



# Cheltenham Local History Society

## Journal 30 ~ 2014

### CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>SALLY SELF</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Breakfast for a Penny: Leopold's, Bakers and Confectioners - Part One</b>	<b>BOB LEOPOLD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>St Gregory's Catholic Church First World War Memorial</b>	<b>CHRISTOPHER BENTALL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Cheltenham's Royal Statues</b>	<b>ERIC MILLER</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>From Pittville to Parliament: the Career of Robert Stokes</b>	<b>JAMES HODSDON</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Correction to Howletts of Cheltenham: Jewellers and Watch and Clock Makers</b>		<b>42</b>
<b>Two Sad Stories</b>	<b>MICK KIPPIN</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>'Apathetic' Women? Who Supported the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham?</b>	<b>SUE JONES</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Cheltenham and the Men in Their Flying Machines</b>	<b>AMINA CHATWIN</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>The Great House Delineated</b>	<b>ANTHEA JONES</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Race for the Cheltenham Stakes 1868</b>	<b>GEOFF NORTH</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham 2013</b>	<b>STEVEN BLAKE</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Gloucestershire Archives Accessions 2013</b>	<b>JULIE COURTENAY</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Society Publications</b>		<b>69</b>
<b>Index 2014</b>		<b>70</b>
<b>Balloon Crazy?</b>	<b>SALLY SELF</b>	<b>72</b>

# Introduction

**SALLY SELF, Journal Editor** ☎ 01242 243714 ✉ [journal.clhs@btinternet.com](mailto:journal.clhs@btinternet.com)

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AS MANY OF YOU WILL KNOW I have been appealing for someone to take over the Editorship of the Society's Journal and I am very pleased to announce that I now have an 'apprentice' or rather a 'journeyman'! Joanna (Jo) Vials has been a member of CLHS for several years and has recently published *Living Stones The Catholic Church of St Gregory the Great Cheltenham*, so she is ideally placed to continue the development of the Journal. The 2015 edition will be a joint effort and Jo will take over from September 2015.

Our 30<sup>th</sup> Journal contains nine articles: those from new authors, Bob Leopold, Christopher Bentall and Sue Jones, and a further six from seasoned contributors, Eric Miller, James Hodsdon, Mick Kippin, Amina Chatwin, Anthea Jones and Geoff North. There are in-depth studies of the history of Leopold's, bakers and confectioners, a review of Cheltenham's royal statues and a detailed article on Robert Stokes, architect, and his work for Joseph Pitt. To commemorate the start of the First World War, we have pieces on memorials to soldiers in St Mary's Minster and St Gregory's: also to observe the anniversary of women's suffrage, there is an article on the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham. As a rest from concentrated reading, there is, on a lighter note, 'Cheltenham Men in their Flying Machines' and 'Race for the Cheltenham Stakes.' Additionally, following up Amina's 'Cheltenham's Old 'Cold Bath'', Anthea has unearthed more about the Great House, in whose grounds it was situated. We hope you enjoy perusing the articles.

*Articles for Journal 31 can be received any time from April 2014 until the closing date which is 5 January 2015. All enquiries relating to the Journal and other CLHS publications should, in the first place, be directed to the Journal Editor.*

## A Snippet

It concerns a visit to Cheltenham by John Southall (1788-1862). He was a Quaker and friend of Richard Cobden, John Bright and other Free Traders. According to Celia Southall he was 'a rather silent studious man'.

*'During the first day or two of my residence there I felt quite painfully affected in viewing the scenes of unmeaning gaiety such of them at least as were open to my observation, in the Promenards, Pumproom and rides. To see individuals so numerous chiefly decked out in all extravagance of fashion many of them like butterflies, apparently with no object but to flit away the present hour, and to reflect that in a few years everyone of them with myself would be levelled to dust. Trite tho' the idea might be it is a truly mournful one. Yet I must add (perhaps I should say with shame) that before I left the place my mind became comparatively reconciled to such scenes and I felt a considerable temptation to go to witness a display of fireworks, which was to be exhibited I rather think in the Vauxhall style, but in order effectually to remove myself from the scene, I took my place in the coach for my return journey home the morning before it was to take place.'*

From Celia Southall: *Records of the Southall Family*, (1932), contributed by **George Breeze**.

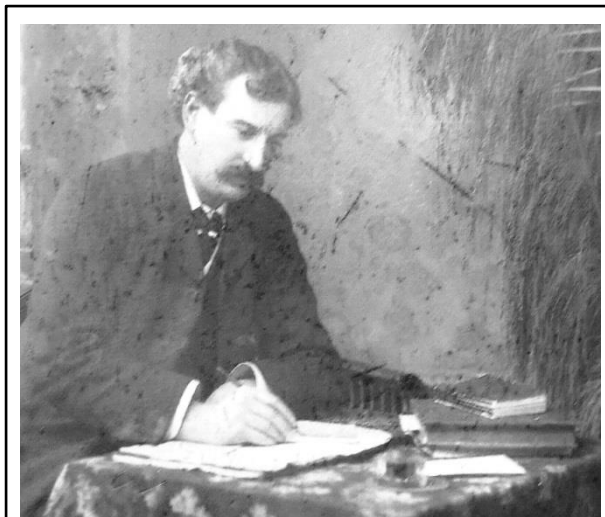
# Breakfast for a Penny: Leopold's, Bakers and Confectioners – Part 1

## BOB LEOPOLD

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### In the beginning

THIS STORY STARTS IN 1816 WHEN TWO Jewish brothers, who were tobacconists in Bavaria, emigrated to Jersey in the Channel Islands.<sup>1</sup> Their names were Lewis Liebman Leopold, and Maurice Leopold. Lewis opened a tobacconist's shop in Jersey and married Marion.<sup>2</sup> They had several children one of whom, Isaac Leibman married Mary Anne Bowman who was born in Carlisle, Cumberland. They in turn had six children: Percy, William, Frederick, Archie, Daisy and Miriam.



This is believed to be a photograph of Joseph Leopold, the great-grandfather of Bob Leopold.

*Original Bob Leopold  
Image © Sally Self*

Isaac, who was a bit of a ladies' man, moved to England in 1905 where he got a job in Birmingham. He spoke very good French and English and his job entailed going to Paris to buy vegetables and flowers for the Birmingham market. He had not been in England long when he sent for his current girlfriend, but this did not last long and he then sent for his wife with Frederick and Daisy to come.

At about the same time, a Mr Marfell was building a restaurant opposite the fountain on the Promenade, which he called the Oriental Cafe. It was a very upmarket affair incorporating a palm court orchestra who played for the customers' entertainment. Mr Marfell needed a manager and a confectioner: Frederick, as a trained caterer, became manager of the combined teashop, restaurant and shop and a Miss Diana Elizabeth Bailes applied for the other position.

Diana Bailes, born in Merton, County Durham, was brought up by her grandfather Metcalf, in Richmond, in the North Riding of Yorkshire.<sup>3</sup> He was very kind to his granddaughter and when she left school, to which she had walked four miles each way, he helped her to achieve her ambition to become a confectioner. She was apprenticed to a firm called Metcalf's, although I do not think they were related. When Diana, who was to become my mother, finished her training, she successfully

applied for the position in Cheltenham and moved here in 1906 – quite a move in those days for a 20-year old spinster.



The Oriental Café was on the corner of Imperial Lane and the Promenade. The café was bought out by Cadena Café Company, later becoming Habitat and has now been split into two shops, Joules and Vinegar Hill.

*Image © Stephen Blake from a postcard courtesy of Roger Dallimore*

Making cakes for the café did not keep Diana busy enough, so she asked Mr Marfell to buy her the ingredients to make goods for the shop. He bought a seven pound bag of flour, which lasted no time, so she persuaded him to purchase a 140lb (63.5Kg) sack. From that time on, with Diana making excellent confectionary and Frederick selling the goods and managing the cafe, the Oriental never looked back<sup>4</sup>. Working together at the cafe brought them together and the two got married in 1908. After a time a daughter arrived and was christened Kathleen Miriam.

Time passed and in 1912 mother (Diana) asked Mr Marfell if she could leave to start her own business. He replied that she could do what she liked as he had just sold the Oriental to the Cadena Café who were just starting a similar business.<sup>5</sup> Mother left to start her new life and being very ambitious and determined, knew exactly what she wanted to achieve and how to do it.

How does one start a business with no money and no equipment? In those days there was no such thing as a planning department and no busy bodies saying you can't do this or that, so she started up in her own kitchen using the domestic oven and her front room as the shop. This stood on the corner of Portland Street and what was Warwick Place.<sup>6</sup> During the Second World War this area was bombed and is now the Portland Street car park and mother's shop no longer exists.

We believe that father, who had helped by doing paperwork, was conscripted at the age of 24 and went on to become a Sergeant in charge of an Officer's Mess. I was told that this was the first time the Mess had ever made a profit because dad stopped the theft which was rife in the Army Catering Corp.

Mother's efforts proved fruitful and in the early part of the war she rented a shop next to the *Sydney Arms* in Pittville Street, now where Marks and Spencers have their side entrance.<sup>7</sup> In the High Street, next to what is now Samuels the Jewellers, was the Maypole Dairy. This is where, during First World War rationing, people would queue for bacon, margarine or whatever. The queue would be right up Pittville Street and round the corner into Albion Street. Mother used to sell these people a cup of tea and a bun to nourish them during their long wait. Later in the fifties buying a bag of cement at Bences, I met Bert, who was in charge of sales. When he asked who it was for and heard the name Leopold's, he recalled that he was one of those who had received a cup of tea and a bun.

### **The business expands on to the High Street**

Mother did so well in that location that her entrepreneurial instincts were once again aroused, so she found a shop in the High Street that had once been a bakery. However, during the war it had been a billet for troops and most of the doors and fittings had been smashed. In spite of all this needing to be put right mother rented it and moved in on Armistice Day, 11 November 1918. She commenced her operations to try to become a force in the metropolis of Cheltenham. Father came back from the war and looked after the shop, doing the buying and selling, thus leaving mother to the baking side of the business. In 1920 they decided to buy the property at 85, High Street, paying a deposit of £100: the property finally became theirs in December 1930 and it turned out to be a very good investment.

In 1922 they bought another business in Albion Street for £850 which included the stock valued at £206 13s 5d (£206.67), taking possession on 13 November 1922. With another shop to look after, a van was needed and a driver was employed. Charles Wakefield was father's choice and he went on to work for the firm for 48 years. People who could drive were not easy to get and Charles, who lived in Chedworth, had learnt to drive on a tractor at a logging camp during the war where pit props were cut for the Forest of Dean and Welsh coal mines.<sup>8</sup>



Frederick, Bob's father, in the uniform of a Sergeant.

*Original Bob Leopold  
Image © Sally Self*

Previously Charles had worked with Townsend's, whose shop was on the opposite corner to the Gas Works. One day he told me how he came to work for dad. One Saturday he started baking at Townsend's Bakery at 2am and loaded the van at 7am with a stock of bread, buns, groceries and provender (animal feedstuff). If he ran out of bread he had to return to the bakery and bake more and then finish the round. On one specific day this happened and he finally returned to the Bakery at 10pm. He then checked in and Mr Townsend said 'your bread is alright, your groceries are alright, but you are 3d short on provender'. Charlie replied 'here's your 3d Mr Townsend and take a week's notice.' When Charlie came to dad's bakery he only worked from 6am to 6pm – a life of absolute luxury.

Father was a great one for gadgets and about this time he bought a cash register – paying for it by instalments. As far as can be seen, the total came to £170 10s (£170.50) – an enormous sum of money for those days, though this might have included maintenance.

### **Breakfast for a penny**

By 1924 mum and dad had got the bit between their teeth and they bought another shop at 141 High Street. This was a small business called Gallops who made a local delicacy called 'dripping cakes', a popular sticky, greasy, sweet bun made in sheets that cut into 40 pieces. With this business came some staff, one of whom was Cecil Randell,<sup>9</sup> and the all important knowledge of how to make these horrifically fattening articles. Father marketed these as 'breakfast for a penny' and they became the cornerstone of the business. At the peak 80 trays a day were made and sold and although now they are looked on with dismay, at the time they were seen as containing all the necessary goodness to sustain a worker very cheaply at one penny.

I don't know quite when it started, but the janitor at the Grammar School, a Mr Morris used to buy every day four trays of drippers to sell to the boys and to make a few pennies for himself. This went on until the school was rebuilt in Hester's Way and ex-boys still hanker for these sticky delicacies.<sup>10</sup>



Frederick Leopold working in the shop  
in the 1930s.  
*Original Bob Leopold Image © Sally Self*

Incidentally an entry in dad's private ledger for 1924, shows that whitewashing the bakery cost £2 10s (£2.50): this would not buy a decent paintbrush these days!

The Great Depression started in 1926 and father, who was a very charitable man, used to give all the leftovers to the Salvation Army or Nazareth House. Also, on Christmas Eve he went round all the other bakers and distributed their leftovers to the poor around the Lower High Street. After his hard work in the bakery before Christmas, not many people would give up their time to do this.

Business was not easy in the late twenties and early thirties, especially for the bakery and shop at 85 High Street, which was outside what was known as the 'golden mile'. Being the entrepreneur that he was, father looked for ways and means to improve the situation and felt that improving the area as a whole would help. Around 1933 he persuaded all the local traders to the south of what was then Miller's the Chemist, to each contribute five pounds towards getting the area lit by electricity. Every shop had a light installed at about 9ft (3m). The lights were automatically controlled from clocks installed in various shops. When they were first switched on, Mr Miller standing with my father, commented, 'Blimey it's just like the b\*\*\*\*\* Strand'.<sup>11</sup> Thereafter that section of the High Street was known as The Strand and the traders formed an association known as The Strand Traders. Another scheme thought up by him was to have a 'Mr Strand' – father became this character, and walking up and down the street, he would stop a shopper and they would receive a grand prize.

During the previous years, various adjacent properties had been bought by developers and to recoup some of the outgoings a garage in York Passage<sup>12</sup> and the room above was let to Joseph Hawkins, who was as close a likeness to an emaciated Charlie Chaplin as it was possible to get. Mr Hawkins turned the garage into a miniature flour mill using any bits and pieces, including Meccano, that he could find. He distributed his flour in 7lb (3.175kg) paper bags using a little Francis Barnett motorcycle. I hope that the people who bought this bread enjoyed it, because the mice used to run around unencumbered by environmental health inspectors. In order to further supplement his income, the room above was transformed into the Apostolic Church which held around 30 people who were charged two shillings and sixpence (12½p) to attend each Sunday.

At this time prices were stable as inflation had not reared its ugly head. In summer the price of bread was one shilling and two pence below the winter price. This was because wheat from Manitoba, Canada, the finest in the world, was transported overland during the winter months when the St Lawrence river froze.

Another memory was of the offal, bones and fish waste being collected by a man who drove a horse and cart just like the tumbrels used in the French Revolution. He called twice a week, parking outside our shop, to collect from Barnett's, the wet fish shop next door, and adding to our coffers by buying a penny dripper. I would disappear quickly because he and the cart stank to high heaven and after he left the shop had acquired a horrible odour which had to be cleared by leaving the door open.

For about a month before Christmas the men, who started at 6am and normally finished at 5pm or 6pm, would go home and later return to almond paste and finish Christmas cakes. These were produced on a belt system, with father standing at the end of the bench putting on the holly, snowmen and other decorations. This work went on until about 10pm when they were allowed to go home. In this period, we made and sold around 2000 of these cakes – an outstanding achievement.

In 1935 a Canadian tycoon, Garfield Weston,<sup>13</sup> docked at Liverpool and on landing gave a press conference. When asked what he was doing in England he said that he was going to start a chain of bakeries and that though his bread would not be top class people would have no option but to buy it. He certainly put the cat amongst the pigeons, as women flocked to buy sliced bread to make sandwiches for the

thousands of men who worked down mines, on the railways, in the cotton mills and elsewhere. At the beginning he only operated bakeries, so the millers were only too happy to sell him flour, but later it was a different story. Many bakers stuck their heads in the sand, not believing that Weston's bread would sell but he was an astute competitor, increasing his turn over year by year. On a personal level, my brother Peter, then 16 went to Birmingham Technical College to learn the ancient craft of bread making and I started at Pate's Junior School.<sup>14</sup>

Two years later George's – where W.H. Smith now trade – went bankrupt through poor management and the property was sold. Mother, ever the entrepreneur, wanted to buy it, as there was a bakery, a very nice restaurant and all the equipment to carry on the business. In the event father declined but we still have odds and ends of Georges' sale.<sup>15</sup>

### **The War Years**

Fortunately for father, the bakery trade was an exempt wartime occupation so the entire staff was retained. However, Peter, who had joined the business, being in the Territorial Army was called up and served in the Gloucestershire Hussars, becoming a Staff Sergeant Instructor. In the early years of the war we had contracted to supply the NAAFI in Little Rissington.<sup>16</sup> As our materials were rationed, we expected that they would be replaced but we were only receiving half of what we used. It does not take a genius to see that in a very short time we would run out, so father stopped supplying the NAAFI forthwith. Nobody but the Government, aided and abetted by the Civil Service, could have thought up such a cock-eyed scheme.

In 1943 I left school and joined the firm, spending my time in the office and helping out in the bakery. Bread was rationed and we used 10% of potatoes in every recipe to eke out the flour which still mainly came from Canada. This was not such a bad thing, as we discovered it helped the shelf life of the confectionary – not that this mattered as everything we baked was sold out by half past ten in the morning. Customers would sometimes quarrel over who should have a certain article and dad would close the shop until peace was restored.

In order to conserve the flour, the extraction rate was put up to 87%. To obtain white flour, which most people craved, only the starch portion of the wheat 'berry' was used and this only accounted for 72% of the grain. The germ of the wheat, the most nutritious part, was used in Hovis flour to manufacture a small, speciality loaf used for teatime bread and butter. Ordinary war time bread, with the added 15% extraction, was sold as 'the national loaf' and was far more wholesome. By Government order, 1% calcium was added by the millers to stop youngsters getting rickets – this addition continued long after the war finished. I remember a section of the uninformed public raising hell because they claimed the millers were making extra profits. This was of course nonsense as the benefits of the wheat germ and the calcium far outweighed any other consideration.

Another national delicacy organised by the Ministry of Food was 50 gallon (230l) barrels of apple puree, preserved by the addition of sulphur dioxide. This had to be driven off by boiling until all the sulphur fumes were gone. However, while this was happening the bakery was uninhabitable, though the customers did not appear to



suffer any ill effects. We also received broken Weetabix biscuits that arrived in huge sacks, being very light weight. I cannot remember what product we made with them but it was a welcome addition to our rations.

Paper bags were in short supply and father started a scheme whereby anyone buying a product which was in a bag was asked to put a halfpenny in the box for comforts for the troops. This scheme was extended to all the bakers – there were 35 in Cheltenham at this time – and on a Friday afternoon it was my job to cycle round all these people, collect the money and leave a receipt telling the customers how much had been collected at that particular shop and a collective total for the week. During this period over £14,000 was raised, which would have bought two Spitfires. At that time an ordinary baker’s wage was £2 10s (£2.50) a week.

To ensure a supply of trained operatives, the Cheltenham Bakers’ Association put pressure on the Technical College and in 1944 the College started a School of Bakers and Confectioners. As no building work was allowed, this class took place at the bakery of Messrs. Gardner’s, which was opposite The Famous in the High Street.<sup>17</sup> I was in the first class. Bill Workman, a Welshman – known as Workman the Bread – and who was Gardner’s’ bakery manager, was our teacher and he was excellent.<sup>18</sup>

The war progressed and the family continued to trade. Mother still worked in the business and father, on top of his normal duties, became a special constable and ran the fire fighting organisation in The Strand which had its base over our Strand shop.<sup>19</sup> Every night there were about four men in the building, whose job it was to locate and extinguish any incendiary bombs that fell on to the roof tops. These men, volunteering two or three days a week, still had to go to work the next day.

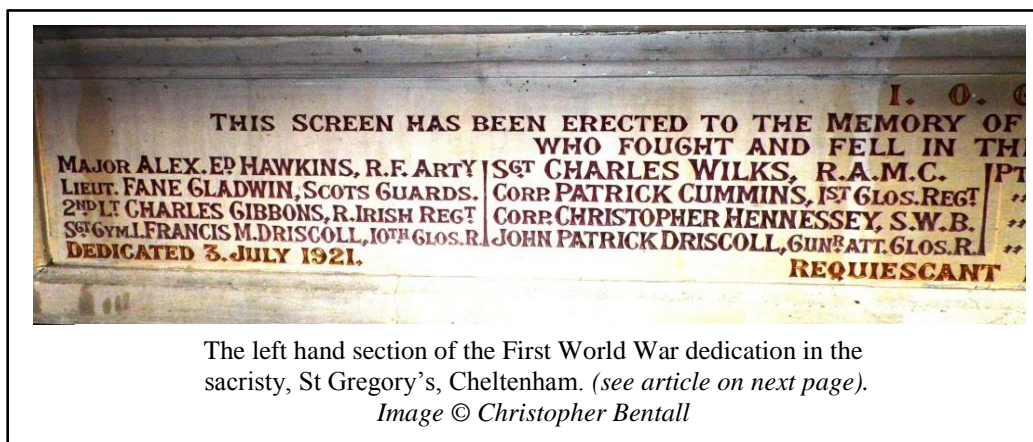
Although the War in Europe had ended, in 1946 I joined the Royal Navy Air Service at Skegness,<sup>20</sup> having been called up under the Conscription Act,<sup>21</sup> which of course interrupted my bakery training. My brother, Peter, was demobbed in March 1946 and joined the family business and went on to run the bakery very successfully.

Ingredients were still in short supply and Peter dreamed up all sorts of schemes to supplement our incomes. One very successful ploy was to make jellies in small cartons. Another innovation was to ask people to bring in their own large glass bowls or other containers which we would fill up and charge accordingly. One Christmas Eve we made one ton of jelly – which was going some in those days for a small firm. Gelatine was freely available and to sweeten the jellies we used saccharine and for flavour we used essences of fruits, as did Rowntrees.

So at the end of the war Leopold’s had three shops, two in the High Street and one in Albion Street. We employed around 40 people, some of whom were part-timers, with mum and dad still running the business.

*Editor’s note: It is planned that the article ‘Breakfast for a Penny: Leopold’s, Bakers and Confectioners’ will be completed in the next Journal.*

- <sup>1</sup> The family believe that this was to escape persecution or to avoid a war.
- <sup>2</sup> Unfortunately her surname has not yet been discovered.
- <sup>3</sup> Diana's parents divorced when she was quite young. Mr Metcalf was a mining engineer but had his fingers in many pies.
- <sup>4</sup> This shop later became Habitat and has now been split into Joules and Vinegar Hill (2014).
- <sup>5</sup> Mr Marfell went on to become chairman of Cadena Cafes which expanded all over the Midlands and the south-west. The Cadena Cafes were eventually sold to Tesco c.1980. The price obtained for the business was very poor: Tesco's got a bargain as the price included the whole of Berkley Square, Bristol.
- <sup>6</sup> Warwick Place crossed Portland Street north of Fairview Road.; Hodsdon, J., *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, (1997), BGAS, p.189.
- <sup>7</sup> Unfortunately none of this is recorded and this information comes from listening to the reminiscing of my parents over many years.
- <sup>8</sup> The timber started its journey by canal using the tunnel between Coates and Daneway, the refurbishment of which is still on going.
- <sup>9</sup> Cecil Randell continued to work for Leopold's until 1960.
- <sup>10</sup> After the First World War people would write to us from all over the world asking if a parcel of drippers could be dispatched to them. It usually cost a lot more than they were worth to post them and what they were like when they arrived I shudder to think.
- <sup>11</sup> See also Hodsdon, J., *An Historic Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, (1997), BGAS, p.172. The exact extent of The Strand has varied but is now generally considered to extend from the Belle Vue Hotel (now converted to flats) to the Rodney Road junction.
- <sup>12</sup> York Passage is a narrow passageway between the Strand and Grosvenor Terrace.
- <sup>13</sup> He was already a multi-millionaire
- <sup>14</sup> The school on St Margaret's Road was to the rear of the old Grammar School on the High Street.
- <sup>15</sup> The property was bought by a consortium for £25,000 and was later let to the M.O.D. at the start of the Second World War.
- <sup>16</sup> This was the Central Flying School for the RAF at this time.
- <sup>17</sup> The Famous ceased trading at the High Street shop in the spring of 2013.
- <sup>18</sup> Gardner's were our main competitors in the town.
- <sup>19</sup> Father was also involved in the starting of the Police Club.
- <sup>20</sup> It had previously been a Butlin's holiday camp. The Royal Naval Air Service was incorporated into the RAF in 1918 but later returned to Admiralty control as the Fleet Air Arm in 1937.
- <sup>21</sup> National Service (Armed Forces) Act 1939.

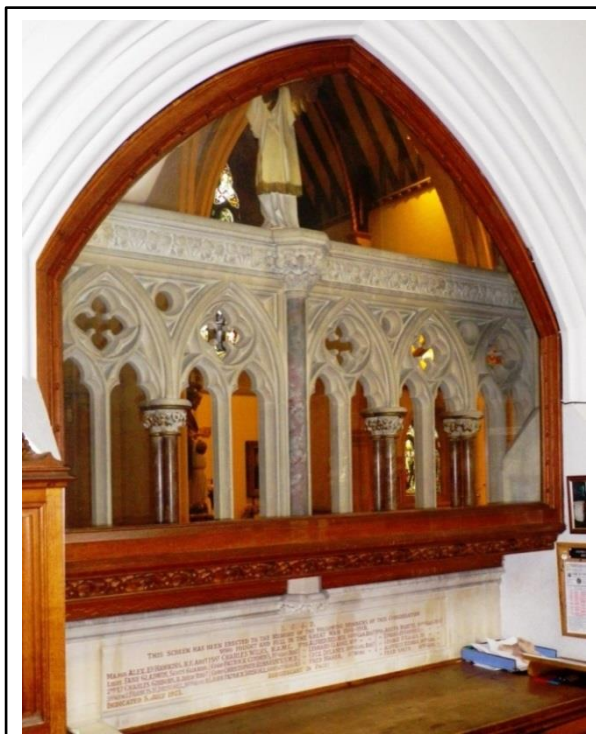


The left hand section of the First World War dedication in the sacristy, St Gregory's, Cheltenham. (see article on next page).  
Image © Christopher Bentall

# St Gregory's Catholic Church First World War Memorial

CHRISTOPHER BENTALL

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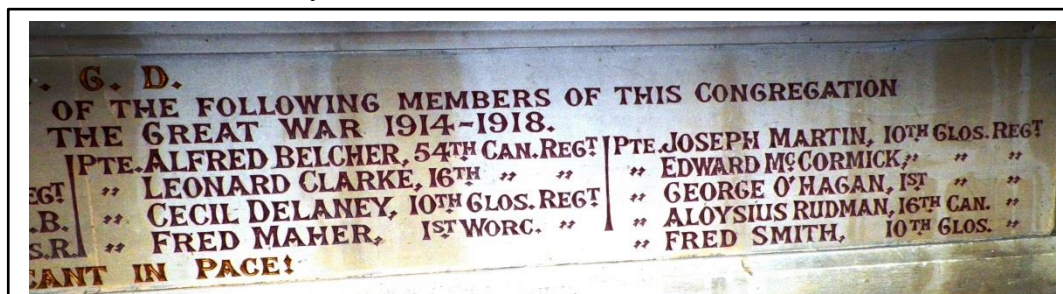
A view from the sacristy of the dedication to 17 soldiers who were killed in the First World War.

*Image © Christopher Bentall*

COMPARED TO ST MARY'S OR Christ Church, there are relatively few memorials in St Gregory's Church, Cheltenham. Unfortunately the dedication of an important one is hidden from general view and so may not be known to many parishioners or visitors, as since 1930 it has formed part of the sacristy. Inscribed with 17 names and dedicated on Sunday morning 3 July 1921, the memorial commemorates the men from the congregation who 'fought and fell' in the First World War.<sup>1</sup>

Four of the 17 were regular serving soldiers; 12 were volunteers, two of whom were ex-servicemen and one was probably a conscript. Sixteen died on the Western Front, five in Belgium - three in 1914 - and 11 in France, and one man at Gallipoli: six have no known grave.

Two were born in Ireland and a handful of others were of Irish descent, their grandparents having come to England in the mid-nineteenth century. Embracing the social spectrum from under-privileged to privileged backgrounds, at a time when the class system was rigid, it is as well that they are all grouped together on the memorial, albeit in order of military rank.



The right hand section of the First World War dedication in the sacristy, St Gregory's, Cheltenham.

*Image © Christopher Bentall*

## Volunteers and Conscripts

Following the outbreak of war in early August 1914, a recruitment office was set up in Great Western Road and by October 1,400 locals had enlisted against a backdrop of Belgian refugees arriving in Cheltenham with tales of German atrocities.<sup>2</sup> Four of the 17 answered the call to arms in September, doubtless in a spirit of heady patriotic fervour and itching to fight 'the Hun'. All over the country men from every station in life enlisted, 'innocent enthusiasts', as historian Lyn Macdonald described them.<sup>3</sup> Did they really believe it would all be over by Christmas when in fact every volunteer signed up for three years or the duration of the war?

**Private Frederick Smith**, 34, and **Sergeant Francis Maurice Driscoll**, 20, both of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment, fought and fell on the opening day of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915, when the British used chlorine gas for the first time and killed more of their own men than the enemy. The 10<sup>th</sup> was among the third group of 100,000 volunteers who responded to Lord Kitchener's famous 'pointing finger' appeal. The fighting at Loos was part of an Anglo-French campaign to push back the Germans but they were well entrenched among the slag heaps and pit heads of coal mines and their machine guns cut down swathes of men. Both Driscoll and Smith were remembered at St Gregory's in prayers and at Masses, as noted in the 1915 Church Notice Book (CNB)<sup>4</sup> entries for 10 and 31 October respectively.

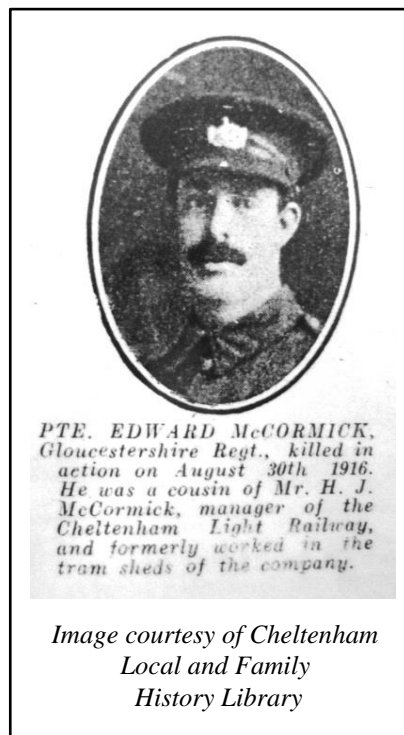
Smith's parents were Frederick and Sarah Grace Smith, long-time residents of Jubilee Cottage, Church Piece, Charlton Kings, situated next to the parish church. Two daughters were born in Cheltenham and Frederick, an only son, also probably first saw the light of day in Cheltenham in 1880.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the war he earned his living as a 'painter of houses'<sup>6</sup> and earlier as a bricklayer and labourer. Smith has no known grave but one of the few bodies recovered was that of Sergeant Driscoll, who was reported to have fought well. He was buried in the Cabaret Rouge British Cemetery.

Conscription was introduced on 1 January 1916 and lasted until 1919. Francis Driscoll's older brother, **John Patrick Driscoll**, (2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment), enlisted - probably conscripted<sup>7</sup> - in Luton in 1916, knowing his younger brother had been killed, news of whose death arrived in October 1915. The older Driscoll, was killed in August 1917 during fighting around Langemarck, near Ypres. Apparently, reports of his demise were slow in reaching Cheltenham, as the CNB entries for 5 May 1918 mention prayers for Driscoll, 'reported missing since last September', followed six weeks later by a record of his death. His Medal Roll Index Card (MRIC) mentions neither his death, when he enlisted nor that he is named on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. On the St Gregory's memorial, Driscoll has no rank but his Index Card describes him as a 'Gunner Attached Gloucestershire Regiment.'

The Driscoll home in 1901 was in St Paul's Street North, when John was a clerk at the Midland Railway Station. A decade on and minus John, the family were at 13 St George's Street with Francis working as a printer's apprentice in Bennington Street. The brothers, both born in Cheltenham - John in 1884 and Francis in 1895 - are also named on the gravestone of their father, who died in 1927 in Cheltenham Borough Cemetery.<sup>8</sup> At least their mother Alice was spared the trauma of grieving for

her sons as she had passed away in 1907. Sad to relate 91 families in Cheltenham lost two sons in the conflict and in one instance twin brothers died on the same day.

**Private Edward McCormick**, 32, (10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment) and **Corporal Patrick Cummins** were also recruited in September 1914. Drafted to France in August 1915, McCormick perished in the front line on the Somme battlefield at High Wood in August 1916. Perhaps the most well-known and infamous of all First World War battles, it began on 1 July 1916 in brilliant morning sunshine. The soldiers had been told resistance would be minimal, but in the first hour 20,000 men were killed and around a further 100,000 Allied troops died in the next few months for little gain in territory. This was one battle of which it was said 'lions were led by donkeys.' During a two month period of stalemate and in very wet weather at the end of August, the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, dug-in at High Wood, endured a two-day bombardment before they were relieved and withdrew back to Mametz; too late however for McCormick who had been killed the previous day. Having no known grave, he is one of about 73,000 names on the Thiepval Memorial.



In 'civvy-street' he had been employed in the tram sheds of The Cheltenham Light Railway Company, where a cousin, Henry McCormick, was the general manager and with whom he had lived in St George's Road. McCormick was married and the 1911 census records him and his wife Esther, 15 years his senior, as living at 8 Lansdown Cottages, Gloucester Road, near the old Lansdown Inn. According to the census, they had been married for less than a year, having been married in St Gregory's, 20 February 1911.

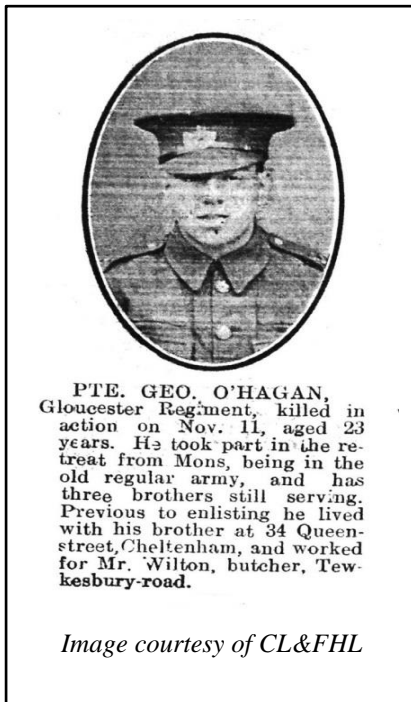
Cummins (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment), a keen runner with the Cheltenham Harriers, alongside his brother Laurence,<sup>9</sup> went to France in January 1915. He was killed at night in the front line near Vermelles on 8 August 1915. Before the war he worked for Mr Charles T. Scott, a former railway contractor, of Buckland Manor near Broadway.<sup>10</sup> Cummins has proved to be the most elusive of all the 17 men. His parents were Dennis and Hannah and he was born in Kinsale, Co. Cork but other information concerning him is hard to pin down.<sup>11</sup> A portrait photograph depicts him as clean shaven with short dark hair. Corporal Cummins was interred in Vermelles Military Cemetery.

Although born in Ireland, clearly their Irish Catholic background did not deter either McCormick, whose birthplace was Kilcock, Co. Kildare, or Cummins from volunteering to join the British Army. Whether McCormick's loyalty was tested by the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, when fellow Irishmen died at British hands is a moot point.

Born in Cheltenham in 1894 and with the same Christian name as his father, **Private Joseph Noah Martin**, 22, was killed in 1916. A married man and father of a son born in September 1915, he volunteered the same month, joining the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. Martin was either struck by a random shell or more deliberately by a sniper's bullet while digging reserve trenches at North Maroc on 5 May and was buried at Maroc British Cemetery. Martin had married Rose Hollick only months before he enlisted.<sup>12</sup> The Martin family lived at 12 Grove Street – an Irish enclave off the lower High Street - but by 1911 five siblings had died leaving only Joseph and a younger sister Annie as a comfort for their parents. Criticised in a health report as early as 1849, numbers 1-17 Grove Street were on a slum clearance schedule in the mid-1930s.

### Four Regular Soldiers

Until 1918 90% of Belgium was under German control. Protracted fighting was concentrated in and around the strongly Catholic, medieval town of Ypres in central Belgium. **Private George Laurence O'Hagan** (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment) was with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) which was quickly deployed at Mons, France in 1914. Outnumbered three to one and forced to withdraw, O'Hagan took part in the 170 mile retreat. He fought on for three years but



met his death on 11 November 1917 in the Ypres sector; he was in one of many patrols sent out to plug gaps over a 900 yard (823m) stretch of ground and in so doing, he and two other men were killed. He is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, along with 34,000 others.

A butcher's assistant in peacetime, O'Hagan lived with a married brother at 34 Queen Street. Born in Cheltenham in 1894, George and his two sisters experienced early life as inmates of the Union Workhouse. The family home at the time was 4 Sun Street<sup>13</sup> and included his mother Mary, a charwoman, a brother David, 15, a coal merchant's porter<sup>14</sup> and Harold, just four. O'Hagan's father, David, was something of a jailbird with at least three prison convictions; for example, he was in Gloucester Gaol in 1903 for absconding from the workhouse and sleeping out.

One month later, on 12 December **Acting Major Alexander Edward Hawkins**, 23, of the Royal Field Artillery and Royal Horse Artillery, died from his wounds at Ypres. Gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in September 1914 and in France with the BEF from January 1915, Hawkins was promoted to Captain. According to one account he was mentioned in dispatches by Field Marshall Haig but this citation referred to another man.<sup>15</sup> Born in Streatham, London in 1894, Hawkins spent his early years in the capital with his widowed father, a retired surgeon. Hawkins was educated at Downside and Cheltenham College, 1910-13, and his home address - 10 Royal Parade - befitted his officer's rank.<sup>16</sup> According to his MRIC the address for correspondence was 'Miss C E Hawkins, Fernihurst, Bays Hill Road, Cheltenham' -

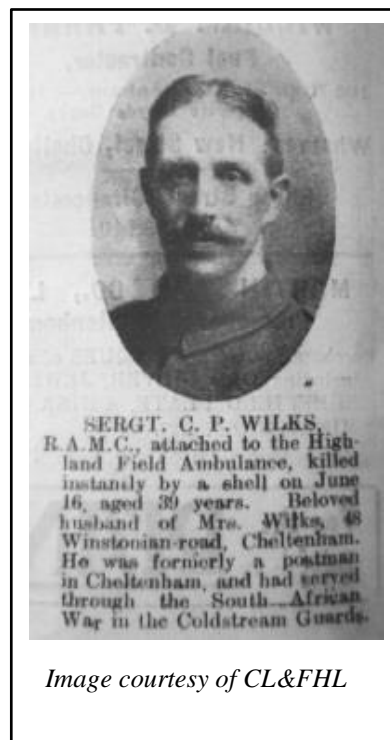
she was his Indian-born aunt Charlotte and had figured in the Hawkin's household since at least the turn of the century.

The son of a Lieutenant Colonel, whose distinguished career was largely spent in India, the first fatality among the 17 men was **2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Charles Barry Gibbons**, 22, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Irish Regiment; he died in August 1914 in Belgium. His body was only identified after the end of the war and was reburied in the Symphonien Military Cemetery. Born in Isleworth, Middlesex in 1892, his family (except his father) were resident at Priory Lawn in the St Luke's area in 1901. Gibbons' mother and three siblings were all born in India. Ten years on and all the family lived in a large house on London Road. Gibbons was granted a commission in 1913 and set off for Belgium on 14 August 1914. By the 23 August he was in a reserve force near the Mons Canal, part of a defensive line which was involved in preventing the Germans from attacking units withdrawing from the canal. The Royal Irish were involved in another 'backs to the wall' action three days later when two German regiments were held up for six hours.<sup>17</sup>

Cheltenham born, (in 1894), **Private Frederick William Maher** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, like George O'Hagan, went with the original BEF in mid-August 1914. Within two months he was dead, defending the same small village north of Ypres (Langemarck) where John Driscoll was to die in 1917. Unfortunately the St Gregory's memorial incorrectly attributes him to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Worcestershire Regiment. A sustained German artillery bombardment caused many casualties and by the third day the survivors were exhausted in what was left of their pulverised trenches. Even so, as the German infantry advanced they were cut down by fusillades of rifle fire. The British line held but Maher did not survive. He was laid to rest in Perth Cemetery, Zillebeke. Like others in this account, his family had lived at several addresses in Cheltenham. Maher's father Jeremiah, from Tipperary in Ireland, was a tailor. Maher also appears on the Holy Trinity Church memorial, so perhaps he had forsaken his Catholic roots.

## Two Ex-servicemen

Born in Swindon in 1879, **Charles Peter Wilks**, a private in the Coldstream Guards in the second Boer War, lasted into the final year of the conflict having joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in Southampton as a Sergeant in July 1915. Interestingly, his Attestation form<sup>18</sup> has 'home service only' written on it, but he was serving with the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> Highland Field Ambulance when a shell killed him instantly near Arras in mid-June 1918. Wilks would have been involved in stretcher-bearing duties and given his previous soldiering experience, perhaps he deliberately opted for a non-combatant role, maybe motivated by religious sensibilities. News of his death was announced at St Gregory's on 30 June. His remains were buried in Anzin St Aubin British Cemetery.<sup>19</sup> A postman and a married man, at 39 Wilks was the oldest of the 17 soldiers. He and



his wife Alice - they married in Teddington (Worcs) on 12 April 1909 - occupied part of an eight-roomed dwelling, 34 The Promenade. Wilks' peripatetic childhood had been spent in the company of 10 siblings; his father William was a railway engine driver. Alice passed away in 1950 at Overton near Tewkesbury.

The other man with previous military experience **Lieutenant Ralph Hamilton Fane Gladwin**, born 1885 at Watton, (Herts), was the youngest son of a wealthy magistrate born in India.<sup>20</sup> His was a privileged upbringing: the family occupied Broughton Castle, a moated, mediaeval castle, near Banbury, along with 11 servants.<sup>21</sup> Educated at Radley College, he was gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Scots Guards in early February 1907 and promoted to Lieutenant in November 1909 after which he left the army. However he joined the Special Reserve of Scots Guards without delay at the outbreak of the war and served with the BEF in France and Flanders, attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

Initially, the Germans planned to push on to the coast and secure Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne and this frontal assault began on 20 October, 1914. The British line held but at great cost; Gladwin was killed during a rearguard action at Kruseeckennear, Ypres on 26 October, aged 29.<sup>22</sup> With no known grave, Lieutenant Gladwin is named on the Menin Gate, where, with traffic halted, the *Last Post* is sounded at each sunset by buglers of the Belgian Fire Service. A Requiem Mass was held for him on 4 January 1915.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1911, Gladwin was with his parent's at Seven Springs House, near Coberley.<sup>24</sup> There were also eight servants, a nurse, an older brother,<sup>25</sup> two married sisters (who were probably visiting) and his mother's spinster sister. Gladwin subsequently married and it was his wife Isabella who was granted probate, - his effects were valued at just over £486. Isabella's address then was 'Shiel' in Sandy Lane Road, Charlton Kings but evidently she soon moved away, as later information gives her address as Pitkerris, By Dundee and 19 Egerton Gardens, London.<sup>26</sup>

### **Three 'Canadians'**

Three of the 17 victims fought in the Canadian army, having left Cheltenham, when employment prospects were poor, although they all returned to England for training. Ties between England and the colonies were strong; 65 colonials with connections to Cheltenham were killed out of around 1,600 fatalities from the town.<sup>27</sup>

**Private Aloysius John Rudman** left Cheltenham quite early on. Although born in the town in 1891, in the two succeeding census returns he was living with his family in Handsworth, latterly employed as a draper's assistant. Accordingly, of all those named on the St Gregory's memorial, his connection with the church and the town is the most tenuous.

A tall man and unmarried, he enlisted in Winnipeg in November 1915, calling himself Frederick Rudman and giving Gloucester as his birthplace. After several transfers he joined the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) and fought in the Arras offensive in northern France in April 1917, being involved in the taking of Vimy Ridge. The Canadian infantrymen displayed enormous courage, and as men from all over Canada participated, their stunning victory became a defining moment. After the war Brigadier-General A.E. Ross said 'I witnessed the birth of a nation.'



However Rudman's war ended on Saturday 5 May when he was badly wounded during the Battle of the Scarpe and passed away the same day. He was buried in Barlin Cemetery.

**Private Alfred George Belcher** of the 54<sup>th</sup> Battalion CEF died on 16 November 1916 during the Somme campaign, only two days before the end of the five-month-long battle. He was in a force attempting to capture the heavily fortified village of Beaumont Hamel in the Ancre Valley.<sup>28</sup> Belcher was killed as the 54<sup>th</sup> approached their target over marshy terrain in cold, clear and dry weather. He too has no known grave but is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial, one of 11,000 names. The CEF Burial Register states his religion as Church of England.

His parents lived in Farm Cottage, Alstone; in his will Alfred left everything to his mother Gertrude. Born in Cheltenham in 1895, Belcher signed on at Vernon Camp, British Columbia in August 1915, eventually embarking for France in August 1916. He had gone to Canada, like Rudman, after the 1911 census was taken where it is recorded that he was living at home and working as a builder's labourer. His father was a former pub landlord and coal merchant based in Townsend Street, before trying his hand at market gardening.

At St Gregory's on Sunday 28 July 1918 prayers were said asking for 'a speedy victory against Prussianism' and, although the end of the war was only a few months away, it came too late for 26-year-old **Private Leonard Brummel Clark** (16<sup>th</sup> Battalion CEF), whose parents lived in Gloucester Road. He was accepted into the Winnipeg Rifles but in England transferred to the 16<sup>th</sup> The Canadian Scottish. Clark was the last of the 17 to die in actions around Damery during the Battle of Amiens on 17 August 1918. Wounded in October 1916 during the capture of Regina Trench at the Battle of the Ancre Heights, he returned to France five months before his death. He was laid to rest in Censy-Gailly Military Cemetery.<sup>29</sup>

Clark had arrived at Quebec from Liverpool in November 1908 on board the *Empress of Ireland*. He was 17 and gave his occupation as farmer and his destination as Shoal Lake, Manitoba. In the 1911 Canadian census, he is a servant or farm labourer with the Priem family in Mackenzie, Saskatchewan; his distinctive middle name is omitted (as it also was on the ship's passenger list) although it reappears in the CEF Burial Register.

I believe his surname, written as 'Clarke' on the St Gregory's memorial, is misspelt. When his father completed the 1911 census page he spelt it as 'Clark'.<sup>30</sup> Clark was born in Cheltenham in 1891 and educated at Douglas House School in Parabola Road with his brother Philip.<sup>31</sup> Present in the household for the 1891 census was Sarah Collins, a 'monthly nurse', presumably helping his mother Georgina to look after three-month-old Leonard at the family home 5 Brecon Terrace. His artistic father Robert, head sculptor from 1905-25 at the well-known local firm of H.H. Martyn & Company, was away at the time.

### **Odd Man Out**

Sixteen of the 17 died on the Western Front but the remaining victim met his fate in another theatre of the war. Less than a month into active service, **Lance Corporal Christopher Hugh Scott Hennessey**, 28, was killed in action on 11 August 1915 at

Gallipoli<sup>32</sup> and buried in Amztak cemetery. Father of five children and a home address at 25 Rutland Street, he actually enlisted in Brecon and went to Gallipoli with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers. He also features on a memorial in front of St Paul's Church as Scott-Hennessey. He had worked underground in South Wales as a 'coal miner hewer',<sup>33</sup> no doubt toiling long hours in very grim conditions. Alice, his widow, like Hennessey born in Cheltenham, remarried and moved back to Wales.

Now part of Brunswick Street, Rutland Street was the first major development in what became the St Paul's area. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Rutland Street, begun in 1806, became a notorious, crowded slum. Hennessey's family background was one of poverty; his mother Ruth had at least three spells in the Union Workhouse and Christopher was born there on 10 January 1887; a brother Reuben, followed in 1888. On his birth certificate the named father, David Hennessey, was crossed out by the registrar. In fact Ruth and David married in 1874, only for him to die two years later aged 56. The previously mentioned Driscoll family had also lived in Rutland Street, as indeed had Ruth as a child<sup>34</sup>. Born c. 1849 Ruth lived on until March 1936.

### Last But Not Least

The majority of the 17 personnel were in their twenties because officially no one under 19 could fight. However, before conscription was introduced in 1916 no proof of age was required, so many under-age youths had enlisted<sup>35</sup> representing a considerable boost to army numbers. Casualties were very heavy from the start of the war: the BEF being almost annihilated in October and November 1914 and 50,000 British soldiers were killed during the first battle of Ypres, so not surprisingly recruitment to the wholly volunteer army slowed.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, Easter 1915 was designated Recruitment Week climaxing with a mile long military parade through Cheltenham on Easter Sunday. One of the subsequent batch of new recruits is the last subject of this article.

**Private Cecil James Delaney**, whose parents ran the Tewkesbury Road Post Office, provides us with a poignant tale. Cecil was born in South Gloucestershire at Falfield, a few miles from Thornbury.<sup>37</sup> In 1901, as an only child, he and his parents lived at 4 Normal Terrace, St Paul's, his father then being employed as a police constable. A decade on, with his father working as an auctioneer's clerk, the family had increased in size; Cecil had three sisters and a brother and they all lived at 1 Cleeve View Terrace in Whaddon Lane. In all probability Cecil was working to support the family finances prior to enlisting in the army.

As a new member of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment, Cecil underwent a relatively short period of training because he was drafted to France on 9 August 1915. His young life was ended on the same day as fellow Catholics Fred Smith and Francis Driscoll (with 30 other Cheltonians), on the first day of the Battle



of Loos, 25 September 1915. It was the first major British offensive of the war, the so-called 'Big Push'. The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion was decimated with barely 100 unwounded survivors.<sup>38</sup>

Like Smith, Cecil has no known grave and both are commemorated on the Loos Memorial. In fact, Cecil was less than half Smith's age and, photographed in uniform, young Cecil looks exactly what he was, a 'boy soldier', a mere 16 years old, having been born in the last three months of 1898. He was one of the battle's 3,600 under-age casualties. The family was plunged into further grief the following year when Cecil's father Michael died aged 45; his photograph appeared in the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* and he was described as a 'particularly well-read and intelligent man.'<sup>39</sup>

Photographs of the fallen, the wounded and the missing - the majority in uniform - handed in by relatives, regularly appeared in the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic*. Only five of the 17 were not featured – the three 'Canadians', Rudman, Belcher and Clark, and Gibbons and Hawkins.

### Postscript

There is another name that should appear on the Memorial in St Gregory's – that of **Cascarino**. He was born in Cheltenham in 1888, was baptised at the church, worked, married and enlisted in the town. He died in Palestine in 1917. He is named on the memorial in The Promenade.

With the death of Harry Patch, the so-called 'last fighting Tommy', in July 2009 aged 110, the First World War crossed a border from living memory to history: none of the men in this article lived to experience a 'land fit for heroes' promised by their leaders.<sup>40</sup> But, although they have long been consigned to be part of history, we do well to remember them and to honour their memory.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The memorial was the gift of Mrs W. Baring Bingham and is made of Caen stone. It was executed by R.L. Boulton and Sons and unveiled by Bishop Burton of Clifton. The Nazareth House Boys Band played *The Last Post* and Chopin's *Funeral March*.

<sup>2</sup> A Mass celebrating the 21st anniversary of Belgian Independence Day was held at St Gregory's in July 1915; that year a Belgian refugee priest, L'Abbe Haereus stayed at the Rectory.

<sup>3</sup> Macdonald, L., *Somme* (1983). Eventually 6,000 to 7,000 local men enlisted.

<sup>4</sup> St Gregory the Great Church Notice Book, Gloucestershire Archives, D4290/PP 3/1

<sup>5</sup> The 1881 and 1901 Censuses give his birthplace as Cheltenham whereas the 1891 and 1911 censuses state Oxford; the latter records his age as 27 instead of 30 or 31.

<sup>6</sup> 1911 census.

<sup>7</sup> Men still volunteered even after the advent of conscription.

<sup>8</sup> The Medal Roll Index Card of John Patrick Driscoll reveals that his father Denis applied for his son's medals in October 1921, his address recorded as 64 Mark (should be Marle) Hill Parade, Cheltenham.

<sup>9</sup> The two brothers last raced together in December 1914 when they finished first and second. Laurence Cummins appears in a photograph of the St Gregory's rugby team, *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic*, 26 December 1925.

<sup>10</sup> A son, Lieutenant Charles Brough Scott, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Dragoons, died of his wounds on 20 November 1917 in France; a memorial in Buckland Church states he was killed in action at Ribecourt.

<sup>11</sup> The births of three Patrick Cummins were registered in Kinsale, Eire between 1890 and 1892.

<sup>12</sup> The wedding was held at St Gregory's, Saturday 27 February 1915.

<sup>13</sup> 1911 census

<sup>14</sup> David enlisted in 1914 and served with three regiments; he was the married brother with whom George resided. The *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic*, 5 December 1917, states that three of George's brothers served in the armed forces but I can only find David and Harold.

<sup>15</sup> *London Gazette*, 18 May 1917.

<sup>16</sup> 647 former Cheltenham College pupils lost their lives in the conflict.

<sup>17</sup> His MRIC gives 23 August as the date of his death.

<sup>18</sup> This is the only Attestation Form extant.

<sup>19</sup> As with John Driscoll, Wilks' MRIC does not mention his death.

<sup>20</sup> When Gladwin's father died in 1913 he left a fortune of over £120,000.

<sup>21</sup> Census 1891

<sup>22</sup> About 90,000 British personnel in the Ypres Salient were killed by the end of the war.

<sup>23</sup> St Gregory's Church Note Book records his name differently - 'Monday mass ... will be a Requiem Mass for Lieutenant Ralph Peter Fane Gladwyn of the Scots Guards who was killed fighting in Belgium'.

<sup>24</sup> In September 1939 at the outbreak of the Second World War junior girls from Cheltenham Ladies' College were evacuated to Seven Springs House.

<sup>25</sup> Their eldest son Francis, a civilian working with wounded soldiers at the racecourse Cheltenham, died in 1916.

<sup>26</sup> Information from Gladwin's MRIC, when Isabella applied for his medal, the 1914 Star.

<sup>27</sup> For example, a French-Canadian soldier Private Odilon Cayer died from his wounds at New Court Red Cross Hospital (Cheltenham); buried in the Catholic portion of the cemetery (section E 7558 or 7258) and marked by an oak wooden cross, the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic*, 18 November 1916, devoted a page of photographs to his funeral.

<sup>28</sup> Beaumont Hamel was a 'day one' (1 July) target, when the author's paternal grandfather, (Private A. J. Bental, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Essex Regiment), was part of the attacking force. He lay wounded on the battlefield for two days but lived to within two weeks of his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday, dying in May 1983.

<sup>29</sup> The CEF Burial Register states 'Instantly killed while his Battalion was holding the front line in the vicinity of Parvillers' and that he was buried in Beaufort British Cemetery, 8 miles east of Moreuil.

<sup>30</sup> Similarly the St Gregory's Church Notice Book omits the 'e' when noting that prayers were said for Clark on Sunday 15 September 1918. He is also 'Clark' in the 1911 Canadian census.

<sup>31</sup> Philip Lindsey Clark (1889-1977) became a sculptor and his works included several Great War memorials. He enlisted with the Artist's Rifles, was commissioned into the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regiment in 1916, attained the rank of Captain, was awarded the DSO and mentioned in dispatches. He was severely wounded in 1917.

<sup>32</sup> On the St Gregory's memorial he is incorrectly ranked as a Corporal.

<sup>33</sup> 1911 census

<sup>34</sup> 1861 census

<sup>35</sup> Estimates vary but it may have been as many as 250,000.

<sup>36</sup> Well-equipped and trained, at the outbreak of war, the British Army numbered around 247,000; Germany had a standing army of about 800,000 and vast numbers of trained reservists; Austria-Hungary had 425,000 men and more in reserve; the French army totalled 650,000 plus reservists; the Russians had 1,350,000 soldiers though lacking modern weapons and were poorly trained.

<sup>37</sup> Cecil's grandparents, James, a shepherd, and Eliza were born in Ireland; the 1871 census states they were in Woolaston, north of Chepstow, with seven children all born in England; the oldest, 14, the youngest, Michael, seven months. Cecil's mother Bessie came from Llanllowell in Monmouthshire.

<sup>38</sup> Everard Wyrall in *The Gloucestershire Regiment in the War 1914-1918*, (1931) states the 10<sup>th</sup>, 'were practically destroyed, there being only some 60 survivors.'

<sup>39</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic*, 4 November 1916.

<sup>40</sup> Patch only began to talk of his wartime memories very late in his life (in 1998); having heard him in person at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham I doubt he felt that he had lived in a land for heroes!

<sup>41</sup> Further sources for information on Cheltenham casualties in the First and Second World Wars are: Devereux, J., and Sacker, G., *Leaving All That Was Dear*, Promenade Publications, (1997); Sacker, G., *Held in Honour*, Promenade Publications, (2000); for under-age soldiers see van Emden, R., *Boy Soldiers of the Great War*, Headline, (2006).

# Cheltenham's Royal Statues

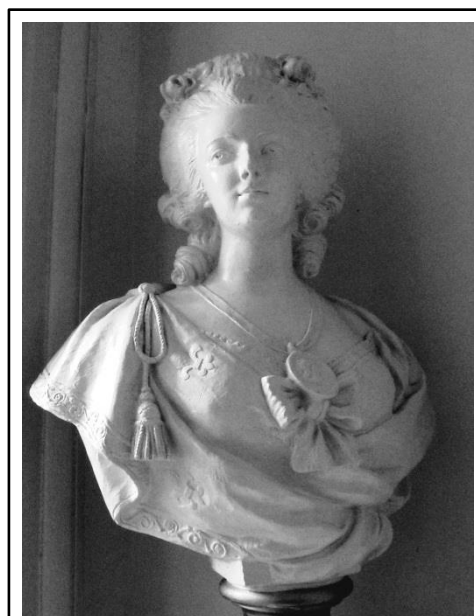
ERIC MILLER

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FOR A SMALL PROVINCIAL TOWN, CHELTENHAM is unusual in possessing eight statues of English monarchs, either on public display or in more private settings. Half-hidden in the lobby of the *Queen's Hotel* is a bust, probably of Queen Charlotte. From Montpellier Gardens, William IV, wearing royal robes and the insignia of the garter, looks towards Edward VII who stands in front of the Rotunda, dressed in mufti. A more imposing statue of Edward, in coronation robes, graces a niche above one side of the stage in the Town Hall and this is matched by one of George V. In addition, a bust of Queen Victoria is to be found in The Ladies' College, while effigies of her and Edward VII are mounted on the chapel of Cheltenham College. This article describes the statues and their fortunes and follows other related trails, in particular one that leads to Cheltenham's twin town in Germany, Göttingen.

## Queen Charlotte

A plaster bust of an elegant lady, dressed in 18<sup>th</sup> century finery, discreetly surveys the reception desk in the lobby of the *Queen's Hotel*. Reasonably enough, the staff believe it to be Queen Victoria, though it bears no resemblance whatsoever to her. It looks much more like Queen Charlotte, who in the summer of 1788 accompanied King George III when he paid his celebrated visit to Cheltenham Spa in the hope of finding a cure. Its provenance and the circumstances in which it arrived there are unknown, but it seems fitting for that Queen's image to be placed on the site of the former Imperial Spa.



The bust, probably of Queen Charlotte, in the *Queen's Hotel*.  
Image © Eric Miller

## King William IV and Cheltenham

Today the statue of King William IV in Cheltenham stands near the eastern edge of Montpellier Gardens, facing the Rotunda. The plaque on the pedestal below it reads:

‘WILLIAM IV. 1830 – 37.  
ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION IN 1833  
TO COMMEMORATE THE CORONATION OF KING WILLIAM IV.  
MOVED FROM THE ORIGINAL LOCATION IN  
IMPERIAL GARDENS TO THE PRESENT SITE IN 1920’

The details concerning the removal are correct, but not the date 1833 nor the reference to a public subscription. Other sources too have given contradictory and confusing accounts of its origin and material composition, as well as differing over its artistic merits. The facts as far as they can be established are set out overleaf.

The statue was unveiled on Coronation Day, 8 September 1831, when the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported that:

*'the most gratifying and permanent tribute of regard to our beloved sovereign, by way of commemorating his coronation in Cheltenham, is to be found in the public spirit of a gentleman who has liberally resolved to hand down the loyalty of his fellow townsmen to posterity by placing a colossal statue of his august Majesty in Imperial Gardens<sup>1</sup> [...] The statue is upwards of eight feet high, clothed in royal robes, with the insignia of the garter and the collar and badge of St George [...] The position is firm, erect and graceful [...] the countenance is bold, expressive and animated ... an excellent likeness.'*<sup>2</sup>

*Rowe's Guide* of 1845 named the donor as Thomas Henney<sup>3</sup>, a prominent Town Commissioner and a man of 'public spirit, liberality and benevolence'; there was no mention of a public subscription. On the day of the coronation 1,405 schoolchildren were treated to a dinner of beef and plum pudding and as they marched past the statue Thomas Henney presented each one with a bun (but a minor example of his bounty). The *Chronicle* stated that the sculpture, in Bath stone, reflected great credit on the sculptor, Mr R. Barrett of Bristol, but corrected this the following week, stating that 'this superb work [...] was actually wholly and solely designed and executed by Mr W.M. Gardner [...] of this town'. William Montague Gardner (1804-1873) practised as a sculptor and engraver in Cheltenham between about 1830 and 1845.

It had been hoped that King William would soon visit Cheltenham. When Thirlestaine House in Bath Road was for sale in 1831, it was recommended as a potential royal residence. An advertisement read: 'It is, in fact, worthy of THE REPOSE OF ROYALTY, and would be the only suitable abode for HIS GRACIOUS MAJESTY in the very probable event of his honouring the Town with his august presence.'<sup>4</sup> No visit took place, but on the other hand his wife, as Duchess of Clarence, had come for a day in 1827. In her honour a triumphal arch was erected at the end of The Promenade (at the expense of the ever-generous Thomas Henney). The Duchess stayed at *Liddell's Hotel*, which was promptly rechristened the *Clarence Hotel*; and the name Clarence Street also commemorates the occasion. The coat of arms of the Kings of Hanover was placed over the entrance canopy of the hotel. It remains on the building, recently vacated by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and at present about to be converted into apartments.

Cheltenham was soon to develop a particular loyalty to the King, for in 1832 he facilitated the passing of the Great Reform Act, which entitled the borough to its own Member of Parliament, a right which had lapsed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>5</sup> The Act had been the achievement of a Whig (Liberal) administration and Thomas Henney was of that party. A Whig, the Hon. Craven Berkeley, was duly elected, and the statue understandably came to be associated with the Reform Act.

When the Act was finally passed there was great rejoicing in Cheltenham. Thousands of townspeople and visitors promenaded the streets to admire the 'transparencies' which were displayed by hotels, businesses and private householders. The *George Hotel* was decorated with a huge anchor (for the 'sailor king') with the letters W and A (for William and Adelaide) outlined in multi-coloured lamps, with a Union Jack.<sup>6</sup>



The statue of William IV in Montpelier Gardens (*left*), with his coat-of-arms, distinguished by the Hanoverian escutcheon place on the centre of the shield, (*right*). The sculptor was G. Lewis . See also the front cover – Aylwin Sampson's drawing.

*Images © Eric Miller*

In 1840 the statue was defaced by vandals. These were no ordinary ruffians but, according to the *Cheltenham Examiner*, 'some sprigs of the aristocracy, who have been some little time located in Cheltenham'. The report ran that one night;

*'the statue of our late beloved and lamented King, William IV, which decorates the Imperial Gardens, was [...] ornamented in rather an outré style; his robes being ermined, waistcoat and continuations (sic) scarlet, shoes black and stockings yellow, with black gaiters, added to which his face was ludicrously marked with a black eye, and all his buttons, collars, etc, appeared of a deep yellow'.<sup>7</sup> (Were the culprits perhaps anti-Reform Tories?)*

In 1856 a letter to the Editor of the *Examiner*, purporting to have been written by the statue, shows that mutilation had continued. He had had to suffer 'the savage assaults of rude boys' and also complained that the ravages of time had produced in him a state of things which called loudly for 'reform'. He was 'daily expecting to lose the best part of [his] visage, and then what a horrid guy – a King without a nose'.<sup>8</sup> The statue quoted the claim in the *Handbook of Cheltenham* (published by the Liberal-leaning *Examiner*) that he had been erected at the expense of 'a few patriotic individuals' on the passing of the Reform Act.

Revisiting the subject in 1906, the *Examiner* complained that the statue 'now gazes inanely across the Promenade [ ... and] remains as a record of the enthusiasm - if not the artistic taste - of the time'. In 1914, on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Edward Wilson, the editor of the *Looker-On* recalled that William IV's 'has in its career had the occasional coat of paint. Once it appeared in a coat of many

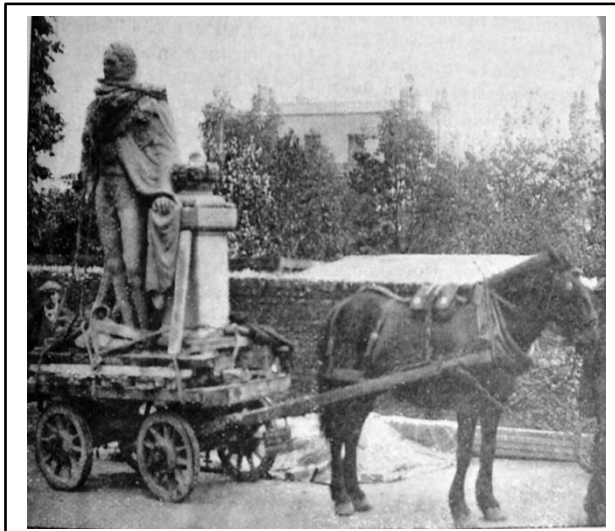
colours, like Joseph's. I have reason to believe that it was for many years without a nose and that the one-time manager of the Winter Gardens modelled one of putty and glued it on.'

Perhaps the statue had become an embarrassment. When a bandstand was proposed for the Winter Gardens in 1920, the statue proved to be an obstacle and was moved to a less prominent position at the east end of the central walk in Montpellier Gardens. Under the heading 'A Royal Removal', the *Looker-On* wrote disparagingly that 'the ludicrous effigy in plaster (*sic*) of William IV has been relegated to the (comparative) obscurity of a site [...] in Montpellier Gardens' and protested at 'the infliction of this unsatisfactory statue upon an artistic people'. Certainly, it must have cut a ridiculous figure mounted on a low cart and pulled by a nag.



In this view of The Promenade, 1900, the statue of William IV can just be seen on the extreme right (*arrowed*), near to where the statue of Gustav Holst stands today. It is also marked (but not named) on Merrett's map of 1834.

*Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum*



The statue of William IV in transit to its new resting-place in Montpellier Gardens in 1920

*Courtesy of Gloucestershire Libraries*

Cheltenham's attitude to this statue has always been ambivalent: it celebrated either the coronation or the Reform Act; was either the gift of a private benefactor or of the general public; in 1831 or 1833; a superb work or a ludicrous effigy; made of Bath stone or of plaster. Even the sculptor was at first misidentified. Since its relocation the statue has been generally ignored, except when visitors from Göttingen are taken to see it. Perhaps this article will encourage others to inspect it and form their own opinion as to its aesthetic quality.

### The Other Statues of King William IV in Great Britain

Statues of William IV are rare, and only five others have been identified anywhere. Appropriately for the 'sailor king' he is represented in the grounds of the Palace of Greenwich, beside King William Walk, and in the area of Devonport Dockyard. The



Greenwich statue, in the uniform of Lord High Admiral, originally stood at the junction of Gracechurch Street and King William Street in the City of London. At its base a plaque records that it was moved to its present position in 1936.

There are two statues in public view in Devonport. The most prominent, over four metres high, and visible from a distance, surmounts the grand entrance gate to the former Royal William Victualling Yard. Nearby, in the dockyard at Mutton Cove, is a brightly-coloured fibreglass copy of a figurehead taken from the prow of the 120-gun warship, *Royal William*. The original wooden figurehead is in store at Devonport Dockyard. Few people will have had occasion to see another statue in London, as it stands in a corridor of the Central Criminal Court (the Old Bailey). There the King holds a scroll – perhaps representing the Reform Act. There might well have been another example in London, for it was intended to place an equestrian statue of King William IV on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, to match the one of his brother George IV. However, no funds had been allocated and the result was the empty space that still presents a challenge today.



Statue of König Wilhelm in  
Göttingen, Germany.  
Image © Jessika Wichner

### Göttingen's Statue of König Wilhelm

When in 1951 Cheltenham was linked with Göttingen as its twin town in Germany, those involved were scarcely aware that the two towns already had a rare feature in common: a statue of King William IV. The Hanoverian rulers of England of course also reigned over the German province in which their line originated, first as electors and, from 1814, when Hanover became a kingdom, as kings; Göttingen falls within the boundaries of that province.

In 1837 William IV gave £1,400 towards building the splendid Aula (the Great Hall) of the University of Göttingen, founded a hundred years before by George II. To celebrate the gift and the jubilee, the city of Göttingen presented to the University a statue of the King. It stands in Wilhelmplatz, named in his honour. Rather like Cheltenham's statue, its position has been altered, having been turned through 90 degrees so that it now faces the main entrance of the building. The King is portrayed as a benevolent ruler and bringer of peace. Inscriptions on the plinth read simply:

‘WILHELM IV KÖNIG VON GROSSBRITANNIEN IRLAND U. HANNOVER 1830-1837  
GUILIELMUS QUARTUS REX PATER PATRIAE’

*Pater Patriae* (Father of the Fatherland) was a title originally applied to certain Roman Emperors and was adopted by the Hanoverian sovereigns.

Among the English students of the university at the time was Walter Copland Perry, later a distinguished historian, barrister and collector, who was studying for a

doctorate. He wrote a graphic eye-witness account of the celebration of the jubilee and dedication of the statue.<sup>9</sup> The ceremony was due to take place on 17 September 1837 and it had been hoped that the King himself would attend, together with three English royal dukes. However, his death in June ‘threw a damp upon the proceedings’.

On the eve of the unveiling, 500 or 600 students marched to honour the veteran alumnus Alexander von Humbolt at his residence and then assembled round the statue of ‘poor King William, and gave him a hearty *vivat*’. On the day itself, processions assembled, comprising the Pro-rector, senior professors, civil and military officers, foreign ambassadors, ministers, representatives of foreign universities and 2,000 ‘respectable strangers’ as well as students. These were grouped in 17 fraternities (*Landmannschaften*), young men from all parts of Europe, distinguished by their national flag and cap. The English contingent of 10 was the smallest but ostensibly the most conspicuous. The bearer of the Union Jack was dressed as a sailor, forever hitching his trousers, and with a clay pipe in his mouth. Perry wrote, ‘The throng upon our part of the procession was immense, and nothing was talked of but “*der Englische Matrose*”’. After a church service all proceeded to the quadrangle in front of the Great Hall to witness the dedication of the statue, forming circles around it. The citizens of Göttingen were adorned with oak leaves, and 50 little girls strewed flowers around the pedestal. The new King (Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland<sup>10</sup>) ‘was graciously pleased to look out of a window’ upon the proceedings.

The unveiling ceremonies and attendant celebrations in Cheltenham and Göttingen were markedly different. In large part this may be attributed to the university’s leading role in Göttingen’s arrangements, while Cheltenham had only recently begun its evolution from small market town to fashionable resort. Today William IV and Wilhelm IV survey their respective towns and their twinning partnership unites them in a way that could not apply to Devonport, Greenwich or - needless to say - the Old Bailey.

There were other links during the 19<sup>th</sup> century between Cheltenham and Göttingen. The most outstanding example was Edward Wilson, the Antarctic explorer, who matriculated at the university during the summer of 1892. He wrote admiringly of the students’ practice of duelling and poured scorn on those who did not take part.<sup>11</sup> Wilson had been a pupil at Cheltenham College, as had Basil Harrington Soulsby, a graduate of Oxford University who studied for a year at Göttingen before returning to Oxford in 1887 to teach German at St Edward’s School.

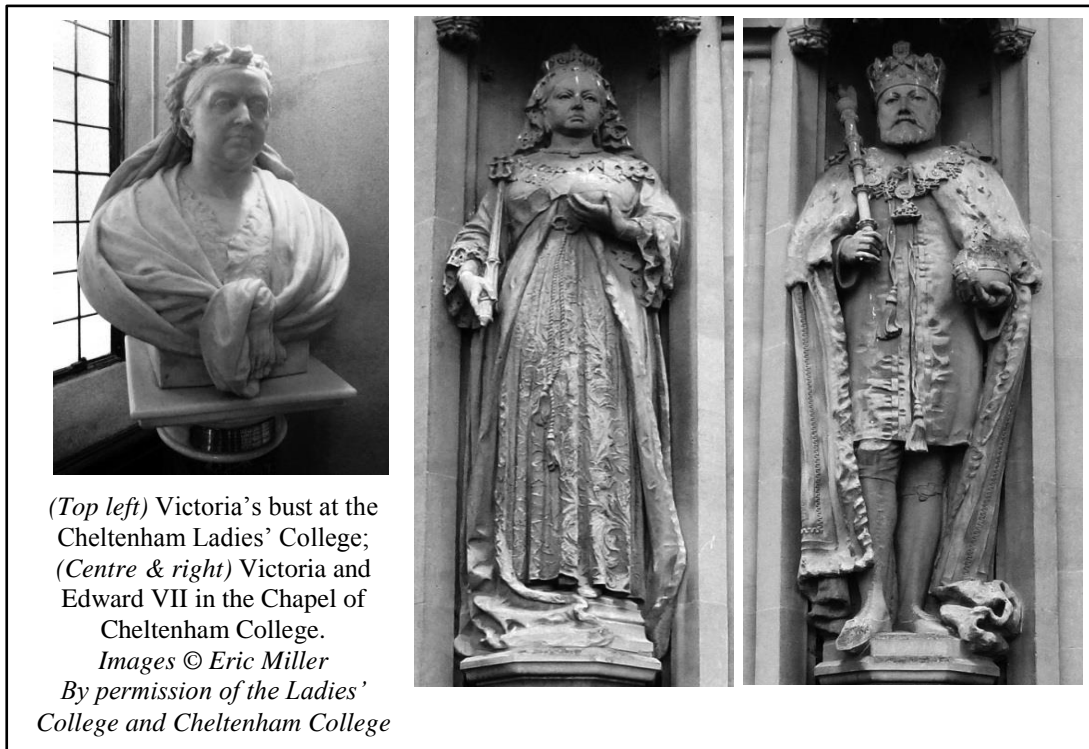
At least three of the teaching staff at Cheltenham College during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were graduates of Göttingen University:<sup>12</sup> Dr G F Werner, German master, 1845 -1854; Dr Franz Kielhorn, who taught in the Classics Department while also studying at Oxford University, 1862 – 1866, he was later Professor of Sanskrit at Göttingen and Dr Julius Maier, German master, 1872 – 1878, and teacher of Experimental and Natural Sciences, 1879 -1883.

### **The Statues of Victoria, Edward VII and George V**

At a Royal Academy exhibition in June 1897 a plaster cast of a bust of Queen Victoria, intended for the Ladies’ College, was the centre of attraction. Its sculptor was Countess Feodora Gleichen, a great-niece of Queen Victoria.<sup>13</sup> The artist had

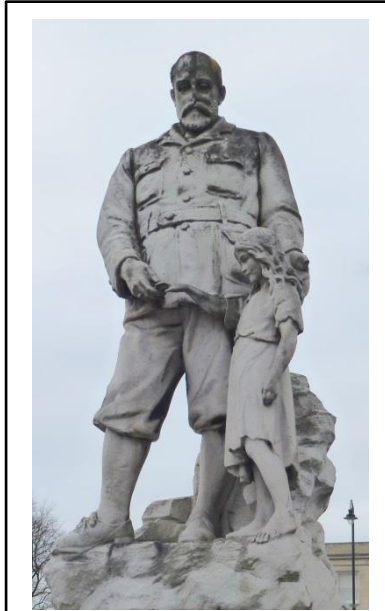
been 'favoured with numerous sittings, an honour now very rarely accorded', wrote the *Examiner*.<sup>14</sup> It was presented to the College by Miss Eales and past and present pupils of Lansdown Villa, and the finished article was unveiled in the Princess Hall on 16 November 1899 by Princess Henry of Battenberg (Princess Beatrice, the Queen's youngest daughter). Her visit was treated as a civic occasion. She and her entourage were met at the Midland Station by the Mayor and Corporation and the Ladies' College Council and a Guard of Honour of 100 men. Thousands of spectators lined the processional route to the College, where the Mayor (Alderman Norman) delivered a loyal address. For the unveiling ceremony the Princess Hall was filled to capacity with dignitaries and pupils, and Miss Beale, the headmistress, spoke at length of the Queen's exemplary devotion to service.<sup>15</sup>

After the Queen's death just over a year later the residents of the town were invited to inspect the bust and pay their respects, and many did so. It was draped with a floral wreath, with the inscription 'In sorrowful memory of our venerated Queen'.<sup>16</sup>



When Henry Prothero designed the new chapel for Cheltenham College, opened in 1896, he left two empty niches on either side of the west door. Clearly, it was expected that they would soon be filled: the *Examiner* alluded to their 'Cromwellian emptiness'. This expectation was fulfilled on 2 April 1898 when a full-length statue of Victoria, as Queen and Empress, crowned, in robes of state and holding orb and sceptre, was unveiled by the Duchess of Montrose. It had been executed by H.H. Martyn himself in Farleigh (Bath) stone and was the gift of the Old Boys of Park House, under Mr G. Pruen. The event was the climax of a weekend at which receptions were attended by both the Duke and Duchess. VIPs, masters in full academic dress, and the chapel choir were ranged in front of the statue and some 120 cadets formed a guard of honour and blew their bugles to herald the unveiling.<sup>17</sup>

It was not long before the second niche on the chapel came to be occupied by a statue of the recently crowned King Edward VII, in coronation robes. It was presented on 4 March 1903 in a more subdued ceremony. Mr Pruen, this time representing the Old Boys of Leconfield House, asked the Principal to accept the gift, hoping that it would serve to remind the boys of their duty to king and country.<sup>18</sup> The style of the sculpture matches that of Queen Victoria, suggesting that it was also the work of H.H. Martyn & Co, which carried out much of the other work on the chapel.



'Edward the Peacemaker',  
Montpellier, Cheltenham.  
*Image © Eric Miller*

Much better known is the statue of the King in front of Montpellier Rotunda, incorporating drinking troughs for dogs and horses and fountains for humans. Uniquely, the King is dressed informally, wearing a Norfolk jacket and plus-fours and placing a protective hand on the shoulders of a young girl. Carved by Boulton & Sons, it represents the King as the Spirit of Peace leading the Spirit of Mischief to the still waters. The idea was that of its donor, Joseph Webster Drew, a lawyer and former town councillor, latterly of Hatherley Court. There had at one time been opposition to the erection of a statue as the town's memorial to the King, some favouring a nursing scheme, for example, but Mr Drew's gift was gratefully accepted. He was in failing health and he died without witnessing the installation of the statue, which took place on 10 October 1914.<sup>19</sup>

Anyone visiting the Town Hall today will be familiar with the plaster cast statues of King Edward VII and King George V in their coronation robes. That of Edward VII was first exhibited at a Red Cross sale and offered for auction. The purchaser was reported as Mr T E Whitaker, who public-spiritedly handed it over to the Corporation. (This will have been Thomas Elsam Whitaker, who had an expert knowledge in carving – see *The Best*, the history of H.H. Martyn & Co, written by his grandson, John Whitaker.) Messrs Boulton & Sons, who had cast it, also promised to



Statues of Edward VII and George V in Cheltenham  
Town Hall – but can anyone be sure which is which?

*Image © Eric Miller*

*By permission of Cheltenham Borough Council*

make a companion statue of King George. The two were placed on their pedestals overlooking the stage in January 1916.<sup>20</sup>

### Conclusion

Cheltenham's collection of royal statues is eclectic. Each has been put forward variously and at different times as an object of patriotic devotion, an example to the youth of dutiful service, an encourager of political reform, or a maker of peace. Today they are part of the townscape but it is hoped that this article will prompt readers to give them a closer look. If any other such images are known the author would be interested to hear of them. There are some conventional representations of course of kings to be found on church buildings, for example at Leckhampton, but those are not actual portraits.

Please note, however, that King Neptune, who only reigns over the Promenade fountain, doesn't count!

*Note: A German-language version of parts of this article will be prepared (with assistance from the Cheltenham German Club) for inclusion in the journal of the Göttingen and District History Society (Geschichtsverein für Göttingen und Umgebung).*

*An article on the sculptor and engraver, William Montague Gardner, referred to on page 22 is being researched.*

<sup>1</sup> More precisely, these were Samuel Hodge's Imperial Nurseries.

<sup>2</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 September 1831, p.3, cols 3-5.

<sup>3</sup> English Heritage, which gives the statue Grade I listing, incorrectly spells the name as 'Hannay'. Thomas Henney played an important part in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century development of Cheltenham, not least in the formation of The Promenade.

<sup>4</sup> Gloucestershire Archives PX21.2GS and in the press, for example *The Standard*, 5 January 1831.

<sup>5</sup> Up until the reign of Queen Elizabeth I Cheltenham had returned two MPs but, citing the borough's impoverished state, the Lord of the Manor, William Norwood petitioned the Queen to be relieved of that obligation.

<sup>6</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 16 August 1832, p.3, col.3.

<sup>7</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 22 April 1840, p.2, col.6.

<sup>8</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 17 September 1856, p.4, col.3.

<sup>9</sup> In *The Christian Teacher and Chronicle of Benefice*, vol. 4, (1838).

<sup>10</sup> HRH Ern(e)st Augustus, fifth son of George III, succeeded to the kingdom of Hanover, since according to Salic law Victoria, as a woman, could not.

<sup>11</sup> Seaver, G., *Edward Wilson: Nature-Lover*, 1937, p.25.

<sup>12</sup> *Cheltenham College Register*, 1841-1889.

<sup>13</sup> Lady Feodora Georgina Maud Gleichen (1861-1922) regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy. Gleichen was a dynastic title assumed by her father. The name derives from a town in Thuringia and not (though it would have suited the theme of this article) the community of the same name a few kilometres from Göttingen.

<sup>14</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 9 June 1897, p.2, col.6.

<sup>15</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 18 November 1899, pp. 1102-1105.

<sup>16</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 6 February 1901, p.3, col.3.

<sup>17</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 6 April 1898, p.4, col.7; also reported in the *Cheltenham Looker-On*.

<sup>18</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 11 March 1903, p.2, col.5.

<sup>19</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 6 February 1913, p.7, col.1; 19 June p.5, col.4; 24 November 1910, p.5, col.2.

<sup>20</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 1 January 1916, p.11.

# From Pittville to Parliament: the career of Robert Stokes, architect

JAMES HODSDON

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## Introduction

PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS OF THE EARLY CAREER of Robert Stokes, who worked in Cheltenham as one of Joseph Pitt's architects, have been limited in scope.<sup>1</sup> This article now uncovers his unexpected origins, gives a fuller description of his work in Gloucestershire (all of which was carried out while he was still in his twenties), and suggests why he might then have decided to seek a very different life in New Zealand. Part two lists all local buildings with a known or suspected Stokes influence in the design.

Interest in Robert Stokes was triggered when, during initial research into the history of Pittville Gates in 2010, a long article was found in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 28 November 1833, which not only described in detail the appearance of the then newly-erected gates, but identified Stokes - 'the gentleman we have previously mentioned as architect of the new Orphan Asylum' - as their designer. This name was not a complete surprise - in 1988, Steven Blake had identified Stokes as Pitt's architect soon after the departure of the ill-fated John Forbes, and his name was already firmly associated with a number of Pittville houses.<sup>2</sup> But who exactly was Robert Stokes?

The standard reference work, Howard Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840*,<sup>3</sup> revealed that after training at the Royal Academy, Stokes - besides working in Cheltenham - had also designed two churches in Gloucestershire, and later emigrated to New Zealand, where he designed a Wesleyan chapel, but did not give a lot else to go on. Some internet research showed - very unexpectedly - that Stokes had in fact had a long career in public life in New Zealand, seemingly unconnected with his early training. What he did later was all very interesting, but I wanted to uncover his origins, and that was harder. Working from the known to the unknown, I checked to see if the Royal Academy records showed where he came from. They did not, though they did hint at interesting connections, of which more later. New Zealand sources showed that Robert Stokes had a brother, John Milbourne Stokes, and John's unusual second name enabled some more focused searching. The result was another surprise find on the internet - the diary of an Australian visitor to London in 1847, who had just learned from an acquaintance that John Milbourne Stokes, to whom he had made a loan, was 'son of the man who was in Jamaica, and was clerk under my father in the Post Office'.<sup>4</sup> Following this up on ancestry websites, it emerged that Robert and his brother were indeed both born in Jamaica. Having thus briefly followed the trail backwards in time, let us now set the story out in the right order.

## Origins

Robert Stokes was born in Jamaica on 16 January 1809, the son of Robert Stokes senior and Martha Frances Stokes, née Barker; he was christened at St Andrew's,

Kingston, the following 25 March. His brother John Milbourne Stokes was born on 1 May 1812 and baptised at the same church on 6 January 1813. A sister Ann was baptised on 7 February 1814; she died young, on 10 December 1816. Stokes senior was principal clerk in the Jamaica Post Office (and is recorded as such in November 1814) but there is a curious allegation in the Australian diary that ‘This fellow [Stokes senior] robbed my Father [the Deputy Postmaster-General] of £2,000, and was turned out of the Post Office in consequence.’ If this incident happened as alleged, it must have been after 1816-17, because ‘Robert Stokes Esq.’ is still named in the 1817 Jamaica Almanac as Chief Clerk at the General Post Office there. At this time, the Jamaica GPO was in a building on Port Royal Street, Kingston, the premises actually being owned by Robert Stokes and one John Woodhall.<sup>5</sup>

It appears very likely that Stokes was of the family descended from Luke Stokes, erstwhile governor of Nevis, who arrived in Eastern St Thomas, Jamaica, in 1656, and settled in what became known as Stokes Field. (Luke’s grandson went on to a nearby property, Stokes Hall, where he built the Great House - now a preserved heritage site.) This descent awaits proof, but what is certain is that Robert Stokes senior was a property and slave owner on the island. His will, made out on 9 April 1817, describes him as ‘esquire’ - of independent means - of Kingston, Jamaica, and directs that all his ‘messuages tenements or dwelling houses pen<sup>6</sup> or pens and other lands negroes and other male and female slaves and other real estate’ shall be sold ‘for the best price that can be obtained’. The proceeds were to be remitted back to England to be invested upon trust by John Smith esq., ‘late deputy postmaster general for Jamaica, at present paymaster of his majesty’s navy’. Half the interest was to fund an annuity for his wife Martha Frances Stokes, the other half to ‘educating, maintaining and clothing in a proper genteel and suitable manner’ his children Robert Stokes, John Milbourne Stokes and Ann Stokes until 21, at which point they would access equal shares of the estate. Stokes senior probably died in mid-1819, his will being proved in London on 2 December 1819.<sup>7</sup>

Sadly, as we know, Ann Stokes barely outlived the writing of her father’s will. If all the Jamaica properties were sold as directed, it is safe to assume that the widow and her two sons then took ship for England - perhaps glad to escape some scandal. The two boys, not even in their teens when Robert Stokes senior died, were thus each on coming of age to enjoy a share of what was presumably a very respectable sum of money.

## **Training**

While we have no details of Stokes’ early education, he evidently developed youthful proficiency as a draughtsman, exhibiting architectural drawings at the Royal Academy in London in three consecutive years: in 1828, he submitted a design for ‘a bath as an ornamental building in a park’, in 1829 a design for ‘a mausoleum with cenotaphs’, and in 1830 a design for ‘a water gate to a nobleman’s palace’.<sup>8</sup> Probably on the strength of work such as this, on 12 January 1830 - just days before he turned 21 - he was registered as an architecture probationer at the Royal Academy Schools.<sup>9</sup> The recommendation for his registration came from an illustrious name, Francis Chantrey, the leading portrait sculptor of the Regency period, and one wonders how this came about. On 10 December 1830 he was awarded the RA’s annual Silver Medal for the best architectural drawing (that year, the subject was the river front of the Greenwich Hospital).<sup>10</sup> Sadly, these early works have not survived.

## The Cheltenham Years

Whether through a further recommendation, or simply because Cheltenham was an attractive destination for a young man who had recently come into his inheritance, Stokes did not linger at the RA Schools, but headed west. By June 1831, he was describing himself as a surveyor, of 72 Sudeley Place, Cheltenham (the house still stands today, as 58 Winchcombe Street); his name appeared as a local agent at the foot of property advertisements placed in many regional papers by Daniel Smith & Co of 10 Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, London. One such insertion appears in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* for 21 July 1831, relating to a property in Ross. Similar advertisements continue until August 1831, Stokes sometimes being alternatively described as ‘architect and surveyor’, at which point the link with Smith appears to end – and perhaps the association with Joseph Pitt begins.

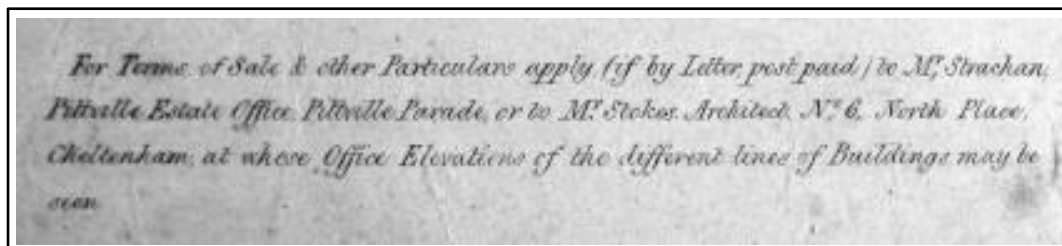
Pitt or no, by the end of 1831 Stokes certainly had other things on his mind, for on 7 February 1832, at the fashionable church of St George’s Hanover Square in London, ‘Robert Stokes, Esq, architect, of Cheltenham’ was married to Miss Margaret Pughe, daughter of the late Revd Lewis Pughe, of Liverpool.<sup>11</sup> It would be agreeable to think that Miss Pughe had met Stokes while on a visit to the delights of Cheltenham, but no record of her has been found in the Arrivals columns of the local press.<sup>12</sup> (Her circumstances are unclear; born in Liverpool in November 1785, she had lost her mother before 1797 and her father had died in 1813 with an estate of under £600. Her only brother had died in 1820, she lost her step-mother in 1823, and in February 1832 she would have been 46 years old.)<sup>13</sup>

The nearest we can get to pinpointing the start of Stokes’ working for Pitt is mid-1832, for in October of that year William Arthur Watson, briefly successor to John Forbes (the Pump Room architect), is described as Pitt’s ‘late surveyor’.<sup>14</sup> What is definite is that in 1832 Stokes was involved in drawing up for Pitt a master reference map of the estate, numbering the various lots available for sale or development, the first copy of which hung in Stokes’ office, while other lithographed copies were in the Pittville Estate Office (see below) and at the Pump Room.<sup>15</sup> To show the various numbers clearly, this map must surely have been to a much larger scale than the 1826 estate plan published by Griffith. The contemporary importance of this (missing) map is illustrated by references such as the following in an abstract of title for a house in Pittville Lawn: ‘the lot bought by Mr Walford is No. 11 on Mr Stokes’ map of Pittville in Class H and is part of lands comprized in this allotment whereon a pile of buildings is intended to be erected and to be called Segrave Place’.<sup>16</sup>

Where was Stokes’s office? No longer in Winchcombe Street it appears. Another map of the Pittville estate at Gloucestershire Archives<sup>17</sup> bears the following rubric: ‘For Terms of Sale and other Particulars apply (if by letter, post paid) to Mr Strachan, Pittville Estate Office, Pittville Parade, or to Mr. Stokes, Architect, No. 6, North Place, Cheltenham, at whose Office Elevations of the different lines of Buildings may be seen.’<sup>18</sup> It is possible this was also his residence, as North Place was the address given by his brother John Milbourne Stokes in August 1833, when - presumably visiting Robert for the summer - he paid the requisite 7s. 6d. (37½p) for a month’s subscription to the Pittville rides and walks.<sup>19</sup> No. 6 North Place survives today, next to the United Services Club, its street numbering unchanged. On this



evidence, 6 North Place was where, in Pitt's day, one could see visualisations of the intended villas and terraces, the drawings surely having been done by Stokes himself.



The year 1833 was probably Stokes's busiest in Cheltenham. He was still only 24. He must have been feeling confident about the prospects for Pittville, for he himself bought at least six lots off the Pittville plan (in the range £125-£300 per lot, based on recorded prices elsewhere in Pittville),<sup>20</sup> and the nearly-complete 2 and 3 Segrave Villas (23-25 Pittville Lawn), which he had designed. This was also the year he designed in Gothic style the new Female Orphan Asylum in Winchcombe Street, the foundation stone of which was laid on 30 August 1833.<sup>21</sup>

As we have seen, the Pittville Gates, his 'grand entrance' to the estate, were completed in the following months. There was sustained activity in 1834 too, as projects which had been begun the previous year (including the Orphan Asylum and several houses) were completed. As Pitt's chief architect in this period, Stokes would have had the lead in designing key sites on the Pittville estate, and there is interesting visual evidence, as well as documentation, to support this. Stokes employed distinctive decorative detail, especially in his ironwork, of which the Gates and adjacent railings are the biggest and best examples. The ironwork patterns (detailed in Part Two below) are found almost exclusively in Pittville, either on sites definitely associated with Stokes, or on strategic corner plots where - it is now suggested - a Stokes design was being followed. (The only other place in Cheltenham where this style has been noted is 22 Rodney Road, where - we might surmise - Stokes was commissioned to add new entrance steps and railings to an existing house of c.1806.)

### **The Break with Pitt**

In early 1835, however, something went wrong. By March, he had left Pitt's employ, in financial difficulties<sup>22</sup> possibly exacerbated by poor relations with Pitt himself, whose track record in retaining his professionals was poor. Admittedly by this time Pitt, now in his mid-70s, had withdrawn from direct management of the Pittville development, putting it in the hands of his long-standing Wiltshire land steward, Josiah Greathead Strachan.<sup>23</sup> However, Strachan himself was not well (he was to die 'at his residence, Pittville Parade, Cheltenham, after a lingering and painful illness' early in 1836),<sup>24</sup> and this may not have helped Stokes. It is also possible that Stokes had simply over-reached himself financially, or that the housing market had slackened again; whatever the cause, he did no notable work in Cheltenham after 1834, apart from completing two Pittville houses. He did however remain resident in the town, at a house he had designed himself, 4 Segrave Place (now 7 Pittville Lawn), being listed there in the *Annales* for 1837 (the earliest issue, dated January of that year) and 1838.<sup>25</sup>

He nevertheless remained active as an architect in this period, gaining commissions for two new Anglican churches in Gloucestershire, at Amberley and Oakridge.<sup>26</sup> The new Holy Trinity Church at Amberley was consecrated in September 1836 (indicating a start of building in 1835); the *Cheltenham Chronicle* carried a full account of the ceremony, describing the church as ‘a very elegant structure in the Gothic style, designed by Mr. Stokes, architect, of this town, and does honour to the talent of that gentleman’.<sup>27</sup> The cost of the new church was met wholly by David Ricardo, MP, who lived nearby at Gatcombe Park; one consequence of this was that no fund-raising campaign was required and no early paperwork is known. In contrast, the new chapel at Oakridge, an outlying settlement in the large parish of Bisley, required several years of patient fund-raising led by the Bisley minister, the Revd Thomas Keble, and the securing of a grant from the comprehensively-titled Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement, Building and Repairing of Churches and Chapels, whose records are now kept at Lambeth Palace.

Thanks to the Society’s good record-keeping, there is more evidence of Stokes’ activities as architect at Oakridge. Having done most of the fundraising and having gathered the necessary estimates for the building work - a total of £1968, including £70 for the architect’s fee - Revd Keble was able to complete the two-page application form and submit his bid to the Society on 8 December 1835. The Society’s main committee, with the Archbishop of Canterbury himself present, considered Keble’s application on the following 15 February; a grant of £350 was approved, with the unsurprising condition that the majority of the sittings in the new chapel should be free. Evidently the application was already ‘in the system’, because two weeks earlier, on 4 February, the Society’s surveyor, J H Good, had produced his report on the planned work, observing *‘That the proposed construction of the roof of this Chapel, without Tiebeams at the feet of the principal rafters, appears defective. The Architect should furnish a full detailed specification of the works and a longitudinal section of the building. If cast-iron were substituted for the oak ribs, marked X in the transverse section, properly secured to the collar beams and principal rafters, the objection to the construction of the roof would be obviated.’*

Rapid correspondence must have followed, as by the third week of February, the same surveyor could record *‘Having carefully examined the Specification submitted by the Architect, for the work, required in building the proposed chapel, I beg to report, That the Specification appears to give a full description of the works required.[and] The thickness of the lead for the Gallery and the scantling of some of the timbers of the roof should be increased.’* Building took just over a year, and the new chapel of St Bartholomew, Oakridge, was consecrated by the Bishop of Gloucester on the saint’s day, 24 August, in 1837. To secure payment of the Society’s grant, Keble had to supply a certificate of completion, which was duly furnished with Robert Stokes’ signature at the end.

*‘January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1838*

*We hereby certify*

*That a Chapel has recently been erected in a substantial and workmanlike manner, according to the Plan and declarations submitted to the Incorporated Society for promoting the enlargement, building, and repairing of Churches and Chapels.*

*That the Chapel contains Three Hundred and Eighty sittings, Three Hundred and Fifty of which are free and unappropriated.*

*That a Plan shewing the Number and Situation of the free Sitings in the Chapel, signed by the Minister and Chapel Warden, has been fixed up in the Vestry Room.*

*As witness our hands the day and year above written*

*Tho. Keble Minister*

*Saml. Damsell )*

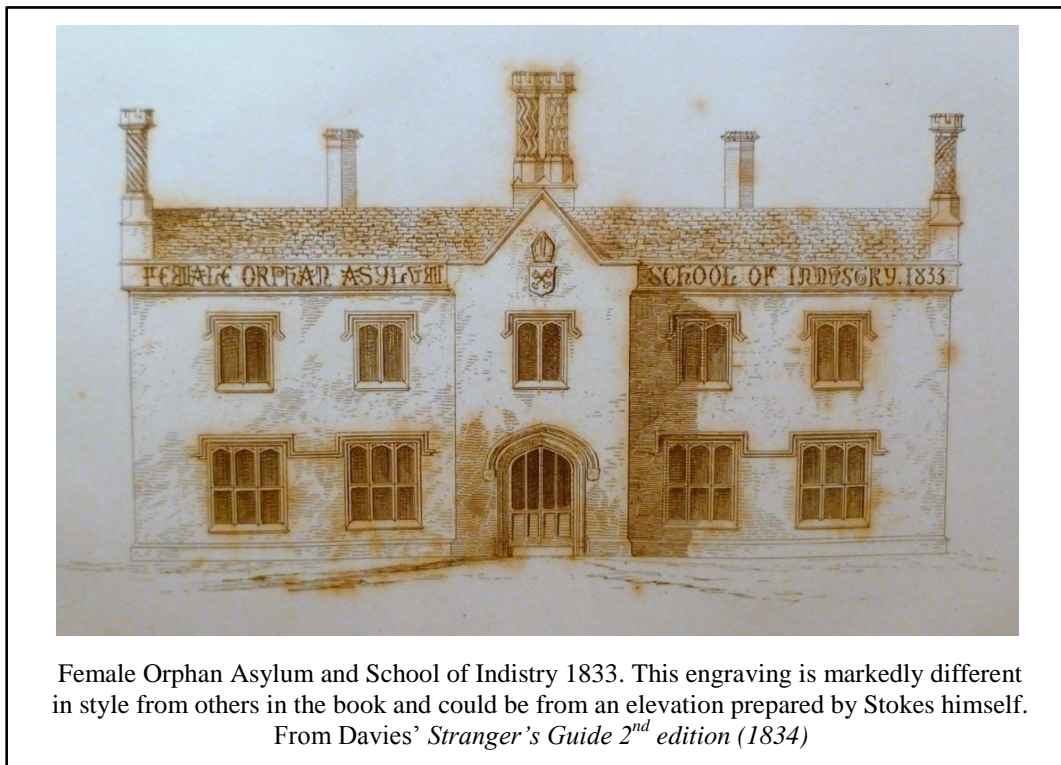
*Peter Wilson ) Inhabitants of Bisley*

*William Whiting )*

*Robert Stokes Architect*<sup>28</sup>



Though unsigned, the Lambeth Palace Library copy of the sittings plan, also showing the complete floor-plan of the church structure, is competently drafted in ink and colour wash, and can be attributed with confidence to Stokes himself. It seems clear from the Oakridge paperwork that Stokes was busy with this second project before Amberley was completed; given that the two buildings are only five miles apart, it is certainly possible that the Oakridge commission resulted from favourable comments on his Amberley design.



## A Second Life in New Zealand

While the Oakridge certificate places Stokes the architect in Gloucestershire in January 1838, nothing more has come to light of any later work locally. However, in February 1838 he was able to sell one of his larger houses, 2 Essex Villas (now 93 Pittville Lawn), for £3220.<sup>29</sup> The property had probably been finished over three years

before; it may have been let in the meantime, but the eventual sale, at the higher end of 1830s Pittville prices, doubtless helped Stokes' finances. After a year when no activity is recorded, his life took a new turn in April 1839, when he successfully applied for a position with the New Zealand Company, and late that year sailed on the *Cuba*, arriving in New Zealand in January 1840, to take up work as an official surveyor of previously unexplored land (Stokes Valley, northeast of Wellington, preserves his name). His brother, who had qualified as a doctor at Edinburgh University in 1836, went out to New Zealand on the *Aurora* later in 1840, so we might infer that both saw the positive attractions of a new country - and perhaps an opportunity to invest their remaining inheritance. Family ties to England were evidently not strong; their mother Martha Stokes was in 1841 in a private lunatic asylum at Kensington House in London.<sup>30</sup>

In New Zealand, he went from strength to strength, going into business on his own account by 1842 and working firstly as a surveyor and then as newspaper proprietor and publisher. He held many public positions: city councillor in Wellington, member of senate of the first University of New Zealand, and from 1862 a member of the New Zealand Legislative Council, the forerunner of parliament.<sup>31</sup> His life there is extensively documented in New Zealand press and records. There is just one further instance of him deploying his architectural skills, for the design of a Wesleyan chapel near Wellington in 1844.<sup>32</sup> His wife Margaret died in New Zealand in 1852. Towards the end of his life, both he and his brother came back to London (Robert is said to have suffered for some time from cancer, but this did not prevent a late second marriage, to Jane Rutherford in September 1878). Robert Stokes died not long after, on 20 Jan. 1880, his brother John the following 18 September. A single grave in the Kensal Green cemetery, west London, holds them both.<sup>33</sup>



The restored ironwork of Pittville Gates shows Stokes' attention to detail and crisp design.

*Image © James Hodsdon*

Unfortunately, the Wellington chapel succumbed to an earthquake in 1844, so the only physical legacy of Robert Stokes as architect is here in Gloucestershire, mostly concentrated in Pittville. Nearly all the buildings he designed in Cheltenham remain in fair shape, the single major loss being the Female Orphan Asylum, demolished in 1958. While Cheltenham might also mourn the wartime removal from Pittville houses of many of Stokes' very distinctive railings, recent efforts by the Friends of Pittville have shown what can be done to put matters right again. The 2012-13 reinstatement of the Pittville Gates and their ironwork (*left*) gives an excellent opportunity to appreciate Stokes' crisp design, looking very much as it must have done 180 years ago.

## Part Two: The Stokes Legacy in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire

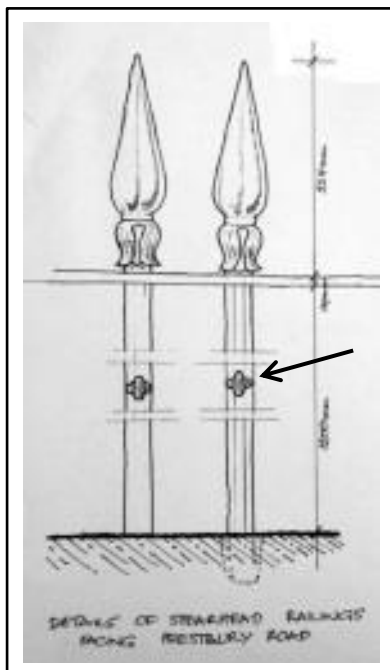
The following pages collate the currently available information on Robert Stokes' architectural work in Gloucestershire, nearly all of it in Cheltenham. He is not known to have designed any buildings elsewhere in England. He can be confidently associated with some 20 buildings, mainly houses, as listed below in roman type. Comparison of design details occurring on known Stokes buildings with those seen elsewhere in Pittville now permits at least 20 more houses to be provisionally linked to him (*italic* in the table), either as the original designer of at least the frontage, or as a significant design influence on later work.



The most distinctive Stokes detail is his cast ironwork, where the running railings have an unmistakable **four-lobed section**, and the main uprights have a naturalistic form suggesting a stem emerging from a bulbous sheath. All such surviving railings are Grade II listed.



With the single exception of 22 Rodney Road (commented on below), this pattern occurs nowhere **outside** Pittville, and no identical example has yet been spotted anywhere else in the UK. The presence of these railings (*left*) or their remains, in the form of sockets and stumps in surviving plinths (*above right*), are a strong indicator of Stokes influence in the design, even for some buildings erected after he left Pitt's employ.



It is possible to see in the main uprights something of an Egyptian influence, the form resembling the papyrus stem later illustrated in Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), but the remaining elements appear to be an eclectic composition unique to Stokes, not drawn directly from any known pattern book. The rosettes and floral 'stamens' incorporated in the central screen at Pittville Gates are further cases in point.

The sketch (*left*) was prepared in the Cheltenham Borough Engineer's office in 1989,<sup>34</sup> for an earlier initiative, probably abandoned for financial reasons, to restore the Pittville Gates and adjacent railings. As well as the distinctive spear finials used by Stokes, it shows in cross-section the required four-lobed profile (*arrowed*), for which there appears to be no recognised name - it is not a

true cross, nor a fully-formed cloverleaf. It also differs from the bundle-of-rods form seen occasionally (for example, the staircase at Houghton Hall, Norfolk).



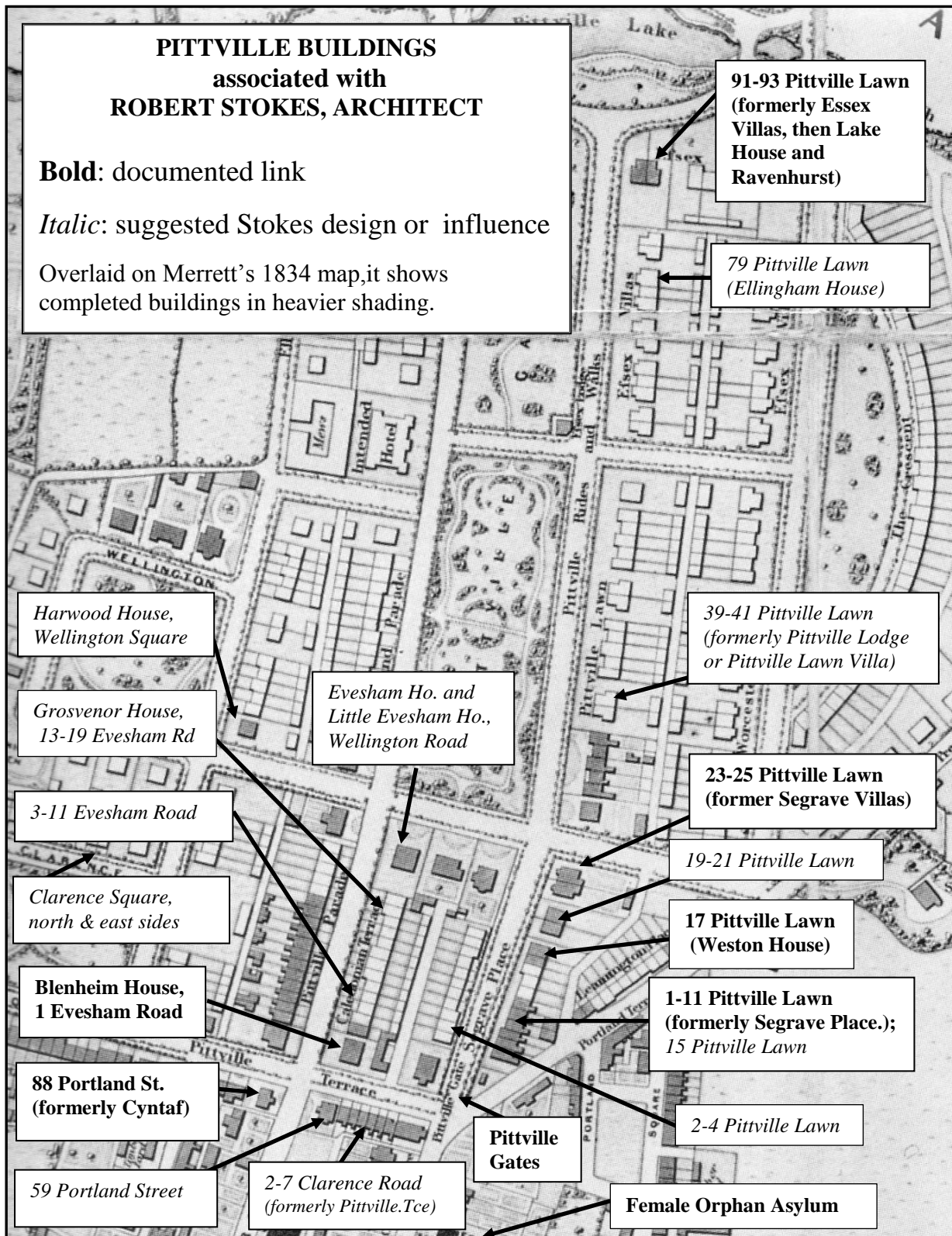
Although not without parallels elsewhere in Cheltenham, another locally significant detail in Pittville is the **rounded relief arch** above the ground floor windows, seen on Stokes' 1832 design<sup>35</sup> for Cyntaf, now 88 Portland Street (*above left*). This is echoed on what must have been its twin, the somewhat altered 59 Portland Street on the opposite side of the road, and the element is repeated along the adjacent terrace, now 2-7 Clarence Road - including the Holst Birthplace Museum - (*above right*), strongly implying that at least their elevations were also designed by Stokes. Given the 1832 date, relatively early in Stokes' Cheltenham career, it is conceivable that for Cyntaf, he adopted or adapted a design inherited from a predecessor.

As Pitt's lead architect at an important phase in Pittville's residential development, it is perhaps not surprising that Stokes, as well as designing terraces ('elevations of the different lines of buildings'), should also have had a hand in designing many of the larger properties on Pittville's key **corner plots**. Several can be linked to him with certainty, and several more (identified in the table: see pp.40-41) can now be provisionally identified as derived from his designs, on the basis of architectural details. One might go so far as to assert that Stokes produced the first designs for most post-1831 corner plot houses in Pittville, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

It is to be hoped that further evidence from house deeds and the like will emerge in due course to confirm or improve on the provisional attributions made here.

### Acknowledgements

The investigations supporting this article have been very much a joint enterprise with my wife Judie, whose work with Friends of Pittville since 2010 towards the restoration of the Pittville Gates has given her a keen eye for local detail, resulting in many improvements to the conclusions offered here. Alec Hamilton provided useful research leads and also made very helpful comments on a draft.



### Checklist of Gloucestershire buildings associated with Robert Stokes

*Italic = suggested influence, based on design similarities with known Stokes' work*

<b>Year &amp; source</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1831-2? GA D3933/1	(Pittville estate)	(Robert Stokes prepares elevations of intended 'lines of buildings' on Pittville Estate)
1832 Schreiber v Creed	(Pittville estate)	(Robert Stokes involved in preparing Pitt's 1832 plan of Pittville building lots)
1832-3 Blake, p 57	88 Portland Street (Cyntaf, later Deerhurst)	Corner plot, Stokes' design.
<i>1832-3</i>	<i>59 Portland Street</i>	<i>Corner plot, distinctive window surround, matching no. 88 directly opposite</i>
<i>1832-3</i>	<i>2-7 Clarence Road</i>	<i>Window surround details identical with 59 and 88 Portland Street, adjacent.</i>
1833-4 <i>Ch. Chron.</i>	Female Orphan Asylum, Winchcombe Street	Stokes' design; now demolished
Nov 1833 <i>Ch. Chron.</i>	Pittville Gates	Stokes' design
<i>Dec 1833</i>	<i>Evesham Ho. &amp; Little Evesham Ho., corner of Evesham Rd and Wellington Rd</i>	<i>Corner plot; four-lobed sockets/stumps on surviving plinths on both frontages; some rails survive behind wooden fence on Evesham Rd.</i>
1833-4 Blake, pp 69-70 Schreiber v Creed	1-11 Pittville Lawn (formerly Segrave Place)	Four-lobed railings survive throughout. Stokes resided at no. 7, 1837-8.
<i>1835</i> <i>Blake, p 69</i>	<i>2 Pittville Lawn</i>	<i>Four-lobed railings survive. Adjacent No. 4 (1847) is of matching appearance but has different railings.</i>
<i>1841-2</i> <i>Blake, p 70</i>	<i>15 Pittville Lawn (Drumholme)</i>	<i>Later addition to N end of Segrave Place, but has traces of four-lobed railings.</i>
(1833)-41 Blake p 70; Schreiber v Creed	17 Pittville Lawn (Weston House), 19-21 Pittville Lawn (formerly 1 Segrave Villas)	Stokes had interest in sites, 1833, but later relinquished to Pitt; extant building is of 1841-2; four-lobed railings survive.
1833 Blake p 70; Schreiber v Creed	23-25 Pittville Lawn (formerly 2-3 Segrave Villas) (Roden and Almington)	Stokes acquires lots in Apr 1833. Corner plot. Quatrefoil railings survive.
2 May 1834 GA	'Pittville Lawn' (not yet firmly identified; assumed to be further north than Segrave Place)	Stokes named on building cert for one house here.
<i>1836-7</i>	<i>39-41 Pittville Lawn (pair of villas) (formerly Pittville Lodge or Pittville Lawn Villa)</i>	<i>Four-lobed sockets on surviving plinths</i>



1840-1	79 Pittville Lawn (Ellingham House)	One original four-lobed rail survives, among modern replicas.
1833-5 Blake p 72	Lake House, 91 Pittville Lawn (formerly 1 Essex Villas)	Corner plot. Visible plinths have remains of four-lobed railings.
1833-6 Blake p 73	Ravenhurst, 93 Pittville Lawn (formerly 2 Essex Villas)	Corner plot. Large quantity of surviving four-lobed railings.
1834-5	Harwood House, Wellington Sq.	Corner plot. Four-lobed sockets in surviving plinths on two frontages.
1833-4	Blenheim House, 1 Evesham Road	Corner plot. Four-lobed sockets in surviving plinths
1834-7	Terrace, 3-11 Evesham Road	Four-lobed railings/sockets survive. Note also that the frontage of the modern pastiche Grosvenor House, 13-19 Evesham Road, closely follows the pattern of the adjacent older terrace.
1835-7 Ch. Chron.	St Bartholomew church, Oakridge	Stokes' design
1836 Ch. Chron.	Holy Trinity church, Amberley	Stokes' design
1832-5 Blake p 37	Clarence Square	Likelihood that Stokes had some design hand in all other Pittville buildings planned in the period of his employment by Pitt, esp. any post-Watson work in Clarence Square. Stokes certainly countersigned the design for 38 Clarence Square (Blake p 62).
1830s?	22 Rodney Road	Four-lobed railings at entrance steps, identical to Pittville pattern; was Stokes responsible for alterations to this c. 1806 building?

<sup>1</sup> For example, the article in *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, ed A H McIntock, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Blake, *Pittville 1824-60*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Transcribed diary of John Augustus Milbourne Marsh (1819-1891) for October 1847, at <http://www.jjhc.info/marshjohnaugustusmilbourne1891diary1847b.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Mentioned in a local Act of 13 November 1822, enabling the sale by the colonial government of a property next to the Post Office (Francis Hanson, *The laws of Jamaica*, Vol 7, 1824). His ownership of the building raises the question of how extensive the duties of a Chief Clerk were; was it merely a sinecure title, acknowledging his provision of the premises?

<sup>6</sup> West Indies term for a large livestock enclosure.

<sup>7</sup> TNA PROB 11/1623

<sup>8</sup> Algernon Graves, *Royal Academy of Arts: Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work ...*, 1769-1904, Vol 7.

<sup>9</sup> By 1830, the Schools were taking about 25 students per year (mostly artists), at what in today's terms would be the post-graduate level. Studentship was 10 years, but this was probably years of eligibility. It appears many students did not complete their full term, but there are no records of attendance or termination of studentships from the early years.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_Academy\\_of\\_Arts#Royal\\_Academy\\_Schools](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Academy_of_Arts#Royal_Academy_Schools), accessed 31 Oct. 2013

<sup>10</sup> *Morning Post*, 14 Dec 1830.

<sup>11</sup> Pughe had died in January 1813 (*Lancaster Gazette*, 16 Jan. 1813). Margaret was the first daughter of his first marriage (to Ann Wordsworth) and was born in Liverpool on 6 November 1785.

<sup>12</sup> Nor in the Pittville Spa Subscription Book (GA D5130).

<sup>13</sup> Online genealogy websites.

<sup>14</sup> Blake p 36.

<sup>15</sup> An 1839 Chancery case (*Schreiber v Creed*) records that ‘in 1832, Pitt caused a public map or plan of the estate, showing, in a more detailed and particular manner, the intended sites of the dwelling houses proposed to be erected thereon, and such plan had ever since hung up for public inspection in his estate office at Cheltenham, and also in the Pittville pump room’; and further, that Stokes had been employed by Pitt in preparing this plan.

<sup>16</sup> GA D6744/1, undated but on this evidence probably of 1832, since houses in Segrave Place were under construction by 1833; the terrace is named on Merrett’s 1834 map.

<sup>17</sup> GA D3933/1.

<sup>18</sup> Blake p 35. Josiah Greathead Strachan lived for a time at 3 Pittville Parade. This would fit with 3 Pittville Parade (now 6 Evesham Road) apparently remaining in Pitt’s personal ownership as indicated in the listing at the back of ref.

<sup>19</sup> Pittville Spa Subscription Book, GA D5130. John Stokes was at that time a medical student at Edinburgh University, graduating MD in 1836.

<sup>20</sup> GA D3933/1.

<sup>21</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 31 Aug 1833. It is possible that Stokes was one of the ‘two respectable architects’ who in June 1833 had determined that that the previous asylum building, though only 10 years old, was structurally unsound and beyond repair. [TBGAS 1999 Vol 117, p141]

<sup>22</sup> The 1839 *Schreiber v Creed* Chancery case says simply ‘Stokes fell into difficulties’, but the context clearly suggests the problems were financial in nature.

<sup>23</sup> Blake, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> *Bath Chronicle*, 12 March 1836

<sup>25</sup> *Cheltenham Annuaire*s, published by Henry Davies. The 1839 issue is not available locally, and by the 1840 issue Stokes has been replaced at 4 Segrave Place by E. H. Courtenay.

<sup>26</sup> For architectural descriptions of both, see Verey and Brooks, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds* (revised ed, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 Sept. 1836

<sup>28</sup> The Society’s name was later changed to the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS); the Oakridge details are drawn from ICBS file 01950, held at Lambeth Palace Library, and the associated minute books.

<sup>29</sup> Blake, p 73.

<sup>30</sup> 1841 Census; she survived as an annuitant until at least 1851.

<sup>31</sup> Despite these numerous public roles, no image of him appears to survive.

<sup>32</sup> Image available via website of National Library of New Zealand (Alexander Turnbull Library).

<sup>33</sup> <http://billiongraves.com/pages/record/RobertStokes/1257535>, accessed 18 Nov. 2013

<sup>34</sup> GA K974 1/4, planning application decided on 23 Feb. 1989

<sup>35</sup> Apparently the only Cheltenham building for which a signed elevation by Stokes survives (Blake, p. 57).

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## Corrections

There are corrections to be made to the article ‘**Howletts of Cheltenham: Jewellers and Watch and Clock Makers**, by Eric Miller, which appeared in *Journal 29*, (2013) on page 54. We apologise to Roger Beacham for this mistake.

The paragraph should read,

‘The photograph (*previous page*) has been supplied by Roger Beacham, whose great grandmother was formerly a **Miss Howlett**, a member of the clock making family and Lynne Cleaver,’ not as was previously stated a **Miss Honeysett**.

For further clarification it should be noted that Footnote 12 - ‘as a memento of forty years happy residence in this most beautiful town’ - was most likely written by **Michael Grange**, donor of the clock and not Roger Beacham as was stated in the article.

# Two Sad Stories

MICK KIPPIN

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## Why was this man allowed to join the Army?

AS AN HISTORIAN THE THOUGHT OF RESEARCHING somebody with the surname of Smith would normally send shudders down my spine! However, when I acquired the illustrated memorial scroll to Private Cyril Theodore Smith of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Imperial Yeomanry, my research was rewarded with an interesting, albeit very sad, story. Fortunately, christian names like Cyril Theodore did make my research somewhat easier and I was able to find his army pension records on line.

Cyril Theodore Smith was born in Gloucester on 15 April 1896, the eldest son of William Smith and his wife Elizabeth. I know nothing of Cyril's early life other than that in 1911 they were living in Widden Street, just off of Barton Street, Gloucester.

He enlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Gloucestershire Hussars in May 1915, as soon as he was old enough to do so. His army records give his occupation at the time as 'milkboy'. In February 1916 he went to Tidworth in Wiltshire with 13 other men from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> for training with the Dragoon Guards before going to Egypt in March, probably as reinforcements for 1<sup>st</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Gloucestershire Hussars who had been in Egypt since 1915 and had fought as infantry at Gallipoli. By the time Cyril and the other reinforcements arrived in Egypt the regiment had left Gallipoli and was guarding the Suez Canal.



Cyril Smith in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Gloucestershire Hussars during the First World War. His youthful appearance is very apparent.

*Image supplied  
by Mick Kippin*

In May 1917 Cyril was admitted to hospital in Cairo. Then in January 1918 he was moved to the 'M' Special hospital in Cairo<sup>1</sup> and evacuated back to England just four days later on the hospital ship *Kalyan*. Once back in the United Kingdom he was treated at Netley Military Hospital, Southampton, then at Dykebar Mental Hospital near Paisley in Scotland and finally at the Crookston War Hospital in Glasgow. He was discharged from the army in Glasgow on 20 November 1918 on the grounds of delusional insanity. One of his doctors stated,

*'Private Smith had a fall on his head at 12 years of age. Two years later he developed delusions which passed off. He enlisted in May 1915. In Egypt from March 1916 to January 1918. Was under fire, but not*

*wounded. In hospital with abscess in right axilla (armpit) and while under treatment became peculiar in behaviour and babyish. Later became solitary, self-centred and hallucinated. Imagined everyone was against him.'*

A second report just before his discharge paints an even worse picture,

*'Dull, apathetic and confused. Has auditory hallucinations. Refuses his food at times. Is sometimes excited and has many delusions – thinks detectives are after him, that the orderlies are down on him and is persecuted by everybody. Is emotional and apprehensive.'*

Smith's surviving service papers give no clues as to just how much action he saw in Egypt but his later medical condition shows many of the classic symptoms of shell shock, or what we would now call 'combat stress reaction' or 'post-traumatic stress disorder'. If the information about the fall that he had when he was 12 and the consequent delusions is true, shouldn't this have been picked up when he enlisted? Or was the country that desperate for volunteers in 1915 that the occasional 'bad egg' was acceptable?

For his service during the First World War Cyril received two medals - the British War medal and the Victory medal as well as a silver War Badge. The whereabouts of these are unknown. After being discharged from hospital in Glasgow, Cyril Smith returned home to Gloucester where he died in March 1971, aged 75.

### **Memorial Plaque in St Mary's Minster, Cheltenham**

Close to the altar in St. Mary's Minster<sup>2</sup> in Cheltenham is a round, bronze memorial plaque commemorating the death of Corporal Walter Browning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucestershire Royal Engineers (Volunteers) or 1 GRE(V), who died of disease at Middelburg in South Africa on 17 March 1901.

Between 1900 and 1902, 25 men and one officer of 1 GRE(V) volunteered to go to South Africa during the Boer War. On 26 February 1900 these volunteers were sworn in as regular soldiers in the presence of the Mayor of Cheltenham before signing their attestation papers. They were required to serve,

*'for a term of one year, unless the war in South Africa lasts longer, in which case you will be detained until the war is over...'*



Corporal Walter Browning:  
1 GRE(V) Active Service  
Section, February 1901  
*Image supplied by  
Mick Kippin*



Illustrated memorial scroll for Cyril Smith from Gloucester City Council.  
 Scroll and image © Mick Kippin

These men sailed for South Africa from the Royal Albert Dock, Woolwich on 3 April 1900 on board the transport *Devon* with orders to join 23 Field Company, Royal Engineers, who were then besieged in Ladysmith, South Africa. Fortunately, by the time the volunteers reached Ladysmith the siege was over. Instead the 23 Field Company and the Gloucestershire Volunteers provided valuable engineering support to General Lyttleton's 4<sup>th</sup> Division during its 1,000 mile march through the Transvaal. Corporal Browning died of disease at Middelburg at the end of this epic march. He was the unit's only casualty throughout the war.

It is, perhaps, somewhat ironic that just before leaving Cheltenham, some of Corporal Browning's friends had tried to dissuade him from going. Browning's reply was, 'No. I have given my word and I will perform my duty as a soldier.'

The Engineer Volunteers arrived back in Cheltenham at about 9.00pm on 22 May 1901. Despite the late hour, they were greeted at the station by their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rogers and about 250 of their colleagues who had stayed in Cheltenham. The whole parade then marched to the *Queen's Hotel*.



The bronze memorial to Corporal Walter Browning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucestershire Royal Engineers (Volunteers) who died in the Transvaal in March 1901

*Image © Mick Kippin*

Before leaving South Africa a memorial to Corporal Browning had been put up in Middelburg, but once back in Cheltenham it was decided to erect a second memorial, paid for by members of the Non-Commissioned Officers' mess. This memorial was designed and produced by Mr Samuel J. Such, a retired armourer-sergeant of 1 GRE(V). Before the war Corporal Browning had been an apprentice at Mr Such's engineering works in King Street, Cheltenham and was also his son-in-law.

This new memorial was originally erected in the engineer's drill hall in Swindon Road (now being used as a car wash); but in March 1908 1 GRE(V) was disbanded under the Government's Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, so Corporal Browning's

memorial plaque together with the drum major's mace were moved to St. Mary's Minster, Cheltenham.

Walter Browning is also commemorated on the Boer War memorial in The Promenade, Cheltenham and on the South African Memorial Arch in Brompton Barracks, Chatham; the ancestral home of the Royal Engineers. He left £299 19s 4d (£299.97) in his will to Sergeant-Major Brown and to Samuel George Such, both members of 1 GRE(V).

<sup>1</sup> Presumably this was a specialist hospital for soldiers suffering from mental illness.

<sup>2</sup> St Mary's parish church Cheltenham was renamed Cheltenham Minster in February 2013.

# ‘Apathetic’ Women? Who Supported the Women’s Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham?

SUE JONES

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*This article is part of an ongoing study which attempts to understand the socio-economic background and the views of the women (and men) who supported the women’s suffrage movement in Cheltenham in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author, having completed an extensive research project in the north-east of England, is now taking the opportunity to research the very different social milieu of Cheltenham, giving a glimpse of a complex Cheltenham picture.<sup>1</sup>*

THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE because it was a time when the emergence of the suffragette organisation, the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) raised the national consciousness, but not necessarily conscience, about women’s lack of the parliamentary vote. The campaign for women’s suffrage had existed throughout the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but was part of a much wider campaign about women’s rights – no less important but less narrowly focused. Women of that generation were used to campaigning on a wider front and to contextualising women’s suffrage within a whole sphere of female inequalities. In Cheltenham, this tradition was well-founded and, in a town where many women of influence lived, it was acceptable for women from the higher social groups to involve themselves in campaigns such as those to widen access to education, to assure women’s rights to local government positions and to establish their rights in divorce. In relation to voting rights, as was stated in a meeting in early 1901, there were many women in the town who owned property and therefore had the municipal vote (based on property ownership) but were denied the parliamentary vote.<sup>2</sup>

Harriet McIlquham of *Staverton House* was the most influential local figure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century context, having fought for the rights and presence of women in local government and becoming the first married female Poor Law Guardian in the country in 1881. She was a revered figure by the time the more militant movement arrived on the scene and was one of those for whom its appearance was uncomfortable. Although she attended the first public WSPU meeting in Cheltenham in 1906, she suggested that all those present should take a postcard to send to a member of parliament, suggesting that she was not in tune with newer tactics.<sup>3</sup> However, she did admit a year later that patience had not brought results, reluctantly conceding the necessity for more militancy.<sup>4</sup>

In the early years of the 20th century, a generation of women like her seems to have maintained a hold on the constitutional movement, the Women’s Suffrage Society (WSS). Often these were wives, daughters or widows of the Raj, whose views one might have expected to be conservative and accepting of a patriarchal society. However, an environment which required some grit and an independence of spirit, either in the Empire or managing a home while the man of the family was serving abroad, clearly fostered some independence of thought.

Examples of these women include Mrs Rosa Swiney who led the Cheltenham WSS throughout the period from its foundation in 1896 to its disbanding in 1919 but also flirted with the ideas, but not the realities, of the WSPU. Born in India, she was the wife of Major General Swiney and had lived in Cheltenham since at least 1881. Although she was from the older generation of suffragists, she was nevertheless willing to upset the middle-class complacency of her contemporaries by regretting the absence of working-class women in Cheltenham suffragism. She also decried her fellows' lack of knowledge of the conditions experienced by those women.<sup>5</sup> In the sedate surroundings of a WSS Garden Party, she chose to speak about the horrors of 'sweated labour' among women and later campaigned for equal wages.<sup>6</sup>



Women's Suffrage  
Society Garden Party at  
*Sandford Lawn*, July  
1910. (Left to right)  
Miss Theodora Mills,  
Mrs Rosa (Frances)  
Swiney, Revd J.H.  
Smith, Unitarian  
Minister.

Image: *Cheltenham  
Chronicle and Graphic*,  
16 July 1910,

From a slightly different background, Mrs Mary Stables of College Lawn, the widow of a Yorkshire tea-dealer, also spoke of how the 'comfortable' classes of women should be more concerned about working-women and rejoiced in the lack of 'snobbism' in the movement.<sup>7</sup> This wider social consciousness within the women's suffrage movement was thus being expressed by some of those most embedded in the upper echelons of Cheltenham society, perhaps surprisingly so.

The younger generation of women who came to prominence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is well represented by Theodora Mills. When only 27, she became secretary of the Cheltenham WSS and remained at the helm until it disbanded. She and her widowed mother Ruth, also an activist, came from a 'trade' background, Charles Mills having been a wine merchant with premises in the town. The ex-colonial and military elite did not therefore dominate the constitutional movement completely. It is unclear whether Theodora had any higher education but she was a talented woman with a range of interests – from theosophy to music. Her song was accepted as the international 'hymn' of the movement in 1909, (to *Onward Christian Soldiers*)<sup>8</sup>:

<i>'Forward sister women!</i>	<i>'Gainst a great injustice,</i>
<i>Onward ever more,</i>	<i>See the fight begun!</i>
<i>Bondage is behind you,</i>	<i>Forward, forward sisters!</i>
<i>Freedom is before,</i>	<i>Onward ever more!</i>
<i>Raise the standard boldly,</i>	<i>Bondage is behind you,</i>
<i>In the morning sun;</i>	<i>Freedom is before.'</i>



Well into old age, she was writing letters to the local newspapers, often defending the reputation and past actions of her fellow campaigners and drawing attention to the opprobrium heaped on the movement in the years up to 1914. She was also keen to ensure that subsequent generations understood the difference between suffragists, of whom she was one, and suffragettes.<sup>9</sup>

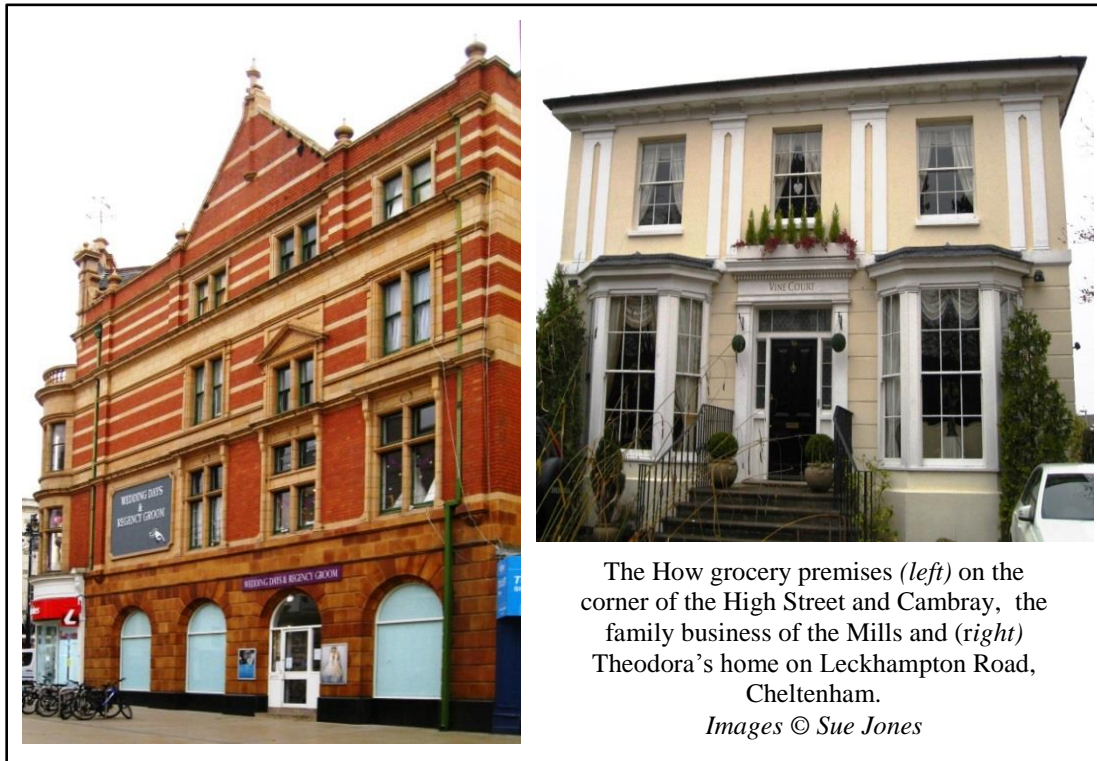
In many ways, Theodora's socio-economic background had much in common with that of the influential How sisters, daughters of the considerable grocery business on the corner of the High Street and Cambray. Edith and Florence both had the benefit of higher education, moving them from the commercial to the professional social circles, and, as pupils, had experienced the campaigning feminism of the North London Collegiate School.<sup>10</sup> Also they were involved in party politics but adopted different political stances, with Edith supporting the Independent Labour Party and Florence and her husband being active Liberals (he was a Liberal councillor in the town). Edith married George Martyn, son of the large memorial sculpture business H.H. Martyn, and they started married life in the modest surroundings of Naunton Park Road, both working as science teachers. However, she soon became a national figure on the women's suffrage scene, becoming secretary of the Women's Freedom League (WFL) after its breakaway from the WSPU in 1907 and later head of its political and militant department. She frequently came to Cheltenham to galvanise campaigns.

Her sister Florence had remained in the town, having married a solicitor, William Earengy (the son of a local foreman boot maker) and initially they lived in Wellington Square. Florence Earengy started her women's suffrage campaigning in the WSS, followed by a brief skirmish with membership of the WSPU until she, like her sister, broke away to found the local WFL in 1908. Another How sister, Lilian or Lilla, who seems to have remained at home with no occupation, was literature secretary for both the WSS and the WFL. This movement between different strands of the women's suffrage movement was not unusual and does demonstrate that, particularly until the escalation of WSPU militancy, overlapping of personnel and allegiances could exist.<sup>11</sup>

Of similar age and obviously well-known to Florence Earengy was Madame Borovikovski(y). By 1912 or 1913, she was secretary of the WFL and had in 1909 been hailed by Mrs Earengy as 'the first member of the local branch to suffer imprisonment in the cause of women's enfranchisement'.<sup>12</sup> This was as the result of a WFL attempt to storm the House of Commons to get a hearing from Asquith, the Prime Minister. Misleadingly described as a 'Raid', Lilian was one of eight who were arrested; she 'declined to be bound over, and she was ordered to find two sureties of £10 each or undergo one month's imprisonment'.<sup>13</sup> She opted for prison.

Madame Lilian Borovikovski's exotic name masks a somewhat enigmatic background which does not place her in the same social circles as the How sisters and Theodora Mills. Lilian's mother was a domestic servant in the Birmingham area before marrying Christopher Prust, a Vaccination Officer, after the births of Lilian and her older sister. After Prust's death, she married Charles Teague of *Mostyn*, Hales Road, a man of musical influence locally, thereby achieving some social respectability from a lowly beginning.<sup>14</sup> Lilian appeared in Cheltenham Ladies' College Guild lists as a former student, probably for a short time, but must have absorbed some of that establishment's feminist spirit. She married Sergei Borovikovski in 1902 and in 1904

gave birth to a boy who would have been very young when she went to prison. Nothing further has been found about her husband but, if he was a Russian émigré, he may well have encouraged Lilian's radicalism. A tantalisingly shadowy figure, she died in Gloucester Mental Hospital when she was only 46.<sup>15</sup>



The How grocery premises (*left*) on the corner of the High Street and Cambray, the family business of the Mills and (*right*) Theodora's home on Leckhampton Road, Cheltenham.

*Images © Sue Jones*

What bound together some of these women from different backgrounds was breadth of interests, thus continuing the 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition of support for an umbrella of causes, but in a more 'alternative' manner. For example, the vegetarian movement seemed to have been vigorously pursued by a number of women's suffrage supporters; at least one meeting was held in the Vegetarian Hotel in Winchcombe Street and the Food Reform Club, Clarence Street was run by the mother of the militant activists, Ruth Eamonson,<sup>16</sup> (see over). While Ruth represented the younger generation, older campaigners such as Mrs Swiney were also members. Moreover, Dr. and Mrs E. Wilkins, both WSS activists, set up the Vegetarian Society in about 1884.<sup>17</sup> The two causes can be seen in support of each other in the protracted and bitter battles between Dr. Alice Burn and Dr. Garnett.<sup>18</sup>

The latter had objected to Dr. Burn publicly advocating vegetarianism, even in a private capacity and demanded that she asked permission to express her views on any public occasion.<sup>19</sup> The fact that 'suffragettes' and other 'vegetarian ladies and gentlemen' were described as being in the public gallery for the debate of the Cheltenham Education Committee shows how the two were linked in the local press and possibly in the public mind.<sup>20</sup> Dr. Burn was a WSPU supporter and had worked as one of the first Schools' Medical Officers in County Durham before moving to Cheltenham in 1912. She also featured in the women's suffrage movement in the north-east of England, but there her vegetarian beliefs did not emerge at any stage and it seems that this close combination of causes was unique to Cheltenham.



Dr Alice Burn in 1914  
*Image: The Looker-On, 10  
 January 1914, courtesy of  
 Cheltenham Local & Family  
 History Library*

She herself stated that, until she came to the town, she was 'never associated in any way with vegetarianism as such.'<sup>21</sup> Other examples of 'alternative' causes espoused by these women were eugenics and anti-vivisection. Not all of them were as radical and, to us, outrageous, as the pseudo-scientific views often articulated by Dr. Charles Callaway, a retired science teacher and frequent speaker at WSS meetings who, on one occasion, argued that the lack of women's rights was due to 'Semitic invaders'.<sup>22</sup>

Teachers were an occupational group who, throughout the country, were prominent in heading the women's suffrage cause. This was no different in Cheltenham and the presence of the pioneering Ladies' College undoubtedly had an invigorating effect on the town's women. However, the only teacher in a prominent office-holding position was Miss Ellen Andrews, the youngest of three sisters who were teachers at the

Ladies' College (having previously been pupils there) and who lent their house at 2 Vittoria Walk for WSPU meetings. She was secretary of the local branch from April 1912 after it was revived by a national organiser, Ada Flatman, who came to Cheltenham in early 1911 to prepare for WSPU action in the by-election.<sup>23</sup> Although she left her teaching post in July 1912, Miss Andrews was a WSPU supporter in the two previous years.

This is demonstrated by her donations of money and, significantly, of the banner for the Cheltenham box at the Albert Hall meeting of June 1911; this suggesting that she had made the trip to London for this national women's suffrage occasion.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting that she had almost literally nailed her colours to the mast while still a member of staff at a time when WSPU tactics were increasingly violent and therefore subject to criticism in 'respectable' circles. Whether Miss Beale, the previous esteemed Principal and ardent feminist and suffragist, would have approved is worth speculating but her successor, Miss Faithfull, did appear on the platform of a WFL meeting.<sup>25</sup> Two more peripheral members of staff were involved in the non-militant WSS, Madame Elischer, who taught music and Melle Murciani, who taught languages, but they both took a prominent stand in 1909 when, with Ruth Eamonson, Winifred Boulton (see below) and four others, they unsuccessfully claimed a parliamentary vote.<sup>26</sup>

Two teachers of gymnastics were more actively militant than Ellen Andrews, though she defended the escalation of militancy in local newspaper reports. Winifred Boulton and Ruth Eamonson were members of the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society and of the WFL, with Ruth Eamonson being local Secretary from 1912.<sup>27</sup> Neither had Cheltenham origins and it is not clear where they were teaching in the town. As mentioned above, they had put forward a claim for a parliamentary vote and so were prepared to be publicly named activists, in itself a difficult stance to take in Edwardian England.<sup>28</sup> They also appear to have been local champions of the 1911 census boycott by those women who were prepared to wage a campaign of civil

disobedience: fifteen Cheltenham women have so far been identified as part of this national protest. In 1913 they, together with Agnes Bales, were charged with unlawfully placarding advertising bills on pillar boxes – this in Cheltenham was apparently as scandalous as setting fire to them!<sup>29</sup> Agnes is recorded in the honorary list of suffragette prisoners compiled by the Suffragette Fellowship in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. She stated in court that she lived with her parents in Bath Parade and therefore it is likely that she had no goods that could be distrained as an alternative to a fine; presumably therefore she served a prison sentence for this seemingly trivial offence. She is also the only Cheltenham activist so far discovered from a working class background – her father was a gardener but she had climbed the social scale to be, by 1901, clerk to a fine art publisher.

As might be expected, women doctors were often involved with the movement and this is true of Cheltenham. Their admission to the profession at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century meant that they were the product of one barrier being overturned and also they were well-placed to see the plight of women. The case of Dr. Burn has been alluded to above. She spoke passionately about the need for women to vote in order to elect men who would consider issues about the welfare of children and mothers. The ‘health of the nation’ was a major political issue after the revelations of the poor physical health of the soldier volunteers for the Boer War – to which those with military connections in Cheltenham would be sensitive. Another doctor in the movement was Grace Billings who was a committee member of the WSS but also contributed to the WSPU funds in 1911, again demonstrating cross-society support.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Dr. Eveline Cargill, who practised from *Lansdown Lodge*, was on the WSS committee.<sup>31</sup>

It is also interesting that the matron of the General Hospital, Gertrude Muller, was not afraid to ask for a WSPU meeting to address her staff - acknowledging that her nurses would welcome civil rights to match their increasing professional recognition.<sup>32</sup> It may be that the contribution of 4s. (20p) to the WSPU by Nurse Violet Sanderson of the Victoria Nurses’ Home was a direct result of that meeting.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the Cheltenham movement is the number of retired army and colonial personnel who appeared on platforms, both in support of their wives and in their own right. It was not unusual for there to be male support in other areas of the country but this was usually amongst men from the professional classes: the Cheltenham profile is therefore atypical and at present inexplicable. Amongst those identified, the elderly and widowed Major General Macdonald of Lansdown Crescent actually became a member of the WSS in 1902, as did Councillor Handley who had been in the Indian Civil Service – his gradual conversion to the cause is indicated by the fact that he had criticised women for not organising themselves more successfully in local elections the year before he became a member.<sup>34</sup>

As in other parts of the country, clergy of various persuasions were prominent in their support. Revd Gedge of Montpellier Grove was an Anglican clergyman whose support was valued and whose funeral in 1912 suggests the breadth of his contacts in Cheltenham society, particularly with the Ladies’ College of whose Council he was a member.<sup>35</sup> The fact that his middle name was Wilberforce suggests a reforming heritage which he was honouring, but there was a fundamental argument voiced by some clergy that women’s rights must be acknowledged as there was no theological

distinction between male and female - an argument still unacceptable to some in the 21<sup>st</sup> century!<sup>36</sup> Revd J.H. Smith was the Minister of Bayshill Unitarian Church, a doughty supporter who chaired meetings and indulged in fiery rhetoric on behalf of the women's cause, often berating the government for their lies and betrayal of women.<sup>37</sup>

The heads of the major independent schools were part of the picture; notably Dr. Flecker of Dean Close and Revd and Mrs Waterfield of Cheltenham College. This was again something which I found in the north-east but there it was confined to the headmistresses of the girls' schools whereas in Cheltenham there were examples of a number of male members of staff being supportive, along with their wives. This may illustrate greater male presence in the movement here than in industrialised areas where male roles were more aggressively gendered.

This article is only a glimpse of the wealth of material which may help to uncover more about the backgrounds and views espoused by the women (and men) supporting the various strands of the women's suffrage movement in Cheltenham. To draw any firm conclusions at this stage would be premature. However, although the generational differences have been mentioned, it can be seen that younger women such as Theodora Mills did not automatically move towards militancy. Nor was the reverse true: it would be interesting to discover whether, nationally, there was an older supporter of the WSPU than Mrs Henry Mushet who, at the age of 93 in 1911, was contributing to funds!<sup>38</sup> What is noteworthy is the tendency for the ex-colonial and military elite to be more supportive of the constitutional approach of the WSS whereas the professional and commercial classes were more supportive of the more militant WFL and WSPU. This is not to deny the courage of all women's suffrage supporters who were prepared to defy society's expectations by actions which today seem unexceptional. 'Apathetic'? Perhaps so if the proportion of committed women is judged, but a more considered answer lies in further research into the range of the individuals involved.

My thanks to the archivist of Cheltenham Ladies College, Mrs Rachel Roberts, for her assistance with the teaching records of the Andrew's sisters and the other members of staff I had identified.

*If you have any further information on any of those named above or on any others concerned in women's rights at this time, please contact the Editor – I am developing a databases of the women and men involved.*

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All biographical detail otherwise unacknowledged has been taken from Census and BMD material.

<sup>1</sup> The charge of apathy was levelled at Cheltenham women at a 1905 Women's Suffrage Society garden party, *Cheltenham Examiner*, 19 July, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 17 April, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 3 October 1906.

<sup>4</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 11 December 1907.

<sup>5</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 20 November 1901.

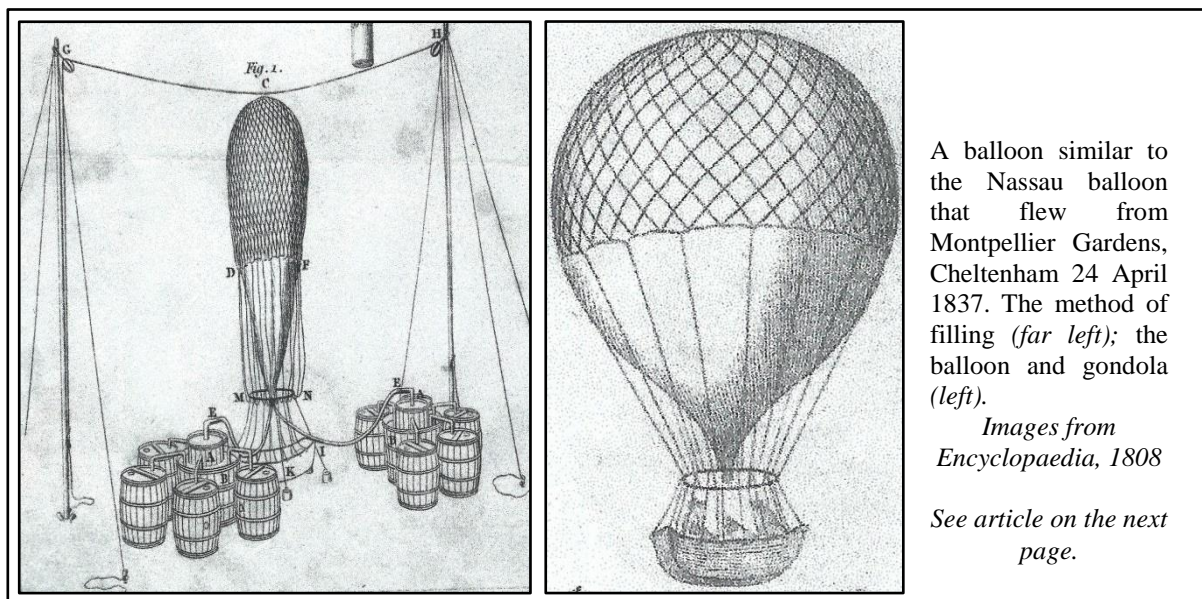
<sup>6</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 19 July 1905; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 1 November 1913.

<sup>7</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 10 February 1904, 22 July 1909.

<sup>8</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 22 July 1909. Words obtained from internet search.

<sup>9</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 15 August 1949. Suffragists; those who believed in constitutional campaigning, the National Union of Women's Societies was their umbrella organisation. Suffragettes; (initially a term of abuse), employed by the press, then adopted by the women, those whose militancy made them willing to break the law, their primary organisation was the Women's Social and Political Organisation led by the Pankhursts. They were terms often used indiscriminately by the press.

- <sup>10</sup> It is a mystery why they did not attend Cheltenham Ladies' College.
- <sup>11</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 15 December 1910, from 1910, the local WFL decided that members should only work for that society, but that did not preclude attendance at each others' meetings.
- <sup>12</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, 23 March 1909.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 20 February 1909
- <sup>14</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 23 November 1912.
- <sup>15</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 29 May 1926. The ages she gave varies wildly and are usually inaccurate!
- <sup>16</sup> Eleven men and women supporters of the women's suffrage movement are named among the 24 guests at the opening of the Vegetarian Hotel, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 12 December 1908.
- <sup>17</sup> He was a stockbroker.
- <sup>18</sup> Dr. Alice Burns was the assistant Schools' Medical Officer; Dr. Garnett was the town's Medical Officer of Health and the Schools' Medical Officer.
- <sup>19</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 December 1913.
- <sup>20</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, *op. cit.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 January 1914.
- <sup>22</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner* 16 December 1903.
- <sup>23</sup> The WSPU in Cheltenham had ceased to exist after its brief appearance in 1906. The pattern of a society being formed during or after a by-election campaign was a common feature nationally.
- <sup>24</sup> *Votes for Women*, 21 July 1911.
- <sup>25</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 8 October 1908.
- <sup>26</sup> This was rejected by the Revision Court but was well-reported, for example in *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 18 September 1909.
- <sup>27</sup> *WFL Report*, 5 December 1912.
- <sup>28</sup> *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 18 September 1909.
- <sup>29</sup> *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 March 1913.
- <sup>30</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 16 December 1903; *Votes for Women* 28 April 1911. Grace Billings was married to a master builder.
- <sup>31</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, *op.cit.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Votes for Women*, 16 June 1911.
- <sup>33</sup> *Votes for Women*, 23 June 1911.
- <sup>34</sup> *Examiner* 20 November 1901, 10 December 1902.
- <sup>35</sup> Obituary in *The Cheltenham Looker-On*, 7 December 1912.
- <sup>36</sup> Also the words of the Dean of Worcester, Moore Ede, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 16 November 1912.
- <sup>37</sup> *Examiner*, 21 July 1910
- <sup>38</sup> *Votes for Women*, 28 April 1911. She was the widow of Robert Mushet who, with Henry Bessemer, invented steel rails, and she had lived in the town since the 1860s.



A balloon similar to the Nassau balloon that flew from Montpellier Gardens, Cheltenham 24 April 1837. The method of filling (*far left*); the balloon and gondola (*left*).

*Images from Encyclopaedia, 1808*

*See article on the next page.*

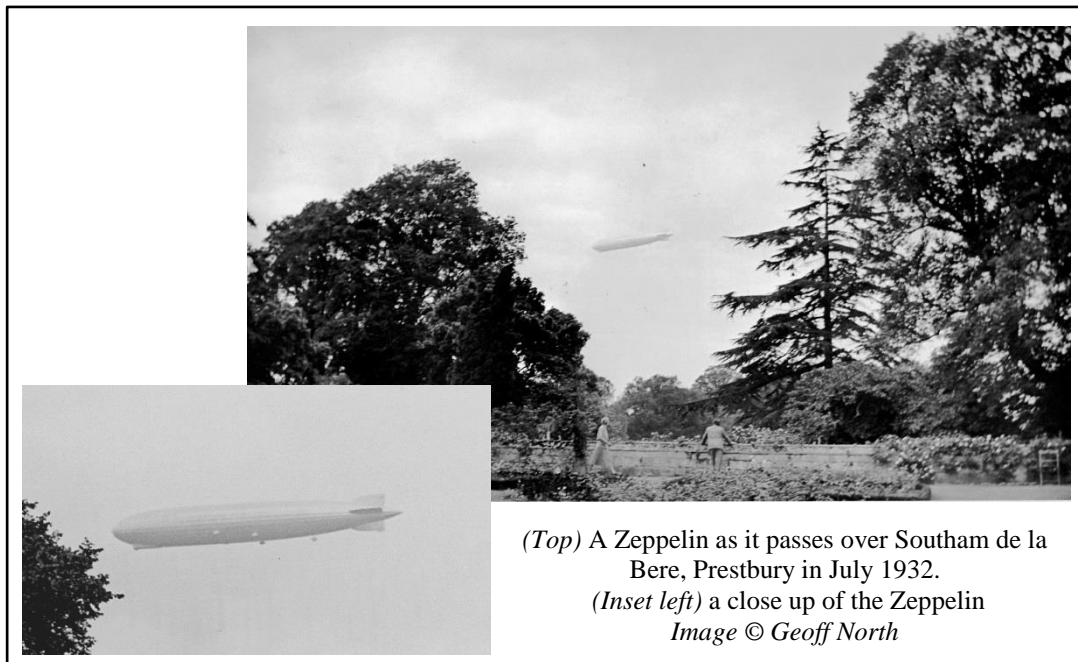
# Cheltenham and the Men in Their Flying Machines

AMINA CHATWIN & STEVE OSMOND

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I REMEMBER AS A SMALL CHILD being held up to a window in our house in Cheltenham and told to 'look up at the Zeppelin'. I mentioned this to Geoff North and he said he had a photograph of a Zeppelin over Southam de la Bere. He showed me the photograph and on the back was written 'July 1932'. This seemed a suitable date as it would have made me four years and three months old. Talking to Steve Osmond about it he said he would try to find out more.

He discovered that LZ 127, the *Graf Zeppelin*, launched 19 June 1928 and retired 19 June 1937, made a 24-hour tour of Britain on 7 July 1932. After passing over Cheltenham it flew on to Bristol and continued southwards. It is not a very sensible thing to rely on the memory of a young child from some eighty years earlier, but it seems to me that I looked up at it almost from below and that it was very low. This appears to be corroborated by the fact that Mike Smith once spoke to someone who remembered seeing it as a youngster and said it seemed as long as the short street he was standing in, and that he could see people's faces looking down on him.



(Top) A Zeppelin as it passes over Southam de la Bere, Prestbury in July 1932.

(Inset left) a close up of the Zeppelin  
Image © Geoff North

It made the longest non-stop flight from Germany to Lakehurst, New Jersey in 111 hours and 44 minutes, and in 1929 flew 20,500 miles in 12 days in the air. It was on 6 May 1939 that the LZ 129, the *Hindenberg*, caught fire at Lakehurst and was destroyed in a matter of seconds and 34 people died. This brought to an end the era of airship travel.

There is an excellent Zeppelin museum in Friedrichshafen, which I visited in 1997 when travelling round Europe with a group of American blacksmiths. It contains the reconstruction of a 108ft long section of the *Hindenberg*. Visitors can climb

aboard the retractable stairway and stroll through the authentically furnished passenger lounge and crew rooms. The tubular and leather armchairs must have seemed stunningly part of a new world concept, comparable only with the space age today. It was quite realistic as one gazed down through angled viewing windows to television screens below, showing the scuttling figures of ground crew casting off ropes and becoming smaller and smaller as we seemed to rise into the air.

The illusion of travelling by airship is followed by subsequent exhibits allowing insights into the history of technology of airship aviation. The airships of Count Zeppelin (1838-1917) were the cradle for entire branches of industry: aeroplanes from Dornier, engines from Maybach and ZF gear boxes. All these companies emerged out of the 'technology transfer' of airship construction. On the ground floor there was an enormous and superb Zeppelin car.

A Zeppelin was not the first strange flying machine to be seen over Cheltenham. *The History of Cheltenham* (1863) by John Goding tells us that on 24 April 1837

*'The great Nassau balloon ascended from the Montpellier Gardens under the guidance of Mr Green, who was accompanied by Mr Rush, an American Minister. After a voyage of three hours during which they travelled 90 miles, a safe descent was effected 40 miles from London.'*

The Nassau balloon again ascended from Montpellier Gardens on 3 July 1837. Experiments must have been going on with parachutes because on 22 September the first descent was made over the Gardens by Mrs Graham's monkey, 'Mademoiselle Jennie'. On 3 October 1838 Hampton, the aeronaut, ascended in a balloon from Montpellier Gardens and safely descended by parachute from a height of two miles onto Hick's Farm at Badgeworth. Montpellier Gardens must have been very busy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century! My grandfather recalled watching the races of the 'high bikes' that were held there.

Most early photographs of aeroplanes show bi-planes that look as if they were made of cardboard and string and among family photographs I found a fading sepia postcard of a mono-plane. There is no printing on the front but fortunately the message on the back says, '*First Mono-plane to fly in Cheltenham. Mr Hucks on his Mono-plane Mercury Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> 1911*'. It was sent to my mother, a young woman at that time.

Bentfield Charles Hucks (1884-1918) was an aviation pioneer who gained his Royal Aero Club certificate in May 1911.<sup>1</sup> In the same year he made a West Country tour in aid of charity, taking with him a portable hangar, with Harry Goodyear as Mechanic and C. E. Manton Day as Manager. Two flights were made at Taunton Fete before 10,000 people on Bank Holiday Monday. The aircraft then went by train to Burnham-on-Sea but then later on 17 August, because of a railway strike Mr Hucks flew the next 25 miles to Minehead in 22 minutes, arriving before the telegram that had been sent to announce his arrival.

During his tour 'Benny' Hucks visited Weston-Super-Mare from where he did a non-stop flight to Cardiff, Whitchurch, Llandaff and back in 40 minutes having made the first double crossing of the Bristol Channel. The tour took him on to Cheltenham on 1 October 1911 where the aircraft was shown at the Drill Hall, North



Street. Flying took place from 4 October at Whaddon Farm, Cemetery Road.<sup>2</sup> Hucks departed for Gloucester on 16 October where he caused a sensation flying higher than the cathedral tower, although still less than his personal record of 3,500ft (1,150m).



Mr Bentfield Hucks in his Blackburn Monoplane Mercury, 5 October 1911. This photograph was possibly taken at the Drill Hall, North Street.

*Image © Amina Chatwin*

It has been estimated that in those months, in his 90 flights, he travelled some 1,000 miles. It was an impressive performance for the period, especially since all the take-offs and landings were from unprepared ground. He did have a forced landing at Cheltenham when he ploughed up yards of cabbages with his skids until eventually a wheel came off and moving forward broke the airscrew.

Mr Hucks joined the Royal Flying Corps when war broke out in August 1914 and was sent to the Western Front. He was invalided home after an attack of pleurisy before working as a test pilot in Hendon. He died of double pneumonia on 7 November 1918, just days before the end of the war.

The entrance to the *Plough Hotel* in Cheltenham High Street had an opening for cars next to the front door. This is now the entrance frontage to the Regent Arcade. It must have been at some point in the 1930s that I saw Amy Johnson, the well-known aviator, drive a car towards the car park and garages at the back. It was on 5 May 1930 that she completed her solo flight to Australia. I expect she had been in the newspapers which is why I recognised her. Just before the Second World War my father learnt to fly. He was anxious to join the Royal Auxiliary Air Force composed of ladies and older men who ferried aircraft from one place to another if an aircraft was no longer where it was required. He was told he would be more useful in his normal job as a quantity surveyor and was sent to the Midlands to help build aerodromes. Amy Johnson, who lived at Stoke Orchard, was a member of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and was lost over Channel on 5 January 1941.

A new association between Cheltenham and flying machines was about to begin. In 1931 George Dowty (1901-1975) set up a workshop in Grosvenor Place South, a back street off Sandford Place. As the Second World War approached this would lead to the development of an enormous factory at Arle Court, between Cheltenham and Gloucester and to the production there of some 87,786 aircraft undercarriages and about one million hydraulic units. In 1956 George Dowty received a knighthood for services to the aircraft industry.

<sup>1</sup> [www.flyingmachines.ru/Site2/Crafts/Craft28479.htm](http://www.flyingmachines.ru/Site2/Crafts/Craft28479.htm) (Blackburn-Mercury-1911); see also Wikipedia, accessed during August 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The future Whaddon housing estate near Priors Road and Bouncer's Lane.

# The Great House Delineated

ANTHEA JONES

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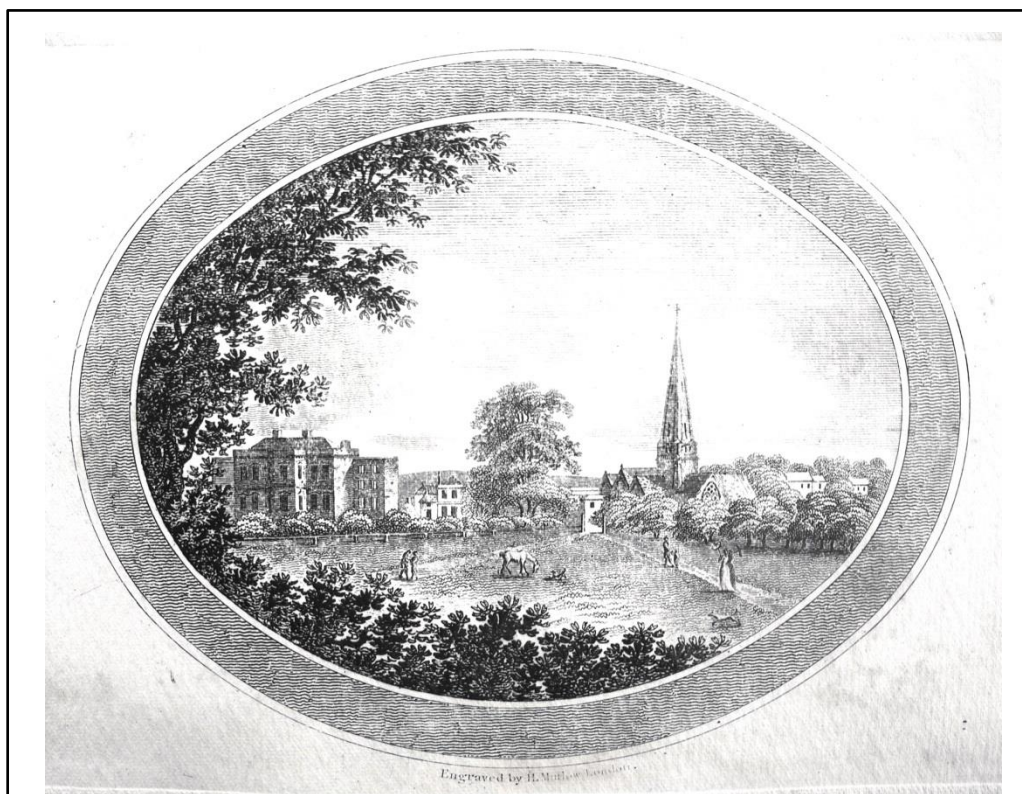
AMONGST A BUNDLE OF MISCELLANEOUS DEEDS in Gloucestershire Archives from Sewell, Mullings and Logie<sup>1</sup> solicitors of Cirencester, described as draft deeds, wills and abstracts<sup>2</sup> are the sale particulars for the Clarence Hotel and Boarding House.<sup>3</sup> An auction of the premises, in one lot, was advertised by Foster & Sons of 14 Greek Street, Soho Square and 54, Pall Mall, London for Monday 27 January 1840 at 12 o'clock, to be held at Garraway's Coffee House, Change Alley, Cornhill, London. Messrs. Paul & Sons, surveyors, Cheltenham, were able to show potential buyers the premises and particulars could be had from Mr Charles Lawrence of Cirencester, Mr John Lawrence of 32, Lincoln's Inn Fields, at Garraway's Coffee House, and at Foster & Sons. The premises were freehold and there was immediate possession. If the premises were not sold, they would immediately be let on lease. As the auction was in January 1840, the particulars were prepared in 1839, as is emphasised by the reference to the opening of the railway.

The addresses of these various persons are themselves interesting, illustrating the strength of the connection between London and Cheltenham for this important property, but even more interesting are the details provided in the sale particulars. They make clear that Clarence Hotel was the building now called John Dower House and the boarding house was the former Great House, demolished before 1857 and replaced by St Matthew's church.<sup>4</sup> In some ways the details of the Clarence Boarding House are the more interesting. As well as the two major houses, there was 'an extensive stable or livery yard and premises', and 'a small, compact brewery with a dwelling house used as a tap with other suitable offices attached'. The whole in one plot of ground had three frontages - St George's Place, Crescent Place and Clarence Street - and occupied one and a quarter acres. Two pews in St Mary's church, which were said to be in 'good substantial order', belonged to these premises, whilst the Hotel was stated as 'in a good state of Ornamental Repair'.

Before describing the buildings in more detail, it is worth reviewing the general attractions of Cheltenham which were written up in the particulars in glowing terms. The premises were 'the Resort for many years of most of the Distinguished Visitors to that FASHIONABLE AND FAVOURITE TOWN'. Furthermore, the property offered 'a most eligible opportunity for Investment at the present moment, and particularly to those Hotel Keepers whose Establishments have been interfered with by the introduction of Railways'. Was this a reference to hotels outside Cheltenham, or to the effect of construction traffic and future railway lines close to or over their premises?

The particulars go on 'From the constantly increasing resort to Cheltenham, the existing Establishments of this character are inadequate to the demand, so that the Proprietors are frequently obliged to engage extra Houses, for the accommodation of those who resort to them', and 'The extended Opening of the Railways next year [1840] will increase largely the number of Visitors; and these Premises possess Advantages of Accommodation particularly adapted for large numbers arriving by

Train or otherwise'. Both houses were said to be 'in a most convenient position to all the Spas, Walks and Drives of that favourite Watering Place, and very near to the depots of the Cheltenham and Great Western Union, and the Birmingham and Gloucester railways.'



The Great House and Church Meadow as engraved by Henry Mutlow of London (died 1826). His address was Russell Court and he was Engraver to the King and was mainly known as an engraver of maps. The path leading to the Old Well is clearly drawn. This engraving was pasted into *Cheltenham Displayed in a series of eighteen views* by J.P. Johnson, Engraver.

*Reproduced by kind permission of Gloucestershire Archives  
Reference B233/51557GS*

The name Clarence Hotel and Boarding House is explained by reference to his late Majesty having sojourned there when Duke of Clarence. Prior to this, it suggests the two premises were known as Fisher's Hotel and Boarding House. Did the Duke as well as the Duchess stay there? Was the application for the use of the Clarence name made to the Duchess, so giving rise to the idea that she was the visitor?<sup>5</sup>

The Hotel was described as having a stone-fronted elevation with a freestone Ionic portico. To each side of this was a small garden between the house and the footway. On the topmost floor there were 12 bedrooms and a water closet; on the second floor 14 chambers, three servants' bedrooms and a water closet; on the first floor nine sitting rooms of good proportions, well-fitted up and four bedrooms and two well-placed water closets (one wonders where the less well-placed ones were on the other floors); and on the ground floor an enclosed entrance hall, a vestibule with stone floor, a handsome circular stone staircase from the ground floor to the top of the house, two large parlours or drawing rooms, eight bedrooms, two water closets, bar and pantry. In the basement there were two servants' halls, seven servants' bedrooms,

kitchen, scullery, shoe room, linen room, room for cleaning clothes, plate room and other necessary offices. Altogether therefore there were 38 visitors' bedrooms which might have accommodated about 80 people.

Clarence Boarding House was approached by a carriage drive leading to a flight of stone steps and a portico, as is shown on Thomas Robins' drawing of the house.<sup>6</sup> This too had three upper floors and a basement, and was described in the sale particulars as follows:

**Upper floor** - eight best bed rooms.

**Second floor** - ten best bed rooms, lobby, and water closet.

**First floor** - six sitting rooms, fourteen bed rooms, principal and three staircases, ten servants' bed rooms, water and other closets.

**Ground floor** - entrance hall, leading to the grand oak staircase; and principal rooms.

**Four lofty public rooms, of large dimensions**, two used as dining rooms and two as drawing rooms, communicating with the pleasure ground;

five other parlours; two bed rooms, a water closet;

large light well fitted up kitchen and a secondary kitchen;

bar, store closets, larders, and other requisite offices.

**Basement** – servants' hall, boot and anti-rooms, larder, five arched wine cellars, an arched beer cellar, another wine cellar and bottling room, a spirit cellar, etc., etc.

The picture of well-to-do visitors staying there while taking the waters is vivid and while it may be thought that there is too much repetition of the water closets in my account, in 1839 these were not generally available in houses; their number, too, would strike a modern visitor as somewhat inconvenient. The term water closet was obviously in general use by this time.

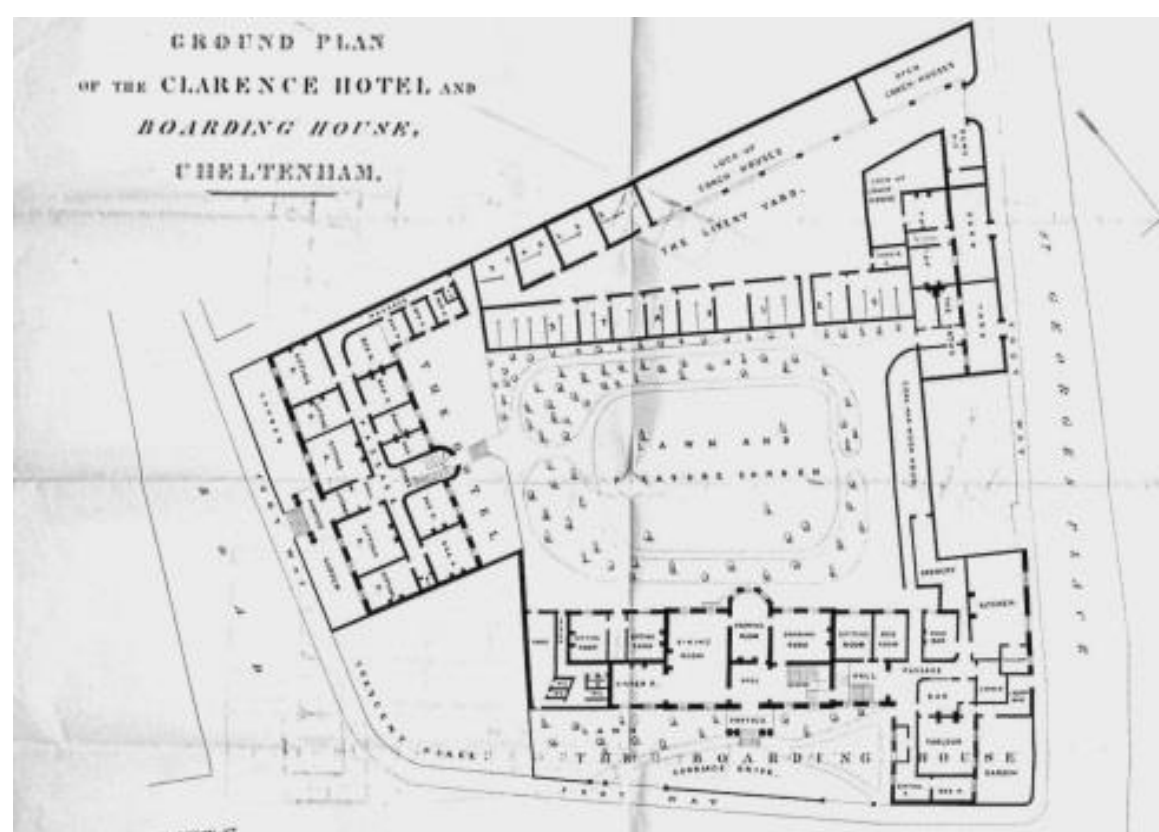
In 1839 the Great House was a little over a hundred years old, when it was an hotel rather than a private house. The assumption made in *Cheltenham, a new history*, from the Robins' painting of the garden front of the Great House, on the fan now in the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, and dated to 1740, is that there were separate sections to the building – this is now confirmed by the several staircases.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Robins showed in the centre a three-sided bay reaching the full height of the building and this is delineated on the plan of the premises attached to the sale particulars.

The plan of the properties reveals the pleasure garden in the centre of the square which had the Hotel on the east side, the former Great House on the north side, the livery stables and yard, with some lock-up coach houses on the south side and on the west side several smaller yards, a saddle room, the Tap, and - here is a most tantalising feature - 'The Baths'. The entrance was from St George's Place. Do we have here the Cold Bath as discussed in the Journal<sup>8</sup> in 2013?

Finally, the conditions of sale take the title of the property back to 1785 to a deed between Catherine Stapleton, spinster (the daughter of Lady Frances Stapleton, the builder of the Great House), Richard Hooper of Cheltenham, surgeon and Ann his wife, and Thomas Coutts of The Strand, Middlesex, banker. The deeds were to be produced at the office of Mr Charles Lawrence of Cirencester.

This lucky find has extended our knowledge of the Great House and of the life of the 'distinguished' visitors who came to Cheltenham to drink the waters of the first spa.

Since this article was written further information has come to light as a result of the cataloguing of the Winterbotham and Gurney archive,<sup>9</sup> which throws further light on this intriguing site. A reference to '2 Bedford Buildings [which are] located on the Great House Close' suggests that the Great House extended across the modern Clarence Street and reached the churchyard, which is not improbable.



The ground plan of the Clarence Hotel and Boarding House 1839, taken from sale particulars.  
 Reproduced by kind permission of Gloucestershire Archives  
 Reference B233/51557GS

<sup>1</sup> Formerly Mullings Ellet and Co.

<sup>2</sup> Gloucestershire Archives reference D1388, Box 99.

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank John Newbury who drew my attention to this document.

<sup>4</sup> It is not on the Old Town Survey map made between 1855 and 1857.

<sup>5</sup> Goding, J., *Norman's History of Cheltenham*, (1868), p.548, for example noted that the Duchess of Clarence stayed at the hotel but no mention is made of the Duke.

<sup>6</sup> This drawing is in private ownership.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, A., *Cheltenham, a new history*, (2010), Carnegie Publishing Ltd. For an illustration of the Great House as depicted on the Robins' fan, see p.169.

<sup>8</sup> Cheltenham Local History Society, *Journal* **29**, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Gloucestershire Archives reference D2202/3/78/14. The Winterbotham and Gurney Archive, 58 boxes, is being catalogued by a group of Cheltenham Local History Society members, 20013 -2014.

# Race for the Cheltenham Stakes 1868

GEOFF NORTH

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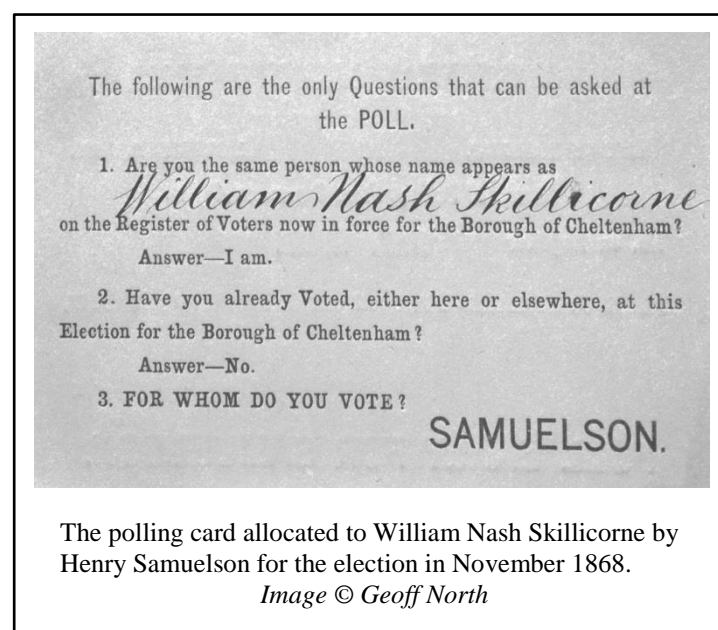
I READ WITH INTEREST THE ARTICLE IN JOURNAL 28 (2012) by Martin Horwood, MP and Anthea Jones *The Members of Parliament for Cheltenham, 1832-1928*, and in particular, references to the 1868 Election<sup>1</sup>.

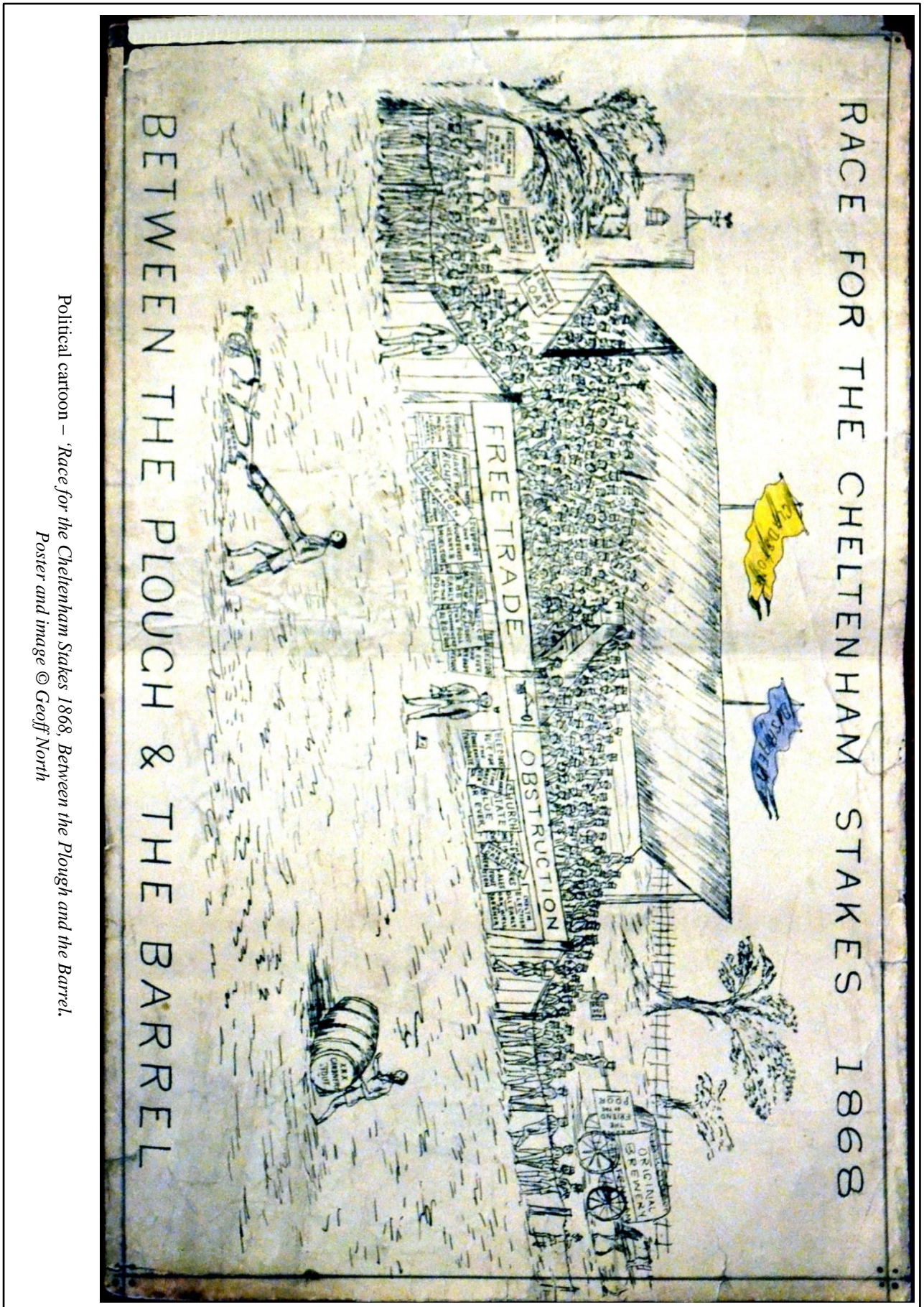
Two of my ancestors were also elected at this time - Frederick North as Liberal MP for Hastings (1831 - 1835; 1854 - 1865 and 1868 - 1869) and Col. John Sidney North as Conservative MP for Oxfordshire (1852 - 1885, Privy Counsellor 1886).

The 1867 Reform Act greatly increased the size of the electorate. Votes in England in the 1865 Election totalled a mere 697,932 whereas the 1868 Election recorded 1,996,704 votes. Gladstone became Prime Minister and Henry Bernhard Samuelson was elected Liberal MP for Cheltenham.

It is often said that 'politics is a dirty game' and the 1868 Election appears to confirm this. Petitions<sup>2</sup> were raised against both Frederick North and Henry Samuelson. Frederick North was one of two MPs elected in Hastings, the other being Thomas Brassey. Frederick was accused of 'bribery' and 'treating' by Parliamentary candidates the Honourable Colonel Calthorpe and Clement Arthur Thruston. An association set up by the two MPs to encourage registration of their voters, paid for time off and provided refreshments. It was found that Brassey's extravagant spending was not illegal even if it was intended to influence the election as it was not aimed specifically at an individual<sup>3</sup>. Frederick was found to have no case to answer but his health was greatly affected by the accusation and his relationship with Brassey, an old family friend, ended.

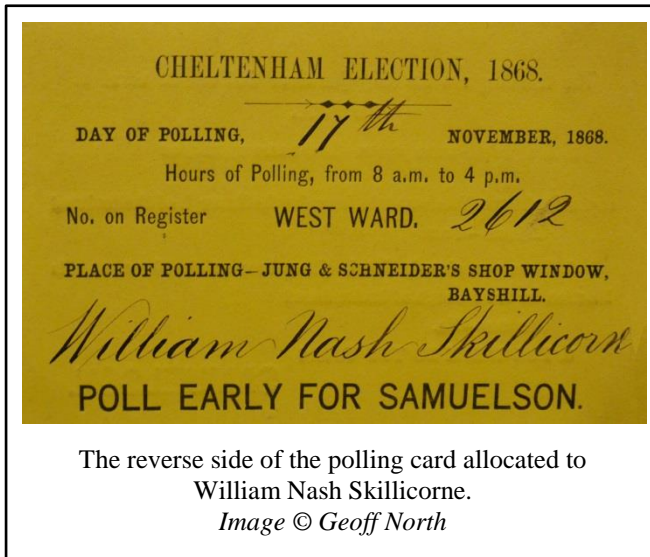
The charge against Henry Samuelson<sup>4</sup> was made by James Tynte Agg-Gardner<sup>5</sup> who accused Samuelson of bribery and undue influence in that a prize fighter had been employed to intimidate voters. The investigation concluded that there was no general riot and, although it was found that some voters had had their rates paid to qualify them as electors, it was not proved that Samuelson was responsible and he was duly elected.





Political cartoon – 'Race for the Cheltenham Stakes 1868. Between the Plough and the Barrel.  
Poster and image © Geoff North

Recently I was able to purchase ephemera relating to the 1868 Election in Cheltenham. A polling card allocated to William Nash Skillicorne<sup>6</sup> by Henry Samuelson indicates that polling was to take place on 17 November 1868 and the Polling Station was *Jung & Schneider's Shop Window, Bayshill*.<sup>7</sup>



The political cartoon is, I consider, a gem. *'Race for the Cheltenham Stakes 1868....Between the Plough & the Barrel'* cleverly portrays the election campaign in Cheltenham and to a large extent reflects that of the country. Electoral reform enabling significantly higher numbers to vote forced both parties to seek support from all classes. In simplistic terms, Agg-Gardner's campaign failed to do this and largely continued with the old order - *'Blue for ever; Church and State.'* Samuelson's campaign appears to have been

better organised and concentrated on winning the votes of all, especially the new electorate - *'Working Men - have your rights; Support one of yourselves.'*

The cartoon, although a crude drawing, measures approx. 17 in (43cm) by 12 in (30.5cm) and is full of detail and subtleties. On the right, under the Disraeli flag, disconsolate Agg-Gardner supporters are leaving the stand. On the left, under the Gladstone flag, a great many more supporters for Samuelson cheer and wave their placards - *'working mans rights; a cheap loaf; beware of bribery.'*

Samuelson was duly elected as MP for Cheltenham and served until the 1874 General Election. He was subsequently elected as MP for Frome in a by-election in November 1876.

<sup>1</sup> Horwood, M & Jones, A., 'The Members of Parliament for Cheltenham 1832-1928, CLHS Journal, 28 (2012), pp.3-13.

<sup>2</sup> It was routine for election petitions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to be brought on grounds of bribery, also to make accusations of treating and undue influence.

<sup>3</sup> *O'Malley and Hardcastle's Reports on Election Petitions*. London: Steven Haynes. 7 vols.1870-1929, p.217: *House of Commons Papers 1869*, pp.120-1; pp.235-242.

<sup>4</sup> *O'Malley and Hardcastle's Reports on Election Petitions*. London: Steven Haynes. 7 vols.1870-1929, p.62: *House of Commons Papers 1869*, pp.120; pp. 46-52.

<sup>5</sup> James Tynte Agg-Gardner was later to serve as MP for Cheltenham on four occasions between 1874 and 1928.

<sup>6</sup> William Nash Skillicorne – Cheltenham's first Mayor (1876).

<sup>7</sup> Jung & Schneider – nurserymen operating from German Gardens, St George's Road, Bayshill: Slater's Commercial Directory 1858-59; 1880 Cheltenham & Gloucester Directory.



# Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham

Compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

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Aldred, David, 'Andrew Morton Brown and a Welsh Connection', *The Congregational History Society Magazine* **7.1** (Spring 2013), 7-16. An extended version of the author's article in the *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **28** (2012).

Anon, *The Diamond Jubilee in Cheltenham*, Cheltenham Borough Council, 2012. 119pp. £5.00. A photographic record of events across the town.

Bell, Joan, and Spurgeon, Paddy (Compilers), *St Nicholas' Church, Prestbury. The Early Years 1930-1970*, privately published, 2010. 52p. Unpriced.

Blake, Steven, *A History of Cheltenham in 100 Objects*, The History Press, Stroud, 2013. 128pp. £12.99. Aspects of the town's past, told through 100 objects from the collections of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum.

Elder, David, *Literary Cheltenham*, Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2013. 96pp. £14.99. An anthology of literary quotations about Cheltenham, accompanied by appropriate paintings, prints and photographs.

Green, Chris (Editor), *Discovering Alstone Volume 3. The Ever-Changing Scene*, no publication details or date. 76pp. £3.50.

Hasted, Michael, *The Cheltenham Book of Days*, The History Press, 2013. 368pp. £9.99. One (or occasionally two) local events for each day of the year, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Miller, Eric, *St Peter's Church, Leckhampton. The Stained Glass Windows*, Leckhampton Local History Society, for St Peter's Leckhampton PCC, 2013. 24pp. £3.50.

O'Connor, David (editor), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin* **59** (2013). 60pp. £3.50. Articles on Charlton Kings by a variety of authors, including The Last Years of the Charlton Park Estate (David O'Connor), Ivy Cottage, Cudnall Street (Mary Southerton), Hamilton House, Brookway Lane (David O'Connor), The American Revolutionary Connections of Samuel Higgs Gael's Relatives (David O'Connor, John and Beverley Wisdom), Part 2 of Local Returns from the 1941-3 National Farm Survey (Brian Lickman), Local Railways (David Morgan), plus several shorter notes.

Price, Monica, and Jackson, Dennis, 'Decorative stones of Cheltenham Part 1: Churches', *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club* **46.1** (2013, for 2012), 96-119.

Spence, Cathryn, 'Thomas Robins and the Dorset Sketches', *The Georgian Group Journal* **21** (2013), 30-46. New information on this important Charlton Kings - born artist.

Vials, Joanna, *Living Stones. The Catholic Church of St Gregory the Great Cheltenham*, published by the author, 2013, and available from the church. 40pp. £3.50.

Wills, Jan, and Hoyle, Jon (Editors), 'Archaeological Review No. 36, 2011', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **130** (2012), includes evaluations and watching briefs in Cheltenham (Hunting Butts Farm, Midwinter Allotments and Albion House, North Street, p. 316) and Prestbury (8 High Street and Moat Cottage, Spring Lane, p. 327)

# Gloucestershire Archives: Cheltenham New Accessions, 2013

JULIE COURTENAY, Collections Team Leader

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We add details of all new 'accessions' (or batches) of archives to our online catalogue within 15 working days of their arrival at Gloucestershire Archives. 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 yet or may need written permission from the depositor to view them. Gloucestershire Archives is very grateful for these deposits and donations, and for news of archives held elsewhere, whether in paper or digital format.

If you have time spare, we also have a variety of opportunities for volunteering at the Archives. Our volunteers, including members of this Society, are helping to create detailed descriptions for the online catalogue. We really appreciate this support. Please see our website or contact us if you would like more information.

Website: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives)

Email: [archives@gloucestershire.gov](mailto:archives@gloucestershire.gov).

**All Saints parish records:** parish magazines, 1988-2012 (P78/2 Acc 13123)

**Cambray Baptist Church:** Pew rents, 1884-1908, and weekly offering accounts, 1899-1905 (D2766, Acc 13354)

**Cheltenham Borough Council:** minutes of the Parks and Recreation Committee, 1967-1973 (CBR, Acc 13228.2); minutes of the Housing Management Sub Committee, January 1976 to November 1978 (DC148, Acc 13228.3); files relating to 4 Clarence Road (Gustav Holst's birthplace), 1971-1976, and a loan to the Everyman Theatre, 1997 (DC148, Acc 13249); electoral register for Cheltenham, 2013 (Q/Rer, Acc 13294)

**Cheltenham Gas Light Company:** Contract for the building of Cheltenham gasworks, 1818 (D2516, Acc 13155)

**Cheltenham Head Teachers' Association:** minutes of meetings, 1926-1968; related correspondence, 1947-1952 (D13336)

**\*Cheltenham Hebrew Synagogue:** records include accounts, 1946-2003; photocopies of deeds and papers concerning synagogue property in Elm Street and deed relating to security on the synagogue, 1838; notes on the Moses family of Cheltenham by David Gompertz, a member of the family, undated [early 21st century]; constitution of the Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation, 1840, 1949, 1998; "The Padre's Newsletter", community newsletter from Rev Sigmund Margulies, 1945; marriage certificate counterfoils, 1971-1994; correspondence mostly concerning registration of marriages at the synagogue, 1965, 2002; synagogue newsletter, issue 1, 2000; correspondence and papers concerning family history, 2002-2008; quinquennial inspections of the building, undated [1960s] and 2010, and condition survey of the building, 2000 (D3883, Accs 13056 and 13138)

**Cheltenham Local History Society:** minutes, 1982-2006; correspondence and papers, 1980s-2000s (D13185)

**Cheltenham (later Cheltenham and Tewkesbury) Methodist Circuit:** St Mark's Methodist Church Sisterhood members' registers, 1972-1989 and Women's Fellowship members' register, 1990-2002 (D3418, Acc 13012.3); choir benevolent fund accounts, 1969-1979; statistics relating to youth organisations at the church, 1970-1986; junior church registers, 1985-1991 (D3418, Acc 13106.3); minutes of Pastoral Committee, 1974-1997; also Bethesda Methodist Church minutes of Women's Work Committee, later Network Committee, 1988-2004; (D7028, Acc 13106.5)

**Christ Church Girls' School:** photographs of pupils, 1933 (D13031, Acc 13031)

**\*Cole: Arthur Cole, band leader and musical director:** recording of "Flapperette" by Arthur Cole's Cheltenham Spa septet (BBC Midlands region, 10 August 1949); small printed book entitled "Marpessa" with inscription and donor's notes; "Seven Sea Poems" by Tony Hewitt-Jones inscribed to Arthur Cole, c.1913-c.1949 (D10001, Acc 13081.1)

**Co-operative Women's Guild (St Mark's branch):** committee minutes, 1936-1966, 1976-1980 ; membership record, 1936-1954; scrapbook/album recording activities, 1960-1962; photograph of tree planting, 1974 (*these were received among a larger deposit of Co-op archives. A catalogue to the whole collection was completed in 2013 thanks to a donation from The Midcounties Co-operative Limited*) (D2754 Acc 13025)

**\*Davis Gregory, solicitors of Cheltenham:** pre registration title deeds relating to Cheltenham including 7 Churchchurch Villas, Malvern Road, 1878-1981; 339 Hatherley Road, 1952-1981; 7 Cleevemount Close, 1956-1983; 31 Stoneville Street, 1936-2002; 4 Clare Court, Clare Street (earlier deeds mention

mission hall), 1805-1997; (D5902, Accession 12998)

**Deeds** and related papers of 48 London Road, Cheltenham, 1904-1999 (D8327, Acc 13023)

**Deeds** of Courtrai, Lansdown Castle Drive, (1856)-1991; 50 London Road, 1857-1973; 52 London Road, 1892-(1972); 5 Lansdown Crescent, (1878)-1972 (D13098)

**Deeds** to various properties in Cheltenham including 5 Courtenay Villas, 1880; deeds of 14 and 15 Courtenay Street, 1882-1912 ; deeds of Nibley House, 7 North Place (premises for Cheltenham United Service Club), 1843-2000; 41 Winstonian Road, 1902-1981; 6 Pittville Villas, 1862 and 56 Prestbury Road, 1972-1987; 2 Northwick Villas or "Northwick", Douro Road, 1919-1979; 43 Little or Upper Norwood Street; 4 Eton Villas or 77 Queens Road, 1909-1985; 4 Stoneville Street, 1948-1988; Hatherley Grange or 13 Hatherley Place, 1839-1953; 74 Priors Road, 1959-1986; 5 and 6 Dagmar Villas, 1879-1927; 8 & 10 Gratton Terrace and 11 & 13 Commercial Street, 1825-1984; 5-8 Cotswold Villas, Painswick Road, 1844-1919 ; 25 Suffolk Parade, 1910-1961; "Horn Acre" and 9 Suffolk Parade, 1858-1888 (D13328)

**\*Drake family of Cheltenham:** personal records of Tony Drake including records of Drake's department store, Cheltenham and concerning Woodleigh, The Park, where Tony lived; diaries of Tony's father Leslie Drake; papers concerning Gloucestershire Mountaineering Club and the Cleeve Conservators, of which Tony was a member, 20<sup>th</sup> cent (D13066) (*This collection, along with Tony's archive relating to the Gloucestershire Ramblers' Association, is being catalogued during 2014 thanks to local donations*)

**Everyman Theatre:** programmes, 2010-2013 and production files, 2006-2007 (D6978, Acc 13310)

**Faulkner-Aston: Harvey Faulkner-Aston of Cheltenham, architect:** research

material and copy of thesis entitled "The St Mark's Housing Estate, Cheltenham Spa, Gloucestershire: A Study of the Development and Present Day Conservation Issues relating to Cheltenham's First Inter War Housing Estate", submitted to the University of Bristol for an MA in Architectural Conservation, 2004 (D13157)

**Gloucestershire County Council archives:** Education Department file relating to E L Ward Citizens Prize Fund, Cheltenham, 1976-1980 (K2024); County Surveyor's Department files concerning the Cheltenham Northern Relief Road, 1979-1984 (K2028); photographs of Gloucester Road, including the New Penny pub, 1998 (K2033)

**Hughes family of Cheltenham:** family tree entitled 'A genealogical account of the family of Hughes, now of Cheltenham in the county of Gloucester', 1789 (D10591, Acc 13281)

**Liberal Democrats and predecessor organisations:** minutes of College Ward Liberal Democrats, Cheltenham, 1980s-1990s (D12940, Acc 13180)

**\*Mercurius Lodge no. 7507, Cheltenham:** records include minutes, 1957-2002; attendance registers, 1978-2012; declaration book, 1957-2008; secretary's correspondence and papers, 1956-2011; list of offices carried out by members, 1977-1984; accounts, 1987-2006 (D13233)

**Monkscroft Secondary School (from the Mary Bliss Collection):** report of trip from Monkscroft Secondary School to Switzerland, 1959; Monkscroft School magazines "Monks Chronicle", March 1958-1967 (S78/30 Acc 13047.4)

**\*S C Morris and Sons Ltd of Cheltenham, building contractors:** accounts, 1905-1931 (D13338)

**St Peter's parish records:** baptism registers 1929-2008; marriage registers 1940-2008; banns registers 1987-2008; services register 1994-2008; confirmations register 1930-2002; papers relating to the future of the church, 2001-2005; Cheltenham deanery synod papers, 2003-2006; PCC accounts, 1981-2007; church organ trustees accounts, 1953-2006; church restoration appeal accounts, 1974-1996; vestry minutes, 2003-2008; Mothers' Meeting Group records, 1961-1999; photographs, c.1949-c.1953; newspaper cuttings, (1938)-2005; pamphlet for the centenary of St Peter's church, 1849-1949 and order of service for funeral of Reverend Canon S.J. Richards, 1951 (P78/11, Acc 13246.1)

**St Peter's Church of England Boys' School (later Swindon Road School):** log book, 1886-1905 (S78/8 Acc 13246.2)

**St Thomas More Roman Catholic Church:** marriage register, 1988-2007 (D12952, Acc 13295)

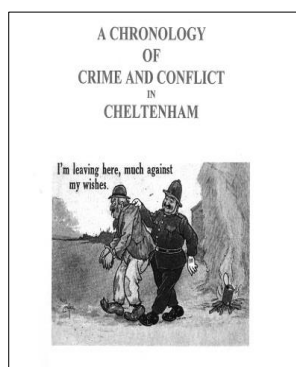
**Ticehurst Wyatt of Cheltenham, solicitors:** customer account book of F Beckingsale of High Street, Cheltenham, 1887-1888; milk account of J Rouse for "Wyelands", [Montpellier Grove], 1898-1899 (D13101)

**Young Arts Centre, Cheltenham:** records kept by the late Elizabeth Webster, its director to 1989, including annual "history files" containing material relating to the centre's activities during the year, production scripts, poetry magazines, photograph albums, artwork, pamphlets and booklets produced by and about the centre and also sound recordings of events and songs from productions, 1967-1989 (D 13172, Acc 13172 and 13248)

# Cheltenham Local History Society Publications

## JOURNALS and CHRONOLOGIES

See website for details and order form: [www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk](http://www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk)  
or ring 01242 243714 – Sally Self Journal Editor

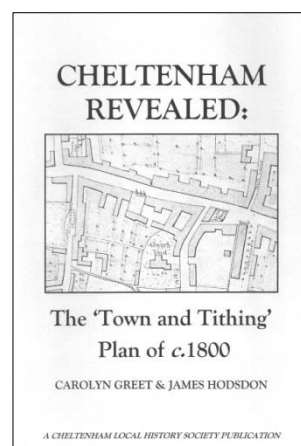
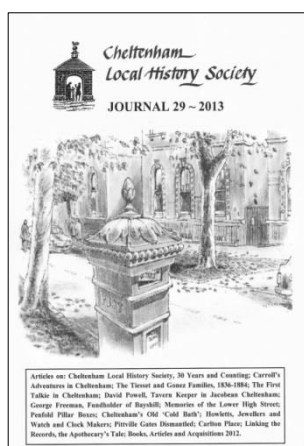
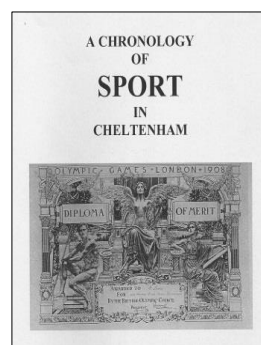


Other publications:

**Cheltenham Revealed:  
The Town and Tithing Plan  
c. 1800**

**Cheltenham Old Town  
Survey  
1855 – 1857 CD**

**St Mary's Cheltenham  
Parish Records 1558 –**



# Index to Journal 30

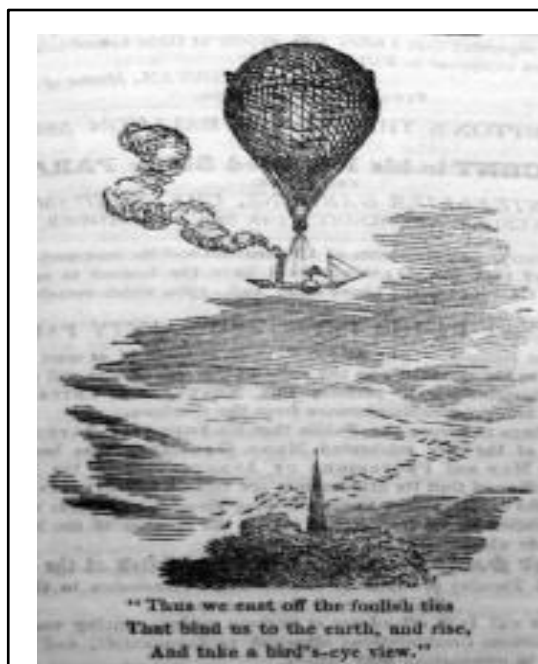
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Please note that most of the indexed page numbers refer to the first entry in an article.

<b>Agg-Gardner, James Tynte</b> .....	62	College Lawn .....	48
Albion Street.....	5	Coutts, Thomas, banker .....	60
Andrews, Ellen .....	51	Crescent Place .....	58
<b>Bailes, Diana Elizabeth</b> .....	<b>3</b>	Crookston War Hospital, Glasgow .....	43
Bakers' Association, Cheltenham.....	9	Cummins, Patrick Cpl .....	13
Bales, Agnes .....	52	<b>Day, C.E. Manton</b> .....	<b>56</b>
Barnett's, fish shop .....	7	Delaney, Cecil James, Pte .....	18
Bath Road .....	22	Dowty, George .....	57
Beale, Miss .....	27	Drew, Joseph Webster, town councillor .....	28
Bedford Buildings .....	61	Drill Hall, North Street. ....	57
Belcher, Alfred George, Pte .....	17	Driscoll, Francis Maurice, Sgt .....	12
Bennington Street .....	12	Driscoll, John Patrick.....	12
Berkeley, the Hon. Craven .....	22	Dykebar Mental Hospital, Paisley.....	43
Billings, Grace, Dr.....	52	<b>Eamonson, Ruth</b> .....	<b>50</b>
Boer War memorial .....	46	Earengy, William & Florence .....	49
Borovikovski(y), Lilian, Madame .....	49	Electric lighting.....	7
Boult, Winifred.....	51	Elischer, Madame .....	51
Boulton & Sons, sculptors .....	28	Essex Villas, Pittville Lawn .....	35
Bowman, Mary Anne .....	3	<b>Faithfull, Lillian</b> .....	<b>51</b>
Brassey, Thomas.....	62	Famous, The.....	9
British Expeditionary Force.....	14	Farm Cottage, Alstone .....	17
Broughton Castle, Oxon .....	16	First World War .....	11
Browning, Waler, Cpl.....	44	Fisher's Hotel & Boarding House.....	59
Brunswick Street .....	18	Flatman, Ada.....	51
Buckland Manor, Broadway.....	13	Flecker, Dr .....	53
Burn, Dr Alice .....	50	Food Reform Club, Clarence Street .....	50
<b>Cadena Cafes</b> .....	<b>4</b>	Forbes, John .....	30
Calthorpe, Col .....	62	<b>Gallipoli</b> .....	<b>11, 18, 43</b>
Canadian Expeditionary Force .....	16	Gallops, bakers & confectioners .....	6
Cargill, Eveline, Dr.....	52	Gardner, William Montague .....	22
Chantrey, Francis, portrait sculptor .....	31	Gardner's, bakers & confectioners.....	9
Cheltenham Examiner .....	23, 29, 53, 54	Garnett, Dr .....	50
Cheltenham Light Railway Company .....	13	Gedge, Wilberforce, Revd .....	52
Churches:		General Hospital .....	52
St Bartholomew, Oakridge.....	34	George Hotel.....	22
St Mary's Minster .....	44	Georges, bakery .....	8
Bayshill Unitarian .....	53	Gibbons, Charles Barry, Lt .....	15
St Matthew's.....	58	Gladwin, Ralph Hamilton Fane, Lt .....	16
St Mary's .....	58	Gleichen, Feodoa, Countess, sculptress .....	27
Apolistic Church .....	7	Gloucestershire Regiment, The....	12-14, 18, 20
Holy Trinity, Amberley.....	34	Gloucestershire Royal Engineers .....	44
St Gregory the Great .....	11	Goodyear, Harry .....	56
St Paul's.....	18	Graf Zeppelin .....	55
Clarence Hotel .....	22	Great House, The .....	58
Clarence Hotel & Boarding House .....	58	Great Western Road .....	12
Clarence Road .....	38	Grosvenor Place South.....	57
Clarence Street.....	22, 50, 58, 61	Grove Street .....	14
Clark, Leonard Brummel, Pte .....	17	Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society .....	51
Cold Bath, The .....	60		
Coldstream Guards .....	15		

- Handley, Councillor** ..... 52  
 Harriers, The Cheltenham..... 13  
 Hatherley Court ..... 28  
 Hawkins, Alexander Edward, Acting Major 14  
 Hawkins, Joseph..... 7  
 Hennessey, Christopher Hugh Scott, L-Cpl. 18  
 Henney, Thomas, Town Commissioner ..... 22  
 High Street..... 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 49, 57, 65, 68  
 Honeysett, Miss ..... 42  
 Hooper, Richard, surgeon..... 60  
 How, Lilian (Lilla)..... 49  
 Howlett, Miss ..... 42  
 Howletts of Cheltenham, jewellers, watch &  
 clock makers ..... 42  
 Hucks, Bentfield Hucks ..... 56
- Imperial Gardens**..... 21  
 Independent Labour Party ..... 49  
 Indian Civil Service ..... 52
- John Dower House**..... 58  
 Johnson, Amy ..... 57  
 Jubilee Cottage, Charlton Kings ..... 12
- King Street** ..... 46
- Lansdown Cottages, Gloucester Road** ..... 13  
 Lansdown Crescent ..... 52  
 Lansdown Lodge ..... 52  
 Leconfield House..... 28  
 Leopold,  
 Frederic ..... 4  
 Isaac Leibman ..... 3  
 Kathleen Miriam ..... 4  
 Lewis Liebman..... 3  
 Maurice ..... 3  
 Leopold's shops  
 141 High Street ..... 6  
 85, High Street ..... 5  
 Liberal Party ..... 49  
 Liddell's Hotel..... 22  
*Looker-On, The Cheltenham* ..... 23
- Macdonald, Major General** ..... 52  
 Maher, Frederick William, Pte ..... 15  
 Marfell, Mr ..... 3  
 Martin, Joseph Noah Pte..... 14  
 Martyn, George..... 49  
 Martyn, H.H. & Co..... 27  
 Maypole Dairy ..... 5  
 McCormick, Edward Pte ..... 13  
 McCormick, Henry ..... 13  
 McIlquham, Harriet ..... 47  
 Millers, chemists..... 7  
 Mills, Theodora ..... 48  
 Montpellier Gardens ..... 21, 24, 56  
 Montpellier Grove ..... 52  
 Montpellier Rotunda..... 28  
*Mostyn, Hales Road*..... 49  
 Muller, Gertrude, matron..... 52
- Murciani, Melle ..... 51  
 Mushet, Mrs ..... 53
- Nassau balloon**..... 56  
 Naunton Park Road ..... 49  
 Netley Military Hospital, Hants ..... 43  
 North Place ..... 32  
 North, Frederick, MP ..... 62  
 North, John Sidney, Col, MP ..... 62
- O'Hagan, George Laurence, Pte**..... 14  
 Oriental Cafe, The Promenade..... 3  
 Orphan Asylum, Female ..... 30
- Patch, Harry** ..... 19  
 Paul & Sons, Messrs, surveyors, ..... 58  
 Pitt, Joseph ..... 30  
 Pittville Estate ..... 30  
 Pittville Gates..... 30  
 Pittville Street ..... 5  
 Plough Hotel ..... 57  
 Portland Street..... 4, 38  
 Priory Lawn ..... 15  
 Promenade ..... 3, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 29, 46  
 Prothero, Henry, architect ..... 27  
 Pruen, G., Mr ..... 27  
 Prust, Christopher ..... 49  
 Pump Room ..... 32
- Queen Street** ..... 14  
*Queen's Hotel* ..... 46
- Race for the Cheltenham Stakes 1868,**  
**cartoon** ..... 64  
 Ricardo, David, MP ..... 34  
 Rodney Road..... 33  
 Royal Field Artillery ..... 14  
 Royal Gloucestershire Hussars ..... 43  
 Royal Horse Artillery..... 14  
 Royal Irish Regiment ..... 15  
 Royal Parade ..... 14  
 Royalty  
 Queen Charlotte ..... 21  
 William IV ..... 21  
 Queen Victoria ..... 26  
 Princess Beatrice ..... 27  
 Edward VII..... 28  
 George V ..... 28  
 Duchess of Clarence..... 22  
 Duke of Clarence ..... 59  
 Konig William, Gottenburg ..... 25  
 Rudman, Aloysius John, Pte ..... 16  
 Rutland Street ..... 18
- Samuelson, Henry** ..... 62  
 Sanderson, Violet..... 52  
 Schools & Colleges  
 Cheltenham College ..... 53  
 Birmingham Technical College ..... 8  
 Cheltenham College ..... 14, 27

Dean Close .....	53	Sydney Arms.....	5
Downside .....	14	<b>Teague, Charles.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Grammar School kindergarten .....	8	Thirlestaine House .....	22
Ladies' College.....	26, 51	Thruston, Clement Arthur .....	62
Radley .....	16	Town Hall, The .....	28
Technical College .....	9	Townsend's Bakery.....	6
Scott, Charles T., railway contractor .....	13	<b>Union Workhouse .....</b>	<b>14, 18</b>
Second World War .....	9	United Services Club .....	32
Segrave Villas, Pittville Lawn .....	33	<b>Vegetarian Hotel, Winchcombe Street .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Skillicorne, William Nash .....	64	Victoria Nurses' Home .....	52
Smith, Cyril, Theodore .....	43	<b>Wakefield, Charles.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Smith, Frederick, Pte .....	12	Warwick Place .....	4
Smith, J.H., Revd.....	53	Waterfield, Mrs .....	53
Southall, John & Celia.....	2	Watson, William Arthur, architect & surveyor .....	32
Southam de la Bere.....	55	Wellington Square .....	49
St George's Place .....	58	Weston, Garfield .....	8
St George's Street.....	12	Whaddon Farm, Cemetery Road.....	57
St Paul's Street .....	12	Whitaker, Thomas Elsam, carver .....	28
Stables, Mary, Mrs .....	48	Widden Street, Gloucester .....	43
Stapleton, Catherine .....	60	Wilkins, Dr & Mrs E.....	50
Stapleton, Lady Frances .....	60	Wilks, Charles Peter, Pte .....	15
Staverton House.....	47	Winchcombe Street.....	32, 33, 40, 50
Stoke Orchard.....	57	Women's Freedom League .....	49
Stokes, John Milbourne .....	30	Women's Social & Political Union.....	47
Stokes, Margaret.....	36	Women's Suffrage Society .....	47
Stokes, Martha Frances .....	30	Worcestershire Regiment.....	15
Stokes, Robert, architect & politician .....	30	Workman, Bill .....	9
Strachan, Josiah Greathead.....	33	<b>York Passage.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Strand, The .....	7		
Such, Samuel J.....	46		
Such's engineering works.....	46		
Sudeley Place .....	32		
Sun Street .....	14		
Swiney, Major General.....	48		
Swiney, Rosa, Mrs.....	48		



## Balloon Crazy?

It seems likely, that during the 1830s, Cheltenham went 'balloon crazy,' if the coverage in the *Cheltenham Looker-On* is anything to go by. Full page advertisements for, and images of, the events in Montpellier Gardens appeared regularly. The magazine's proprietors even adopted, as their masthead, the *Royal Vauxhall Nassau Balloon* – even if they did add a sly caricatured face! (see left) The last date this appeared was April 1839.