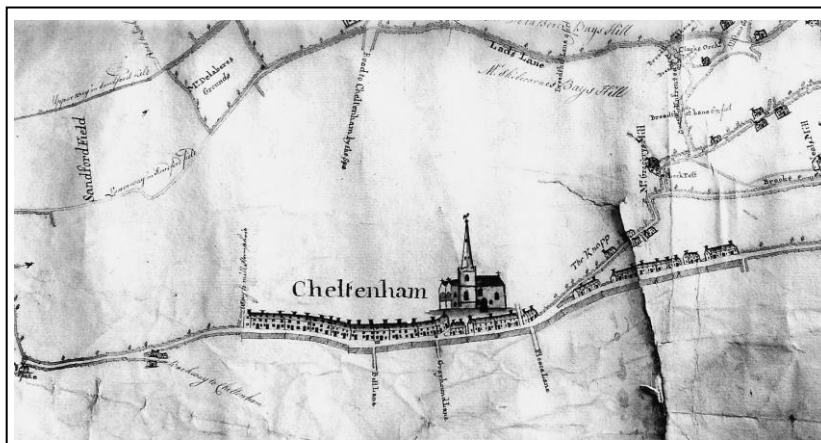
There is further population evidence provided by Atkyns. He gives households (320) and inhabitants (1500) – the figures look suspiciously rounded, but are confirmed by John Prinn, Steward, with 321 houses and 1500 inhabitants – or is this Atkyns’ source? Atkyns also states that nearly 40 years on from the Hearth Tax, Alstone has ‘decreased’ to 30 houses and Arle has ‘increased’ to 30 – dubiously neat figures. With figures so open to question it is difficult to arrive at any clear trends of a substantial increase or decrease, over the period, as experienced by some nearby towns such as Worcester.

Another source of data for the demographic vitality of the town comes from the Parish Registers.¹⁹



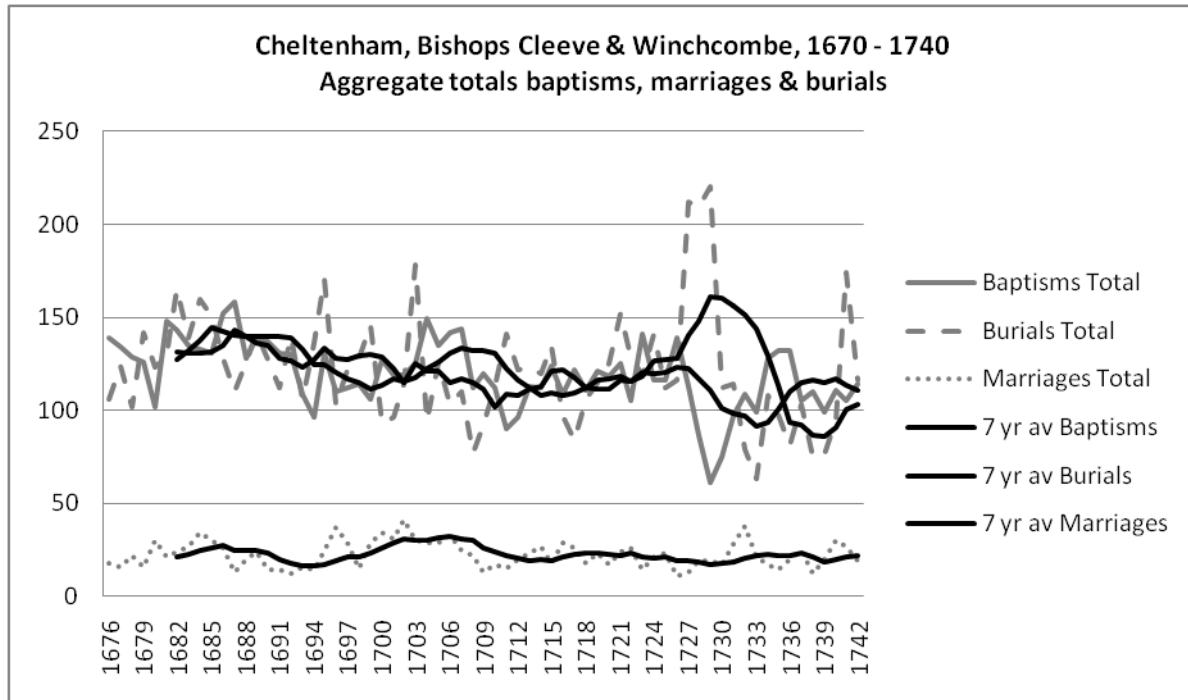
Source: St. Mary's Cheltenham; Gloucestershire Archives, microfiche, PFC 78/1 1/3 and PFC 78/1 1/4

Although at first glance the data appears to fluctuate, the seven-year moving average shows a stable period between the early 1680s and the late 1720s. However, during the last decade baptisms and burials appear to fall quickly. There could be several explanations: lax recording and the presence of an increasing number of Non-conformists seems most likely, while a sudden cessation of births and deaths least likely.²⁰ Marriages do not decrease, so abandonment of the town by those of fertile age seems unlikely. Although the Cheltenham 'vital events' generally total over one hundred, the figures for the adjacent parishes of Bishops Cleeve and Winchcombe were also scrutinised and the results aggregated, to give a broader picture of the trends in the area.²¹



The map which may have contributed to the 'myth' of the insignificance of Cheltenham. Detail from 'A Plan of the Roads leading from Arle Cross to Pillford Lane' G Coates & Son 1776

GA Ref. Q/SRh/1777/A/1
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The graph (above) shows very similar trends over the three areas. If linear trend lines are substituted for the moving averages they show marriages have great stability over the 80 years, and baptisms and burials show only a very minor drop. But there appears to be some form of mortality crisis in the area in the late 1720s and low baptism numbers in the early 1730s, which appear to reflect the 'extreme fluctuations' in the National Population Series.²³

Crude Birth, Marriage and Death Rates for Cheltenham, Bishops Cleeve and Winchcombe		
	1676	1712
National Crude Birth rate	29.84	30.46
Cheltenham CBR	19.69	17.80
Winchcombe CBR	26.40	17.50
Bishops Cleeve CBR	42.30	54.40
Mean of 3 parishes CBR	25.31	21.92
National Crude Marriage rate	7.41	8.00
Cheltenham CMR	2.59	3.08
Winchcombe CMR	4.40	4.00
Bishops Cleeve CMR	7.00	12.30
Mean of 3 parishes CMR	4.66	6.46
National Crude Death rate	30.68	26.79
Cheltenham CDR	16.07	39.48
Winchcombe CDR	26.10	15.80
Bishops Cleeve CDR	41.90	49.10
Mean of 3 parishes CDR	28.02	34.79

Crude Birth, Marriage and Death rates for Cheltenham and for the aggregated totals of the three parishes, can be worked out for the dates 1676 and 1712, and comparisons made to the national figures. That the Cheltenham CBR and CMR are below the national figures and the CDR is above seems to point to a town at least stationary, or a more cruel term might be 'stagnant' in terms of demographic growth. However these are only 'spot' years, based on figures that can be questioned, so are not clear trends. In 1712 Cheltenham had a peak in its mortality rate, though not severe enough to be called a crisis. These did occur in 1682, 1695 and 1721 and for three consecutive years at the end of the 1720s. The late 1720s were a time of deficient and poor harvests throughout England, especially in the south west.²⁴ The other crises

only lasted a month and would indicate bacterial or viral infections. It is possible that the weekly markets and annual fairs were sources of these sudden outbreaks.

Turning to the Probate documents, one comes to a fine source of economic information. The occupations of 464 people are given; the status, i.e. widow or gentleman, of over 200, and occasionally both. Most were, of course, locals, but

Geographical spread of occupational information		
	Occupations	% of total
Cheltenham	344	74
Gloucester	43	9
Gloucestershire	60	13
London	9	2
Other counties	8	2
Total	464	100

around a third came from other geographic locations. Links are mostly to fellow traders, such as the one between the Cheltenham and Ledbury mercers, the Arrowsmith family, or those who needed the services that the town could not provide.²⁵ Status was more closely linked to the town; nearly 100% of the widows and spinsters lived in Cheltenham, but only around 60% of the

gentlemen and esquires - the rest came from Gloucester and the county. These figures are skewed in favour of males, as females did not act as appraisers, and seldom as bond providers during this period.

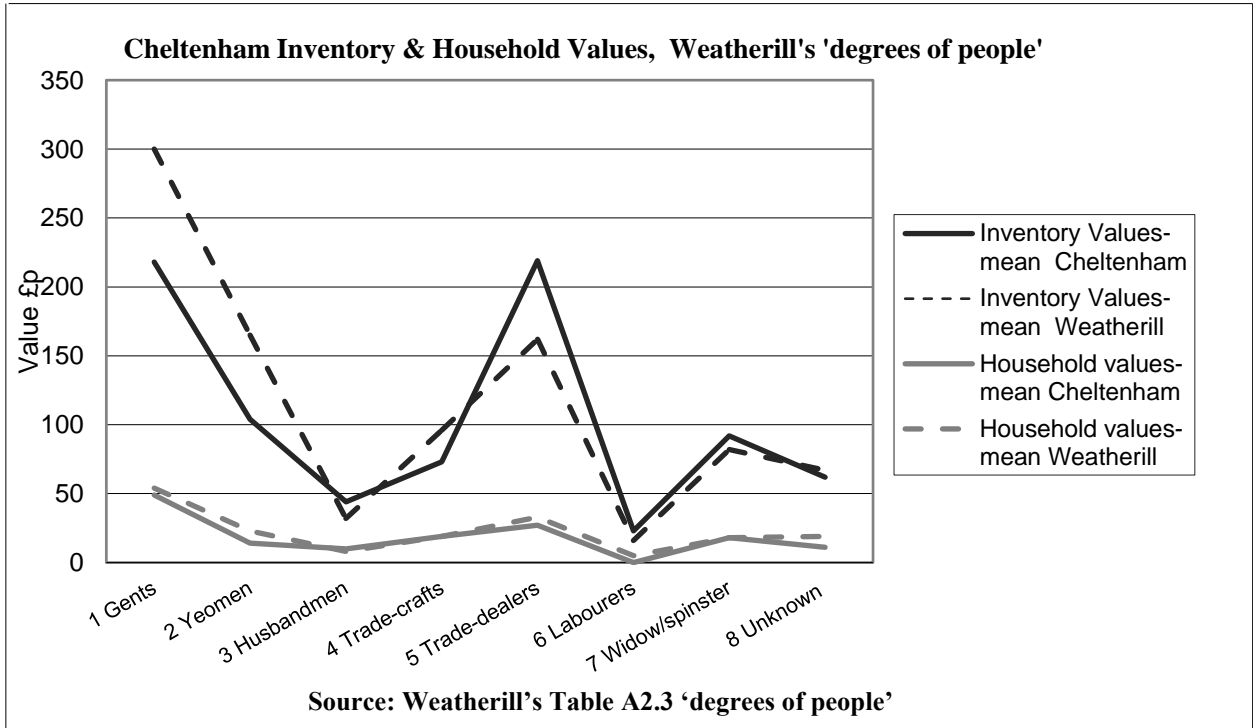
In Cheltenham (and its tithings) there are 67 different occupations, excluding the terms relating to labourer or servant. This seems a high number when compared to other studies of occupations, and would seem to indicate a vibrant town serving its own needs and those of the immediate rural area, most likely as a result of its market.²⁶ It is also apparent that many of the inhabitants were 'multi-occupational': farmers were malting and brewing; glovers were trading in wood, pasturing sheep and growing wheat; gentlemen brewed and farmed.

Further analysis of the data using pivot tables reveals a town heavily dominated by the primary and secondary trades of agriculture, malting, food and drink and clothing. Building would seem to be negligible, though there are references to a new malt-house and hall.

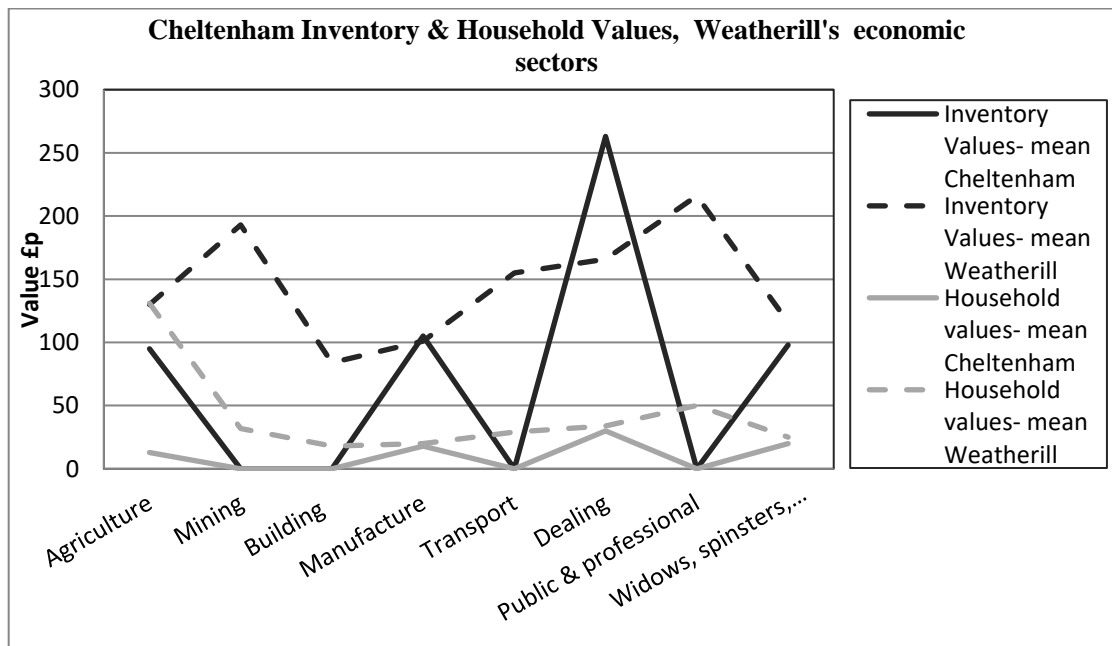
Occupational groups – Cheltenham 1660-1740				
Category	Total	% of total	Of which	were
Agriculture and allied trades	175	51	yeomen	107
			maltster*	27
Food and Drink Trades	69	20	innholders	12
Clothing Trades	50	15	mercers	14
			leatherworkers	19
Building Trades	24	7	woodworkers	15
			workers in stone and brick	7
Services	21	6		
Professional and medical	10	3		
Servants and labourers	22	6		

*Maltsters are included with Agriculture, though they could, as easily, be included in Food & Drink

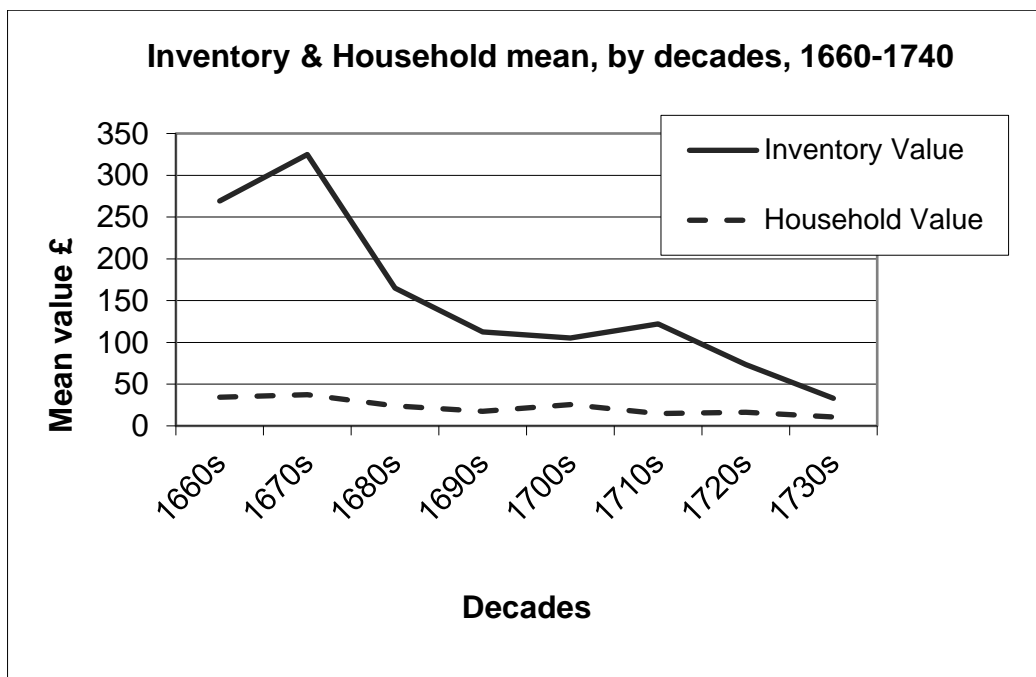
To help establish the functioning of the community, a comparison has been made between the Cheltenham inventories and household values and the findings of Lorna Weatherill’s extensive research into consumption and consumer behaviour.²⁷



Weatherill looked at occupational groupings of ‘the middle ranks [...] in order to take specific account of different economic sectors and parts of the social hierarchy.’²⁸ The first breakdown employs what she describes as ‘degrees of people:’ the second more conventional ‘economic sectors’.²⁹ The Cheltenham findings closely mimic her results and would lead to the conclusion that Cheltenham was a fairly standard market town, with typical economic and social groupings.



Alongside the inventory total values, the value of household items was also calculated and both sets of figures were further analysed for the mean value, by decades: the graph reveals a drop in inventory value from over £250 to below £50. The peak in the 1670s is caused by one high value of £1673. The household values also decline, though at a slower rate, and as expected these become a larger percentage of the inventory value over the eighty years. While single mean values may have little significance, the decline over the whole period must have some meaning: possibilities include a decrease in the town’s economic functions, a sustained demographic crisis or possibly just the selection of Inventories that have survived.³⁰



Cheltenham: inventory and household average value analysed by decade

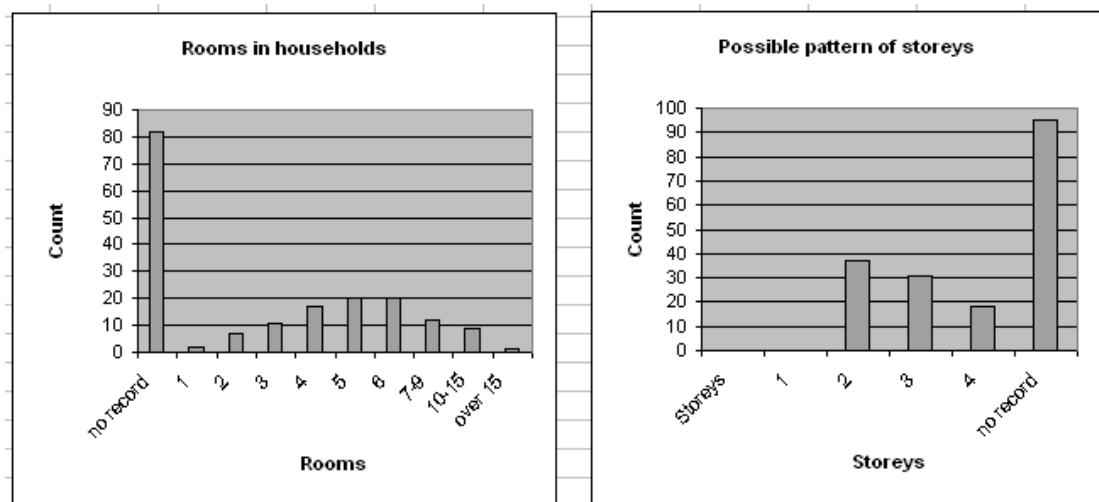
The mean figure for inventory value is £128, with a range of £1672, and household value a mean of £22, range £141 - figures that reveal little social or economic information. However the mean inventory value for several identifiable groups tells one more. Weatherill’s figures are also included for national comparison.

Group	Mean £	Median £	Range ³¹ £	Maximum £	Minimum £	Number documents	Weatherill Mean in £ ³²
Yeomen	132	41	707	710	3	37	165
Husb'men	47	20	106	111	4	7	32
Maltsters	257	146	829	837	8	13	162
Mercers ³³	595	352	1669	1674	5	4	
Widows	102	23	1025	1031	6	27	82
Spinsters	36	17	165	168	3	18	
Gents	208	160	480	485	5	13	300
Total	128	41	1673	1674	2	203	148

Analysis of the significant occupational & status groupings in Cheltenham, inventory value

The mercers, few in number but ‘rich’ in terms of Cheltenham, are followed by the maltsters, gentlemen and yeomen. However, inventories only give part of the picture: wills also give indications of wealth.³⁴ They often specifically state that wealth had already been apportioned, usually to close kin, indicative of dowry payments and dwellings and land passed to children. Few made money ‘work’ by placing it in annuities and bonds. Of the sample, 38% had a dwelling to pass on, but details are lacking; land (48%) was more closely defined, reflecting the land holding in the area, demesne, freehold and copyhold, both owned and rented. In these wills there is little evidence of commercial property, apart from a malt-house, a cider mill and the King’s Arms, Prestbury. Around half left bequests of money, 14% substantial sums over £100, while those leaving under a £1 seemed to do so for the procurement of gloves and rings. Of the 32 female wills, many passed on bedding, furniture, brass and pewter. The majority signed their names, but charity towards the ‘poor’ of the town was distinctly lacking.

Another view of the town is gained from the analysis of rooms and storeys. There seems to have been a very mixed tenancy/ownership pattern; chambers over shops ‘owned’ by other people, ‘retired’ or ‘poor’ inhabitants in one room, and others in four storey buildings with 12 or more rooms. Unfortunately, evidence is only sound in around 50% of the Inventories.³⁵ The houses of the yeomen, ‘gentlemen farmers’ and those who were malting were the largest, with five to eight rooms and often adjacent working building. Attics are recorded in 26 houses, cellars in 50, and are often used as storage for barrels, malt and ‘lumber’. There were 46 records of buildings or chambers dedicated to the manufacture of malt, brewing, cider making and preparing hops. There were also dairies, and 14 shops or specific manufacturing work areas.³⁶ Five- and six-roomed dwellings and two storeys appear most common, but this may present a false ‘picture’ because of the selective nature of the records.



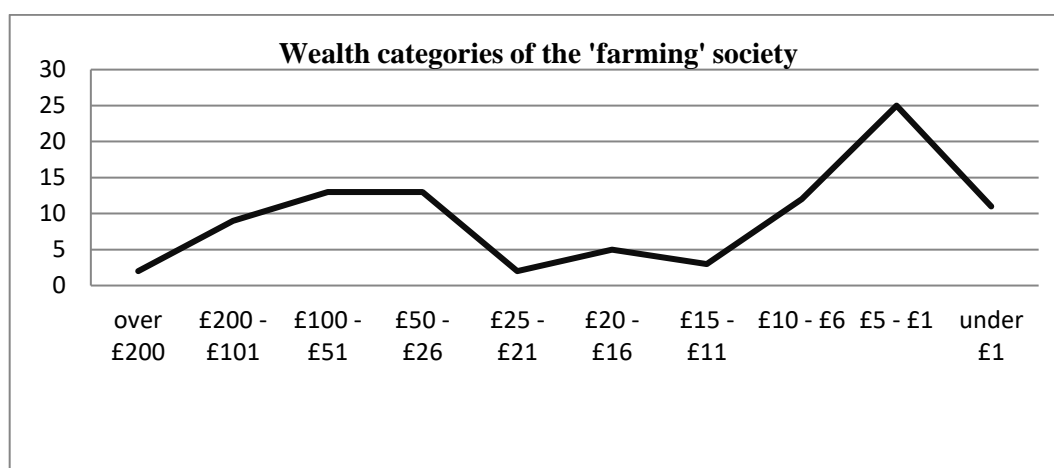
Analysis of rooms and storeys in Cheltenham housing 1660-1740

As one would expect, malting and brewing formed a section of the economic activity: it represented about 6% of the total inventory value, but for a few individuals it was as much as four times the value of their household goods and at least equal in another 14 cases.³⁷ These were the exception; for most it was a malt mill (33) and other malting equipment. The evidence seems to point to large scale malting being in the hands of a few and taking place in specialised areas, (13) and a larger number

grinding the treated grain into malt, possibly only for home consumption.³⁸ Brewing is harder to quantify; there is evidence of three brew-houses, all in the 1700s, but it seems to be largely a household activity. The manufacture of malt may also account for the frequent references to coal; it seems likely that the malt furnaces were run at least partially on this fuel.

Agricultural value formed a larger sector for the town, though its value declined over the decades. More research needs to be done into national and local values to see if this is a ‘real’ trend – farmers, manufacturers and traders could have been subject to falling values, and if wages were rising, their wealth would have decreased. The evidence points to mixed arable and pastoral farming; though greater value was present in the animals, though some of this, in the larger concerns, is accounted for by the value of the horses used for the cultivation of crops.³⁹

The farming wealth was mostly in the hands of a few, the yeomen and ‘gentlemen farmers’. In a middle category, £50-£26, were often those who had two or more occupations, such as a glover and a cordwainer. The final ‘tail,’ which was a considerable one, spiking in the £5-£1 bracket, were those with a pig or two, a crop of wheat or a ‘parcell of sheep cubs’. Farming represented a far larger share of the town’s wealth, 23% of total inventory value, than did malting and brewing.



Analysed by category of agricultural wealth

The wealth in shops and workshops was also looked at. As mentioned in occupations, food, drink and clothing sectors were most represented, but apart from the four mercers, no one occupation consisted of sufficient numbers to be analysed. It is also impossible to tell if their wealth was that of a master, a journeyman or a labourer. Around 8% of the total inventory value was linked to this area. The mercer Edward Johnson, stock valued at £968, was in a league of his own - the Harrods of seventeenth century Cheltenham?⁴⁰ Detailed inventories for two shops show a wide range of choice and price. A Cheltenham haberdasher offered for sale over 36 dozen hats, of 42 types, for all ages and both sexes; a shoemaker had 170 pairs of shoes and boots ready for customers.

Debts, in the form of credits and lending, featured in 19% of inventories and were linked, as is common, to those in retailing and the craftsmen, though the gentlemen and one widow were also encumbered.⁴¹

As the research progressed it became noticeable that the same names were recurring; so a search for the top 10 to 20 in each of the important economic groups was carried out. It became obvious that certain families held a substantial percentage of the town's wealth (farming, malting and retailing), and that wealth appeared in their households, and presumably affected their status in the community; not just in one generation but usually into the next. Tabulation of inventory value for farming, brewing and malting had eleven of twenty names in common; those named as yeomen had seven names.⁴² The links to the status of gentleman were not as strong, though four were 'gentlemen farmers' and brewers. The widows formed a separate group and had only one connection to farming and none to malting.⁴³ These could be named as Cheltenham's 'middling sort', its 'middle classes' or 'the yeoman, husbandmen and urban masters' who had 'notions of independent economic activity [and] a strong sense of household,' and probably held a high social position in the community.⁴⁴

With the power of *Microsoft Access* and *Microsoft Excel* it is possible to manipulate probate data into endless cross tabulations, but what of the 'real' people and places - a few examples must suffice. There is a detailed inventory for the Bell Inn (1700). It had a minimum of eleven rooms, with separate cellars for beer and cider, its own malt-house and malting rooms; the hall could apparently seat around 20 people; the 'Best Chamber' housed 12 chairs, besides tables and the bedstead; linen was valued at £6 15s; and there were silver spoons, pewter and brass valued at over £5. The innholder, Richard Cowles (or Coles) seems also to have been acting as a banker, holding over £50 'money in the house' and owed in bonds and debts around £115.

Another source of more personal information can be gleaned from two accounts, which give a vivid picture of the town in the early 1700s. William Roberts, (1707), a 'gentleman farmer' was owed over £260, but he in turn owed money to seventeen people, the interest on borrowed money, wages and shop bills, £15.56 for meat alone. James Smallpiece, (1714) just owed to all and sundry. His debts totalled £898, with an average of £8.31; he hadn't even paid the postman! He may have been involved in a new build, as he owed £30.95 to the building trade; one of the few pieces of evidence of any new development. He may even have completed it, as there is a debt of £9.45 to an upholsterer.⁴⁵

Before drawing all the complex threads together, one needs to restate the original question – was Cheltenham more complex in its functions and complexities than the 'myth' of one street and a few pigsties may lead us to believe? The primary evidence has been statistically analysed in relationship to the demographic trends, the occupational evidence, the 'wealth' and values in households, agriculture, retailing, brewing and malting, and the composition of those households (rooms and storeys), as well as some individual examples.⁴⁶ One also needs to remind oneself of the limits of the sources; married women, servants, labourers, apprentices, seasonal workers, and those who the Poor Laws sustained are very under-represented. There *is* a brief glimpse of them in Atkyns; he refers to '6 poor People, to each of whom 12d a Week.' The probates have only four wills written by servants and labourers, and again there is evidence of levels of 'wealth' – one left 2s, another made bequests of £10, his house, orchard and land. Servants were left quite substantial sums or apparel and as testators (four) left money and land. Apprenticeships are mentioned only in three wills where

money is set aside for that purpose. Any conclusions are therefore of a partial and limited nature.

Cheltenham's population figures confirm that there were over 1000 inhabitants, so on size alone it would qualify as a town, within the generally accepted definitions. The market operated during this time, and although the sources do not mention it directly, inferences might tentatively be drawn pointing to Cheltenham as a nodal point for the onward transport of cheese and malt.⁴⁷ There is evidence of specialist craftsmen and traders, with a strong secondary sector, almost certainly as a result of the market. However, comparison with towns of a similar size but with no market would need to be made to be certain of any conclusions. There is little evidence of tertiary employment, though the town had clergy and a bailiff, and at various times also apothecaries and surgeons.

In the case of the demographic information 'most English towns suffered from frequent, and often severe, short term demographic crises.'⁴⁸ Cheltenham was no exception. The relative stability in baptisms and burials between 1676 and 1720 was followed by a steep drop, before apparently stabilizing from 1737 at a level below the previous ones. Various explanations have been offered, poor record keeping and the rise of Nonconformity seem the most likely, but it may have been influenced by national factors. Where the two vital events do diverge, it is always the burials that exceed the baptisms. Also the link between demographic and economic factors is well established, so Sharp's analysis of these decades may apply: he attributes lack of buoyancy in agricultural prices, the pressures of land tax and other fiscal measures as governing factors.⁴⁹ Definite conclusions are elusive: 'violent fluctuations' and 'limitations of the surviving evidence make it impossible to quantify the changes precisely'.⁵⁰

The breadth of occupations suggests a high level of economic activity, and most are present throughout the period, but their close link to the activity of the market would have made them vulnerable to the pace of agricultural forces. The slow but steady decline of the inventory and household values may indicate a market that is having growing economic problems. The fact that much of the capital was tied up in agriculture, malting, and retailing would be contributory factors. Cheltenham may also have been affected by developments in other local towns. No one trend appears to be a major cause.

The quality and quantity of consumer items places Cheltenham low down in the national hierarchy, more closely aligned to rural than urban areas, but there were many quality items recorded.⁵¹ Direct links to London were difficult, but there were many associations with other communities and lack of awareness of these items seems unlikely. However if the market and its associated activities were dropping there may have been insufficient money to spend on the items chosen for analysis. The severe fire of 1719 may have had an influence here; if much of the basic household equipment was lost, then there would have been insufficient 'spare cash' for the latest consumer goods, the effects of which would show up in Inventories of those dying years later.⁵²



Apart from St Mary's church this is the only building that can easily be traced to the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century in Cheltenham.

It was the house of Richard Hyett, yeoman.

Will & inventory, Cheltenham Probates, 408 & 409
Image © S Self

The original thesis that Cheltenham was indeed more than a long street with a few pigsties, must surely have been established, but in the hierarchy of market towns it was close to the bottom, and like so many small market towns of this period, mixed messages are common.⁵³ Pigs (and bacon) do figure largely in the inventories, but so too do anagrammed silver and a 'green silk satin suit, [and] a red lustring petticoat'.⁵⁴ Most of its dwellings were strung out along the one Street; but some were of four storeys and one that remains to this day, in Arle, is a substantial, if small, Queen Anne house and its owner, Richard Hyett can best be summed up by a quote; he 'mentayned a good howse, a good plow, good geldynges, good tillage.' Cheltenham for those eighty years was certainly much more than one street and a few pigsties.

I gratefully acknowledge and thank Sarah Richardson of Warwick University, my course tutor, and Stephen Blake and James Hodsdon for their assistance in spotting mistakes and inconsistencies.

¹ Rowbotham, S. & Waller, J. (2004), *Cheltenham, A History*, p9 - the manuscript referred to is the 'Account of the Council of Cloveshoe', and refers to rents and profits from church lands going back thirty years. Also Hart, G, (1965), *A History of Cheltenham*, pp2-5.

² This was the heyday of such grants – around 2000 were made between c1100 and c1349.

³ There is good evidence of other buildings and roadways in the town at this time, so it would appear that Coates has shown only those buildings adjacent to the road he was mapping.

⁴ Goding, J (1863) *Norman's History of Cheltenham*, Introduction, it continues 'the town presented all the appearance of a stragglng village. A more retired, rural and unfrequented place was not to be found in England [...] an obscure hamlet.'

⁵ *Cheltenham Probate Records 1660-1740*, ed. A. J. H. Sale, (BGAS, 1999). I should like to place on record my very grateful thanks to Tony Sale and his team of researchers – without their transcription the original Assignment for ADLH and this article could not have been written.

⁶ For a full explanation, see 'Pigsties or a green satin suit? – Cheltenham 1660-1740' S Self, 2008, Advanced Diploma in Local History Via the Internet, a copy of which is held in the Society's Library.

⁷ For a fuller understanding of the legal purpose and extent of each type of document see the Introduction to *Cheltenham Probates*, pp xii-xvii; *When Death do us part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans & N. Goose, Leopards Head Press (2004).

⁸ Earlier there had been the distinction between the will for the dispersal of land and the testament which dealt with transmission of personal property.

⁹ Arkell, Evans & Goose, p45.

¹⁰ This figure, for the period 1660-1740, seems to be consistent, with national figures: Erickson, *Women and property*, pp 204-5, quoted in Arkell, T, Evans, N & Goose, p47, found that around 20% in the seventeenth, and 25% in the early eighteenth century, of will-makers were women, - 'the vast majority being widows'.

¹¹ Even in the most well represented areas, it is estimated that only c.50% of the population made a will, with the period, clerical district and custom affecting the percentage. Those with an 'estate' of less than £5 had no need to do so, and survival rates for the documents vary widely depending on the Probate Court. However it is estimated that there are around 750,000 wills, 'largely untapped' for the Early Modern Period. Arkell, T. Evans, N. & Goose, N., pp38-39.

¹² Although there is copious information in the form of the National Series of Prices, it is hard to be certain of comparing like with like. A local example would be the value of farm horses which stayed constant, between £4 - £6, throughout the period, but this may be illusory as no indication is given of age or quality.

¹³ *Cheltenham Probates* has a table of the most frequently occurring names, p. xxvi.

¹⁴ Hearth Tax was levied from 1662 to 1689, but only one return for Cheltenham seems to exist. The rate was 2s per annum for each hearth or stove, and was paid at Michaelmas and Lady Day. Exemptions also included almshouses, however smiths' forges and bakers' oven were included.

¹⁵ If Swindon, with 17 dwellings, is included the percentage would be 69%.

¹⁶ <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/hearthtax> accessed Oct 2007.

¹⁷ Though the number of exemptions seems high, many places had far higher percentages – Tonbridge, Ashford and Cranbrook in Kent, one of the wealthier counties at this time, had 50% exemptions. Clark & Slack, *Towns in Transition*, p21.

¹⁸ The multipliers are discussed in Alison Percival's Gloucestershire Village Populations, *Local Population Studies*, No.8, Spring 1972, and Nigel Goose, Notes and Queries: The Ecclesiastical Returns of 1563: A cautionary note, accessed 15/12/2007 from www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk

¹⁹ Figures are not available for 1660-1676.

²⁰ The Registers seem poorly kept, with frequent crossings out and interpolation of data. Cheltenham had nearly 10% of its population designated either Papist (4) or Non-conformists (97) in 1667 and there is evidence of a Quaker community in the town from 1658, with them having their own burial ground from 1700. This was followed by the establishment of several Chapels during the early 18th century. Blake, S, (1982) *The Book of Cheltenham*, p24, and Rowbotham, S & Waller, J, *Cheltenham, A History*, pp 47-48.

²¹ In areas where vital events are low, the statistics can become wildly skewed: it is therefore recommended that figures from adjacent parishes are aggregated. Bishops Cleeve and Winchcombe figures are from Richard Scofield, *Parish register aggregate analysis, A Local Population Studies supplement* (Colchester, 1998).

²² Unfortunately, owing to the article now being reproduced in black and white, the seven-year average trend lines are not clearly differentiated. For clarification, see original article in CLHS Library.

²³ Schofield, R. S. & Wrigley, E.A. (1989) *The Population History of England, 1541-1871*, Table 8.8, twenty greatest annual deviations in Death rates, p322, and Birth rates, p324, identify the end of the 1720s and early 1730s as times of 'extreme fluctuations'.

²⁴ Hoskins, W.G. Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History, 1620-1759, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 16 (1968).

²⁵ Many of the bondsmen named in the Administrations came from Gloucester, and London provided the services of innkeepers and lawyers.

²⁶ Arkell, T. Evans, N. & Goose, N. p 83 quotes other studies that give only 55 trades for three West Sussex towns 1610-1760; and 63 for the City of Lincoln 1661-1714. He also adds that Inventories do not identify all the occupations in a town.

²⁷ Weatherill analysed nearly 3000, randomly selected, inventories from eight parts of England taken from the middle year of each decade from 1675 to 1725. For further information see Cheltenham probates, pp xvii – xxvi; *Consumer behaviour & material culture in Britain 1660 – 1760*, L. Weatherill Routledge (1996).

²⁸ Weatherill, Appendix 2. She looked at three ways of grouping occupations. This method uses a terminology that was common to Gregory King's Scheme of Income & Expenses and is commonly used in the Inventories.

²⁹ Weatherill, L, Table A2.3 she refers to Wrightson's groupings of pp 17-28 in *English Society, 1580-1680*, or Corfield's trades and occupations, *The Impact of English Town*, pp 124-145.

³⁰ For an alternative point of view, and comparisons to Gloucestershire studies see *Cheltenham Probates*, p xxiii.

³¹ The standard deviation for all groups is large, indicating a very wide spread of values in all the groups; there is often a few impressively large sums, set against many smaller ones.

³² Taken from Weatherill, Appendix 2, Table A2.3.

³³ The figure for the mercers is possibly misleading; fourteen were present in the town but only four left Inventories, of those one appeared to have retired, and one was the 'richest' man in the town. If these two are excluded the mean is £352.

³⁴ Of the 245 wills, only 131 were sampled, 53% of the available numbers.

³⁵ I acknowledge that Tony Sale in *Cheltenham Probates* BGAS has produced a similar analysis of the rooms/house size distribution - his conclusion is identical. This analysis has been extended to a survey of storey composition.

³⁶ These include haberdashery, cutlers, bakers, collarmakers, glovers and cordwainers. With a time span of eighty years some of these are likely to be the same areas recorded more than once.

³⁷ The figure of 6% is likely to be too low, as it is impossible to separate out the brewing equipment from the general kitchen equipment – so much household brewing was in the hands of the women as part of their weekly work.

³⁸ The number of malt houses is likely to be lower as they will have passed down through the generations – the name Hyett (who had a horse malt mill) and Chestroe appear twice.

³⁹ One Inventory lists a team of oxen and their tackle – thus harking back to the Domesday record of 22 ploughing teams.

⁴⁰ He also had debts owed to him of £499. This was noticeable with all the traders, they had extended 'credit' to a value that exceeded the value of the stock; one was over 6000%, with another 6 not so far behind! Unfortunately the Inventory for Edward Johnson (Sale, 26) contains few details other than categories of wares.

⁴¹ Many of the debts were large, with a maximum of £632.

⁴² Names such as Wood, Nichols, Gregory, Chestroe, Ellis, Cox, Hyett, Yeates and Sturmy.

⁴³ The wealth of the widows was calculated by adding household, money and apparel together.

⁴⁴ The phrase 'middling sort' is now much used, brought into general parlance by Wrightson; the other two terms refer to Sharpe, Chapter 8, in discussing the common people, as opposed to the landed and noble orders, he states that he prefers the third phrase in an urban setting. In Cheltenham examples of urban masters would be William Arnold, Samuel Arrowsmith, and the two innholders, Robert Smith and Richard Cowles, with a mean Inventory total of £445.

⁴⁵ The debts must presumably have accrued over many years, and extend from Cheltenham to London. The largest debts were for bonds, the unpaid interest, and for legal advice, all local. Food and clothing items accounted for £114.26. Unfortunately space does not allow for a proper analysis, an article could be written on the Accounts alone.

⁴⁶ Tosh makes the point that 'Trevelyan's 'small number of particular instances' must not take the place of statistical analysis, but that if based on such evidence they can illuminate it.' Tosh, J (2006) *The Pursuit of History*, pp259-260.

⁴⁷ There was a 'cheese' wharf at Lechlade, for the transfer to London, and facilities at Gloucester and Tewkesbury for links to the Midlands via the Severn. Richard Hyett had 200 cheeses in the loft when he died. The evidence for malt is not so conclusive. 'Two bushels of malt are barely enough for a hogshead (48 gallons) of very weak beer, enough for a family of five for about four days', McWilliams, J.E. 'Brewing Beer in Massachusetts Bay, 1640-1690', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4, (Dec., 1998), pp. 543-569, so most of the malt may have been used locally.

⁴⁸ Clark, P. & Slack, P, p82.

⁴⁹ Wrigley & Schofield, Chapter 8, have established the connection between demographic and economic trends; also Sharp p163 – he was speaking of the small and middling groups of gentry, but these conditions would have affected Cheltenham's minor gentry and better-off yeomen.

⁵⁰ Clark & Slack, p 97.

⁵¹ For a more detailed analysis of household goods, see Sale, pp. xvi-xxiv.

⁵² The fire was sufficiently severe for it to 'be mentioned in church briefs around the country [...] the Croxhall Church, Lichfield gave their collection to "the poor sufferers by fire at Cheltenham."' – Rowbotham and Waller, p18.

⁵³ The fact that it managed to retain its market may be of some significance – Clark & Slack, p 24 state that nearly a quarter of late 17th century towns lost their markets.

⁵⁴ This quotation comes from the will of Mrs Margaret French Sale, 454.

‘A Grand Entrance’: the Pittville Gates, Cheltenham

JAMES HODSDON

Efforts are under way to restore the Grade II listed gates at the southern entrance to Pittville. This article, building on materials collected by Dr Steven Blake for a talk to the Friends of Pittville AGM on 21 October 2010, sets out their chronology.

IN SUMMARY: APART FROM THE WROUGHT IRON ‘overthrow’ added by the Borough Council in 1897, the structure visible today can now be confidently dated to 1833. The gates were designed by Robert Stokes, Joseph Pitt’s principal architect at the time. This new entrance feature was part of a surge of building in the southeast corner of Pittville in the early 1830s, all intended to attract and impress visitors coming north up Winchcombe Street.



Detail from Johnson’s, ‘Female Orphan Asylum &
Entrance to Pittville’
Image by permission of Cheltenham Art Gallery

The illustration shows a detail from the earliest known image of the gates, an 1836 view by Johnson¹. It depicts recognisably most of the basic structure seen today: six stone pillars, with a fixed ornamental cast-iron panel in the middle (this has never opened), gated carriage entrances either side, and smaller gates for pedestrians to left and right. Lamps adorn each pillar. The four opening gates were removed in the last century (see below).

Early ambitions

Pitt’s original plan for his new estate did not mark specific entry points, but evidently something imposing had been hinted at, for by the summer of 1828 the *Cheltenham Looker-On* was raising a quizzical eyebrow: ‘It is now some time since we heard that it was intended to erect two grand entrances into Pittville, one at the end of Portland Street, and another in Winchcombe Street, but we have not lately had any intelligence on the subject. We hope it has not been given up, as such a proceeding would form a very handsome feature to the new town; and a couple of triumphal arches might be erected at a trifling expense...and would be extremely beautiful’.² Trifling or not, in the event the money only stretched as far as one grand entrance, and once the Pump Room had been opened (1830) it was perhaps natural that the Winchcombe Street axis was preferred for embellishment, for it would have led the eye almost straight up to the new spa building, and a suitable sliver of land was available.³

The Gates are built

The *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 28 November 1833 pinpoints their arrival almost to the month: the gates were then ‘new’, and finished all but the lamps. Construction probably did not take long, when one notes that the neighbouring new Female Orphan Asylum – of which Pitt was a patron – shot up from foundation stone to external completion in just two months.⁴ Within a short space, not just the gates and orphanage, but also Pittville Mansion (left of the gates; now Ellenborough House), and 1–11 and 23–5 Pittville Lawn were all completed in this small area.⁵ The strong inference is that Pitt, assisted by his architect Robert Stokes, wanted to maximise the impression made on visitors approaching the new estate.

The *Chronicle* is worth quoting at length because of the detail it gives, from which we can see that the remaining cast ironwork is indeed original:

‘... Neither ought we to quit this part of Cheltenham, without noticing the new, elegant and massive gates that form the principal entrance to Pittville, and which, we have been informed, were manufactured and erected from a design by the gentleman [Robert Stokes] we have previously mentioned as architect of the new Orphan Asylum. The following description will, perhaps, convey to strangers some idea of the beauty of their construction.

‘The whole space is divided into five parts, having two gates for carriages, and two for pedestrians, while the centre division is filled with iron work of the same pattern with the gates. The design of the gates is very classical, and in pure Grecian taste; the rosettes which fill the lower compartment agreeably harmonize with the flowing lines and magnificence of the principal division; these are surmounted by a series of elegant open panels which are crowned by terminations of a very ornamental character, alternating with heads of a smaller and simpler design. The piers by their massiveness and simplicity, greatly heighten the elaborate appearance of the gates, and add by contrast to the general effect. The gates are painted in imitation of bronze, which we think exhibits the detail more distinctly and to greater advantage than if they had been finished plainly. The lamps we perceived were not painted, and on enquiring the cause, we were glad to find, that those at present on the piers will shortly be replaced by others more ornamental in their design,⁶ and by their size, better adapted to the situation.

‘We owe this improvement to the judicious liberality and public spirit of Joseph Pitt, Esq. the proprietor of the estate. We can only add, that these superb gates impart a new feature to the entrance of Pittville, before much wanted, and are well calculated to convey to the visitor of this delightful Spa, a favourable impression, which every step on his road to the Pump Room encreases. When the lamps are lighted, the extent of the improvement will be fully appreciated, and it will, we have no doubt, stimulate to a still greater extent, the operations of those who are engaged in investing their capital in building on the estate.’

Within weeks, the permanent lamps were installed, being ‘lighted for the first time on Tuesday night [17 December 1833]. They were exceedingly splendid, and harmonised well with the design of this magnificent entrance.’⁷ These will have been oil lamps, as gas lighting did not reach the Pittville Estate until late 1839.

The reference to painting 'in imitation of bronze' indicates that the original colour was indeed something near the present shade of green.⁸ Stokes' design does not appear to have survived;⁹ we do not know where the gates were made, or by whom. The pattern details (see inset) are distinctive, and seemingly have no exact parallel in Cheltenham, but it would be reasonable to assume sources similar to neighbouring contemporary ironwork in Pittville Lawn, discussed by Amina Chatwin.¹⁰ Surviving receipts show that R.E. & C. Marshall of Cheltenham supplied or repaired decorative ironwork elsewhere on the Pittville Estate grounds for many years,¹¹ but it has not been possible to link their name to the main Pittville Gates.



Detail Pittville Gates,
November 2010
Image © James Hodsdon

Pittville Gate (singular) is named on Merrett's 1834 map, though not represented, probably because the structure was not quite in being when he was adding final details to his draft engraving in late 1833. Merrett does however use Pittville Gate as a reference point in his table of distances, placing it at 539 yards from the High Street. By 1836 there was a licensed cab stand nearby, 'for no more than three fly carriages at a time'.¹²

Thereafter, the gates (now usually plural) are regularly noted in the guidebooks, from Davies' 1840 edition of the *Stranger's Guide* onwards. Pitt died in 1842; many of his assets were auctioned in the following years, and organised investment in the Pittville Estate was at an end. Nevertheless, the Pump Room and other attractions were in being, drawing numbers of visitors, and in 1852 a new stand, for four licensed (sedan) chairs, was designated at the gates. But for the next quarter-century, little is recorded, apart from periodic maintenance of the fabric by local firms employed by the estate's agents.¹³

It is likely that waiting cabs and their horses were what prompted the Cheltenham Ladies' Society for the Protection of Animals to offer a cattle-trough to be set up in front of the gates in 1883. The council accepted, and it was installed in or shortly before August of that year, surviving until about 1965.¹⁴

In 1888, the County of Gloucester Bank, which had become owner of the residue of the Pittville Estate (principally the Pump Room, roads and gardens) offered to sell to the Council for £5,400 – a bargain price. An Act of Parliament was required to give the council power to raise the money, the sale being finalised in early 1891. In all likelihood, the gates, lying across an estate roadway that definitely was transferred, became council property at this point, and certainly the council acted as their owner from then on.

1897 saw Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee; in May that year the Prince of Wales honoured a long-standing invitation to visit Cheltenham. Much effort went into decorating his route through town, which had been decided well in advance. The new

electric lighting was already spreading to Winchcombe Street, and the chairman of the lighting committee, a keen advocate of electrification, appears to have spotted an opportunity to make a statement of his own along the route of the prince's return from a military review at Prestbury Park. Not only were the new arc lamps to be extended up as far as Pittville Circus, there was to be an arc lamp 'over the Pittville Gates on an Arch'. The committee instructed the Borough Engineer to design a suitable arch, to be ordered at once.¹⁵ Within six weeks the job was done, and whether or not the prince actually saw the finished work (perhaps over his right shoulder) as he re-entered the town, others certainly approved the result:

*'The decision of the Town Council, to give special treatment to the lighting of this entrance to the Pittville Estate, has been carried out with commendable promptitude, the ornamental lamp arch, approved by the Lighting Committee, having been finished early last week, and current switched on to the electric arc lamp it carries on the evening preceding the Prince's visit to the town. The effect both in daylight and at night is decidedly good. The arch, which springs from pillar to pillar in the centre of the drive, is of open stamped ironwork, the curve bearing the words "Pittville Park." Above the curve is some artistic scroll work, supporting at its centre a circular device with the motto Salubritas et Eruditio, surmounted by a shield with the borough arms. The lamp hangs from the base of the shield in the ring formed by the motto. Whilst the design appears to be generally admired, the light at night is appreciated by the neighbourhood as a first instalment of the arc lighting about to be carried out along the whole of Winchcombe-street. The lamp will not be used regularly until the other lamps have been erected.'*¹⁶

Note the 'Pittville Park': this was still a relatively new term, adopted only in 1894 once the Marle Hill Annexe had been added to the original Pittville garden grounds.

The decades of decay

A Victorian postcard of 1893 shows visible decay of the stonework, especially at the bottom section of the pillars. The freestone selected may not have been the highest quality, or the best choice for the job. Periodic repairs with cement, and over-painting of some of the stonework, noted in the 1870s and 80s,¹⁷ may unwittingly have contributed to the deterioration.

In late 1920, the council's Parks and Recreation Grounds Committee considered repairs. The Borough Surveyor was instructed to remove the gates i.e., the opening leaves, (this was at least partly to give vehicles easier passage), to paint the remaining ornamental ironwork, and to render in cement and generally repair the pillars. The gate removal and repainting - relatively inexpensive - was probably carried out some time after June 1921. However, there was no money for pillar repair, which was to be postponed until the next year. Much of the decayed cement rendering visible today may thus date from 1922. The removed gates were probably stored at a council depot, until in June 1932 the Borough Surveyor suggested they be disposed of. Having adjourned to take a view, in September, the Parks committee agreed to allow their disposal as scrap. We can infer that some councillors had considered

reinstating the gates, but either they were seen to be beyond repair, or there was simply no money to spare.¹⁸

Narrow escapes

In 1940 the drive to salvage metal for the war effort led the Borough Surveyor to propose removing for scrap all remaining railings (including 'ornamental cast iron work') at the Gates. The gates when open had been wide enough for carriages, but as motor vehicles increased in size, problems were more likely. Had it not been for the problematic cattle-trough (the Surveyor felt it could not be moved without the donor's permission, there was no labour available anyway, and painting it white would be merely a palliative and no real safeguard) the wide central railings might well have gone at this point. In the event, the committee resolved to 'retain railings and ironwork at the main entrance for the present', though the adjacent length of shorter railing, running from the right-hand pillar along the Prestbury Road pavement, and present in pre-war photographs, probably did disappear at this point.

There were certainly traffic problems after the Second World War, caused by the narrowness of the road gates and poor sightlines at a busy four-way junction. The Highways Committee considered several options, including complete removal of the gates. Following council agreement in 1959, the paving in front of the centre section was extended southwards in 1961, obliging traffic to take a straighter line through the gates. Any benefit was short-lived, as incidents with large vehicles continued, culminating in July 1965 when a furniture lorry was going south through the gates. It started to reverse, demolished the third pillar, cracked the central railing and brought the arch down on two parked cars.¹⁹ The damaged overthrow required expensive restoration, skilfully undertaken by Cotswale Welding and Smithing Works of Tewkesbury Road in July-August 1966.²⁰ In 1967 there was a proposal to limit access to cars and small vehicles. After committee consideration, this developed into a more substantial plan, executed in 1968-9, to ban traffic through the gates altogether, insert bollards, and realign the adjoining pavement from Clarence Road round to Prestbury Road, to the line seen today. Possibly, at the same time, new luminaires were fitted to the outer four pillars.

Recognition

The Pittville Gates were among many sites in Cheltenham given Listed status in 1972. Listing does not however guarantee adequate maintenance, and restoration of the gates formed an element of a 2009 bid for Heritage Lottery Funding for the restoration of Pittville Park. Though the larger bid was unsuccessful, a local group, Friends of Pittville, is now working with Cheltenham Borough Council towards the more limited objective of stabilising and restoring the gates, so that they deserve once more the title of 'Grand Entrance'.

Tailpiece

Research for this article has underlined the fact that gates, even historic ones, are not buildings; they do not get conveyed by solicitors, nor are they mentioned when highways change hands; they are not sketched or photographed nearly as often as (say) the Pump Room. Nevertheless, they do form a local reference point, and it has been possible to find at least a passing mention of the Pittville Gates for almost every

decade of their existence. My thanks to all those who have contributed memories and research suggestions for this piece, and also especially to my wife Judie who has shared the fun of the chase for the facts above.



A postcard view, probably from the 1920s - the side gates have gone. Note the original line of the paving, the arc lamp below the crest, the Cheltenham pigeon (now missing) adorning the crest, and, in the right foreground, the cobbled surface for horse cabs.

Image supplied by Tom Clarke

¹ Johnson, George Phillips, 'Female Orphan Asylum & Entrance to Pittville' in series *Cheltenham displayed in 18 views*, reproduced by permission of Cheltenham Art Gallery.

² *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 7 July 1828.

³ Even today, there is an old sign 'To Pittville Spa' at the southern end of Winchcombe Street.

⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 September 1833: foundation stone laid.

⁵ Blake, S., *Pittville 1824-1860*.

⁶ Judging from engravings and early photographs, the eventual lamps closely resembled those now on the steps to the Municipal Offices in the Promenade.

⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 December 1833: thanks to Mike Grindley and Vic Cole for this reference.

⁸ Parissien, Steven, *Regency Style*, p. 70, illustrates other examples from the period. Subject also discussed at greater length by Patrick Baty in *Palette of the Past* (article in *Country Life*), 3 September 1992, pp. 44-47.

⁹ He left Cheltenham shortly after; though he practised briefly elsewhere in Gloucestershire, he spent most of the rest of his life in New Zealand.

¹⁰ Chatwin, Amina, *Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork*, p. 41, (pub. author), 1975.

¹¹ Gloucestershire Archives D6187.

¹² Gloucestershire Archives CBR A1/1/4.

¹³ Gloucestershire Archives D6187.

¹⁴ Memories differ as to when it went, and the circumstances. What is probably an exact match, in red Aberdeen granite and supplied in the same year by the same society (see *Cheltenham Examiner*, 29 August 1883), can still be seen at the east end of the High Street (north side), near the junction with Hewlett Road.

¹⁵ Printed Council minutes.

¹⁶ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 19 May 1897.

¹⁷ Gloucestershire Archives D6187.

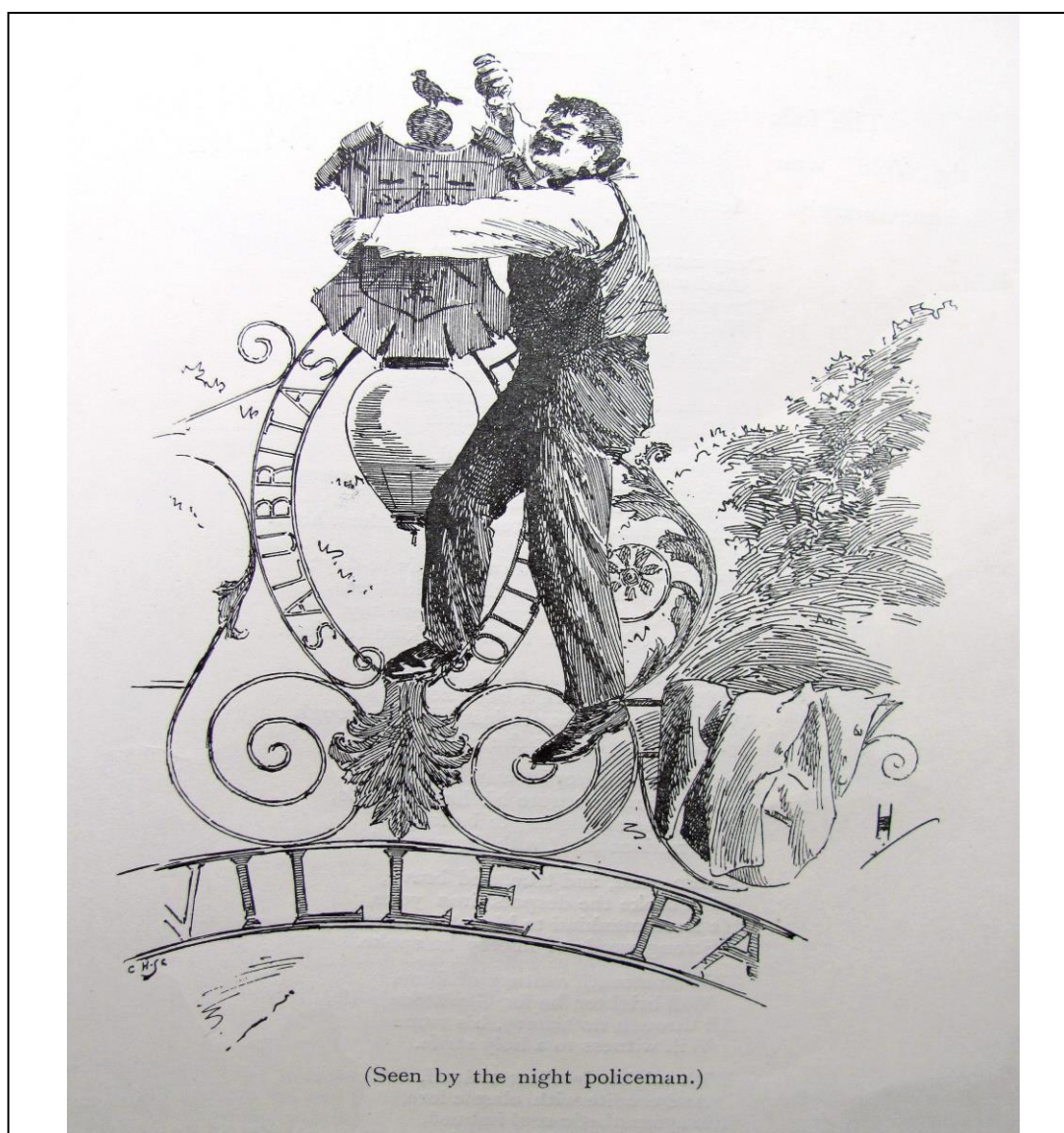
¹⁸ This and following paragraphs based on printed Council minutes, amplified in some cases by unreported minutes now deposited at Gloucestershire Archives (CBR A3 series).

¹⁹ Article with photograph, *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 July 1965.

²⁰ As well as accident damage, some of the scrollwork was very rusted and required remaking almost from scratch: personal communications; Ewart Iddles and Peter Carpenter, November 2010-January 2011; *Gloucestershire Echo*, 18 July 1976. The pigeon and ball which once surmounted the borough coat of arms (visible in early photographs) seems to have been lost before 1965.

Cheltenham Cartoons: 1897-1901

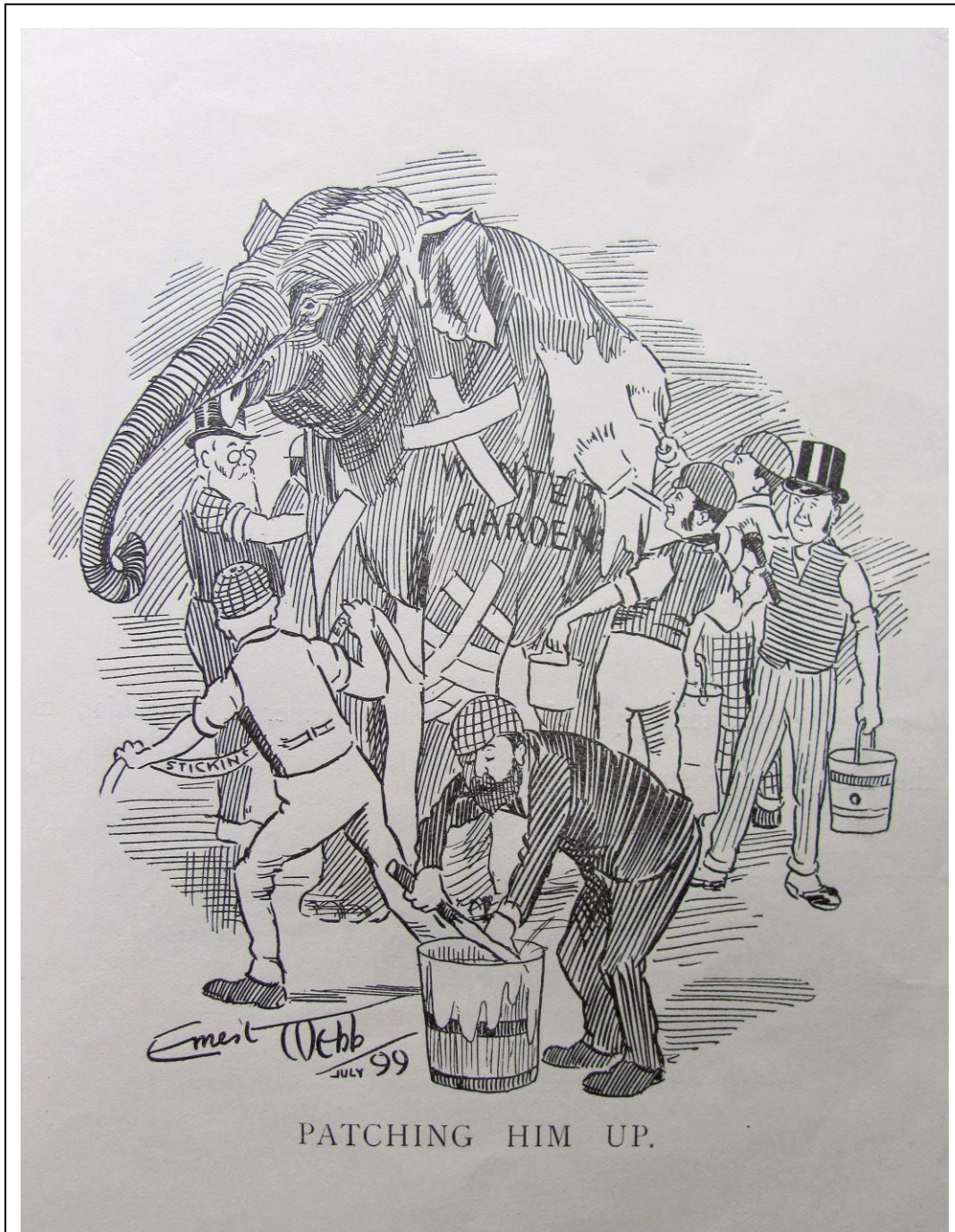
ORIGINALLY THESE FOUR CARTOONS appeared in the weekly *Cheltenham Free Press and Cotswold News* between 1897 and 1901. Because of their popularity, the cartoons were republished in five volumes as the *Cheltenham Sketchbook*.¹ They featured two artists, 'H' and Ernest Webb.² In the *Sketchbook* each drawing is accompanied by a pertinent remark or verse, on the facing page. The themes of the cartoons provide a contemporary comment on local politics at the turn of the century, and at 6d a volume appear to have been very popular.



'PITTVILLE GATES: ELECTRIC LIGHT EXTENSION'

Volume 2 Courtesy of Cheltenham Local & Family History Library Photograph Mary Nelson

This sketch is dated 23 August 1897, just four months after the ornamental arch and lamp were added to Pittville Gates for the visit by the Prince of Wales. Though first published on 14 May 1898 to mark the start of the permanent electric lighting in the area (the switch-on for the royal visit was a temporary job in advance of the full infrastructure), it focuses not on the actual light but according to the caption on an actual incident.



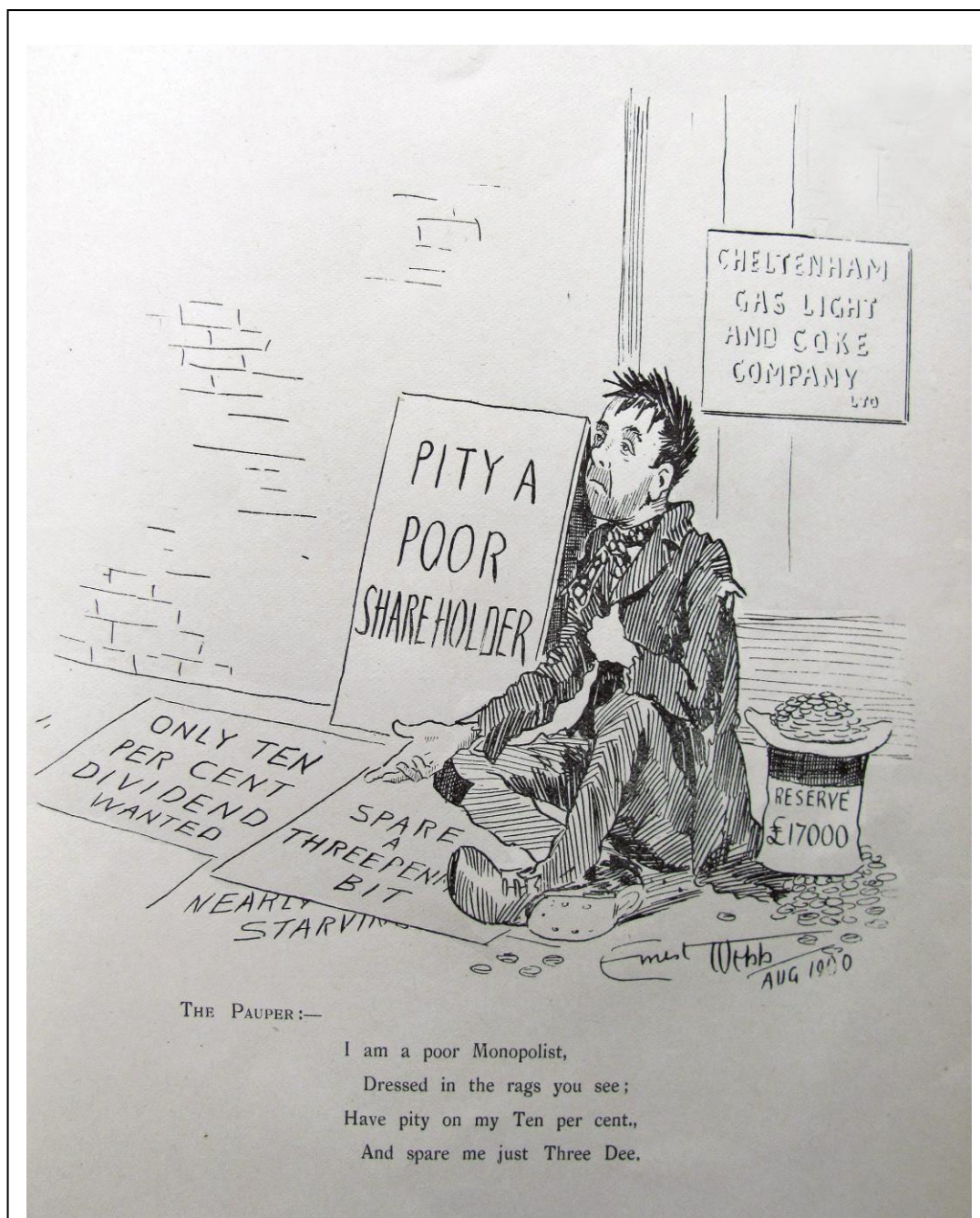
PATCHING HIM UP.

‘THE WHITE ELEPHANT’

The July meeting of the Town Council sanctioned the Town Improvement Committee’s proposal to expend £5,000 on repairs and alterations to the Winter Gardens’

Volume 3 1900 Courtesy of CL&FHL Photograph Mary Nelson

Dated July 1899, this drawing by Ernest Webb highlights the chequered life of the Winter Gardens. Designed by J.T. Darby the ironwork was produced locally at the Central Iron Works of Messrs Vernon & Ewen. The structure was built in 1878 and had a wide variety of uses, leisure activities predominating, with many people recalling it as a venue for roller skating. During the First World War it was used as a shadow factory for the production of Bristol Fighter aircraft, before being dismantled in 1940.



'A SPLENDID PAUPER

In August the Cheltenham Gas Company decided that the rise in the price of coal necessitated an increase in their charge for gas of 3d per 1,000 cubic feet.'

Volume 4 August 1900 Courtesy of CL&FHL Photograph Mary Nelson

This cartoon by Ernest Webb dated August 1900 has a contemporary ring – we are again worried by the rising prices of fuel. The lighting of the town by gas began in 1819, but was fraught with problems during the 19th century and into the 20th century. In private hands, until 1948, there were long running disputes between the Cheltenham Commissioners and the Gas Company over pricing, the quality of the product – deposits in the gas could extinguish or reduce the power of the lights – and the positioning of street lights. The Gas Company Offices, at the junction of Tewkesbury and Gloucester Road, built in the 1880s, is a fine example of brickwork and ornamentation.



‘FOR THE NEW ART GALLERY

The Baron de Ferrières has offered £1,000 and a collection of pictures far exceeding that sum in value to the Town, for the purposes of a Municipal Art Gallery on condition that the Town provided the site. Councillor Margrett opposed the raising of the loan for the later purpose at the Local Government enquiry. The sketch is intended as a suggestion for an allegorical painting to be placed in the New Gallery.’

Volume 3 1900 Courtesy of CL&FHL Photograph Mary Nelson

The Art Gallery (the site of which is now occupied by the Art Gallery & Museum extension) was opened in 1899. It was given a complete overhaul, with a new frontage in 1989 and is now again waiting for funding for further extension and improvements.

¹ The following note appears at the beginning of Volume 1 (1898) of the *Cheltenham Sketchbook* ‘The first thing that strikes the eye [...] is the vast difference that good paper and plenty of margin make in the appearance of [...] the drawings. On the whole these are admirably suited to their purpose and the portraiture is in most instances very good’.

² If anyone has any knowledge of ‘H’ or Ernest Webb, please contact the Editor.

Cheltenham in 1799 and the Sale of the Essex Lands

CAROLYN GREET

THE SALE IN 1799 OF THE LANDS BELONGING to the Earl of Essex made a vast difference to the geographical development of Cheltenham as the open fields and common land of many centuries' standing were bought up, enclosed and in many cases quickly sold on for building. The 'Descriptive Particulars' supplied by the auctioneers mentioned specifically that the lots included 'Several desirable and commodious Scites [*sic*] for Building' and the prices paid for these at the sale reflect their desirability. The subsequent development of the town, notably the creation of entire new areas such as Pittville and Montpellier, has been well documented but perhaps less attention has been paid to the general picture of the town and parish as it appeared at the time of the 1799 sale.

The Gloucestershire Archives contains an apparently hitherto unnoticed 'Plan of the Town and Tithing of Cheltenham in the County of Gloucester' c1800.¹ This shows with considerable clarity the extent of pre-enclosure Cheltenham and its fields with the Cheltenham/Swindon boundary of the modern Kingsditch Lane and Wyman's Lane on the west, Wyman's Brook marking the Cheltenham/Prestbury boundary to the north, and Coltham Lane (Hales Road) to the east. To the south of the main Tewkesbury Road/High Street/London Road the Chelt borders it in part.

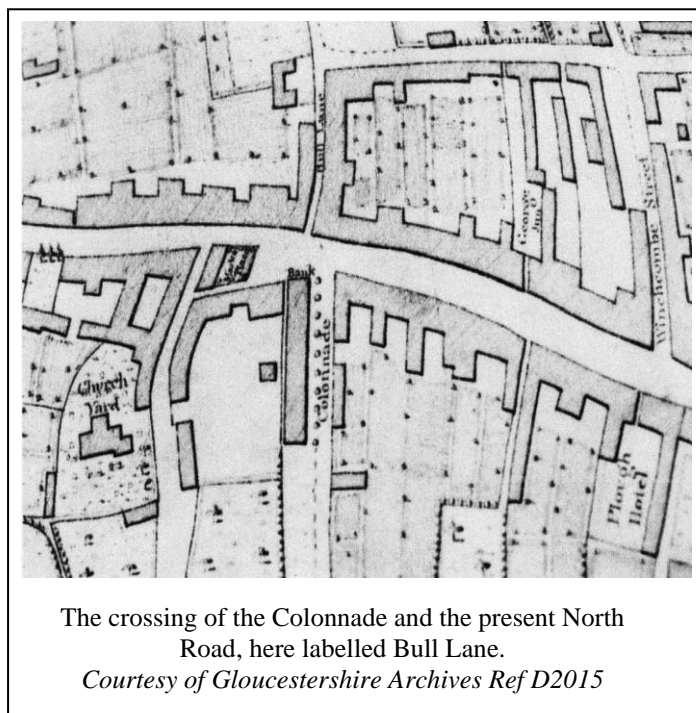
The map is five feet in length and is drawn to a scale of 20 inches to the mile. On it are marked roads, the type of land (arable, pasture or common), hedged enclosures and paths through the fields, as well as buildings; even the extent and direction of the strips within the furlongs are shown. Though the names of the fields and furlongs are not given, with the assistance of the map made to accompany the Essex sales particulars and work done by Barbara Rawes on the earlier fieldnames² it is possible to identify some of them, as well as pin-pointing as far as possible the exact position of the lots in the 1799 sale.

Before dealing with the sale details, it is worth mentioning some of the points from the 1800 map which, while not strictly relevant to the sale of the Essex lands, add to our knowledge of Cheltenham at that time. The map shows the larger roads mostly hedged on both sides, smaller paths being indicated by fainter lines. Orchards, brooks and ponds are shown and even some individual trees. As far as one can tell, every building is marked, even small ones, particularly outside the town and in the less built-up areas. Where the grounds of an individual property are shown, divisions, paths etc. within them are marked.

Away from the town, turnpikes are marked near the southern end of the later White Hart Lane, on the Prestbury Road at Cakebridge and at the junction of what is now Hales Road and London Road. The one at the junction of St Paul's Road and Swindon Road, though mentioned in the Essex sale particulars, is not marked. At the extreme west and east, directions are given: 'From Gloucester', 'From Arle', 'From

Birdlip Etc.’, ‘To London’, but otherwise the only name marked outside the main area of the town is ‘The Folly’ at the southern end of what is now Folly Lane.³

Along the High Street, rows of buildings are indicated though without the divisions between them. However, the shapes of the rear extensions to some make it clear that these are inns; indeed the George Inn, Plough Hotel and the Fleece are named, but not the White Hart or the Old Swan, though both are identifiable on the map. Some other buildings are named but the choice seems rather arbitrary: the Market House is identified, but not the Upper or Lower Rooms; the Almshouses are clear but anonymous, as is the Grammar School, though the Parsonage (Cambray Farm), the Churchyard, a Bank at the northern end of the Colonnade, and the Mill (Barrett’s in Cambray) are all named. Other recognisable but unnamed buildings include the Great House, Albion House, Rodney Lodge, Gardner’s Brewery and the Eight Bells opposite the church.



The choice of roads seems even odder. The Colonnade is named and the road immediately opposite is marked ‘Bull Lane’. The use of that name is unexpected, as before becoming North Street the road was generally known as Greyhound Lane, the Bull apparently having been a little further east along the Back Lane (Albion Street).⁴ ‘St George’s Place’ is marked but clearly still refers only to a small area towards the top rather than to the whole road. New Street, Grove Street and Ambrose Street (in existence though known by other names) are

unnamed, but for some reason ‘Magpie Alley’ is shown by name; this was a very narrow path running between the High Street and New Street and appears to be where ‘Newman’s Alley’ was later. Why this one very minor path should be singled out is not clear. Between the present North Street and Henrietta Street a minute break in the building line and a faint path behind indicate Counsellor’s Alley, later Oxford Passage. There is no sign of Coffee House Yard; the line of buildings along the High Street is unbroken from Bull Lane to the George Inn’s entrance.

The map does add some details to our knowledge of Cheltenham, in that it suggests that some buildings such as Albion House and Rodney Lodge are earlier than previously suggested. As for roads, taken in conjunction with the Essex map it makes clear how Hewlett Road was developed soon after 1800; also the perhaps more interesting revelation of the extent to which modern roads have followed the lines of much earlier paths and enclosure hedges, particularly in areas further from the centre of town. I have indicated examples of this in the following details of the lots included in the Essex sale.

In the following introductory section numbers in brackets refer to the lot numbers; terms printed in **bold** and *italic* appear in the catalogue.

I am particularly grateful to Jane Sale who passed to me the late Mary Paget's annotated copy of the sale catalogue, and to Dr Steven Blake who gave me a copy of the accompanying map.

On Tuesday 6 August 1799, a London firm of auctioneers conducted the sale at the Plough Hotel, Cheltenham. It had previously been advertised in Bath, Bristol and Birmingham as well as the more local towns of Gloucester, Worcester and Tewkesbury,⁵ and prospective bidders were invited to apply to view the accompanying map. This, the 'Essex map', showed the exact location of each lot and named the occupiers of land bordering each. The catalogue occasionally gave extra details. A reference section on the map listed the acreage and type of land of each lot, as well as grouping them by current tenant, with a handy summary showing that at the time of sale holdings varied from 1 acre 13 perches (Richard Newman) to the large area held by John Cook (**55 acres 2 roods 20 perches**).⁶

Many of the lots consisted of strips in the common open fields to the north of the High Street and bounded by Wyman's Brook, the boundary between the parishes of Cheltenham and Prestbury. These large open fields were **Lower Field** in the west of the parish, North Field, Whaddon (neither of these last two specifically named in the sale catalogue) and **Cheltenham Field**, also known as Upper or Over.⁷ They were divided into strips allotted to individuals. Within these fields were smaller groups of strips known as **Furlongs** - a 'field within a field', as it were; some of these were enclosed by hedges as indicated on the Essex map, for example Gause Ditch (30), and Keckbridge Piece (35). Much of the land was arable, though it varied in quality (see Lot 1, 5, 8, 9).

In the north of the parish was an area called The Marsh or **Marsh Common**, where burgesses (holders of burgage plots) had the right to pasture animals. In addition, some areas such as Church Meadow (20), land at Whaddon Corner (47) and, to judge by the names, Great Lammy and Little Lammy (54) were **commonable at Lammas** i.e. animals might be grazed on the land from Lammas (August 1), usually until **Candlemas** (February 2). An enclosure of nearly ten acres (32) adjoining Marsh Common and Whaddon Ground (54) was also described as **Meadow** or grazing land. Two areas in the northeast were **Leasow** or enclosed pasture.

Most of the lots offered were held **on lease** i.e. rented for a fixed period which was stated in the catalogue details. The majority of leases expired at Michaelmas 1803 (those held by William Humphris Barrett) or Michaelmas 1806 (Abraham Byrch, John Cooke); the two exceptions were Richard Hooper's lease of Church Meadow (20) which expired at Lady Day 1800, and one of the commercial premises (40) which expired on 21 December 1814. Some lots were held **at Will** i.e. rented but without a specific period. All Thomas Byrch's, except 47, were held 'at Will', as were John Newman's (part of 15, 21, 34 and 39). In five cases specific rents are mentioned. The commercial premises referred to above (40) paid annual Ground Rent of £20; the rent for Church Meadow (20) was £8; the Churchyard was let to the Churchwardens for £1.10s.0d.; Mrs. Lloyd (3) paid £2.15s.0d.; and John Cooke paid £4 for Whaddon Ground (part of 54). The details for all the other lots include 'Proportion of yearly rent', a sum which appears to be linked to the acreage of the lot: for the majority of

the land this was roughly £1.10s.0d. per acre. There were a few apparent anomalies: some lots had higher amounts, notably 12, 41, 48, 49, and for land in the east of the parish up the later Hales Road the rate was nearer £2 0s 0d per acre. In addition, the sale particulars give the 'Proportion of Land Tax' payable on each; this tax was based on annual value of land.⁸ I have not included these latter details for the individual lots.

Lots in the common fields were sold as so many *lands*; a 'land' approximating to half an acre, though it varied considerably according to the layout of the field. Two lots (36 and 47) carry notes that part 'is supposed to be copyhold, held of the Manor of Cheltenham'. In lot 36 this was 'One Selion or Customary Half-Acre', in 47 'Two Selions or a Customary Acre'.⁹ Of those named as occupying Essex land, the largest land-holders were Thomas Byrch mostly in the west and the north, Abraham Byrch, and John Cooke in the east of the parish. William Humphris Barrett also held several pieces in the west. In the years immediately after this sale many plots changed hands. Joseph Pitt in particular 'tidied up' his holdings, thereby facilitating his development of Pittville, though those developments are beyond the scope of this article.

The copy of the catalogue I have worked from (unlike that in the Gloucestershire Archives) has hand-written notes added, most of them later overwritten in darker ink. They give the name of the buyer of each lot plus the amount paid, and there are also occasional extra notes about the quality of the land. There were 54 lots altogether; on the first day 15 were sold in the west of the parish and the area around the present St. Paul's Road and Swindon Road. They were followed by five prime building sites, lots 20 (Church Meadow) and 16-19 (the kitchen garden of Cambray Farm). Day two dealt with the rest of the lands in the common fields, two central shops, and the large and important final lot which included the Improprate Rectory of Cheltenham, the Churchyard, Cambray Farm and its fields.

In the following details of the lots I have not always followed the exact order of the catalogue, as it seemed more helpful to follow a scheme of working basically from west to east. The lots to the south of the High Street plus the fields associated with them are dealt with in a separate section. I have abbreviated details somewhat, in an attempt to save space.

Three lots were included in the sale whose details I include here but which I have not elaborated upon as they do not relate so directly to the town. These were as follows:

Lot 7 *The Great and Small Tithes of the Tything of Alstone, arising from upwards of 700 Acres of rich Arable, Meadow, Pasture, Orchard and Wood Land. Together with One Piece of Arable Land, Tythe free, lying in Rowan Common Field, containing 0A[cre] 3R[ods] 11P[erches]. Occupation Benjamin Bubb, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806, at yearly Rent of £67 and capable of great Improvement. The yearly Land Tax from this Lot is £6.3s.2d. Sold to Mr. Butt £2070.*

Lot 11 *The Great and Small Tithes of the Tything of Arle, adjoining the Turnpike Road to Gloucester, and arising from upwards of 800 Acres of rich Arable, Meadow, Pasture, Orchard and Wood Land. Occupation Walter Welch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806, at yearly Rent of £87.10s. The yearly Land Tax from this Lot is £7. Sold to Mr. Butt £3230.*

Lot 33 *The Improprate Rectory of Charlton Kings, with the Great and Small Tithes of the whole Parish, arising from upwards of Two Thousand Seven Hundred Acres of rich Arable, Meadow, Pasture, Orchard and Wood Land, now let to Richard Barton at Will, subject to his keeping the Chancel in Repair, at the very low Rent of £148, but of considerably more Value than double that Sum. N.B. In this Rent is included a small Portion of Tithes within the Parish of Cheltenham, which is intended to be sold with Lot 54. The Curate of Charlton Kings is nominated by the Master and Fellows of Jesus College, Oxford; and the yearly Stipend of £40 is paid out of the Tithes of Charlton to the Curate doing Duty for the Time being. The Timber on this Lot is valued at £56.2s. which is to be paid for over and above what this Lot may sell for.*

ALSO Sundry Pieces and of Valuable Land, called Battledons, now inclosed and divided into Four Inclosures, containing 56A 0R 35P, including the Road through Coltham Field; delightfully situated on a beautiful Eminence near the Town of Cheltenham, commanding an extensive Prospect of the River Severn and the much-admired Vale of Gloucester, bounded by the Malvern Hills. In the Occupation of Thomas Byrch at Will. Sold to Mr. Rickett £7250.

MAP A WEST (page 46)

This begins at the western edge of the parish, covering the northerly part as far as modern Folly Lane, followed by the more southerly part and then the northerly lots between Folly Lane and modern Marle Hill.

LOTS 1-3. At the extreme west of Cheltenham Parish. To the south was the Turnpike Road to Gloucester (modern Tewkesbury Road) which in 1799 ran via the Cross Hands and down Hayden Lane. Mrs. Lloyd's house, The Moors, was to the south of the junction; she had left there by 1802.¹⁰ As well as 3 she already occupied land to the immediate west of 1. The Coates map of 1776 shows a large house marked 'Moore's' here, still shown on maps as late as the 1920s. The lots were bordered on the north by the 'Back Road to Cheltenham'; this ran via Maud's Elm, joining the present Swindon Road and continuing east across the town. The present cul-de-sac Richards Road represents the section near Maud's Elm, the rest of the western end no longer exists. It appears from the notes that land in this corner of the Lower Field was not of very high quality. The site is now covered by commercial and industrial development.

Lot 1 *Three Lands of Arable in Lower Field, abutting on Turnpike Road to Gloucester. Occupation Abraham Byrch on Lease, expires Michaelmas 1806. 1A 1R 3P. Sold to Pitt. 50 Guineas. Note – 'Very Bad Beans'.*

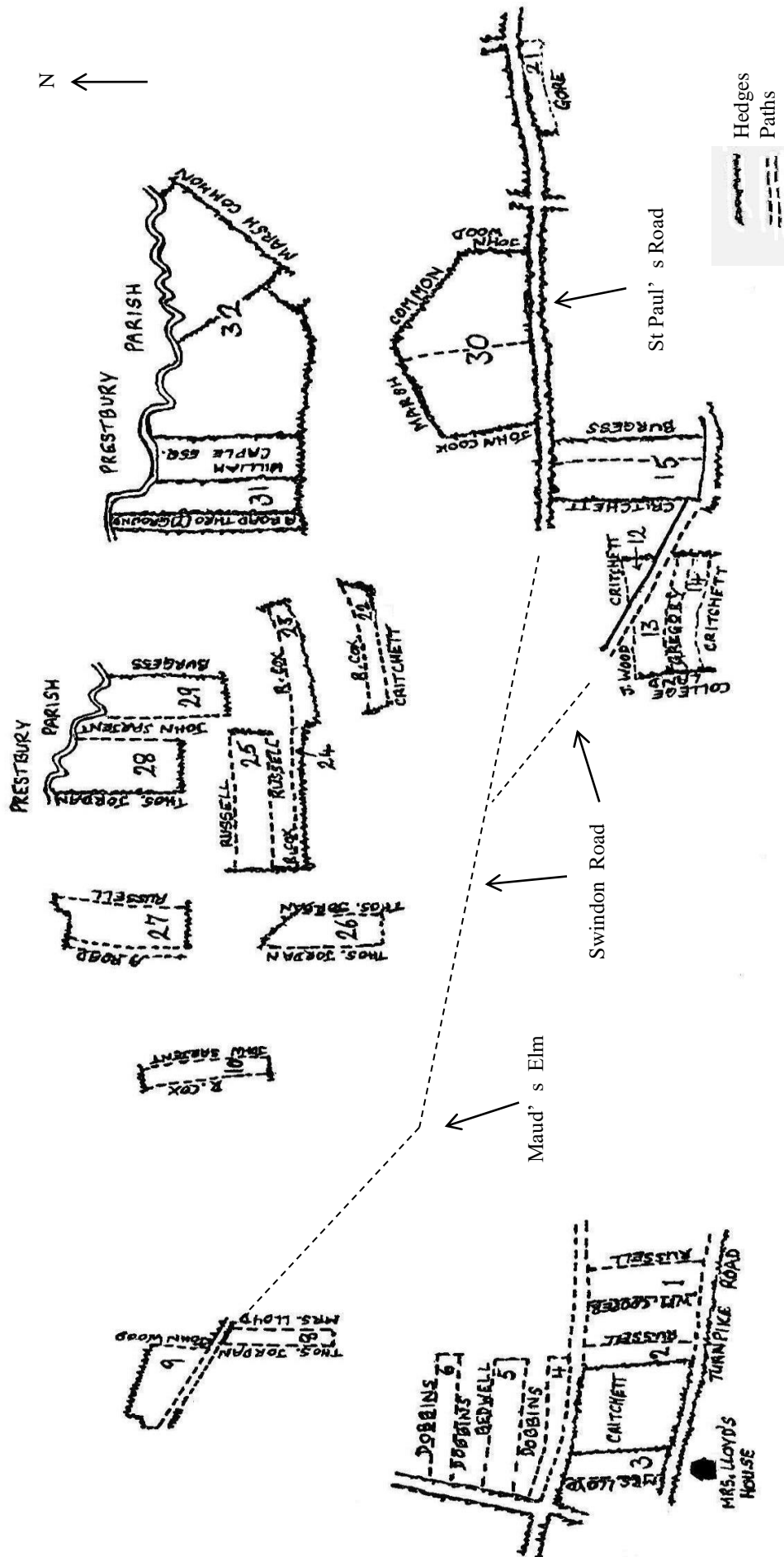
Lot 2 *One Land of Arable, in same Furlong in Lower Field, abutting on Turnpike Road to Gloucester. Occupation Abraham Byrch on Lease, expire at Michaelmas 1806. 0A 2R 21P. Marked 'Not Sold' but also 'Tims 7 mths.' £32.*

Lot 3 *Part of an Arable Field, abutting on Turnpike Road to Gloucester, opposite Mrs. Lloyd's House and in her Occupation, at Will at the Yearly Rent of £2.15s. 1A 1R 17P. Sold to Mrs Lloyd. £90.*

LOTS 4-6. In King's Ditch Furlong, bounded on the west by the road to Swindon (the boundary between Cheltenham and Swindon parishes) now Kingsditch Lane. Like Lots 1- 3 this land was developed in the 20th century for commercial and industrial use.

MAP A – WEST

Author's drawing based on the 'Essex' map



Positioning of roads is approximate.

Lot 4 *Two Lands of Arable in Lower Field, adjoining Turnpike Road to Gloucester at the South West Corner. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 1A 1R 19P. Sold to Ricketts of Ledbury. £56. Note – ‘Bad Beans’.*

Lot 5 *Two Lands of Arable in the same Field, in King’s Ditch Furlong, North of Lot 4. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 1A 2R 27P. Sold to Tims. £90. Note – ‘Bad Barly[sic] by [unclear]’.*

Lot 6 *One Land of Arable in King’s Ditch Furlong, North of Lot 5. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 0A 3R 15P. Sold to Stone. £43. Note – ‘follows by [?hedge]’.*

LOTS 8-9 The Essex map shows a lane to the south of 9; this is the modern Swindon Road. Barset (or Bursett)’s Patch was bordered on the west by the present Wyman’s Lane and is the site of the modern commercial development opposite the Borough Council Depot. Lot 8 was virtually opposite and is now part of the Depot. In 1799 the land was clearly of much higher quality than that further south.

Lot 8 *One Land of Arable in Lower Field, opposite Barset’s Patch. Occupation William Humphris Barrett, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 0A 2R 33P. Sold to Henry Markham. £45. Note – ‘Good Wheat’.*

Lot 9 *A Piece of Land called Barset’s Patch, lying North of Lot 8. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 2A 1R 10P. Sold to Henry White of Tewkesbury. £102. Note – ‘Good Beans’.*

LOTS 10, 22-29 These were all in various named furlongs in the area of the Lower Field bounded to the north by Wyman’s Brook (the boundary between Cheltenham and Prestbury parishes), to the south and west by the present Swindon Lane and to the east by the Marsh Common and the present Folly Lane. Cockham Slade (10) was also called ‘Colcombe Slad’¹¹ and ‘Cowcombe Slade’.¹² William Humphris Barrett who occupied both this and 8 would have appreciated the ‘Good Wheat’ ascribed to both; he was a baker. The land is now presumably part of the Windyridge estate. Lots 22-25 were in Derby’s Pill, which was in two parts. Barbara Rawes considered that the name referred only to the eastern section:¹³ however, it is clear that by the end of the eighteenth century the western part was also included as the 1800 map shows the two parts surrounded by a single hedge. The note ‘Hedge Land’ indicates that the east and part of the south boundary of 22 lay along the division between Derby’s Pill and Marsh Common. These lots are still not built on. Lots 26-29 were in ‘Holley Withies’ or ‘Holly Withies’; probably originally ‘hollow withies’. It is not clear what the ‘road’ to the west of lot 27 was; it does not appear on the 1800 map. Lots 28 and 29 were bordered by Wyman’s Brook.

Lot 10 *Two Lands of Arable in Lower Field, called Cockham Slade. Occupation William Humphris Barrett, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 0A 3R 18P. Sold to White. £40 Note – ‘Good Wheat far out’.*

Lot 22 *Two Lands of Arable in Lower Field, in a Place called Derby’s Pill. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 0A 3R 18P. Sold to Pitt. £36. Note – ‘Hedge Land’.*

Lot 23 *Two Lands of Arable in the same Furlong, more North. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires at Michaelmas 1806. 0A 3R 17P. Sold to Pitt. £38.*

Lot 24 *Two Lands of Arable abutting West on Lot 23, in Derby's Pill. Occupation William Humphris Barrett, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 0A 2R 26P. Sold to Thomas Byrch. Price not clear.*

Lot 25 *Six Lands of Arable lying North of Lot 24 in same Furlong. Occupation William Humphris Barrett, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 1A 1R 0P. Sold to Pitt. £110.*

Lot 26 *Four Lands of Arable in Lower Field in Holley Witheys. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 1A 1R 22P. Sold to Pitt. £58. Note – 'Little [unclear – 'too far'?]'*

Lot 27 *Nine Lands of Arable in Crab Tree Furlong in Lower Field. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 2A 2R 20P. Sold to Pitt. £115.*

Lot 28 *Eleven Lands in Crab Tree Furlong in Lower Field. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 3A 1R 35P. Sold to Pitt. £145.*

Lot 29 *Six Lands in Crab Tree Furlong in Lower Field. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 2A 1R 39P. Sold to Pitt. £105.*

LOTS 12-14 These were closer to the High Street and not part of the common fields. The 'lane leading to the Lower Field' is the stretch of the modern Swindon Road where it turns northwest to meet St. Paul's Road. The shape of 12 is still apparent, immediately to the west of the railway bridge. 'Garden ground' presumably indicated it was too small for serious cultivation, though its 'Proportion of Yearly Rent' was high at £1.15.0. It is clearly marked on the 1800 map, completely hedged round, but with no obvious house nearby except the 'barn' referred to in 14. The turnpike gate was at the Swindon Road/St. Paul's Road junction and is shown on the 1820 map though not on that of 1800 (the 1806 'Mitchell' map does not extend so far west). On the 1800 map a hedged road is marked down the eastern edge of 14, with a turnpike gate near its southern end; this later became White Hart Lane. The 'barn' referred to in 14 was to the east of the lot, in the angle between it and Swindon road. Land to the west of 14 was owned by Corpus Christi College, Oxford.¹⁴ Lots 13 and 14 are now probably covered by the northern ends of Charles Street and Townsend Street.

Lot 12 *An inclosed triangular piece of Garden Ground, near the Town, abutting on Lane leading to Lower Field. Occupation William Humphris Barrett, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 0A 1R 17P. Sold to Ricketts. £52.*

Lot 13 *A Parcel of Ground divided from Lot 12 by a Highway leading to Lower Field. Occupation William Humphris Barrett on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 1A 3R 12P. Sold to Pitt. £74.*

Lot 14 *One Land of Arable lying at the Barn, near the Turnpike, in Back Lane. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 0A 2R 33P. Sold to Pitt. £44.*

LOT 15 In the area bounded by St. Paul's Road to the north and Swindon Road to the south. The plot was not built on by 1800, but the 1806 map shows 'Mrs. Ironside' in the centre of the eastern (formerly Newman's) section. By 1820 'The Elms' had been built by Admiral Sir Tristram Ricketts in its place. There was some connection between Ricketts and Mrs Ironside, as Letitia Ironside was buried in the same vault as various members of the Ricketts family in 1821.¹⁵ In 1841 Admiral Ricketts gave land to the west of the plot for a new Workhouse, later the site of St. Paul's Hospital. I have been unable to establish if Admiral Ricketts was related to the Ricketts of Ledbury

who bought several plots including the large and expensive 30. The western boundary of this lot was almost opposite Folly Lane.

Lot 15 Three Lands of Arable called Close Ends, abutting on lane leading to Lower Field. Occupation William Barrett, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1803. 2A 1R 30P. ALSO Another Piece of Arable Land, being two Lands adjoining the last-mentioned Piece on the East. Occupation John Newman at Will. 1A 1R 35P. Sold to Yatman. £225.

LOTS 31-32 Rawes refers to this as ‘The Bittoms’; the land lay along Wyman’s Brook, further east than 28-29. The ‘road’ marked on the Essex map to the west of 31 appears to be the line of the present Tommy Taylors Lane (the continuation of Folly Lane). On the 1800 map it is a narrow fenced strip with a gate at its southern end. The ‘Folly’ of Folly Lane was ‘Cook’s Folly’,¹⁶ a house marked on the 1800 map at the southern end of the land abutting the present St. Paul’s Road; a path, the later Folly Lane, is faintly marked through the land, in line with the strip referred to above. The 1806 map shows The Bittons clearly, also that while the three sections (31, 32 and the lot between the two) were still distinct, three small ‘extra’ pieces of land were now part of 32 – one to the south-east, one at the north-east corner, the third, perhaps surprisingly, beyond the boundary brook.¹⁷ By 1810 Marle Hill, its lake and gardens had been constructed on much of 32. The southern boundary must have been roughly at Marle Hill Road and Hudson Street. The area is now part of Pittville Park and the Recreation Ground.

Lot 31 A Piece of inclosed Arable Land called The Bittons, adjoining Marsh Common. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 2A 3R 3P. Sold to Pitt £145.

Lot 32 Two Pieces very valuable Meadow Land called the Bittons, abutting on Marsh Common. Occupation Abraham Byrch on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. East Inclosure 4A 1R 16P. West Inclosure 5A 3R 37P. Sold to Markham. £680.

LOT 30 This was to the south of 32, to the north of St. Paul’s Road; *Place Names of Gloucestershire* (see endnote 11) gives the name as ‘Gosecroft’, originally presumably an area where geese were kept. There is still a house called ‘Gosditch’ in Malthouse Lane which runs through the site. From the 1806 map it is clear that the line of present Dunalley Parade represents the north-west/south-east boundary of this area, while the north boundary probably approximates to Manser Street and the west to roughly Victoria Street. The ‘peak’ of Gause Ditch was at the northern end of the present Hanover Street. In 1829 St. Paul’s Church was built in the eastern part. The cross roads marked to the east of 30 represent to the south the present Dunalley Street; to the north it went only a short way and was then stopped by a gate.¹⁸ John Cook had occupied the whole area from Folly Lane to the western boundary of Gause Ditch – see Lot 31. The area between Folly Lane and Victoria Street was still unbuilt on by 1897,¹⁹ though Gause Ditch enclosure itself was built on by 1840.

Lot 30 A singularly Eligible and Valuable Piece of inclosed Arable Land called Gause Ditch, abutting North on Marsh Common and South on Back Lane, and lying near the Town. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 10A 3R 23P. Sold to Ricketts. £710.

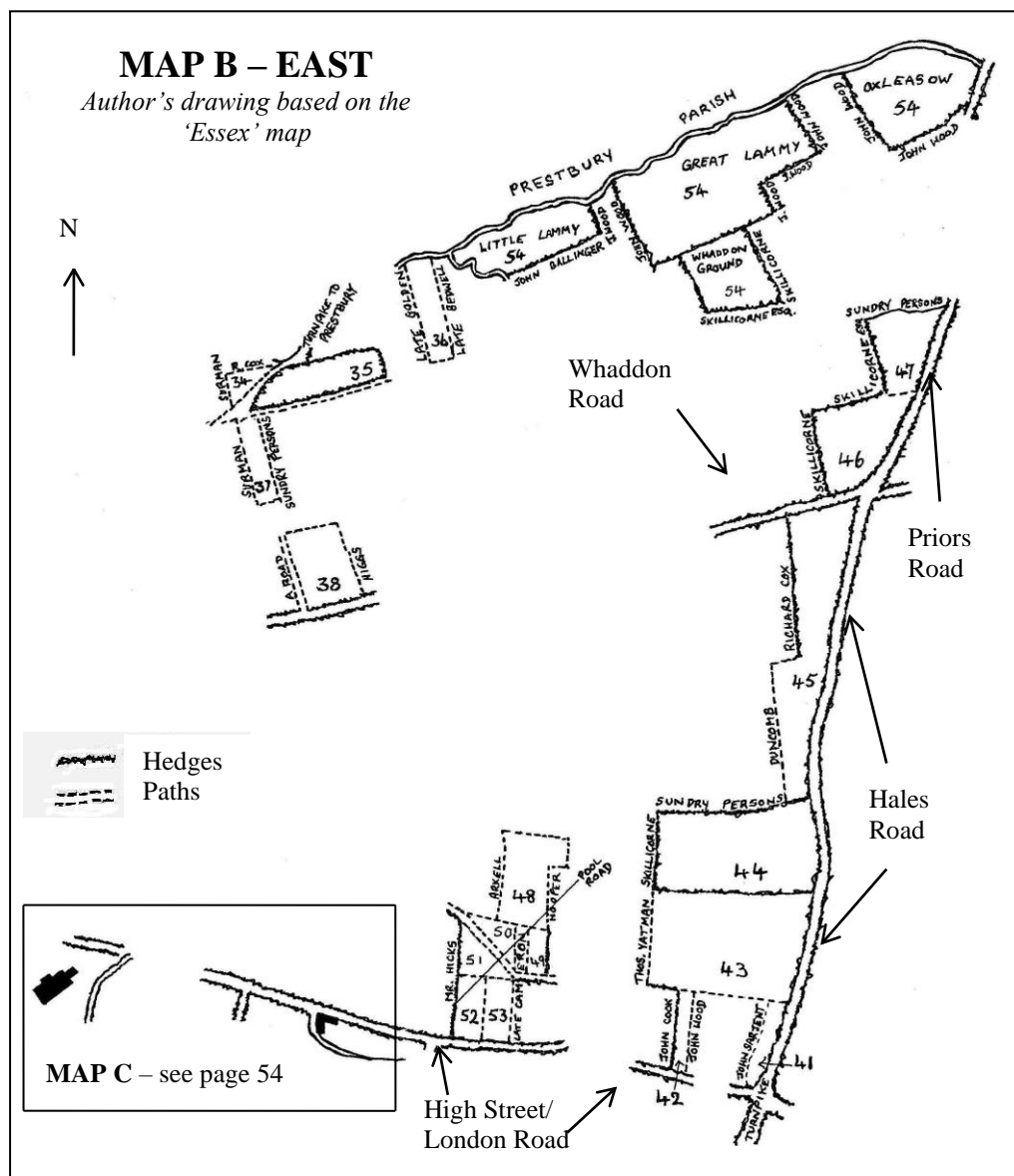
LOT 21 This lay a little to the east of 30 and to the south of Clarence Road. Leach or Leech Croft extended both sides of the present St. Paul’s Road/Clarence Road.²⁰ On the 1800 map a narrow area of strips running west-east is clearly indicated in this

position; the present Northfield Passage runs along the southern side of it. The south side of Clarence Square was built on the site of this lot in the 1830s. The road shown on the Essex map to the north went only as far as the top of Leach Croft.

Lot 21 *A Piece of Arable Land lying in Cheltenham Field in Leach Croft. Occupation Richard Newman, at Will. 1A OR 2P. Sold to Pitt. £44.*

MAP B EAST

This covers lots along the northern boundary (with the exception of those included in 54), followed by those along the northern side of the High Street/London Road, and then from south to north along the present Hales Road and Priors Road.



LOTS 34-38 These were in the north of the parish, where land was on the whole more valuable as it lay nearer the centre of the town. The turnpike house on the Prestbury Road, mentioned in 34, stood where Windsor Street now joins Prestbury Road. It is marked on the 1800 map and was sold in 1814.²¹ Cakebridge or Keckbridge is a very old name, first noted as early as 1250.²² This piece was already enclosed and remained a distinct area until the 20th century. The road to the south is the later Whaddon Road.

Lot 37 is included here as it fits neatly with 35. Lying directly south of the present Whaddon Road, there is still a footpath running from Whaddon Road through Selkirk Close. Lot 36 lay a little further east along the present Whaddon Road; I have found no other mention of 'Jennings'. The Berkeley Hunt Kennels were situated here, marked on maps from 1834-97. It is now presumably part of the sports ground. The 'road' referred to in 38 is the continuation of the 'footpath' in 37. It is still marked as a public footpath on the 1834 map and appears to be almost exactly the line of the present All Saints Road. This lot included the western half of the road. 'Sandshords' or 'Sandshards' to the south was a very old east-west route,²³ (see also Lot 41).

Lot 34 *A small triangular Piece of Arable Land in Cheltenham Field, abutting on Turnpike Road to Prestbury and adjoining the Toll House. Occupation John Newman, at Will. 0A 1R 28P. Sold to John Newman. £20.*

Lot 35 *A Piece of inclosed Arable Land lying near Lot 34, called Keckbridge Piece. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 1A 1R 38P. Sold to John Newman. £105.*

Lot 36 *Three Lands of Arable lying in Jennings's Corner. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. N.B. One Selion or Customary Half-Acre of this Piece is supposed to be Copyhold, held of the Manor of Cheltenham. 1A 1R 38P. Sold to Pitt. £75.*

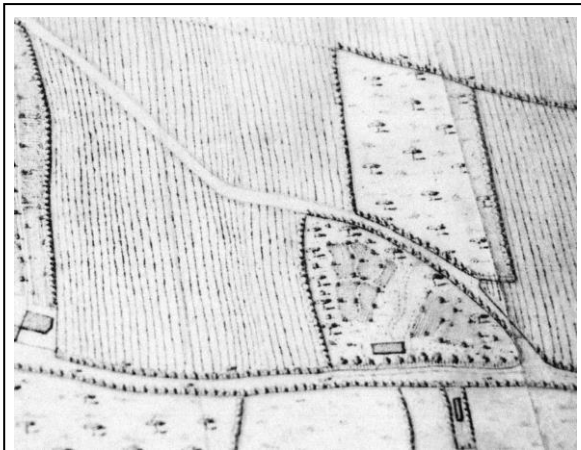
Lot 37 *A Headland of Arable Land near the Prestbury Road. Occupation John Newman. The written description also mentions that there is 'a footpath along the middle'. 0A 1R 34P. Sold to Newman. £18.*

Lot 38 *A very valuable Piece of Arable Land called Sandshards, including the Moiety of a Road on the West Side. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 2A 3R 38P. Sold to Pitt. £145.*

LOTS 48-53

These form a block to the north of the High Street (now London Road). The opening to the south of the street is Barratt's Mill Lane, and the plot to the west of 51 and 52 is where 'Sir William Hicks Bow Window' appears on the 1806 map; the house (unnamed) is also on the 1800 map. This was later replaced by the former Belle Vue Hotel, the building which still exists.²⁴ The diagonal path going northwest/southeast across 50 and 51 continued to the High Street, as is shown on the 1800 map; it disappeared in the reorganisation of land after 1800²⁵ and the road across the top of 50 became the continuation of Albion Street ('the Back Lane'). By 1820 Berkeley Place had been built on 52 and 53 ('well situated for building') with Berkeley Street running through the centre and continuing (as now) up to Albion Street. In 1829 St. John's Church was built on the northeast corner of 50.

Hewlett Road now runs along the east side of Berkeley Place and is shown in that position on the 1806 map, where it is marked 'New Road to Hewletts'. There is no sign of this road on the 1800 map. The new road was constructed north from the High Street past 53 and 50, taking in the section marked 'late Cammeron' as well as probably the east part of 48. Lot 49 was built on by 1820, Sidney Street perhaps marking the line of its eastern boundary. Both 48 and 49 commanded a high 'Proportion of Yearly Rent', particularly 48 where the sum given was £6.0s 0d. The former turnpike gate at the junction of the present London Road and Hales Road (see 41) was moved between 1800 and 1806; the 'New Turnpike' is shown on the 1806



The site of the present Hewletts Road. The building on the extreme left is Hicks' house, now Irving Court. The present Wellington Place is in the angle to the right.

Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives D 2025

map across the High Street immediately to the west of Hewlett Road. For discussion of the 'pool road' marked as a line across lots 48, 50, 51 and 52, see endnote²⁶.

Lot 48 *An excellent Piece of Arable Land lying in Cheltenham Field near the East End of the Town. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. A 0R 37P. Sold to Pitt. £150.*

Lot 49 *Two Lands of Arable lying in Cheltenham Field, near the Town at the East End. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 0A 2R 21P. Sold to Ricketts. £50.*

Lot 50 *A triangular Piece of excellent Arable Land situate in Cheltenham Field near the Town at the East End and abutting North on the Road leading to Back Lane. Occupation of John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 1A 1R 0P. Sold to Pitt. £42.*

Lot 51 *A triangular Piece of excellent Arable Land situate in Cheltenham Field near the Town at the East End, abutting South on the Road leading to Back Lane. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 1A 1R 0P. Sold to Pitt. £44.*

Lot 52 *Four Lands of excellent Arable situate at the East End of the Street abutting on the Turnpike Road to London, and well situated for Building. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 0A 3R 22P. Sold to Pitt. £66.*

Lot 53 *Six Lands of excellent Arable situate adjoining Lot 52 on the East Side and abutting on the Turnpike Road to London, commodiously situated for Building. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 1A 0R 0P. Sold to Pitt. £68.*

LOTS 41, 42 These were further east along the London Road; 41 on the west corner of London Road and the present Hales Road; 42 further west, probably just to the east of the present Sydenham Villas Road. The rear boundary of both plots was at the level of Coltham Fields on Hales Road (approximately the north end of Keynsham Bank and Keynsham Street). The statement that 41 is 'at Sandshards' is slightly odd, as the old route of Sandshards ran rather to the north of here (see endnote 23). The Turnpike Gate was at 'Gallows Oak' at the foot of Hales Road but was moved soon after to take into account the building of Hewlett Road; the 1806 map marks 'Gallows Oak Turnpike House formerly' at the south end of 41. This was another lot with a relatively high 'Proportion of Yearly Rent', perhaps reflecting the additional value of its important position. By 1820 Albion Cottage was here, its garden extending a short way behind. The latest building on the site, a small shop, went in 1974 but the area of the turnpike house is still indicated by a lane behind it, which continues north up the west side of the former 41.

Lot 41 *Three Lands of Arable Land at Sandshards near the Turnpike Gate on the London Road. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 1A 0R 5P. Sold to Pitt. 50 Guineas.*

Lot 42 *One Land of Arable Land abutting on the London Road. Occupation Thomas Byrch, at Will. 0A 2R 11P. Sold to Pitt. £42.*

LOTS 43-47 These extended up Hales Road, then known as Coltham Lane, which was the boundary between the parishes of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings. Lot 43 extended to about the line of Sydenham Road South. The northern boundary of 44 seems to have been at the end of the present King's Road gardens, a field boundary which still appears on the 1810 map. Lot 45: 'Picked' (or 'Pecked') indicated a pointed piece of land; the arrangement of modern houses along that section still reflects the rather odd-shaped piece of land. The road to the north of this lot is Hewletts Road; that to the northeast the present Prior's Road; that to the east Harp Hill. The old road to London went up Harp Hill; a note on the 1806 map reads 'This was formerly the Road to London one mile stone still remains on the upper part of the Hill beyond Hewlets'. Lot 46: the northern boundary is the present Whaddon Road. Cleeve View Road is now on the west border of this lot; this was originally a cul-de-sac to the south of Whaddon Road but in 1919 residents suggested that it should be extended across a field owned by the executors of the Skillicorne estate²⁷—interestingly, in view of the name Skillicorne appearing 120 years earlier on the Essex map to the north and west of this and 47. The area was not built up until the late 1920s.

Lot 43 *A very valuable Piece of Arable Land called the Twelve Acres, lying in Cheltenham Field near the Turnpike Gate on the London Road. Occupation Abraham Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 12A 0R 36P. Sold to Pitt. £650.*

Lot 44 *An excellent Piece of inclosed Arable Land called the Ten Acres, lying in Cheltenham Field adjoining Lot 43 on the North. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 11A 2R 3P. Sold to Pitt. £650.*

Lot 45 *Another Piece of Arable Land adjoining Lot 44, called the Picked Piece and abutting North on the old Road to London, in part inclosed. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 8A 3R 5P. Sold to Pitt. £420.*

Lot 46 *A very valuable Piece of Land called Cow Leasow, on the other side of the Lane abutting North on the old London Road and Lot 45. Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. 7A 1R 7P. Sold to Pitt. £380.*

Lot 47 *A Piece of Meadow Land situate at Whaddon Corner, commonable at Lammas. Occupation Thomas Byrch, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806. N.B. Two Selions or a Customary Acre is supposed to be in this Piece, and to be held as Copyhold of the Manor of Cheltenham. 2A 2R 6P. Sold to Dr. Naish. £75.*

MAP C SOUTH - page 54

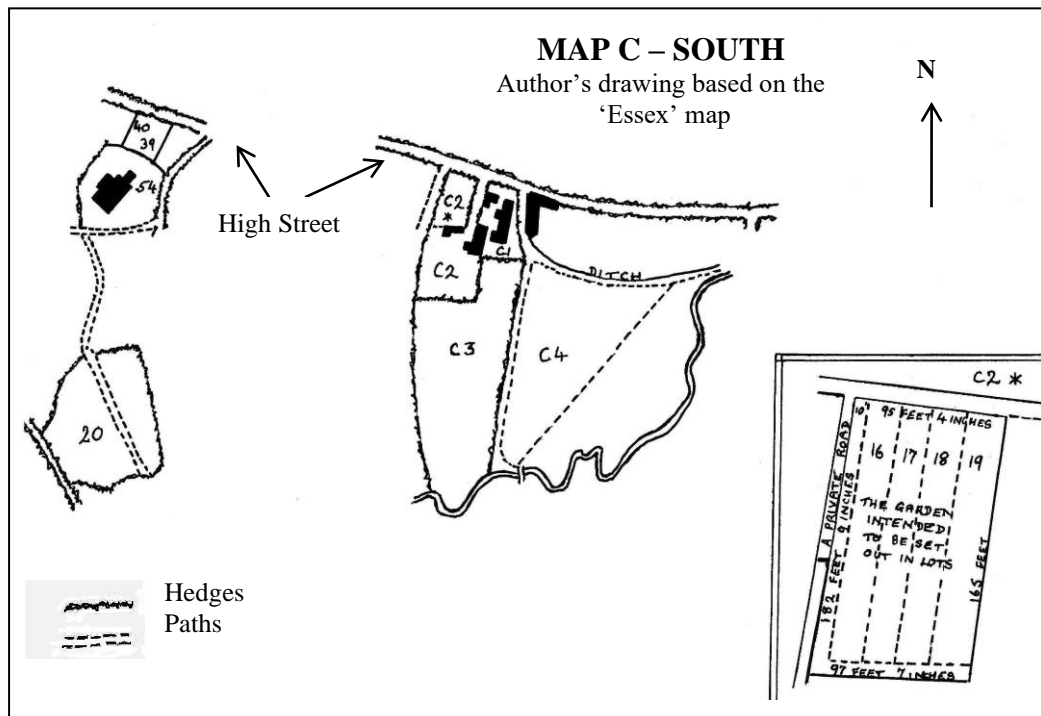
This section covers the lots south of the High Street: these are 39-40 (shops), 20 (Church Meadow), and 16-19 (the farm garden).

LOTS 39, 40 These two premises were on the High Street and backed on to the churchyard. The Market referred to was built in 1776 to the east of Church Street.²⁸ Lot 39 was immediately to the west of Church Street, the wheelwright's yard being behind the house. When the replacement Market House was built in 1809, Newman's property was bought by the Commissioners for £702²⁹ and demolished; 40, next to

Newman's, also lost part of its land in 1809 though the Turks continued at these premises for years. The high prices paid for these two lots reflect their important central position. The site of 39 is now modern premises; 40 is that of 'The Famous'.

Lot 39 *A small Messuage, 30 Feet 6 Inches in Front, and a Wheelwright's Shop, with a Yard and Garden, situate very near the Market. Occupation John Newman at Will, and capable of great Improvement. Sold Jones. £410.*

Lot 40 *A neat Messuage, Two Rooms on a Floor, with Modern Sash Front, 35 Feet, with Sadler's Shop, good stabling, Yard and Garden. Occupation Messrs. Turk, on Lease expires 21st Day of December 1814, at Net yearly Ground Rent of £20. Sold Turk. £400.*



LOT 20 This meadow is the oldest identifiable field in Cheltenham; according to Gwen Hart it was 'almost certainly part of the holding recorded in the Domesday Survey as that of Reinbald the Priest'.³⁰ The road to the west is St George's Place, the line of which is also early. Ruff's *History of Cheltenham* (1803) declared 'Church Mead...affords some very picturesque scenery. The views...serve to render this one of the most delightful spots about Cheltenham'. However, the 'building and improving' began in 1805 when the building of Royal Crescent was started, and the meadow is currently the less than delightful Royal Well Bus Station. The 1800 map shows that the area between the churchyard and the meadow was orchard to the east of the path, and the Great House, owned by Richard Hooper, surgeon, with its meadow and small pond to the west. Unfortunately the name of the buyer and the amount paid do not appear on the catalogue, though by the time of the Enclosure map of 1806 the land was owned by Joseph Pitt.

Lot 20 *A very valuable Piece of Meadow Land called the Church Meadow, through which the Walk to the Spa passes, and is well adapted for Building and Improving. N.B. This Meadow is Commonable from Lammas to Candlemas. Occupation Richard Hooper, on Lease expires at Lady Day 1800, at yearly Rent of £8. Should it be the Wish of the Company attending the Sale, it will be put up in Two Lots, divided by the Foot Path. The East Side 1A 1R 36P: The Path 0A 0R 24P: The West Side 2A 3R 7P.*

LOT 54 This important lot offered several varied and widely spaced properties; because of the proximity to 20 it seems sensible to deal with the Churchyard and the Rectory itself first. As for the purchaser, it is known that Joseph Pitt acquired all this land, but the details actually recorded on the catalogue are ‘Mr. Blizard £6000’. Blizards are recorded in the town from the 1760s and one was an attorney some years later (1820): as this amount would have been an enormous sum for Pitt to have ‘in hand’, particularly when all his other purchases were also taken into account, perhaps the money was advanced by Blizard and repaid when Pitt sold land on, as we know happened quite shortly afterwards.

Churchyard Seven years later Joseph Pitt sold this to the Vestry for £100.³¹ *The Church Yard, let to the Churchwardens of the Parish, at Will, at £1. 10s. 0d. yearly. 1A 0R 35P.*

Rectory The Rectory had passed to the Earl of Essex by 1700 though as the additional information shows, the right of presentation remained with Jesus College, Oxford as it had since 1629.³² Great Tithes were paid to the Rector, Small Tithes to the actual incumbent.³³

The Improprate Rectory of Cheltenham, with the Great and Small Tythes of the whole Parish, arising from upwards of 650 Acres of rich Arable, Orchard, Meadow, Pasture, and Wood Land, all contiguous to the Town, and in a superior high State of Cultivation AND a small Portion of Tythes lying in the Parish of Cheltenham, adjoining Prestbury, heretofore leased with the Tythes of Charlton Kings but which is now intended to be included in this Lot.

Additional details:

The Curate of Cheltenham is nominated by the Masters and Fellows of Jesus College, Oxford, and the yearly Stipend of £42³⁴ per Annum is paid out of this Estate to the Curate doing the Parochial Duty, for the Time being. There is a further Out-going of 10s.3d. for Procurations to the Bishop of Gloucester, and 7s. to the Archdeacon of Gloucester, and all necessary Repairs to the Chancel.

Fields belonging to the (Cambray) Farm These are found on Map B. The first three enclosures (all of which, like the Farm, were *in the Occupation of Thomas Byrch at Will*) were in the north-east corner of the parish. Little Lammy was to the west, in the angle formed where a tributary joined the brook from the southeast; Great Lammy and Ox Leasow along the northern boundary, the latter touching the present Priors Road. All are described as ‘Arable’. The names ‘Great Lammy’ and ‘Little Lammy’ clearly indicate that these were commonable at Lammas. Whaddon Ground adjoined Great Lammy to the south and is described as ‘Pasture’. Most of all four enclosures remained unbuilt on until well into the 20th century.

In Cheltenham Field: The Ox Leasow 4A 3R 10P: Great Lammy 12A 2R 15P: Little Lammy 3A 2R 6P: Whaddon Ground Occupation John Cook, on Lease expires Michaelmas 1806, at Rent of £4.0.0. 3A 3R 3P.

The Farm *All that capital Stone Building covered with Slate, called the Farm, situate on the South Side, and nearly in the Centre of the Town of Cheltenham, containing good Accommodation for the Uses of the Farm, as well as a considerable Part usually let off as a Lodging House, to Persons of the first Distinction – sundry useful Offices and Farm Buildings – capital Tythe Barn, Stables, and Cart House – Brick Ground, Farm Yard,*

Kitchen Garden, and Front to the Street, capable of great Improvement, by letting on Building Lease. The sole and exclusive Right to the Pews in the Chancel of Cheltenham Church, [and the following Pieces of inclosed rich Arable, Orchard, Meadow and Pasture Land: these are the fields described above as belonging to the Farm.] House, Yard, Walk and Lower Garden 1A 1R 38P.

The Farm & Yard The specific mention of stone indicates that this was a building of importance; the only other known stone buildings in the town at that time were the church, the alms-houses and the school. Sometimes referred to as the Parsonage or Rectory, it was originally, according to Barbara Rawes³⁵ the Grange belonging to Cirencester Abbey. She quotes the 1632 Survey of the Rectory buildings: 'A fair parsonage house accommodated with necessary outhouses, with a large great barn, a cowhouse, an oxhouse, a wainhouse, a stable having before it a fair court with a large pool in it together with a garden and a little orchard on the back parts of it.' As is clear from the sale details, the barn, stable and cart(wain)house, as well as the garden and small orchard (the Lower Garden) were still there over 160 years later, though for some time part of the main farmhouse had been lodgings – particularly well placed for the theatre and both the Upper and Lower Rooms. It was still described as a 'farm' in the 1802 Directory, as well as 'lodgings', and John Cook also offered 'horses to let' from here.

The 1800 map shows a wall along the north of the site (C1 and C2 on Map C). Access was by a gate across the lane from the Upper Rooms (see 'The Ditch,' next page), at the corner of the long building which was the tithe barn. Of the other three buildings shown, the small one near the High Street was probably the carhouse, the one adjoining the garden the stables, and the large building near the corner of the Lower Garden the house. It is not known precisely when the buildings were demolished; they still appear on the Enclosure map of 1806, but must have gone very soon after. The space left by their clearance enabled two more plots to be added to the east of 16-19 (see below), and possibly the addition of a couple more buildings to the west of the Upper Rooms. Between these was the new entrance to Cambray.

LOTS 16-19 These were the site of the farm's kitchen garden - see the plan on Map C. They lay to the immediate east of the present Rodney Road and fronting the High Street, in the most fashionable part of the town and extremely well-placed for development. They sold for high prices and the mention of space for coach houses and stables gives a clear indication of the status of the occupants hoped for. Rodney Road was known at the time as Engine House Lane. It would seem sensible for the fire-engine to be kept near the Chelt, which was presumably its source of water; however, the description of lot 16 makes it clear that this was not so. Indeed the fan painted by Thomas Robins in 1740 depicts a small brick building labelled 'Fire Engine House' right on the High Street, with a small gate to its west and next to 'The Assembly House' (Powers Court House partly converted to a ballroom; later the 'Lower Rooms' were constructed next to it, now the site of Lloyds Bank). There is no sign of the engine-house on the 1800 map, but the Enclosure map of 1806 shows a very small building in exactly the same position, though by then the two end plots had been acquired by Pitt, who soon erected what is now Barclay's Bank on them. By 1806 the properties known as Essex Place were built on the site³⁶ and Ruff's *Beauties of Cheltenham* declared approvingly that 'some shewy [*sic*] shops nearly finished give life and spirit to the whole'. The four original plots were soon expanded to include two more to the east, as described above.

Lot 16 *A very valuable Piece of Ground for Building in the Centre of the Town, Part of the Farm Garden, being the first Lot from the Place where the Engine-house stands, having a front of 21' by a Depth of 172', with sufficient Room at the lower End for Coach houses and Stables. Sold Thomas Markham. £145.*

Lot 17 *A Parcel of Ground adjoining more east of same Dimensions. Sold Rickett. £150.*

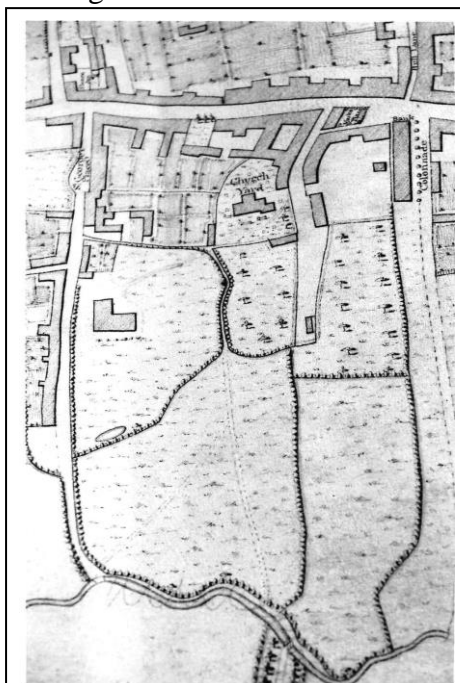
Lot 18 *A Parcel of Ground adjoining more east of same Dimensions. Sold Markham. £130.*

Lot 19 *A Parcel of Ground adjoining more east of same Dimensions. Sold Bastin. £135.*

Lower Garden (lower section of C2 on plan). Sold with the House, Yard and Walk. In the Survey of 1632³⁷ this was the 'little orchard...containing one acre'. The Lower Garden lay below the main farm garden, on the east side of the present Rodney Road. Rodney Lodge, which appears on the 1800 map, is opposite, its position possibly marked by the gate across the lane visible in the plan of lots 16-19. The upper part of this garden became part of 16-19, providing space for the stables etc.

Orchard, Ditch & Meadow The Orchard (C3 on plan) lay to the south of the Lower Garden. The 1632 Survey described this as a 'large orchard with three fishponds in it called the Moores adjoining to the Rectory House'. By 1799 it was described as 'Pasture' and hedged off from the meadow and the farm gardens. It had not been built on by the 1806 map but Cambray House was built at the south end soon after; the houses along what is now Cambray Place were there by 1820. ***Orchard 3A OR 33P.***

The Ditch marked the boundary of the Meadow and is now the line of Bath Street and Vernon Place. By 1799 properties were already built along the High Street; the large building marked here near the Farm was the Upper Rooms. ***The Ditch next the Garden 0A OR 14P.***



Church Meadow
Courtesy of Gloucestershire
Archives Ref D2015

Cambray Meadow (C4 on plan) extended almost as far as the mill to the east; the opening to Barratt's Mill Lane is shown. The division marked between Orchard and Meadow was a little to the west of the present Wellington Street, the path along its eastern side heading to the bridge over the Chelt and then to the pool which was on the site of Rodney Road car-park; (end note²⁶). Ruff's *History of Cheltenham* published in 1803 mentions 'the pleasant meadow of Cambray...lately purchased by Mr. Watson³⁸ and in which he intends raising a new theatre, will soon be covered with houses of the first taste and elegance: the present master of the ceremonies, Mr. King, having already set an example'³⁹ By the next edition in 1806, Cambray meadow was 'nearly covered with houses' and Watson's theatre had been built in Bath Street. Wellington Mansion was later built to the east of Wellington Street.

Cambray Meadow 4A 3R 35P.

In conclusion, it is clear from the quantity of land which changed hands as a result of this sale that the scene was set for the major expansion and development of the town for years to come and that, as Goding remarked in his comment on the Enclosure Act which followed within two years, it ‘...produced effects which were never contemplated’.

¹ Gloucestershire Archives, reference D2025.

² Rawes, Barbara, ‘The fields and field names of the Hundred of Cheltenham’, *Cheltenham Local History Journal*, (CLHSJ), 1988, **6**, pp.8-10.

³ See details of lots 31-32.

⁴ Hodsdon, James, *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, (TB&GAS), 1997 (*Gazetteer*)

⁵ *Gloucester Journal*, July 1799.

⁶ 4 roods or rods to an acre; 40 perches to a rood.

⁷ Rawes, *op cit* pp.6-7.

⁸ Land Tax was imposed from 1692 and was officially known as such from 1697.

⁹ ‘selion’ defined as strip of land.

¹⁰ *Cheltenham Manor Court Book*, 29 October 1802, mentions Sarah, widow of Daniel Lloyd; Goding (*History of Cheltenham*, 1863, p436) says that in 1808 she gave £100 to the Cheltenham Baptists.

¹¹ Smith, A.H., *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire Part Two*, ((CUP), 1964, (PNG), p.108.

¹² Goding, *op cit*, p.407.

¹³ Rawes, *op cit* pp.8-9.

¹⁴ Hodsdon, James, ‘A 1787 map of Cheltenham’, *CLHSJ*, **15**, 1999, pp.35 & 41.

¹⁵ Memorial in Cheltenham Parish Church.

¹⁶ Perhaps the Thomas Cook who was Town Surveyor 1786-95, according to Hodsdon (*Gazetteer*).

¹⁷ A mill is marked here on the 1834 ‘Merrett’ map.

¹⁸ Marked on the 1800 map.

¹⁹ Victoria Street was built from 1838 (Hodsdon, *Gazetteer*).

²⁰ Rawes, *op cit* pp.8 & 10.

²¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle* 7 May 1814.

²² Hodsdon, *Gazetteer*.

²³ Hodsdon, *Gazetteer*.

²⁴ Now Irving Court.

²⁵ The triangular piece of land in the angle between the diagonal road and the High Street was the site of ‘Cox’s Cottage’ by 1806, later ‘The Priory’ built by Marshall, and now the modern block Wellington Place.

²⁶ Pool Road is marked on the Essex map, running diagonally northeast/southwest through 50 and 51 reappearing as a path branching off the ‘ditch’ by Barrett’s Mill and going at the same angle to the bridge over the Chelt at the south end of Cambray Meadow. It appears to make (logically) for the pool marked on the 1810 and 1820 maps to the south of the Chelt on the site of the present Rodney Road car-park. However, there seems no good reason for the section of ‘Pool Road’ to the north of the High Street; the whole area was then simply fields, with nowhere obviously significant for the path to run from. Neither section of the path appears on the 1800 map and nothing south of the river is marked.

²⁷ Hodsdon, *Gazetteer*.

²⁸ The building is shown in the 1804 sketch by John Nattes now in the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

²⁹ Hart, Gwen, *A History of Cheltenham*, 2nd edition 1981 p246.

³⁰ *ibid* p.15.

³¹ Goding *op cit* p.201.

³² Acquired by Pitt in 1812.

³³ Richards, John, *The Local Historian’s Encyclopaedia*, (Historical Publications Ltd.), revised ed. 1981.

³⁴ Most sources say £40.

³⁵ Rawes, Barbara, ‘Three Properties of Cirencester Abbey in the Cheltenham Area’, (CLHSJ), **1** 1983.

³⁶ Hodsdon, *Gazetteer*.

³⁷ Rawes, see endnote 35.

³⁸ John Bowles Watson, proprietor of the Theatre Royal, York Passage.

³⁹ Mr King’s house was on the present Bath Road by the entrance to Sandford Park.

From Coltham to Little Bath: Satirical Views of Cheltenham

DAVID ELDER

AS U.A. FANTHORPE, THE POET AND FORMER HEAD OF ENGLISH AT Cheltenham Ladies' College, observes in *Down Cheltenham Way*¹,

'over the years, Cheltenham has had to suffer a variety of confusing/unhappy/ misleading identities. In certain unenlightened circles it is still thought of as the place where ex-colonial officers go to die; a place of Bath-chairs..., crusty old colonels, fading spinsters, afternoon tea and general depression'.

But how were these identities created in the first place? How were they reinforced and promulgated to the public at large? The purpose of this article is to identify some of the most influential authors who have played a significant part in Cheltenham's literary history, helping to shape public perceptions through their satirical views of the town. These include Cobbett, Bulwer-Lytton, Surtees, Thackeray, Trollope, Craik and Jerome, who have all helped to put Cheltenham on the national (and sometimes international) map, whilst other, less well-known writers such as John Parry and John Nunn have also contributed greatly to the rich tapestry of work depicting the town in its hey-day as a spa town.

William Cobbett (1763-1835)

The politician, farmer and journalist, William Cobbett, was one of the first to paint a satirical picture of the town. His scathing attack on Cheltenham in *Rural Rides*² stemmed from his opposition to the leisure classes and support for impoverished farm labourers;

'Cheltenham is a nasty, ill-looking place, half clown and half cockney. [... it] is what they call a "watering place"; that is to say, a place to which East India plunderers, West Indian floggers, English tax-gorgers, together with gluttons, drunkards, and debauchees of all descriptions, female as well as male, resort, at the suggestion of silently laughing quacks, in the hope of getting rid of the bodily consequences of their manifold sins and iniquities.'

Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)

In *Pelham: or the adventures of a gentleman*³, Bulwer-Lytton directs a much gentler satire on Cheltenham. In one memorable scene, Pelham becomes confused by the fact that the menu, apart from offering the usual soup, chops, steaks and roast joints, also includes 'lions' and 'birds'. After ordering soup and a "slice or two of lion, and half a dozen birds" the waiter solemnly replies that he cannot "have less than a whole lion, and [there are] only two birds in the house." The scene continues:

“Pray,” asked [Pelham], “are you in the habit of supplying your larder from Exeter ‘Change, or do you breed lions here like poultry?”

“Sir,” answered the grim waiter, never relaxing into a smile, “we have lions brought us from the country every day.”

“What do you pay for them?” said I.

“About three and six a-piece, sir.”

“Humph! Market in Africa overstocked,” I thought.

“Pray, how do you dress an animal of that description?”

“Roast and stuff him, Sir, and serve him up with currant jelly.”

“What! Like a hare!”

“It is a hare, sir.”

“What!”

“Yes, sir, it is a hare! but we call it a lion, because of the Game Laws.”

“Bright discovery,” thought I; “they have a new language in Cheltenham: nothing’s like travelling to broaden the mind.” “And the birds,” said I, aloud, “are neither humming birds, nor ostriches, I suppose?”

“No, sir; they are partridges.”

“Well, then, give me some soup: a cutlet, and a ‘bird’, as you term it, and be quick about it.”

“It shall be done with dispatch,” answered the pompous attendant, and withdrew.’



An illustration from *Pelham*
Image David Elder

Robert Smith Surtees (1805-1864)

Another character who pokes gentle fun at the town is John Jorrocks, a cockney grocer created by the novelist Surtees. In *Jorrocks’ Jaunts and Jollities*⁴ the grocer visits the town for a week to take the Cheltenham waters after ‘tucking into too much roast beef and plum pudding at Christmas.’ However, he is not impressed by the town itself which failed to live up to expectations: ‘it is nothing but a long street with shops ... with a few small streets branching off from it, and as to the Prom-me-nard, as they call it, aside the Spa, with its trees and garden stuff, why, I’m sure, to my mind, the Clarence gardens up by the Regents Park, are quite as fine.’

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

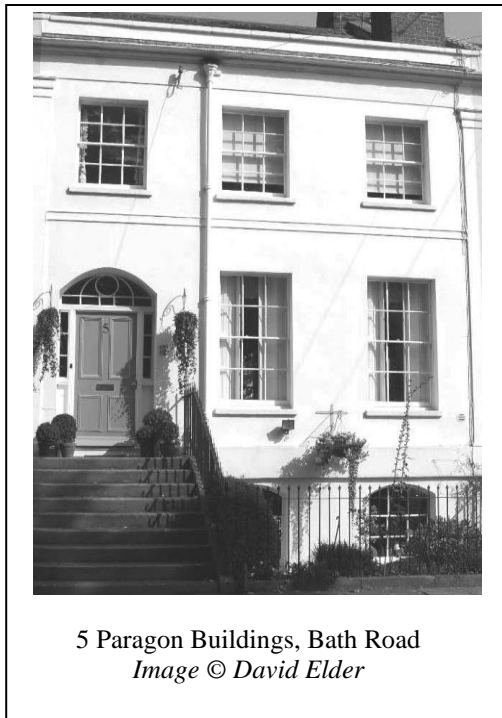
The novelist, William Thackeray, on the other hand, took a more acerbic approach when writing about Cheltenham. In *Vanity Fair*⁵, for example, he describes it as a place ‘wherever trumps and frumps were found together; wherever scandal was cackled,’ whilst in *The Book of Snobs*⁶ he includes characters such as Lady Fanny Famish who, we are told, ‘resides at Cheltenham, and is of serious turn.’ It was

through characters such as this that helped Thackeray to popularize the meaning of the word ‘snob’ through the *Punch* magazine.

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)

The novelist, Anthony Trollope, although not generally known for satirical writing, also launched a severe attack on Cheltenham through the thinly veiled disguise of Little Bath, this being the name he used when criticizing Cheltenham. In *The Bertrams*⁷, for example, he talks about the ‘three sets of persons who resort to Littlebath’:

‘...there is the heavy fast, and the lighter fast set; there is also the pious set. Of the fast sets neither is scandalously fast. Of the heavies, it may be said that the gentlemen generally wear their coats padded, are frequently seen standing idle about parades and terraces, that they always keep a horse, and trot about the roads a good deal when the hounds go out. The ladies are addicted to whist and false hair, but pursue their pleasures with a discreet economy. Of the lighter fast set, assembly balls are the ruling passion; but even in these there is no wild extravagance. The gentlemen keep two horses, on the sale of one of which their mind is bent. They drink plentifully of cherry-brandy on hunting days; but, as a rule, they do not often misbehave themselves. They are very careful not to be caught in marriage, and talk about women much as a crafty knowing salmon might be presumed to talk to anglers. The ladies are given to dancing, of course, and are none of them nearly so old as you might perhaps be led to imagine. They greatly eschew card-playing; but, nevertheless, now and again one of them may be seen to lapse from her sphere and fall into that below, if we may justly say that the votaries of whist are below the worshippers of Terpsichore. Of the pious set much needs not be said, as their light has never been hid under a bushel. They live on the fat of the land. They are strong, unctuous, moral, uncharitable people. The men never cease making money for themselves, nor the women making slippers for their clergymen.’



5 Paragon Buildings, Bath Road
Image © David Elder

Trollope picks out the pious set for particular severe criticism on account of his own personal experience when he visited the town from December 1852 until April 1853, staying at No 5 Paragon Buildings. At that time he was a Post Office Surveyor who was attempting to introduce postal deliveries on a Sunday. However, his attempts were strongly opposed by Rev Francis Close whose reputation as the town’s ‘Pope’ was well known⁸. When Francis Close finally got his way, Trollope took his revenge

through his pen, portraying the preacher in an unfavourable light, particularly in *Miss Mackenzie*⁹, in which Close was depicted as Mr Stumfold who ‘was always fighting the devil by opposing those pursuits which are the life and mainstay of such places as

Little Bath'. Inevitably, this also included the 'Stumfoldian edict [...] ordaining that no Stumfoldian in Little Bath should be allowed to receive a letter on Sundays.'¹⁰

Dinah Craik (1826-1887)

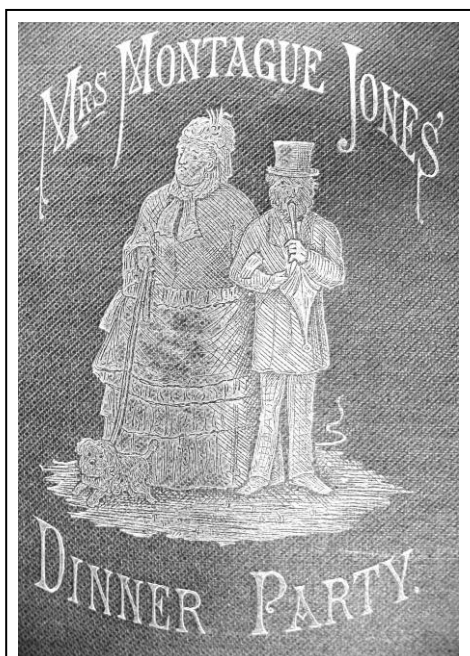
Dinah Craik (formerly Mulock), like Trollope, chose to portray Cheltenham through the thin disguise of a fictitious place, after gaining inspiration from a visit in 1852-53, when she stayed at Detmore, Charlton Kings, the family home of Sydney Dobell. She named it Coltham and used it as the setting for the early scenes of her most famous novel, *John Halifax, Gentleman*¹¹; Coltham being a place which 'patronized royalty, rivaled even Bath in its fashion and folly'.

Jerome K. Jerome (1859-1927)

As Cheltenham became increasingly associated with retired army officers¹², writers such as Jerome reinforced this image in the public's perception. A good example appears in *The Angel and the Author*¹³ in which we are informed that 'the American colonel is still to be met with here and there by the curious traveler, but compared with the retired British general he is an extinct species. In Cheltenham...and other favoured towns there are streets of nothing but retired British generals – squares of retired British generals...whole crescents of British generals.'

Whilst the writers that I have briefly reviewed above have been influential in depicting Cheltenham's image at a national and international level, much of Cheltenham's unique literary heritage has been provided by less well-known authors. Of particular interest are John Nunn and John Parry¹⁴.

John Nunn (dates unknown)



Cover of first edition of Mrs Montague Jones' Dinner Party
Image David Elder

In 1872 John Nunn wrote a memorable tale about a dinner party hosted by the imperious Mrs. Montague Jones, a character of self-inflated importance who is 'a great deal more than Mr. Jones' better half'.

Entitled *Mrs. Montague Jones' Dinner Party: or Reminiscences of Cheltenham Life and Manners*¹⁵ the story is populated by a variety of eccentric characters, which include Bill Sykes, a dog fancier; Miss Deaux-temps, 'a rather stupid young lady [...] who] delights in fast dances'; the Hon. Lionel Lazylegs who is 'more addicted to the study of dogs, horses, and rats, and pugilistic encounters, than the study of Virgil, Horace, Demosthenes, or Plato'; Miss Smiles, 'a young lady of *embonpoint* appearance'; Lady Broadgauge who is 'tall and stately in appearance, and seems fully to realize that she is a person of a good deal of importance'; Sir Jonas Broadgauge who when walking gives off a

‘peculiar creak in the boots that often belongs to the monied class’; Miss Baden, who ‘[...] has, of course, a great deal to say about the Continent, and the best route to it’; Mrs. Whitmore, who is nicknamed Mrs. Writemore, having ‘already written some 25 novels, besides essays, reviews, desultory thoughts, recollections of travels, memoirs, articles for magazines, and poetry’; Captain Heehaw who ‘is devotedly attached to the town, and thinks that the word of a local bard are absolutely true that commence thus;

*‘Where is the town in all this land,
Can be compared to Cheltenham?’;*

Major Golumpus who talks ‘of his exploits in India, where he was in action, and commanded a regiment of irregular cavalry’; Dr Softly ‘author of many learned works on the stomach and intestinal canal’; and Mr. Gustavus Jelly, who is ‘more ornamental than useful, and belongs to the non-laborious and non-industrial class...’ and who ‘sings a little, plays a little, flirts, rides, and dances ... and thinks that a watering-place like Cheltenham is the only fit place for a man to live in’.

In the *Preface*, Nunn observes that it is for the reader to judge whether he has been successful in depicting ‘the various characters that [he] met in fashionable society in Cheltenham in this latter half of the nineteenth century’, not overdrawing any of them but leaving them in print ‘very much as [he himself] met the individuals’. However, the book appears not to have met with a favourable response, for in a review¹⁶ from the *Cheltenham Examiner* it is described as ‘pretentious’ and ‘simply a travestie’ in terms of its ‘portraiture of society and character in Cheltenham, - at all events in *present* Cheltenham’, though it is acknowledges that it was ‘...printed on good toned paper, illustrated by a dozen clever etchings, and handsomely bound.’



Mr Gustavus Jelly, as illustrated by
Harry Furniss.
Image David Elder

John Parry (dates unknown)

Another memorable satirical account of Cheltenham was written by the musician, John Parry. Entitled the *Diary of Dolly Dubbins*¹⁷ the work was arranged as a series of fictitious letters to the editor of the *Morning Post*, describing a month’s sojourn in Cheltenham during 1829 by a cockney family comprising Dorothy Dubbins, together with her Pa, Ma and sister, Boxiana. The following ‘diary entry’ for Saturday 18 July is typical of its style and charm;

‘We sallied forth at eight o’clock towards Mount-Pillar. Pa was determined not to drink any of their briny water; but Ma, understanding that it was fashionable to do so, took three or four half-pints; and we paraded up and

down, during which a most excellent band performed capitally, which rendered the scene a most lively one. Presently we heard 'God save the King' struck up, and all eyes was turned towards the lower entrance to the Promenade. Joy sparkled in Pa's eye, and off he scampered to catch a glimpse at the Duke. We were all anxious to see his Royal Highness, who took a glass of No 4, politely bowed, and was retiring, when one of his suits whispered something to him, he turned round and looked smilingly at Pa and Ma, who considered it a great mark of condescension (sic) to be so particularly noticed. We returned to our lodgings to breakfast, and found a card with C. H. Marshall, M.C. on it. We were much puzzled to guess what M.C. meant. Pa thought it meant man-cook, but I concluded that it was intended for 'the Mayor of Cheltenham,' in which conjecture Ma considered (sic). However, we were all abroad, for the servant told us it was the Master of the Ceremonies who had called, which we considered a very great mark of respect paid us from an utter stranger. Boxiana came in to escort me to the evening Promenade, a full account of which with many other interesting matters I shall send you in the next.

Yours affectionately, Dorothy Dobbins.

P.S. The races take place next week; we intend of course to attend, also to go to the Balls, &c. Ma hopes they will allow her to call for a country dance; she does not like quadrilles, which I am sorry for, because her commanding-figure would appear to such great advantage in Pantaloon. There as been great hopposition (sic) to the Races and Playhouse, and persons are placed in various parts of the town to distribute tracts.'

As is clearly demonstrated, not only in *Down Cheltenham Way*, which includes excerpts from over two hundred authors, but also from the wealth of material referenced in the Society's own *Chronology of Literary Connections*¹⁸, Cheltenham draws on a particularly rich heritage. This is based not only on the many famous writers such as Trollope and Craik who visited the town, but also from many others such as John Nunn and John Parry who have helped to develop the town's unique appeal. Whilst not all have been endeared to the place, most, notably William Cobbett and Anthony Trollope, have written about it with great affection when viewed through a satirical lens. What is perhaps more apparent, I think, is that if the writers in question were still alive today, they would probably be impressed with how the town, far from being stuck in a time-warp, has endlessly succeeded in re-inventing itself through the ages and continued to provide a rich source of inspiration for a host of contemporary writers. Whilst Coltham and Littlebath may be largely unrecognizable today, new images of the town are being promulgated far and wide, not only through the racing thrillers of Dick Francis¹⁹, but also the comic fiction of Howard Jacobson²⁰, the historical novels of Flora Fraser²¹, the mystery novels of Jane Bailey²², and the romantic novels of Zoe Barnes²³

¹ Elder, D., ed., *Down Cheltenham Way: an anthology of writing about Cheltenham through the ages*, (Cheltenham: Cyder Press, 2009). Currently out of print.

² Cobbett, W., *Rural Rides*, (London, William Cobbett, 1830)

³ Bulwer-Lytton, E., *Pelham: or the adventures of a gentleman*, (London, Colburn, 1828)

⁴ Surtees, R., *Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities*, (originally published in serial form in the *New Sporting Magazine* between 1831 and 1834. First complete edition published in 1838).

⁵ Thackeray, W., *Vanity Fair*, (originally published as *Vanity Fair, Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society* in 20 serial parts from January 1847 to July 1848. First complete edition as *Vanity Fair, a Novel without a Hero*, published in 1848).

⁶ Thackeray, W., *The Book of Snobs*, (originally printed in *Punch* 28 February 1846 to 27 February 1847 as *The Snobs of England, by one of themselves*. Published as *The Book of Snobs* in 1848).

⁷ Trollope, A., *The Bertrams*, (London, Chapman and Hall, 1859).

⁸ In a letter to a friend in 1845 Alfred Tennyson wrote, 'Here is a handsome town of 35,000 inhabitants, a polka-parson-worshipping place, of which the Rev Francis Close is Pope...'.
⁹ Trollope, A., *Miss Mackenzie*, (London, Chapman and Hall, 1865).

¹⁰ For a more detailed account of Trollope's Cheltenham, see Mullen, R., 'Trollope and the pious slippers of Cheltenham', *Contemporary Review* Vol. 278, part 1621 (February 2001), pp.112-114.

¹¹ Craik, D., *John Halifax, Gentleman*, (London, [Hurst and Blackett?], 1904).

¹² Descriptive guides such as John Garrett's *Cheltenham, the Garden Town of England*, published 1901, drew attention to the town being a favoured place for retired officers: 'Inhabiting the numerous villas and residences in terrace and square is a large population of the leisured class. A considerable number of heads of families bear military titles, allied to these are others who have at some time served the country in a civil capacity, and who have experience of India and other parts of the Empire, similar to those of their friends, the retired army officer.'

¹³ Jerome, J., *The Angel and the Author*, (London, [Hurst and Blackett?], 1904)

¹⁴ From my research to date there appears to be very scant biographical information about John Nunn and John Parry and their connections with Cheltenham. I would be pleased to hear from any readers who are able to supply me with any relevant information.

¹⁵ Nunn, J., *Mrs Montague Jones' Dinner Party: or Reminiscences of Cheltenham Life and Manners*, (London, John Camden Hotten, 1872).

¹⁶ *Cheltenham Examiner*, 16 April 1873, p2, col 2.

¹⁷ Parry, J., *Diary of Dolly Dubbins: being an historical account of a trip to Cheltenham accompanied by Pa, Ma and Boxiana*. (First published in 1829. Following its success, John Parry wrote a second series of letters in 1834).

¹⁸ Waller, J., *A Chronology of Cheltenham's Literary Companions*, (Cheltenham, Cheltenham Local History Society, 2008).

¹⁹ See, for example, *Straight* (1989) and *Under Order,s* (2006).

²⁰ See, for example, *No More Mister Nice Guy*, (1998).

²¹ See, for example, *Princess: the six daughters of George III*, (2005)

²² See, for example, *Tommy Glover's Sketch of Heaven*, (2005).

²³ See, for example, *Hitched*, (1998) and *Love Bug*, (2002)

Apology

SALLY SELF, EDITOR

My sincere apologies to Roger Beacham for not printing the following acknowledgement, which should have appeared at the end of Roger's article '**Rodin's Sojourn at Cheltenham**' in the 2010 Journal **27**.

'I am grateful to Helen Brown for access to the information held at the Art Gallery and Museum, and for the help received from my friend and former colleague Christopher Rainey and my mother.'

The 'Back of' Series of Addresses

MICK KIPPIN

WHILST RESEARCHING A GROUP OF MEDALS in my collection, I came across a rather strange series of Cheltenham addresses. They are all listed as either, 'back of ...', or simply 'back' together with a street name and number; in some cases there was not even a house number to be 'back of'.

The owner of my medal group was Walter Charles Phillips and his First World War service papers show that he and his wife lived at No. 28 Back of Hatherley Street, Cheltenham. The Cheltenham Voters List for 1918 simply states, 'Back 28 Hatherley Street', as do the Ward Rolls for both 1919 and 1920. Having thought about this strange address I realised that I had medals for two other men with similar addresses: Horace Benjamin Joynes and his wife lived at Back 21 Upper Norwood Street in 1918 and Wilfred Ernest Paul lived with his brother at Back 82 High Street.

Digging a little deeper into this series of addresses I found other 'Back of ...' locations. There are 32 such addresses in the 1918 List of Cheltenham Voters.

BLOXSOME, David & Ann	Back Cotswold Inn, London Road
BROWN, John & Jane	Back Suffolk Parade
CLEEVELY, Albert & Louisa	Back 34 York Street
COLLIER, John & Kate	Back 14 Exmouth Street
COOMBS, Margaret	Back Duke Street
CRITCHLEY, Ebenezer	Back Fairview Street
DAVIS, Benjamin & Mabel	Back Jersey Street
DEAN, Caroline	Back Fairview Road
DIBSDALE, Elizabeth	Back 34 Portland Square
ELLIOT, William & Mary	Back 4 Bath Road
FLETCHER, Thomas	Back 30 Rutland Street
HALL, Edward & Catherine	Back 229 High Street
HOOPER, Alfred, James & Amelia	Back 33 Duke Street
HUGHES, Charles	Back 167 High Street
JAMES, Emily	Back 23 Townsend Street
JOYNES, Horace & Edith	Back 21 Upper Norwood Street
KEAR, Albert & Julia	Back 229 High Street
KING, Edward	Back 10 Russell Place
LEWIS, Thomas & Rosina	Back 5 Lansdown Terrace, Malvern Road
MARKS, Frederick William	Back 34 Duke Street
MITCHELL, Joseph	Back 46 New Street
MORGAN, Rose	Back 26 Union Street
MOXEY, Frank	Back 22 Burton Street
PAUL, Albert Victor	Back 82 High Street
PEARCE, Arthur	Back Duke Street
PERKINS, James & Anna	Back 17 Burton Street

PHILLIPS, Walter & Annie	Back 28 Hatherley Street
RAWLINGS,, Albert	Back 31 Jersey Street
ROGERS, Ellen	Back 10 Russell Place
SHORT, Ellen	Back 49 Fairview Street
WATKINS, Edward & Leah	Back 82 High Street
WRIGHT, Thomas	Back 48 Union Street
Lodging House?	Back 24 Exmouth Street

So, just what is meant by the term 'back of...'? In the case of the Phillips family at 28 Back Hatherley Street my first thoughts were that Inkerman Lane, which runs parallel to Hatherley Street, might have been the site of this house before being named Inkerman Lane. However, there is no evidence of any houses backing directly onto those in Hatherley Street and the lane was apparently known as Moon's Lane before being called Inkerman Lane.

James Hodsdon's *Gazetteer of Cheltenham* lists three streets with 'Back' actually in the title: Back Albert Place, Back Exmouth Court and Back Montpellier Terrace. However, all the addresses I have listed appear to be single properties, not part of a whole street. This may mean a dwelling at the 'back of' the address, or in larger properties the 'back of' the house may have been rented out to a second family.

At least five houses had members of more than one family living in them (multiple occupancy): there are a number of possible reasons for this:-

Back 24 Exmouth Street might have been a lodging house of some kind. The following are all listed at this address: William Bishop, Annie Brown, Annie Bunting. Back 14 Exmouth Street also has several occupants: John and Kate Collier, and James Elliot. John was still away on war service. Had his wife taken in a lodger? An Edith Hunt was also living at this address.

Back 21 Upper Norwood Street. Horace Joynes was away on war service and a Frank Eyles is listed at this address, another lodger?

Back 82 High Street was home for Albert Victor Paul as well as Edward and Leah Watkins

Back 229 High Street is another multiple occupancy address: Albert and Julie Kear, Edward and Katherine Hall, Isabella Smith and Charles and Ann Wellfair.

If anyone has any further ideas about these addresses, I would be interested to hear from you.

Sources

James Hodsdon, *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, BGAS 1997

Maps of Cheltenham 1855-1918

Cheltenham Directories and Annuaires

Cheltenham Voters' Lists 1918, Cheltenham Ward Rolls 1919 & 1920

First World War papers of Driver Phillips, Privates Paul & Joynes, TNA WO363

Memories of a Cheltenham Evacuee

NORMAN WILLIS

IT ALL BEGAN ON THE MORNING OF 3 SEPTEMBER 1939. I was going by car with Mr and Mrs Flack, our next door neighbours and Pat Bryant, who lived on the other side of them, to stay 'for a few days' with their relatives in Cheltenham [Dickie and Madge Dunn] 'just in case a war started'. I had never been on a long car ride before - indeed I had only sat in a car twice - so I looked forward to this great adventure. I can't remember whether one of the Flacks' daughters and their niece were also there, but I am certain that their dog, Chum, also came.

We arrived at 235 Arle Road at precisely 11.00 am, just in time to hear Mr Chamberlain say we were at war, so we were greeted by three crying ladies and a very noisy dog fight between Chum and the resident dog. How we all jammed into that not very large three-bedroomed house I can't remember. Pat Bryant and I shared a bed in the little box-room, (Pat was some two years younger than me) and the other two bedrooms had to accommodate the others – the young couple 'Dickie' and Madge Dunn, Mrs Dunn's mother Florence, and Mr and Mrs Flack.¹ That only makes seven of us and I know there were eight when we all registered our National Identity Cards, so either the Flack's daughter Edna or their niece Barbara must have been there, as well.

I was found a place at Gloucester Road Primary School, which I seem to remember was near a Gas Works and the other side of the road from the Market where Mr Flack got a job. There wasn't room for me in the top class so I sat at the back of the next class down with another evacuee, Reggie Shilton, and we were both given different work to do from the rest of the class. I enjoyed and thrived on the individual attention. When the weather was decent I walked from the house, which was at the far end of Arle Road to the school, presumably with Pat. When the weather was bad we caught a bus that started from a corner farther up Arle Road.²



The new Gloucester Road Junior School in February 1937. From left, Mr W. Turner Long, Ald. C.H. Margrett, the Mayor, Ald. Clara Winterbotham.

Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic

It was at the school that I made friends with a classmate called Donald Bromage or Bromidge. He was little and skinny and I was tall and skinny so we must have made an odd pair, but I spent many happy hours playing with him in the fields by the river Chelt that lay between my house and the little labourer's cottage that he lived in. That was in the village of Arle itself and on the occasions I went to call for him I used to cross, with great fear and trepidation, a field containing a Guernsey cow

renowned for its unpredictable and unfriendly nature. But it was always good going there because his mum (a lady I only ever saw wearing a full wrap-round floral overall) made delicious lardy-cake. [These were] not only wonderful to eat but left you with sticky bits on your fingers to lick off as you paddled in the river, keeping a look-out for leeches. Donald was a true countryman and I learnt a lot from him that came in useful later.

I only remember a few things from my year at Gloucester Road. One was the Empire Day Pageant on 24 May 1940. The boy who was dressed as the Indian rajah had an epileptic fit; this upset many of the girls and led to several of them fainting. Several of the boys did the same. The story got into *The Gloucestershire Echo* and the headmistress was absolutely furious. We were told we were a lot of hysterical children and that was not how English people should behave. Incidentally, the girl who played Britannia was called Queenie, and was far away the tallest girl in the school. When the whole school photo was taken, she stood on the ground, while the rest of the back row were standing on forms, she still looked the same height as the others. I adored her from afar and once or twice was brave enough to walk part of the way home with her.

My last memory was of the fuss at the scholarship exam. When we were all seated in the hall ready to start I put up my hand and reminded the headmistress that Essex County Council were supposed to be sending an Essex paper for me, so everyone had to check and see if the word Essex appeared on a paper. It had not arrived so I took the Cheltenham Education Committee exam. The result was that though I passed, my parents were told I could not be accepted unless they paid full fees as Cheltenham [Education Committee] would not give a scholarship to children of non-residents. I eventually returned to Bucklehurst Hill, Essex, to attend the very new county high school, and to experience the Blitz.

There are other ‘family’ memories. One Christmas Eve I was allowed to accompany the adults to midnight communion. We walked together across the snow covered fields to a church on the Tewkesbury Road. But what impressed me most was not the beauty of the service, but the ceiling above the altar, painted a deep blue and covered in golden stars. Even more interesting was that one of the clergy was blind and read the service from a sheet of Braille strapped to his chest. Mr Dunn recognised that I had a good singing voice and encouraged me. He would also take me, in his Austin Seven, provided by Radio Rentals, for whom he worked, to visit his customers. I vividly remember going to a house on Cleeve Hill one evening. I was left in the car for what seemed like hours in complete darkness with all the noises of a windy hillside – I did not enjoy it. I think I had too vivid an imagination. We went on family trips to Leckhampton and Painswick and on one very snowy day, when my parents had come down for the weekend, we went to Cleeve Hill and Pat fell into a snow drift and had to be dug out by the adults.



Mr Flack,
the early 1940s,
Village Youth Club.
Image © Neal Cooper

As the years passed Mr and Mrs Flack moved to a rented bungalow in Swindon Village. My parents decided that I should join them for a whole summer

holiday, [due to the fact] that I had become very stressed during the summer of 1944 as the flying bombs were arriving over London many times a day. Things came to a head when one fell in front of the school caretaker's house, not only blinding him and wounding his family, but also blowing out most of the windows at that end of the school. Fortunately, the head had decided to close the school for the summer the previous day. In Swindon Village I had a wonderful summer. So that I had something to do, they encouraged the farmer in the village, whose name was Roger, to let me work at jobs around the farm, especially when it came to harvest time (unpaid of course). As a result, I have followed a horse-drawn reaper-binder, stoked sheaves of corn, loaded a wooden farm cart with the sheaves using a pitchfork (referred to as a shupik), helped build a rick, ridden on the mudguard of a Ferguson tractor and worked on the baling machine when the steam-powered traction engine did the threshing. I must have been pretty useless because physical strength was never one of my attributes.



Hay making
August 1942, a
field at Uckington.

It is not likely that Ray is the boy on the top of the cart, but he would have been involved in an identical scene.

Image © Carolyn Evans

I also rode on the back of a very ancient carthorse after I got sunstroke in the harvest field a long way from the farmyard. All they did was slap the horse's rump and say 'home' and it calmly walked back to the village and came to a halt by the farmyard wall so that I could get off, then saw itself into its stall and a welcome feed of hay. Italian prisoners-of-war would come up the very dark, steep hill (The Pitch?) into the village on the way back to their camp from the fields they were working in, often singing operatic arias and chatting to the locals – they were very friendly. Finally, on a day off, I borrowed a bike, a lady's model with only a back-pedal brake (remember them?) and rode through Bishops Cleeve to the top of Cleeve Hill and then down the road into Cheltenham itself, a terrifying experience when you've only got a back-pedal brake!

All in all, I had a wonderful summer in Swindon Village. I did more hard physical work than I've ever done since and I'm sure I went home a much calmer and very happy, young man. Cheltenham was very good to me.

¹ Florence and Mrs Flack were sisters; which is why they took us in.

² *Editor's note* – it sounds as if this is the corner where Brooklyn Road meets Arle Road, in which case the bus route has not changed in 70 years!

Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham

Compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

Aldrich, Richard J., *GCHQ. The Uncensored Story of Britain's Most Secret Intelligence Agency*, Harper Press, London, 2010. 666pp. £30.00.

Andrews, Ross, *Paranormal Cheltenham*, Amberley Publishing, Chalford, 2009. 125pp. £12.99.

Beardsley, Christina, *Unutterable Love. The Passionate Life and Preaching of F. W. Robertson*, Lutterworth Press, Cambridge, 2009. £27.50. An account of the intellectual development of the early Victorian preacher, the Revd Frederick William Robertson of Brighton, who lived in Cheltenham until aged 21.

Benson, Derek, 'Chartism in Tewkesbury and District', *Tewkesbury Historical Society Bulletin* **19** (2010), pp.18-25. Includes several Cheltenham references.

Fitzgerald, Mick, *The Cheltenham World of Jump Racing*, Racing Post Books, Newbury, 2010. 240pp. £25.00.

Gillard, Elizabeth, *The Tale of a Cheltenham Lady*, Matador, 5 Weir Road, Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicester, 2009. 113pp. £7.99. The autobiography of a former Cheltenham Ladies' College pupil in the 1950s.

Grindley, Mike, and Waller, Jill (compilers), *A Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work. A Chronology of Workers' Movements in Cheltenham*, Cheltenham Local History Society, 2010. 51pp. £4.30.

Hanks, David, *Cheltenham Past & Present*, The History Press, Stroud, 2010. 128pp. £12.99. 'Then and now' photographs.

Hodsdon, James (editor), *The Court Books of the Manor of Cheltenham 1692-1803* (= Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Record Series **24**, 2010). 621pp. £30.00. A full transcription of the eight manuscript volumes in Gloucestershire Archives (D855/M12-19), with an introduction and detailed indexes of persons, places, occupations and subjects.

Jones, Anthea, *Cheltenham: a New History*, Carnegie Publishing, Lancaster, 2010. 406pp. £24.99. A major new study of the town, focusing on the economic and social development of both Cheltenham and the adjoining settlements of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury and Swindon Village.

Miller, Eric (editor), *Leckhampton Local History Society Research Bulletin* **4** (Summer 2010). Articles on Major Robert Cary Barnard, 1827-1906 (David O'Connor), memories of Leckhampton Hill (Mary Paterson), eminent Cheltonians commemorated at Leckhampton (Eric Miller; reprinted from the *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **23**), the Manorial Records of Leckhampton (Terry Moore-Scott; reprinted from *Gloucestershire History* **16**), bargeboards on houses in Leckhampton (Amy Woolacott) and a postscript to an earlier article on Leckhampton's farms (Terry Moore-Scott).

Sale, Jane (editor), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin* **56** (2010). 60pp. £3.50. A wide range of articles on Charlton Kings by a variety of authors, including the Eagle Gates to Charlton Park (David Morgan), Whitefriars School (Martin Ablett), Charlton Kings Urban District Council Hall (Mary Southerton), 125 (Cheltenham) Squadron ATC (Andrew

Baynes), the Bond family (Douglas Bond), the clockmaker Moses Bradshaw (Jane Sale), Bafford Farm (Simon Woodley), St Mary's Churchyard Extension (Jane Sale), the restoration of King's House (Michelle Grainger), The Royal Hotel (Ann Hookey), 61 Ryeworth Road (Jane Sale) and Charlton Kings in World War I (Jane Sale).

Sampson, Aylwin, *Laid out with taste and judgement. The landscape, architecture and social history of The Park and its environs in Cheltenham*, University of Gloucestershire, 2010. pp. £10.00.

Waller, Jill, Atkinson, Heather, and Rowbotham, Sue (compilers), *A Chronology of Housing the Poor in Cheltenham*, Cheltenham Local History Society, 2009. 41pp. £4.00.

White, Diz, *Haunted Cheltenham*, The History Press, Stroud, 2010. 96pp. £9.99.

Whitney, Charles E., *At Close Quarters. Dean Close School 1884-2009*, Logaston Press, Almeley (Herefs), 2009. 282pp. £19.00.

Wills, Jan, and Hoyle, Jon (editors), 'Archaeological Review No. 33, 2008', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **127** (2009), has short notes on archaeological evaluations at Holy Trinity Church and Grove Street (p.310).

Gloucestershire Archives: Cheltenham Area Accessions, 2010

JULIE COURTENAY, Collections Team Leader

The following list covers archives received during 2010. We add details of all new 'accessions' (or batches) of archives to our online catalogue within 15 working days of their arrival. For a large accession, this may be an overview of the whole collection rather than an item by item description. In the following list, * means that access is by appointment only – these records may not have been catalogued in detail or may need written permission from the depositor to view them.

Address: Gloucestershire Archives, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GL1 3 DW

Telephone: 01452 427772; **Online catalogue:** www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives-catalogue; **Email:** archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Air Raid Precautions: wardens' log books for Post No. A6 [Cheltenham area] 1940-1942 (D12054)

***Baileys of Cheltenham, solicitors:** deeds and related papers of properties in Gloucestershire including Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Leckhampton, Shurdington, 18th-20th centuries; records of clients including Baghot-De La Bere family, 19th century, Butt family, 19th-20th centuries, Coxwell-Rogers family of Rossley Manor, Dowdeswell, 18th-20th centuries, Gibbons family of Boddington, The Leigh and Staverton, 16th-20th centuries, James family, 19th-20th centuries; records of

Cheltenham Legal Association, 1906-1995; records of Cleeve Common Board of Conservators, 1860-1983; office records of Pruen and Griffiths of Cheltenham, solicitors, 18th-19th centuries (D11106 accession 11881)

***Bartosch and Stokes of Cheltenham, architects:** files relating to work done on various churches in Gloucestershire and elsewhere c.1940-1990s (D7266 accessions 12113 and 12136)

Dr Boisragon of Cheltenham: professional diary 1830-1832 (D11867 – transferred from Cheltenham Library). He practised as a physician in Cheltenham for

40 years and was an extra physician to the Prince of Wales (later George IV). For obituary, see the *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 5 June 1852

***Cheltenham Camera Club:** photographs, slides, catalogues, exhibition material and accounts, correspondence and material collected by individual photographers 1912-2009 (D12165)

***Cheltenham Children's Library:** photograph albums of activities and customers 1984-1988 (D5130 accession 11964)

***Cheltenham Deanery:** records including pastoral files for the Deanery 1997-2007 and papers relating to the Team and Groups Ministries Measure for Cheltenham, 1995 (Gloucester Diocesan Records, GDR accession 12020)

Cheltenham Grammar School: calendars, sport fixture lists, notices of special services and prospectus, 1960-1965 (D11966)

Cheltenham Town Football Club: official match day programme for the Division Three play-off final against Rushden and Diamonds, 2002 (D11966)

Deeds relating to land and various properties in Cheltenham including: two messuages and gardens situated near the Nap, 1829, premises situated in Chapel Street, 1835, house and premises known as Cambrey (*sic*), 1843, Park Estate, Leckhampton, 1855, and strip of land forming part of 'The Woodlands' as a continuation of Merestones Road, 1864 (D12055); Fairlight Place, Hatherley Street and Princes Road, Cheltenham, 1867-1895 (D12169)

Everyman Theatre: production administrative files including budgets and contracts, 2004; programmes, 2009 (D6978 accession 11944)

***Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway PLC:** deeds relating to Great Western Railway land on the route between Honeybourne and Cheltenham Race Course 1902-1921 (D11954)

Gloucestershire County Council: papers relating to the Council's involvement with Cheltenham Literary Festival 1985-1988 (K1982 accession 11960)

***'Gloucestershire Echo' photographic archive :** film (and a few glass) photographic negatives taken by Echo photographers, 1960s-2002; job diaries, 1970-2008; negative index books, 1965-1983; also microfilms of 'Gloucestershire Echo', 1930-2005 (533 reels) (D12061)

John Hyett formerly of Cheltenham: personal reflections and reminiscences entitled 'Re-establishing Civic Pride in Cheltenham' (1876)-2010

***Kingsmead School:** records of governing body 2001-2009 (S78/8 accession 12118)

Landowners Secretarial Services Limited: area general meeting minute book 1916-1936 (D11939)

Leckhampton Local Board of Health: minute book, 1891-1893 (DA9 accession 12093)

D G Martin slide collection: slides capturing images of Cheltenham, early 19th to the late 20th century (D12083)

Order of the Friendly Brothers of St Patrick, Cheltenham Knot: minutes of the Cheltenham Select Knot, 1821-1871; minutes of the Principal Cheltenham Knot, 1823-1881; register of members, 1818-1875; novitiate declaration book, 1823-1873; constitution and rules, 1824 (D11870 – transferred from Cheltenham Library)

Park Grange, Charlton Kings: interior photograph of the dining room 1937 (D12025)

St Barnabas parish records: PCC minutes 1992-2005; vicarage extension plans 1984-1985; church hall and disabled toilets building plans (P78/16 accession 12120)

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Threshing machine at Winson, September 1941

See article **Memories of a Cheltenham Evacuee** by Norman Willis, pp. 68-70

Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic, 20 September 1941