



Cheltenham Local History Society

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Introduction

SALLY SELF, Journal Editor

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A WARM WELCOME TO ALL our readers and I hope you thoroughly enjoy this, the 31st edition of the Society's Journal. I say it most years but this one, once again, is special.

We have several articles by writers who have not contributed before. Virginia Adsett, was the Outreach Officer at the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (now The Wilson) working with primary school children; her article arises from her study of The Pied Piper Operation in the Second World War, as it affected Gloucestershire. Eric Williams has been a society member for several years and his contribution on local injustice in the 14th century is especially welcome as we are offered so few articles from the period before 1780. April Marjoram, has been working on an exploration of the artists who lived or worked in Exmouth before 1910. One of those artists was Richard Hayley Lever (1875-1958) and it was while she was researching his life that she came across Domenico D.J. Barnett of Cheltenham: artist Richard Lever named his son after Domenico. One of Barnett's paintings, *'Apple Blossom'*, has been reproduced on the back cover of the Journal.

There is an article from Alan Munden, a former contributor, who we have not heard from for some time, now that he has moved north. We also have articles from many of our regular authors, some of whom have been very tolerant and accepted that their articles have had to be 'carried forward', as we are in the fortunate position of having more material than we can accommodate. Sue Rowbotham's article on the suffrage movement in Cheltenham, adds more valuable information to that topic. The second part of Leopold's, bakers and confectioners, is included – I have had many responses concerning the first part, as many of you have fond memories of those 'drippers'. There are excellent contributions from David Alder, Vic Cole, Joyce Cummings, David Elder, Anthea Jones and Eric Miller. Steven Blake and Julie Courtenay have also made their usual contributions on Cheltenham Books and Articles and Accessions for 2014. My grateful thanks to all of you for your hard work in helping me to produce our Journal.

Unfortunately I have to announce, that once again I am looking for someone to become Editor for this Journal. As I have said in the past, it is a very enjoyable task – yes, it is time consuming during the winter months, but one gets to meet so many interesting people, the opportunity to learn more about the town and to be involved with helping the Society maintain high standards of historical research. Why don't you give me a ring and we can have an informal chat.

The Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham 1871-1914

SUE ROWBOTHAM

Background

IN 2003 FELLOW SOCIETY MEMBER Jill Waller and I came across a newspaper report of an arson attack by suffragettes in 1913 on *Alstone Lawn*, a substantial house which once stood in seven acres of landscaped gardens on the corner of Gloucester Road and Alstone Lane¹. Intrigued, but unable to find out more about the arson case or its protagonists, who were known only as 'Red' and 'Black', we turned our attention elsewhere.

I began researching the *Alstone Lawn* story again after hearing about the 100th anniversary of the death of suffragette Emily Wilding Davison on 4 June 1913, after having been struck by the King's horse at the Epsom Derby. I have finally been able to piece together the story behind the arson case, and have tried to put it into the broader context of the women's suffrage movement in Cheltenham and nationally from the early 1870s to the outbreak of World War One.



'The Majesty of the Law'.
Published in *Punch*, 5
March 1913.
See *Journal* front cover for
a colour reproduction

Radical leanings

Cheltenham has had a long-standing radical tradition, with many followers of non-conformist religious movements settling in the town, beginning with the Quakers as early as 1658, and Unitarians in the early 1660s, both of whom believe in equality for all. There was a strong Chartist community in Cheltenham in the early 19th century, espousing the concept of 'universal suffrage', that is the right of every adult male over the age of 21 to be able to vote, regardless of property ownership. In education too, the town was rich with radical new ideas. Samuel Wilderspin carried out pioneering work in educating the infant poor, establishing infant schools across the country from his home at Alpha House, St Georges Road, from the 1820s until 1839². The foundation of Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1854 demonstrated the importance

many influential people in the town attached to the radical concept of making academic education accessible to middle-class girls.

Early Days of Women's Suffrage in Cheltenham: 1871-1912

Bristol is acknowledged to have been the hub for the women's suffrage movement in the south-west of England in the 19th and early 20th century and one of the foremost centres for the movement in the country. However, Cheltenham became the focus for much of the campaigning for women's suffrage in north Gloucestershire, as is clearly

demonstrated by the number of key national figures who were invited to speak in the town. There were also strong links between campaigners in Cheltenham and Bristol. Although there were undoubtedly earlier advocates of women's suffrage in Cheltenham, it was the visit of Lydia Becker³, a leader in the early British suffrage movement, who spoke persuasively at a public meeting at the Corn Exchange on 28 February 1871, that seems to have been key to the formation of the Cheltenham branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage in the early days of the movement. Mrs Eliza Griffith, the 43-year-old wife of the Revd David Griffith, the Unitarian Minister of Bayshill Chapel⁴, was appointed as the first Branch Secretary, while 53-year-old Mrs Eliza Robberds, wife of the Revd John Robberds, a retired Unitarian Minister⁵, became the Treasurer. The other committee members were Mrs Mary Jane Briggs, thought to have been the wife of Thomas Graham Briggs, a 'member of Her Majesty's Council of Barbados', and 54-year-old Miss Lucy March Phillips, who drew an independent 'income from dividends'⁶. A Central Committee for Women's Suffrage was set up in London early in December 1871 to act as a '*central medium of communication between the many provincial and local suffrage committees*'⁷, and by the end of that year had official connections with 21 local committees across the country, including the newly-formed Cheltenham branch.

Miss Rhoda Garrett, considered to be one of the most effective of the early suffrage speakers, was invited to a meeting at the Corn Exchange in Cheltenham on 3 April 1872 and was joined by her cousin Agnes. Both women were active in the London National Society for Women's Suffrage set up in 1867 and had become members of the Central Committee in 1871. The meeting at the Corn Exchange was chaired by Henry Bernhard Samuelson, Liberal MP for Cheltenham, who had presented the town's first petition in favour of women's suffrage in the House of Commons on 12 May 1869⁸, and a second petition on 28 March 1871. On the platform was Bath Quaker Miss Liliash Ashworth⁹, another significant national suffrage speaker and a founding member of the Bristol and Clifton Society for Women's Suffrage. Also with her was the Cheltenham Congregational minister the Revd Dr Andrew Morton Brown, the Revd John Robberds, the Revd David Griffith, Mary Jane Briggs and Lucy March Phillips.

On 13 March 1877 another suffrage meeting was held at the Corn Exchange. The key speaker was Miss Isabella Tod, the major driving force behind the women's suffrage movement in Ireland. In 1871 she had established the North of Ireland Women's Suffrage Committee, the first suffrage society in that country, and her speeches were widely reported in both suffrage journals and daily newspapers in Ireland and England. Also speaking at the meeting were Miss Liliash Ashworth, and local suffrage supporters, Mrs Eliza Robberds, wife of the Revd John Robberds, and Mrs Harriet McIlquham. Harriet, described by Sue Jones as 'the most influential local figure in the 19th century context', worked tirelessly for the cause of women's suffrage, supported by her husband, James Henry McIlquham, surveyor to the Cheltenham improvement commissioners, a solicitor and partner in a well-established law firm in Cheltenham¹⁰.

On 27 April 1879, the Revd Joseph Hirst, the Unitarian Minister for Bayshill Chapel, lectured on 'The Position of Women', and on 3 May 1880 Miss Eliza Surge visited Cheltenham from Birmingham to address a meeting at the Assembly Rooms. Amongst those who actively supported the meeting were Emily Sturge, a Bristol Quaker and campaigner for women's education and suffrage; Mrs and the Misses

Colby from Bristol; Mr and Mrs McIlquham, and the Revd William Lennox, Minister for the non-conformist Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel in Cheltenham¹¹.

On 7 December 1880 the motion 'Should women, equally with men, be invested with the parliamentary franchise?' was discussed by the Cheltenham Debating Society. Most unusually, the women present were encouraged to participate. Miss Helen Blackburn (Secretary for the Bristol and West of England branch of the Society for Women's Suffrage) and Mrs Harriet McIlquham were amongst those who responded, and the motion was carried. Just 10 days later, on 17 December, Cheltenham's newly elected Liberal MP, the Baron de Ferrieres, chaired another meeting, this time under the auspices of the Bristol and West of England branch of the Society for Woman's Suffrage. The national Society branches were represented by Lydia Becker (Manchester), Jessie Craigen (London), the 'redoubtable' Mrs Maria Colby and her daughter Cordelia Colby (Bristol and West) and Helen Blackburn. The meeting adopted a more assertive tone than those previously held in Cheltenham, drawing up a 'memorial' for the Prime Minister the Right Honourable William E. Gladstone which read:

'...over five hundred thousand rate-payers in the United Kingdom are deprived of the power of voting in the election of Members of Parliament on the sole ground that they are women, which exclusion is directly opposed to the fundamental principle of representative government, and therefore unjust towards such ratepayers, depriving them of that free expression of opinion which is the only guarantee of liberty in the State...'

The meeting prayed that '*a measure be introduced to remove this disability*'. A deputation from Cheltenham was appointed to present the memorial¹². Jessie Craigen was a charismatic speaker, with a '*powerful and magnificent speaking voice*' who had campaigned on temperance and trade unionism across the country, but came to greater prominence in 1879 when she became a suffrage speaker. She was particularly successful at building up working-class support for the women's movement, although there is no evidence to suggest that this was the reason for her visit to Cheltenham.

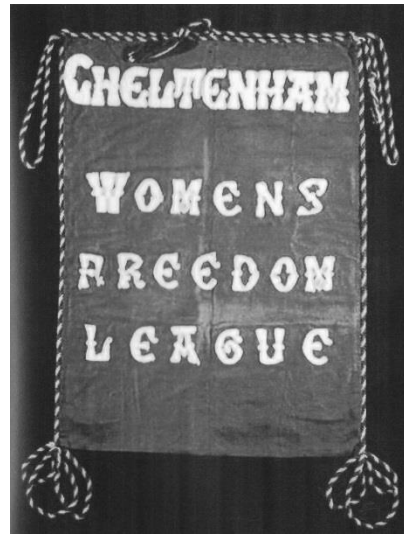
The decline and rise of the Cheltenham Society for Women's Suffrage

No reference has been found to the Cheltenham branch of the Society for Women's Suffrage in local newspapers between the late 1880s and 1896. The reason is not clear, but perhaps the Cheltenham Society went into decline as the more active members joined one or more of the many other, sometimes more radical, suffrage groups. There are understood to have been 17 distinct suffrage groups nationally at one time. In 1889 Harriet McIlquham attended the annual meeting of the Central National Society and was a member of the Women's Franchise League. In 1891 she was a member of the radical Women's Emancipation Union, and on 11 December that year she published a paper entitled *The Enfranchisement of Women: An Ancient Right, a Modern Need*, which she read to the Bedminster (Bristol) Champion Habitation of the Primrose League¹³.

The Cheltenham Society for Women's Suffrage was re-founded in 1896, with Mrs Rosa Frances Swiney as President¹⁴. Frances Swiney (more often known locally as Rosa) had been born in India and was the wife of Major General John Swiney of

the Indian Corps. She was also a Dame of the Primrose League and a member of the Women's Emancipation Union, and in 1897 the Union published her book *Plea for Disenfranchised Women*. The Society's first Secretary was Miss Platt of Toseville, Hewlett Road, followed by Miss Theodora Mills¹⁵ who served in the same capacity from at least 1902 until the outbreak of World War One.

By the end of the 19th century supporters of women's suffrage across the country were becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress. In 1903 Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst¹⁶ founded the Women's Social and Political Union, with support from her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia. This group advocated militant tactics, including demonstrations, stone-throwing, arson, window-smashing, cutting telephone wires and hunger-strikes, considering these essential for drawing attention to their cause. The militants claimed that their actions were only directed against empty buildings. *Daily Mail* journalist Charles E. Hands coined the word 'suffragette' as a term of derision for those campaigners who used violent protest, but the new Women's Social and Political Union adopted the term with relish and made it their own.



Cheltenham Women's Freedom League banner 1804-1914.
 Courtesy of the Library of the
 London School of Economics &
 Political Science

On 27 October 1906 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported that:

*'...a local lady [was] amongst those who [had] been consigned to prison for two months for causing a disturbance within the sacred precincts of Parliament...'*¹⁷

The lady in question was Cheltenham-born Mrs Edith How Martyn¹⁸, and the incident took place on 23 October when several hundred women demonstrated in the Central Lobby of the House of Commons, and outside in the grounds of the House at the opening of Parliament. Ten women, including Edith, were arrested for *'insulting or threatening behaviour likely to lead to a breach of the peace'* and were subsequently sent to Holloway prison¹⁹. Mrs Martyn's address was reported to be Clement's Inn²⁰, in the Westminster area, close to the Royal Courts of Justice.

In 1906 writer and pioneering trades unionist Miss Clementina Black drew up the Women's Suffrage Declaration²¹, to demonstrate the strength of support nationally for women's suffrage. The Declaration was signed by 257,000 professional and other women across the country. In 19 December the *Gloucester Citizen*²² reported that The Cheltenham Ladies' College strongly supported the Declaration and that it bore the signatures of Miss Elizabeth H. Sturge, Vice-Principal, and 33 other members of staff, all of whom were named in the article. Miss Dorothea Beale, College Principal from 1858 until her death on 9 November 1906, was a staunch proponent of women's suffrage, and obviously engaged like-minded women on her staff²³. She had been one of the members of the Kensington Society, a women's discussion group set up in 1865 which submitted a petition to Parliament that year advocating women's suffrage; the Society eventually became the National Union of Suffrage Societies. In her article

Sue Jones names teachers at the Ladies' College who were prominent in heading the women's suffrage cause. The *Citizen* also reported that Miss Theodora Mills, Secretary of the Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society, had been responsible for collecting 900 signatures for the Suffrage Declaration, and Miss Craig of Manor Road, had collected over 100 signatures.

Living an alternative lifestyle

Mrs Frances Swiney, President of the Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society, was a Theosophist and a vegetarian, and the Society was obviously attractive to those with 'alternative' convictions. In December 1908 Mrs Gard²⁴, a member of the Society, opened the Vegetarian Hotel in Winchcombe Street²⁵. The hotel, previously known as Holbourne House, was said to be the first of its kind in the country. Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society meetings were held at the Hotel throughout 1909. Many of those who were reported as attended the opening of the hotel are known to have been Society members, and it is suspected that some of the other named individuals were also supporters.

In addition to campaigning within Cheltenham, the town's suffragists also visited local villages, including Gotherington, Badgeworth and Swindon. They flew the Society's red and white banner and canvassed with leaflets, and Frances Swiney and Theodora Mills spoke at several outdoor meetings, supported by other members. The response from the village inhabitants was generally courteous, and in 1909 the *Cheltenham Looker-On* reported that on one occasion a male cyclist riding past hailed the banner and speakers with 'Hurrah! Hurrah!' Even when 'a passer-by of crabbed temper acted with some rudeness' in Shurdington 'an elderly man who was in sympathy offered to "go for" the offender'²⁶.



Suffragette activists, Miss Mary Keegan and Miss Nellie Crocker, speaking under the Big Lamp in Clarence Street, Cheltenham, 15 June 1908, to advertise their spectacular rally which took place in Hyde Park, London on 21 June.

Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic,
20 June 1908

Militancy Grows

Throughout 1912 and 1913 the number of attacks by militants demanding women's right to vote increased, and national and local newspapers were full of reports of suffragette 'outrages' across the country. On 8 March 1913²⁷ the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported at length on three Cheltenham suffragettes who had been

summoned to the local Police Court charged with *'unlawfully placarding pillar boxes'* on the evening of 2 February. The defendants were Miss Winifred Louisa Boulton, of Finray, College Road²⁸; Miss Agnes Bales, of Blenheim Place, Bath Parade²⁹; and Miss Ruth Eamonson of the Food Reform Depot in Clarence Street³⁰. All three women were members of the Women's Freedom League. The placard was written in what the *Chronicle* described as *'somewhat inflammatory language'*:

'Dare to be Free! Whereas the Prime Minister has egregiously failed to secure the fulfilment of his pledges, militant Suffragettes, who henceforth will require nothing short of a Government measure for the enfranchisement of women, announce their intention to defy and resist Government without consent, and invite the people of this country to rally to their support.'

Amid laughter in the courtroom the Prosecutor, Mr Cyril H. Taynton, described how the defendants had been caught in the act of sticking a placard onto a pillar box in Imperial Square by PC Ashton, who had also found other placards, including one on a pillar box in College Road and another on a street light in Sandford Road. PC Wilcox had seen Miss Eamonson putting a placard on a pillar box in St George's Road. Miss Bales stated with a smile *'We really dissociate ourselves from the militant – the very militant – suffragettes, and don't destroy property.'*

Miss Eamonson was represented in court by Miss Anna Munro, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League, which had been responsible for printing the placards and posting them as a protest against the attitude of Parliament. Miss Munro submitted a plea of not guilty for all the women as they did not recognise the courts. They refused to pay a fine of 10s plus costs each, and were therefore sentenced to 14 days in gaol.

Despite the lack of militant suffrage support in the town, tension within Cheltenham increased. On 10 May 1913 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported that:

*'...it was with some apprehension that theatre-goers entered the Opera House on Monday night when they saw patrols of "militants" outside. They could hardly believe that the latter were there merely for their ostensible purpose, the distribution of leaflets. When in the course of the evening – happily during one of the intervals – the electric light failed, the whisper went round that the suffragettes were at work. However, whether the suffragettes were, or were not, the fell cause of the breakdown, the performance was not changed, [and] before long the dynamo was at work again and all was well.'*³¹

In June 1913 Poole's Picture Palace in Albion Street ran the silent film of the 1913 Derby, which showed the 'sensational' footage of Emily Wilding Davison's fatal accident 'quite clearly'³². This must have shocked many people, and raised tensions and concerns still further in the town.

In Cheltenham, as elsewhere, there were many who opposed the women's suffrage movement. Generally opposition took a peaceful form, comprising largely of meetings and letters to the local press, but the increasing number of militant attacks by suffragettes in 1912-1913 led to a dramatic backlash from the anti-suffragists, sometimes with unfortunate consequences for non-militant suffragists.

On the evening of Tuesday 15 July 1913 a small group of women suffragists arrived in Cheltenham. They were the Western contingent of the 'great march to London', organised by the non-militant National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies that year. The aim of the march was to join a rally in Hyde Park and to place the claims of women to the Parliamentary vote before the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith. The Western group had marched from Wales, and on their way had been joined by others from Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Coleford, and the Forest of Dean. Accompanied by several Gloucester ladies on bicycles, they arrived at Lansdown Castle where they were met by Cheltenham suffragists, including Mrs. Swiney, the Revd J. H. Smith, Dr Alice Sanderson, and Dr Alice Burn (schools medical inspector). The small band marched into Cheltenham through the crowded Promenade to the Clarence Street lamp, the spot chosen for a meeting. The *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported in detail the events that followed, under the headline 'CHELTENHAM DISGRACED, RIOTOUS SCENES IN CLARENCE STREET'³³. Despite being opposed to the women's suffrage movement himself, a *Cheltenham Chronicle* reporter wrote:

*'...deeply sympathised with the ladies who were badly treated by a number of rude hobble-de-hoys...The disgraceful scenes were even more deplorable in that the pilgrims, who were passing through the town, were members of a strictly constitutional and non-militant society, and this fact was made prominent in an advertisement in the "Echo". They had, however, to suffer for the sins of their sisters... One discouraging feature for the pro-suffrage enthusiasts who were present... was the strong opposition displayed by some of the women and girls in the crowd.'*³⁴

Militant suffrage supporters were also blamed for being a bad influence on others, particularly the young. In late July 1913 Perry George Tolley and Edgar George Whale, both aged 16, were brought before the Cheltenham Magistrates and pleaded guilty to the charge of inserting lighted matches and paper into a pillar box at Up Hatherley on 20 July. Mr Cyril Taynton, prosecuting, believed that:

*'...the offence was committed in a spirit of mischief, and very little damage was done to the contents of the box, with only one postcard being burnt... [However] at the present time, when similar acts of destruction were committed by militant suffragettes, there was a temptation for other persons to follow their example... In this case he understood that the defendants were heard to say it would be thought that the suffragettes had done it, and they would escape.'*³⁵

Tolley, a chef, and Whale, an employee at Martyn's, were fined 15s (75p) each, including costs, in consideration of their otherwise good character. Edgar Whale's father said that he was a working man, and unable to pay, so the Bench paid the costs of 5s (25p) each.

What proportion of incidents in Cheltenham during this time were really the work of suffragettes is difficult to judge. On 30 August 1913 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported that a 'suspicious-looking contraption' about the size of the crown of a straw hat and 'bearing in red paint the fearful words "Votes for Women"' had been found outside the main doorway of the Town Hall on the previous Wednesday by Mr Charles Cossens, one of the painters³⁶. Around the device were several spent matches. Mr Cossens, who had handled explosives while serving in the army, had calmly dismantled the device, and discovered that it was 'fashioned with some ingenuity' and contained a large quantity of black powder. He placed a small quantity

of the powder on the parapet and tried lighting it with a match. Thankfully it failed to explode, or to burn. Police Sergeant Bunker was less cavalier with the ‘bomb’ and plunged it into water. Workers at the Town Hall were said to have regarded the device either as a joke for someone with ‘*weak nerves*’, or to give the suffragette cause ‘*a cheap advertisement*’. The police were satisfied that it was a fake.

The Arson Attack on *Alstone Lawn* - 20 December 1913



(Left) *Alstone Lawn*, drawn and lithographed by Henry Lamb, 1820s. Courtesy of The Wilson, Art Gallery & Museum

(Bottom) The site of *Alstone Lawn* today; (left) the SW corner, at the junction of Gloucester Road and Vine Yards Lane; (right) the SE corner at the junction of Alstone Lane and Gloucester Road.

Images © Sue Rowbotham



At 5 o'clock on the morning of Sunday 20 December 1913 a fire was discovered at *Alstone Lawn*, one of the largest houses in Cheltenham. The house, unoccupied since the death of Mary Prescod de Sales La Terriere on 11 September 1911, stood in seven acres of landscaped and well-timbered grounds on the corner of Gloucester Road and Alstone Lane, bordered to the west by the railway line and surrounded on the remaining sides by an eight-foot wall. The alarm was immediately conveyed to the fire station in St James's Square and Cheltenham police station. John Such, the Brigade Superintendent, ordered out the full strength at his command with steam pump engine, ladders and all the necessary appliances. The engine was at work within 10 minutes of the alarm and the fire was brought under control within half an hour. The central staircase which ran up from the floor of the house past three landings to the top bedrooms had been completely burnt out and a hole about 10 or 12 feet square had been made in the roof. It was thought that the only reason that there was not further damage was that the Brigade had arrived so promptly. As soon as the extent of the fire was known Superintendent Such ordered half his men to return to

headquarters in case of another call elsewhere. *The Gloucester Journal* commented that this was:

...a wise precaution in these days when groups of suffragette firebrands are infesting the country, dealing destruction on every hand.'

Superintendent Such deduced that the perpetrators had made their entrance through *Alstone Lawn Lodge* on the Gloucester Road, walked across the lawn, entered through an open conservatory window and made their way to the hall and staircase. They had come well-prepared for their 'dastardly errand'. Suffragette literature and an empty two-gallon can, which had contained paraffin, were found and paraffin was splashed liberally over the walls. The marks of small stockinged feet, one with a prominent large toe, were found on the floors between the conservatory and the hall, and all along these tracks there was a strong smell of paraffin.



Suffragettes 'Red' and 'Black'
being transferred from Cheltenham
Police Court to Worcester Gaol.

*Cheltenham Chronicle and
Gloucester Graphic, reported
27 December 1913
Courtesy of Jill Waller*

On the morning of Monday 21 December two young women were placed in the dock at Cheltenham Police Station, and charged with setting fire to *Alstone Lawn*. On being arrested both women had absolutely declined to give any name and address, or to comply with any of the regulations, and had also begun a hunger-and-thirst strike. They were described in the court records simply as 'Red' and 'Black'. In the court hearing that followed, Constable Herbert Antell stated that at 4.30am on Sunday 20 December he had been on duty on the pathway leading from St. Mark's to Arle Road, known as the Cinder Path, within a quarter of a mile of *Alstone Lawn*, when he had seen the two women. At 9.20 a.m. they were arrested by Sergeant Welchman as they walked along the Tewkesbury Road, coming from the Arle direction, and were taken to the station by Inspector Whyton. At the station there was a strong smell of paraffin from the prisoners' clothing. Their stockings were also saturated with paraffin, their boots smelt strongly of it, and there were '*particles of paraffin on the shorter prisoner's cloak or waterproof*'.

The Bench asked for a remand until the following Monday to enable him to make the necessary inquiries concerning the women. Asked whether they had any objection to the remand, the taller of the two prisoners answered in a tone suggesting that she thought it funny, '*Only one - that we don't approve of this court at all. We don't see why men should try us in the least. There are no women to try us*'. The Bench had no alternative but to detain the two women in custody. The waiting crowds and press were shocked when the women emerged from the police station that afternoon with their hair loose about their shoulders and not wearing hats, shoes or stockings. 'Red' and 'Black' were understandably reluctant to be photographed as

they were taken to the Midland railway station by taxi where they caught the 2.55pm train to Worcester, accompanied by two police officers. They were then transferred to Worcester Gaol, to await trial.

'Red' and 'Black' continued their hunger-and-thirst strike while in Worcester Gaol until 25 December when, under the order of the Home Secretary, they were released under licence to the care of Mrs Impney in King's Norton, under the Prisoners' Temporary Discharge Act of 1913, often known disparagingly as the Cat and Mouse Act³⁷. The women were released on condition that they returned to Cheltenham the following Monday 28 December. On that date the Cheltenham Bench was told that 'Red' and 'Black' had escaped³⁸. A warrant was issued for their arrest, and detailed descriptions of both women were circulated across the country.

Incendiary Incidents at public and commercial premises - 1914

On 12 January 1914 the *Western Daily Press* reported that the telephone wires at the Cheltenham Head Branch of the Cooperative Society had been '*torn asunder and the usual reference to "Votes for Women" chalked up in a conspicuous place*'.³⁹ The report also said that a placard bearing the words 'Your turn next' had been found on one of the gates of the Grammar School buildings. It was unclear whether these incidents were the work of suffragettes or other perpetrators, and no further reporting on either of these stories has been found to date.

Early on the morning of 8 January 1914 a serious fire broke out in the geological department of the science buildings at St Paul's Training College in Cheltenham. The outbreak, described in detail in the *Gloucester Journal*⁴⁰, was discovered almost simultaneously by Mr. Jack Such, junior, a member of the Cheltenham Fire Brigade, who gave the alarm to his comrades and the police, Mr. J. McFee, headmaster of the Cheltenham Practising School, who lived within the grounds of the College, and a number of others. However, by the time the Brigade arrived the fire had taken serious hold and, fanned by strong winds, the conflagration spread quickly east from the geological department to the examination and recreation room, and west to the supplementary laboratory. It took some time for the Cheltenham Fire Brigade to bring the blaze under control. Damage to the buildings, fittings and apparatus was substantial, and was later estimated at £5,000.

Unsurprisingly, given the circumstances surrounding the recent fire at *Alstone Lawn*, the fire at the College was immediately attributed to 'incendiary suffragettes', but a diligent search revealed no traces of literature or other evidence to support this theory. The fire had been started in the geological room, where there was said to have been 'absolutely no inflammable material'. The premises had been locked by the Chief Porter at 10 pm and it was:

*'...practically certain that from that moment no one entered the doomed buildings till the fire had broken out, as when the Brigade arrived they found all the doors and gates locked, and consequently they had to force an entrance.'*⁴¹

The key to the door into the geological room had been found, unusually and mysteriously, on the corridor side. There was no indication of any electrical or gas fault and therefore no other satisfactory explanation for the fire; an incendiary was still suspected.

Eager to benefit from the mystery surrounding the origins of the fire the suffragettes ran a piece in their militant publication *The Suffragette* on 16 January 1914⁴² under the headlines 'COLLEGE ABLAZE IN CHELTENHAM' and 'SUFFRAGETTES SUSPECTED'. The article repeated much of what had been said in the *Gloucester Journal*, but stated that '*Although no Suffragette literature was found upon the premises it [was] strongly suspected that Suffragettes [were] responsible*'. The article also claimed dramatically that the damage to the College was '*estimated at anything from £6,000 to £10,000*'.



Cheltenham Fire Brigade pose in front of the new Fire Station, St James' Square, with their Merryweather steam fire engine, 1906.

Courtesy of Jill Waller

On the same page as the report on the St Paul's Training College fire *The Suffragette* ran two other stories about the impact of militant suffrage action on Cheltenham⁴³. The first, headlined 'SCARE AT ALSTONE BATHS' read:

'The impression that the fire at St. Paul's Training College was due to Suffragettes was intensified when it was made public that about two o'clock on Wednesday morning someone had entered the Alstone Baths.

'The caretaker was awakened by the barking of his dog at that hour, but being unable to hear anything he went to sleep again. However in the morning there were certain indications that the building had been entered. A window had been forced and a woman's footprints were clearly visible inside the building and on the garden border outside.

'Nothing was missing from the premises, and it has also been pointed out that if the firing of the building was premeditated, the office, where the footprints were discernible, would certainly have been selected as the best place from which to create a conflagration, for it is largely a wooden structure.'

The other story in *The Suffragette*, headlined 'PRECAUTIONS IN CHELTENHAM', hints at the anxiety that many probably felt about the possibility of further suffragette action in the town at that time:

'A large firm in Cheltenham [not further identified], whose stock comprises many thousands of pounds' worth of timber, have made arrangements for a permanent night-watch of their premises, having in view the number of recent fires attributed to suffragettes.'

Neither of these stories has been supported by other evidence so far.

Fire at Arle Court, 22 February and the Outbreak of War, August 1914

The third ‘great fire’ in Cheltenham within eight weeks almost completely destroyed the west wing of Arle Court near Cheltenham in the early hours of Sunday 22 February 1914. This substantial mansion⁴⁴ (now known as Manor By The Lake) had been owned by Derbyshire-born businessman Mr Herbert Unwin since 1904. Strong gales, hail and rain seriously hampered the work of both the Cheltenham and Gloucester City Fire Brigades, but eventually they managed to bring the blaze under control, using water pumped from the lake. All 14 family members and servants narrowly escaped with their lives, with three servants having to jump from bedroom windows. A substantial report on the fire published in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* on 28 February 1914⁴⁵ stated that the fire had almost certainly started in the kitchen, which formed part of the west wing, and damage to the building was estimated to be £5,000. There was apparently no evidence of suffragette literature or slogans, but the paper said that the cause was ‘a matter of vague surmise’.

On 9 May 1914, the *Gloucester Journal*⁴⁶ revealed that one of the women⁴⁷ involved in the Alstone Lawn arson attack had been identified from a photograph as



Lilian Lenton, Home Office surveillance photograph, c,1912
Wikipedia

Miss Lilian Lenton, a dancer and one of the most militant suffragettes in the country. Lilian had travelled widely since the Cheltenham attack in December 1913, using a variety of disguises to evade capture, but had been recognised and re-arrested at Birkenhead on 5 May under the Cat and Mouse Act for attempted arson at Doncaster. Steps were taken to secure her re-appearance before the Cheltenham Bench, but she was also wanted in connection with an arson attack on the Kew Gardens Tea House in February 1913 and for another offence at or near Manchester. On 12 May 1914, just three days later, Lilian was released from Armley Gaol in Leeds to a secure house under the Cat and Mouse Act, to recover from another hunger-and-thirst strike. Yet again she escaped her police guards while awaiting trial, this time dressed as a grocer’s boy⁴⁸.

The other woman involved in the arson attack on Alstone Lawn has not been identified to my knowledge, but may have been Olive Wharry,

who had participated in the attack on the Kew Garden Tea House and other London locations with Lilian Lenton.

On 4 August 1914, England declared war on Germany. Two days later the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies announced that it was suspending all political activity until the war was over. The leadership of the militant Women’s Social and Political Union began negotiating with the British government, and on 10 August the government announced it was releasing all suffragettes from prison. In return, the Women’s Social and Political Union agreed to end their militant activities.

Many of the suffrage groups, both militant and non-militant, re-directed their considerable energies to supporting the war effort. Nationally-renowned actress Lillah McCarthy, born in the High Street, Cheltenham, was a staunch suffragist and Treasurer of the non-militant Actresses' Franchise League, which existed from 1908-1934. The League, which claimed to have 900 members at the start of the war, raised substantial sums of money in 1915-1916 for the establishment of the British Women's Hospital for severely-disabled ex-servicemen, initially in what had been the Star and Garter Hotel on Richmond Hill, London⁴⁹. The League also created a Theatre Camps Entertainment group, which toured military bases throughout the country.

Whatever happened to Lilian Lenton?

In a fascinating interview recorded by the BBC on 5 February 1955, a still-unrepentant Lilian Lenton claimed that her aim had been to set fire to two empty properties a day during the height of her campaign - when she was not in custody. Her objective was '*...to create an absolutely impossible condition of affairs in the country, to prove it was impossible to govern without the consent of the governed*'. In a longer BBC interview recorded on 1 January 1960, she talked with relish about her many escapes, including the one following her arrest in Cheltenham. Because of the frequency of her escapes Lilian Lenton became known as the '*tiny, wily, elusive Pimpernel*'⁵⁰.

During the First World War Lilian Lenton served with distinction in Serbia with the Scottish Women's Hospitals Unit and was awarded a French Red Cross medal. After the Russian Revolution she travelled in Russia with fellow suffragette Nina Boyle. She later worked in the British Embassy in Stockholm. She was a speaker for the Save the Children Fund, and from 1924 to 1933 was a speaker and travel organiser for the Women's Freedom League, as well as the editor of the League's *Bulletin* for over 11 years. After working in Scotland in animal welfare she became the financial secretary of the National Union of Women Teachers in 1925 and continued in this role until 1953. Lilian Lenton died on 28 October 1972, aged 81.

The Prescod Hinds mystery

Whilst researching for this article I found the abstract of the will of Dame Mary Jane Briggs, thought to be a founder member of the original Society for Women's Suffrage in Cheltenham, in the National Probate Calendar Index for 1918:

'BRIGGS, Dame Mary Jane of the Island of Barbados and of 14 Challoner Mansions, West Kensington, Middlesex, widow, died 16 November 1918 at 14 Challoner Mansions. Probate London 31 December to Charles Prescod Hinds Corbin, no occupation. Effects £98 3s 6d.'

Charles Prescod Hinds Corbin was a relation of William Hinds Prescod, former owner of *Alstone Lawn*, and Mrs Mary La Terriere, last occupant of the house, was William Hinds Prescod's adopted daughter⁵¹. This connection between *Alstone Lawn*, the La Terriere family and a known suffragist is intriguing, and hints that there may be more of the story to be uncovered. We shall see.

Afterword

The story of the women's suffrage movement in the United Kingdom is a complex one, with many protagonists and many societies with similar-sounding names. I have

tried to focus on the actions of the suffrage supporters in Cheltenham; there were many other local meetings, for which there was not room here. I hope that this article and its companion piece by Sue Jones in the previous Journal give a flavour of the suffrage movement in Cheltenham, set in its wider context. If you have any further details or names that can help add to our understanding of the story please contact Sue Jones or myself in the first instance.

Acknowledgements Particular thanks to Sue Jones, Gillian Murphy (Archives & Special Collections, London School of Economics), Naomi Paxton and Jill Waller, and to Ann-Rachael Harwood and Steve Blake (Wilson Art Gallery and Museum).

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¹ See Jill Waller's article, 'Alstone Lawn, A Noble Residence', Cheltenham Local History Society, *Journal 15* for more about *Alstone Lawn*. Plans of *Alstone Lawn* have recently been found in D2025/Box 37

² Smith & Rowbotham, *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham*, pp.66-67, p.100

³ Lydia Becker, Wikipedia

⁴ In the census taken in April 1871 the Revd David and Mrs Eliza Griffith were living at 9 Montpellier Grove, Cheltenham (Piece 2673, folio 59, p.13). Crawford has identified this address as 'Clan Tavi House'

⁵ In the 1871 census Revd John & Mrs Eliza Robberds were living at Battledown Tower, Charlton Kings (Piece 2659, Folio 18, p.29)

⁶ In the 1871 census Lucy March Phillips was living with her unmarried elder sister Rose March Phillips at 5 Wellington Square, Cheltenham (Piece 2666, folio 14, p.22). Rose was also drawing income from dividends

⁷ *East London Observer*, 9 December 1871, p.7 col.5

⁸ *Western Daily Press*, 14 May 1869, p.2 col

⁹ Known as Liliash Ashworth Hallett after her marriage

¹⁰ For more about Harriet McIlquham see Sue Jones, "Apathetic" Women?' The Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham?', Cheltenham Local History Society, Journal **30**, (2014), p.47

¹¹ In the April 1881 census the Revd William Lennox and family were living at The Parsonage adjacent to 5 St Margaret's Cottages, Cheltenham (Piece 2573, Folio 64, P.6)

¹² *Western Daily Press*, 18 December 1880, p.3, col.4

¹³ The Primrose League was an organisation for spreading Conservative principles in Great Britain, which was in existence from 1883-2004

¹⁴ For more about Mrs Rosa Frances Swiney see Sue Jones, Journal **30**, (CLHS 2014), p.48

¹⁵ For more about Miss Theodora Mills, *ibid*

¹⁶ Mrs Pankhurst is known to have spoken in Cheltenham Town Hall on 16 February 1911. See *Cheltenham Examiner*, 16 February 1911 p.4 col.5 & p.5 col.5

¹⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 27 October 1906 p.2 col.2

¹⁸ Edith was the wife of George Martyn, son of Howard Henry Martyn, founder of H.H. Martyn's in Cheltenham in 1888. See Smith & Rowbotham, pp.36-37

¹⁹ *The Times*, 25 October 1906, p.15

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ Sometimes known as the Women's Franchise Declaration

²² *Gloucester Citizen*, 19 December 1906 p.5 col.4

²³ Dorothea Beale, Wikipedia

²⁴ Thought to be Mrs Lisa Mary Gard, born in Exeter, Devon. At the time of the 1901 census Mrs Lisa M. Gard, aged 40, was living with her husband 79-year-old John Gard, an insurance agent, at 37 Wincombe Street. She was a dressmaker with her own business, working from home (RD: Cheltenham ED: 1, Folio 67, p.27). By the 1911 census Lisa was a widow living as a lodger at 61 Hereford Road, Bayswater, London with Florence Carapata, an unemployed lady housekeeper; Rose Robinson, an unemployed vocalist, aged 30; Olga Papadachi, a 32-year old Greek teacher of languages. Lisa was described as an 'Astrologist' and widow, aged 50. (RD: Paddington ED: 10 Piece: 50)

²⁵ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 12 December 1908 p.3

²⁶ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 19 December 1906, p.5 col.4

²⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 March 1913 p.2 col.3

²⁸ The 1911 census recorded that a Mrs Boulton, a Miss Eamonson and one 'female servant' were living at Fintray or Fintrary, College Road. No other details are given

²⁹ In Apr 1901 Agnes Bales, aged 23, was living with her parents James Bales (domestic gardener) and his wife Lydia at 5 Blenheim Place, Cheltenham. Agnes' occupation was given as 'Clerk to a Fine Art Publisher'. All three were born in Bircham, Norfolk

³⁰ Ruth Eamonson's address at the Food Reform Depot is interesting. The Depot or Café, in business from 1909 to at least 1927, espoused an alternative lifestyle of vegetarian food and plenty of exercise.

³¹ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 May 1913 p.3 col.1

³² *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 7 June 1913 p.8 col.2

³³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 June 1913 p.7 col.5

³⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 19 July 1913, p.3 col.1

³⁵ *Gloucester Journal*, 23 August 1913 p.5

³⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 30 August 1913 p.2 col.2

³⁷ The government were at a loss as to how to deal with suffragette hunger-strikers, so they turned to a policy of force-feeding them by naso-gastric tube: an extremely distressing process, causing sickness, with the possibility of pleurisy if food passed into the lungs. Faced with growing public disquiet over force-feeding, and the determination of the jailed suffragettes to continue their strikes, the government rushed the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill Health) Act 1913 through Parliament. The Act allowed prisoners who were suffering illness, including that which was self-inflicted, to be released

under licence and under guard long enough for them to recuperate. However, the police were able to re-imprison offenders once they had recovered, usually within a week.

³⁸ *Gloucester Journal*, 7 January 1914, p.11 col.3

³⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 12 January 1914 p.3 col.5

⁴⁰ *Gloucester Journal*, 10 January 1914 p.11 col.2

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² *The Suffragette*, 16 January 1914 p.3

⁴³ The other articles relating to Cheltenham in *The Suffragette* are quoted in full. Other equally dramatic stories on the same page of *The Suffragette* were headlined 'Explosion at Llandaff College – walls blown out', 'hayrick burnt down – over £100 damage', 'smoking bomb at Stratford – gunpowder and phosphorus' and 'Hampstead pillar box on fire – many letters damaged'

⁴⁴ White pp.47-9

⁴⁵ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 28 February 1914 p.6 col.6

⁴⁶ *Gloucester Journal*, 9 May 1914 p.11 col.5

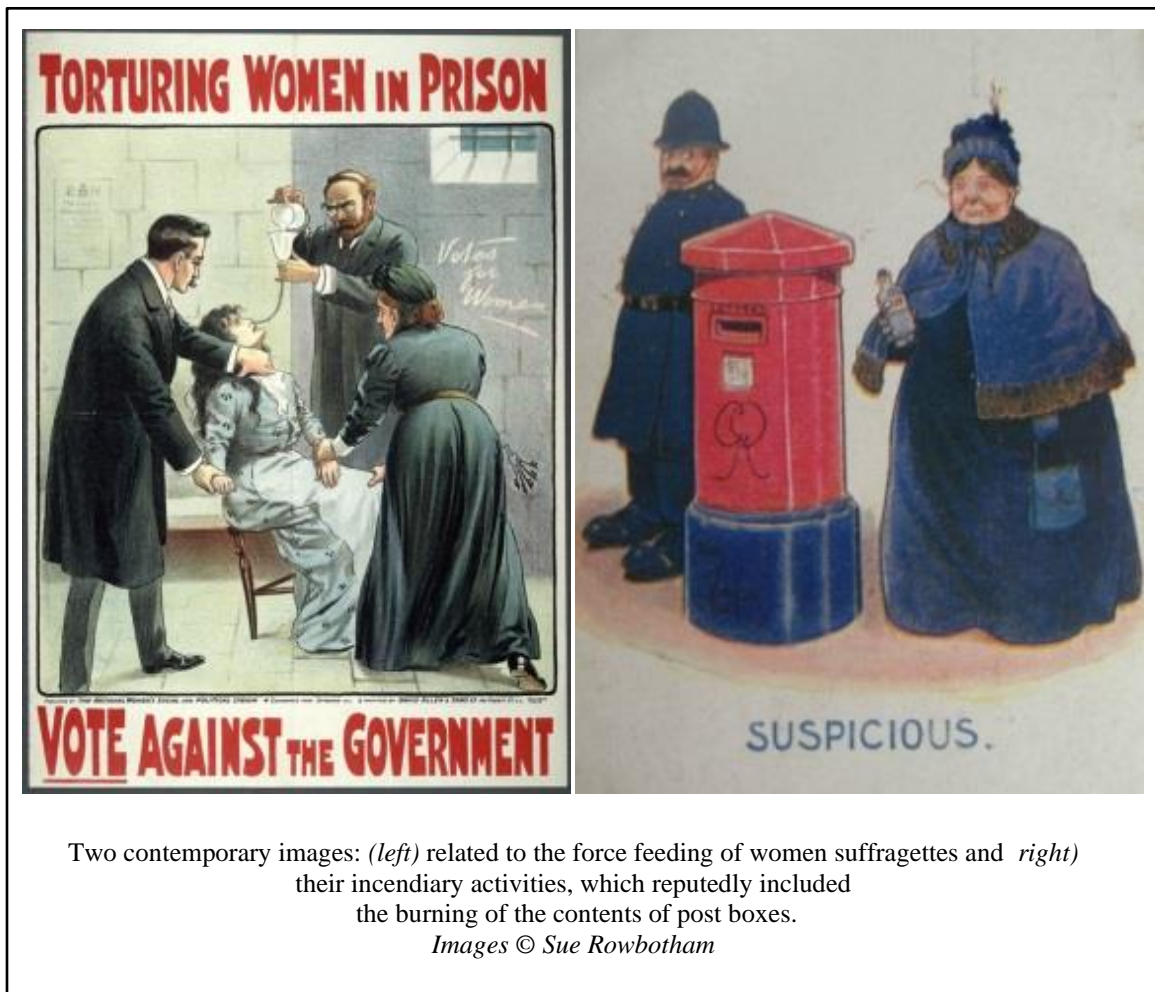
⁴⁷ The *Gloucester Journal* article of 9 May 1914 does not make it clear whether Lillian Lenton was 'Red' or 'Black', but it seems likely that she was the taller of the two women, who wore a red coat and did all the talking

⁴⁸ Lillian Lenton describes this dramatic escape in some detail, interview, BBC, recorded, 1 Jan 1960.

⁴⁹ See <http://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/royalstarandgarter.html> for more on the Royal Star and Garter Home

⁵⁰ *The Times*, *Miss Lillian Lenton, an Elusive Suffragette*, 4 November 1972 p.16

⁵¹ See Phillips, 'Barbadian Legacy', CLHS, Journal **16**, pp.14-18 and Waller 'Alstone Lawn', CLHS, Journal **15**, pp.45-48 for more about William Hinds Prescod and Alstone Lawn



Two contemporary images: (left) related to the force feeding of women suffragettes and (right) their incendiary activities, which reputedly included the burning of the contents of post boxes.

Images © Sue Rowbotham

Henry of Up Hatherley – A Tale of 14th Century Injustice

ERIC WILLIAMS

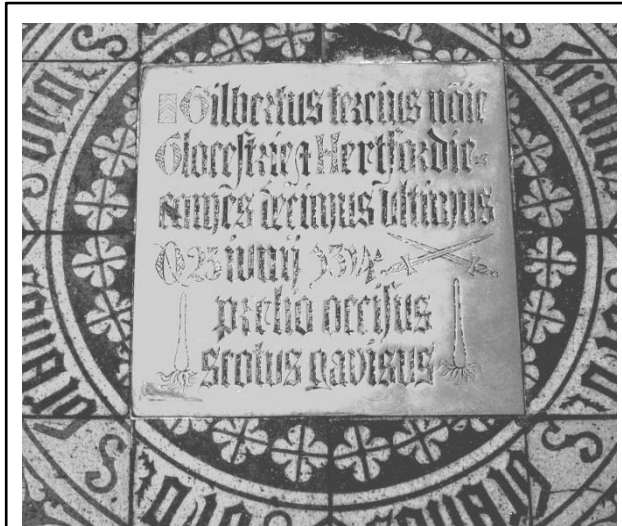
ALISOT, WIDOW OF HENRY OF HATHERLEY, wanted justice and as a last resort she took the brave step of putting her case before the king.¹ She sought formal recognition of the many harms and injuries that she claimed her late husband had endured at the hands of Robert Ashwell of Prestbury who was seised of the manor of Cheltenham and lands in Up Hatherley, Prestbury and Leckhampton. Henry's story unfolds at the beginning of the 14th century in the turbulent reign of Edward II and closes in 1330 when King Edward III in Parliament passed judgement on Alisot's plea.

Henry of Hatherley was a prosperous freeman who leased 80 acres of ploughland, meadows and woodland in Up Hatherley from Robert of Prestbury at an annual rent of £10 2s 0d (£10.05) and the presentation of a fur robe. Robert was intent on revoking this lease but Henry resisted this bid to deprive him of his holding. Robert, a man of influence in the district and noted for his avarice then embarked on a campaign of intimidation to achieve his goal. Thus it was that an obstinate yeoman farmer and a malevolent landlord engaged in a bitter feud that was to last for 20 years and end in tragedy. It is a catalogue of misdeeds that reflected the turmoil of the period and demonstrated how a royal power-struggle shaped the turn of events in a minor local dispute.

Robert tried first to eject Henry from his tenancy in 1309 by procuring a band of 30 local men to plunder Henry's land, carry off his corn and burn his farm buildings. Henry promptly laid charges against Robert and his band who were found guilty at trial in Gloucester and fined 20 shillings by the Keepers of the King's Peace.² But this did not deter Robert and four years later he used more subtle means to achieve his ends. By breaking into a chest and removing the lease agreement for Up Hatherley which Henry had put into safekeeping at Gloucester, Robert deprived Henry of his proof of tenure. Henry resorted to the law yet again³, but such was its inadequacy at that time, his complaint went unheard and he stubbornly held on at Up Hatherley until feudal obligation forced him leave Gloucestershire to serve the king.

Under feudal law, Henry was required to take up arms at the behest of his overlord and in the spring of 1314 he marched north with Hugh le Despenser the Younger who commanded Edward II's bodyguard in that monarch's ill-fated attempt to re-impose English supremacy in Scotland. Edward had assembled a formidable army commanded jointly by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford. The Scots, led by Robert Bruce and fired by the memory of William Wallace, routed the English at Bannockburn on 24th June, 1314. Later, the chronicler Jean Froissart claimed that Edward had fought like a lion and was unwillingly escorted from the field by his guard. Froissart is generally considered trustworthy but as he was born 27 years after that battle there may be reason to doubt this statement. Edward certainly returned to England to continue his ineffectual reign.

Gilbert de Clare was killed in the initial, and ill-considered charge at Bannockburn and his body was later returned by Robert the Bruce to be buried with honour at Tewkesbury Abbey. Henry of Hatherley was captured and imprisoned in Stirling Castle for a year until Alisot paid a ransom of £40 for his release.



Gilbert de Clare is buried before the high altar in Tewkesbury Abbey. The inscription reads:

*Gilbert, third named Earl
of Gloucester and Hertford
tenth [and] last [Lord of Clare]
died 23 June 1314
the Scots rejoiced.*

The symbols beside the last two lines are inverted torches to signify the extinction of the line.

*Translation David Barnes
Image © Eric Williams*

When Henry returned from Scotland in 1316, his homecoming brought him little joy. He soon learned from Alisot that his old adversary Robert Ashwell, after spreading a rumour that Henry had been killed at Bannockburn, went to the house at Up Hatherley, removed most of Henry's possessions and then leased the property to Thomas, Henry's estranged nephew. This conspiracy between Robert and Thomas had been carefully planned so that when Henry forcibly re-occupied his house, a hue and cry was raised against him. He was seized, incarcerated in Gloucester Castle and then tried before the Keeper of the King's Peace who acquitted him upon the charge of housebreaking. Henry responded by accusing Robert and Thomas of wrongful arrest and imprisonment and demanded the

restitution of his goods and property. His counter-charge was rejected by these same law enforcers and his persecutors, now undeterred, mustered a gang of ruffians from Leckhampton and Prestbury who waylaid Henry in a Gloucester street and beat him so badly that he almost died from his injuries. Fearing further reprisals, Henry was forced to abandon the manor of Up Hatherley in exchange for a small annuity of £12 11s 0d (£12.55).

The persistent hounding of Henry by Robert Ashwell showed the latter to be a thoroughly ruthless individual and there is further evidence to prove that this reputation was justly deserved. In 1321, he appeared to have been implicated with Sir John Giffard of Brimpsfield in the Earl of Lancaster's insurrection against Edward II. Giffard ambushed the king's wagon train on Ermin Street as it moved to re-supply a force sent to subdue a rising on the Welsh Marches. The ambush failed, Giffard and Ashwell escaped and joined the main Lancastrian force in the north. When Edward defeated Lancaster at Boroughbridge later that year, Giffard was captured, hanged later at Gloucester and his castle at Brimpsfield was razed by order of the king. Robert Ashwell was also captured at Boroughbridge, charged with high treason and imprisoned in Pickering to await trial at York. Resourceful as ever, he bribed his gaoler and fled to France. He was punished *in absentio* for his sedition and in 1324,

all his lands were forfeit to the Crown. Henry of Hatherley took advantage of Robert's treasonable acts in 1321 by presenting a petition to Edward II pleading for recompense for the years of persecution he had suffered at the hands of Robert.⁴ After inquisition, in 1324, Robert's lands in Up Hatherley, Leckhampton and Prestbury were leased by the King to Henry of Hatherley for an annual rent of £6.19s.11d (£6.99).⁵

It seemed that justice had finally been obtained and Henry's claims had been vindicated. But little remained secure for long during the reign of Edward II. By 1325, his estranged Queen, Isabella and her lover, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, had established a power base in Flanders where they plotted Edward's downfall. The fugitive Robert Ashwell saw his chance and insinuated himself into the royal entourage and joined the conspiracy in the hope of recovering his wealth and position at home.



(left) Gilbert de Clare III and (right) Hugh le Despenser.
Windows 35 and 29 respectively, chancel clerestory, Tewkesbury Abbey.
Images © Eric Williams

On 24 September 1326, a fleet transported Isabella, Mortimer, the young Edward Prince of Wales and a small force of around 1500 Hainault mercenaries to the mouth of the Orwell in Suffolk. Isabella quickly moved inland, gathered support from local levies and eventually gained powerful assistance from Thomas, Earl of Norfolk, a leader in the Lancastrian faction. By now a fugitive, Edward II fled to South Wales but when Isabella took Bristol by siege, his fate was sealed. An abortive attempt to

escape by sea to Lundy failed, he landed in Glamorgan, was soon captured and taken to Kenilworth prior to incarceration at Berkeley Castle. It is generally accepted that he died at Berkeley, possibly assassinated on the orders of either or both Isabella and Mortimer. The putative story of his brutal death accords with that time of factional hatred and violence but conclusive evidence for his horrific murder has yet to be found. The Despensers, father and son, hated by many as Edward's favourites and his loyal supporters, certainly suffered gruesome fates at the gallows.

Robert Ashwell was now on the winning side in this power struggle and when he was rewarded by the young King Edward III with a royal pardon, Henry of Hatherley was once more at the mercy of an enemy intent on settling old scores. Henry was charged with owing Robert and Thomas £100. Robert, his star in the ascendant, gained a favourable judgment and Henry was imprisoned at Gloucester for more than a year. Robert now had influential friends at Court and in 1329 he had been appointed as a Conservator of the Peace in Gloucestershire. Broken in body and spirit, Henry was eventually released from captivity. He returned to his devoted Alisot who cared for him until his death a few months later. Alisot continued the fight for justice and in that same year, gained an opportunity to put her case before the Crown. The 18-year-old Edward had assumed control of his realm. Mortimer had been arrested for assuming royal powers, and for such treasonable acts he was condemned and hanged at Tyburn as a common criminal. Isabella was deprived of all regal authority and spent the rest of her life in secluded and guarded retirement. The rule of law had returned to England and Alisot now looked to the young king to redress the injustices suffered by her late husband. Her petition, recorded in Rolls of Parliament, again itemised the many wrongs that Henry of Hatherley had suffered at the hands of Robert Ashwell. Parliament listened, deliberated and pronounced a judgement:

*'Sic le baron fait en vie, la pliente est seon, et s'il mort, la pleinte la femme est nulle.'*⁶

Which translates as; 'If the baron (Henry) were alive, then the grievance was his and if he is dead then the wife's plea is void.'

Robert Ashwell of Prestbury, Conservator of the King's Peace in Gloucestershire, was apparently above reproach.⁷

Editor's note: the information regarding the numbering of the windows in Tewkesbury Abbey is taken from the handbook, 'The Stained Glass Windows, Tewkesbury Abbey'.

All written sources accessed through Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society library, Francis Close campus, University of Gloucestershire on 12 January 2015.

¹ Rotuli Parliamentorum Volume 2 35, 4 Edward III Petitiones, [1331].

² Cal Pat Rolls p.248, Memb. 26d, 14 December, Westminster, [1309].

³ Cal Pat Rolls p.66 Memb. 8d, 7 November Westminster, [1313].

⁴ Rotuli Parliamentorum 15 Edward II, p392, Petitiones, no.26, [1321].

⁵ Cal Close Rolls p220 Memb. 33 27 September Porchester, [1324].

⁶ Rotuli Parliamentorum, Volume 2 35, 4 Edward III Petitiones [1331].

⁷ The title Justice of the Peace (JP) first appeared in 1361, in the reign of Edward III.

Dr Grace Billings (1872-1957): Cheltenham's First Lady Practitioner

ANTHEA JONES

A BLUE PLAQUE IS TO BE PLACED on the house, 3 Pittville Parade (now 6 Evesham Road), where Frederick Billings and his wife Dr Grace had their first home, and where Dr Grace opened a general practice. Grace Billings deserves to be better known as a pioneer of women in general practice. While she followed a number of women in becoming qualified as a doctor, she may have been one of the first in the country to set up in general practice, and was certainly first in Cheltenham and probably in Gloucestershire.¹ What follows is a brief account of her pioneering role. Her descendants are still living in the area and have given generous help in compiling this record.

Grace was the second daughter of James Stewart and Louisa Ariel Ransford; she was given the second name Harwood, her grandmother's name, and always described herself using her full name. After marriage she also did not drop the name Stewart. James Stewart was from Penzance in Cornwall. He became a chemist and bought a business in Portishead, Somerset. He married Louisa Ariel, a daughter of the prosperous Ransford family from Clevedon². Louisa's father, Samuel, was also a chemist in Clevedon, who died in 1902 leaving his effects to his oldest son, William Ransford, also a chemist.

James and Louisa's first child, Mary, was born in Bedminster, the next two in Portishead, Charles was born in Clevedon, and another three children were born in Bristol. In 1881 James Stewart was living at 2, Royal Promenade, Bristol. However, he spotted an opportunity for his chemist's business in Cheltenham and set up the County Drug Store in the High Street in 1884. By 1891 he was living at Ariel Lodge, Hewlett Road; in 1901 he was living at Winstone, Hewlett Street. He had moved again by 1911 to St Ursula, Glencairn Park Road and stated that he was a retired chemist, aged 64.³ It is said by Mackenzie Stewart, who wrote a history of Grace's sister, Mary,⁴ that he became mayor of Cheltenham but this was a mistake, though he was an alderman. Louisa Ariel died in 1924 and James in 1938.

Grace and her older sister, Mary, were always rivals. Mary, born one year earlier, was named Mary Ariel and was known as May. When May discovered after their father's death in 1938 that an 'heirloom' clock was in Grace's house, she removed it to her own house – a sign of quite bitter rivalry. Both studied at the London

Dr Grace
Billings as a
young
woman.

*With
permission of
Richard King,
grandson of
Dr Billings.*



School of Medicine for Women (and the Royal Free Hospital) and qualified as Bachelors of Medicine. But although Grace was one year younger, she obtained her degree a year earlier than her sister. Grace qualified in the College of Medicine in Newcastle, which had its first woman student in 1894 and in 1897 had announced in its official regulations that women would be admitted to the College. The first cohort of female medics from Newcastle - Margaret Joyce, Grace Harwood Stewart, Claudia Anita Prout Rowse – all graduated as Bachelors of Medicine (MB) and Bachelors of Science (BS) in 1898 from King's College, Durham University.⁵ But not until 1902



Dr Grace Billings in the 1930s
*Courtesy of
Dr Robert Billings*

were the first women medics able to complete their full medical training in Newcastle itself. May secured her MB, BS in 1899 from London University.⁶ She married Major Thomas Deacon in 1901 and died in 1947.

What made Grace move to Newcastle on Tyne? Was it her individuality which wanted to escape from her sister's influence, or did she like the idea of being a pioneering student at Newcastle? She is celebrated in Newcastle not only as one of the very first medical graduates, but also as a pioneer in setting up a general practice in Cheltenham in 1899. Sarah Gray, may have set up in general practice in Nottingham earlier than this; she wrote to the British Medical Journal [BMJ] from Nottingham on 4 January 1897 describing herself as a medical practitioner.⁷

In Cheltenham, a second woman medical graduate, may have followed Dr Grace Billings' example; for in 1901, The British Medical Association (BMA) held its annual meeting in Cheltenham and one of the two secretaries for the Obstetrics and Gynaecological section was Miss Eveline A. Cargill, MD Brux. of Lansdown Lodge, Lansdown Road, Cheltenham.⁸ Eveline Cargill is said to have set up in practice in Cheltenham in 1912.⁹

Grace married Frederick Walter Billings, builder, of Southwood Lodge, Prestbury Road, son of Alfred Cockerell Billings, on 29 July 1899, beating May to the marriage ceremony too. The 1901 census records her as a doctor of medicine (own account) at 3 Pittville Parade, with one son, Frederick, eight months old; a daughter, Brenda, was born in 1911 who also became a doctor. In 1903 the Billings moved to Sussex Lodge, Pittville Gates, which was adjacent to Billings' builder's yard, and then in 1912 to Gloucester Lodge, the Promenade, where they continued to live until Frederick died in 1937.¹⁰ Her husband was said to be very proud of her. She had a lady doctor partner in 1927, Dr Gwendolen Brown. At this time and for many years afterwards, only women doctors joined the practice.¹¹ The practice is now known as Overton Park Surgery, and the women only rule has been relaxed!

There is no doubt that to start with, Grace met with much opposition. There were 40 doctors in Cheltenham in 1899 and Grace visited them all, as was proper etiquette. Dr Brown wrote in the obituary in the BMJ 'she was received quite kindly, but, in some cases, obviously not seriously'.¹² She was possessed of considerable self-confidence and Dr Brown reported how she was the only woman to attend the

meetings of the local branch of the BMA, and moreover attended the dinners afterwards. 'It was amusing to watch her light her after-dinner cigar in complete unconcern at the surprised glances of newly arrived doctors to the area'. The BMJ reported Dr Grace as speaking at the Gloucester branch on a number of occasions,¹³ and towards the end of her career she was made president of the local association, another first for a woman.



The Billings family c.1920. A.C. Billings is seated, centre, with his sons and daughters on either side. Frederick is seated second left. Grace is standing behind him wearing a hat with a large brooch. See also p.75 for a photograph of A.C. Billings.
Courtesy of Dr Robert Billings

Grace Billings catered for women and she built a reputation in gynaecological and sexual health and child welfare, all areas that were normally shunned by male doctors. She is also remembered as a champion of female medics at the BMA and for setting up the first field hospital in the Great War and for coming out of retirement to run the St John Ambulance in the Second, though she had retired in 1936. During the First World War Cheltenham received many wounded at various Voluntary Aided hospitals and Dr Billings was exceptionally busy during these years, being in charge of St Martin's Hospital and helping at others, also acting as locum anaesthetist at Cheltenham General Hospital. Her work in these years will be more fully described in the forthcoming book *Cheltenham in the First World War*, by Neela Mann.¹⁴

Dr Billing's contributions to health and welfare in Cheltenham were many. Mention is made in her obituary of part-time school medical inspections, lectures to the St John Ambulance Brigade, as lady superintendent of the Cheltenham nursing division, one of the first officers of the Cheltenham Infant Welfare Association and that she held a clinic from 1917 until her retirement. She was a pioneer in family planning and saw women who needed contraceptive advice for medical reasons and who were sent to her by the infant welfare clinics. This work developed into the Cheltenham Municipal Women's Welfare Clinic. She took a lively interest in the Girl Guides, whose local president she was for many years.

Many tributes have been paid to Doctor Billings, who said her home was a pleasant place, as she always had time for everybody. She did many personal kindnesses to her patients and gave forthright, common-sense opinions. 'She was a beautiful woman in her middle years, and must have been lovely even as a young

one'. But the most interesting evidence of Dr Grace's life and achievements is contained in a fragile sheaf of papers from the archives of the Medical Women's Federation, now in the Wellcome Institute in London.¹⁵ It seems likely that there was a plan to publish *The Book of Memory: Remembering those members of this Federation who achieved much both in their profession and in the broad humanities their work enabled them to embrace*; this collection of notes provides much information on a large number of women doctors, who mainly qualified later in the twentieth century. The following is quoted in full from the notes:

'Grace H Stewart Billings MB BS Durham 1872-1957

Qualified London (RFH) School of Medicine for Women, and Durham, 1898

Dr Grace Stewart Billings must have been one of the earliest women general practitioners in England. Her life was notable for the successful way in which she combined marriage and the bringing up of a family with active pioneer life in medical practice.

In 1899 she set up practice in Cheltenham and had an uphill fight to gain recognition, but she soon attracted patients who remained her loyal supporters throughout her life. She undertook every branch of general practice. She was one of the first medical officers of the Cheltenham Child Welfare Association. She was the pioneer in Family Planning in her area. She was a regular attender at the meetings of the Gloucester branch of the BMA and towards the end of her career she was honoured by being elected President. She took a great interest in the Medical Women's Federation and was one of the founder members.

Dr Billings' chief characteristic was her amazing interest in people. Her second characteristic was her great honesty and integrity. She gave confidence to everyone who came in contact with her.'

¹ Dr Sarah Gray, born 1860, was the first to set up in general practice in Nottingham in the 1890s. 'The Book of Memory', Medical Women's Federation, Wellcome Library SA/MWF/C.245:Box 39.

² A whole area of Clevedon, Bristol is called Ransford.

³ The genealogical information was kindly researched by Neela Mann.

⁴ Mackenzie Stewart, *Buoyancy of Spirit, A memoir of Dr Mary Deacon* (Cromarty Publications, Hexham n.d.) p.10.

⁵ Alumni Association Newcastle University history.

⁶ British Medical Journal, 24 May 1947, p.744.

⁷ Sarah Gray, Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (L.R.C.P.) and Bachelor of Science, Edinburgh (B. S.Edin).

⁸ Notice of meeting published in the BMJ 5 January 1901.

⁹ <http://www.maltaramc.com/ladydoc/s/sandersonae.html>. See also catalogue of papers of Dr Alice Emilie Sanderson Clow, Wellcome Library SA/MWF/M.1; it states that she joined Dr Eveline A Cargill in practice in Cheltenham in 1914.

¹⁰ The Lloyd George survey of land values shows Dr Grace Billings as the under-purchaser of Gloucester Lodge and Mrs Newman as the purchaser from J Newman Esq the previous owner.

¹¹ Personal communication with the family.

¹² July 13, 1957, pp.107-8.

¹³ Meetings of the Gloucestershire Branch of the British Medical Association were sometimes held at Cheltenham General Hospital.

¹⁴ Mann, Neela, *Cheltenham in the First World War*, The History Press, proposed publication date is March 2016.

¹⁵ Wellcome Library, SA/MWF/C.245.

Domenico Dragonetti Joseph Barnett, Musician and Teacher, (1839-1911)

APRIL MARJORAM

Editor's note: See back cover for a colour reproduction of Domenico Dragonetti Joseph Barnett's 'Spring Blossom'.

DOMENICO BARNETT TAUGHT MUSIC at Cheltenham Ladies' College for 44 years. He was a brilliant musician and teacher; additionally he was an excellent amateur photographer and a skilled painter - five of his paintings are in the Cheltenham Art Gallery's (The Wilson) collection

Domenico Barnett came from a family of musicians: his father was John Barnett (1802-90),¹ who was described as the 'father of English opera',² his works included *The Mountain Sylph*, *Fair Rosamund* and *Farinelli*.³ Domenico Barnett's father was a cousin of the German composer Meyerbeer and his mother, Eliza Emily, was the daughter of cellist Robert Lindlay⁴ - a long-standing friend of double bass virtuoso Domenico Dragonetti (after whom their son was named). Domenico's father studied the piano with Ferdinand Ries (Beethoven's favourite pupil)⁵ and after devoting many years of his career to composing,⁶ he and his family settled in Cheltenham⁷ where he was professor of music and taught singing for 50 years at Cheltenham Ladies' College. Alice Elgar (wife of the composer) used to go to concerts in Cheltenham and noted that 'John Barnett and his talented family gave distinction to Cheltenham.'⁸ Friends of the Barnett family not only included eminent musicians but also artists and writers - William Makepeace Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold, Leigh Hunt and the brothers Mayhew were close associates.⁹

Domenico Barnett studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire from 1857 to 1860 where some of his companions were Arthur Sullivan, Walter Bache, Alberto Randeggar and Franklin Taylor; his cousin was the composer John Francis Barnett and his sisters, Rosamund and Kathleen, both had musical careers.¹⁰ Domenico was a prolific writer of songs and was a composer of operas;¹¹ however, his sister's view was that his 'invincible nervousness which caused his health to be upset both before and after a performance [...] meant that a public career as a piano virtuoso was not for Domenico'.¹² Thus, after finishing his studies, he moved back to Cheltenham and became professor of music at Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1867: he taught the piano, whilst at this time his father taught singing there.¹³

Domenico spent the rest of his life (44 years) teaching music at the Ladies' College¹⁴ and was described as a brilliant musician and teacher: he 'threw himself heart and soul into his work and spared no pains to obtain the best results'¹⁵ and was 'so sensitive himself that he was able to inspire pupils to an intense devotion to their work'.¹⁶ However he would not allow early specialisation in music at the expense of general education - in one case a talented piano pupil applied to give up mathematics in order to devote more time to the piano: he intervened and told Miss Beale (Headmistress of the Ladies' College) that mathematics should not be dropped, as training in accuracy was much needed by the young musician.¹⁷ He had the

‘excitability naturally associated with his genius, but it never took a more alarming form than a pirouette’ performed by him when a student made mistakes!¹⁸ His annual concert at the school was a popular event¹⁹ and was always ‘of the highest order’ and ‘quite remarkable’²⁰ but even that caused him stress - a former pupil said of these occasions, ‘he usually fell prey to such agonising nervousness when one of his pupils went on to the platform, that during her performance he used to go out into the garden and walk up and down wringing his hands’.²¹

Domenico was also a skilled painter²² and ‘spent many of his holidays painting seascapes at St Ives’.²³ In 1926, eleven of his works were in Cheltenham Art Gallery’s (The Wilson’s) permanent collection²⁴ - though the Gallery now has five - *Apple Blossom*, *Boats in Harbour*, *Seascape* and two entitled *Sketch at St Ives*.²⁵ He exhibited paintings in 1883 at the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society’s exhibition.²⁶ There is also an oil painting of Cheltenham done by him (possibly for his sister Kathleen Rogers) stored in the Houghton Library, Harvard University.²⁷

It was said that ‘*he did not find expression in words easy but he had two mediums - his music and his painting - in which to express himself*’.²⁸ Outside the college he had a close circle of friends and although he was ‘of so quiet and retiring disposition’ he was the ‘highly esteemed friend of many well-known artists.’ One of those artists was the painter Richard Hayley Lever who was based in St Ives, 1900 - 1914: it may have been that they met in St Ives through their mutual interest,²⁹ though it could be that Lever’s wife Aida Smith Gale, who was a contralto singer, knew the Barnetts through musical events. Whatever the circumstances of their meeting, the evidence of their friendship is clear: they named their only child after him.³⁰

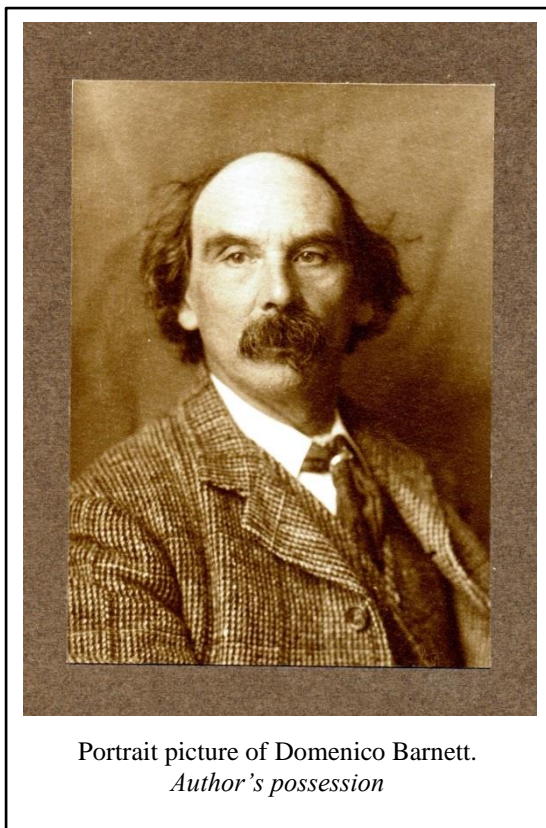
Additionally, Domenico was ‘one of the best amateur photographers in the country’.³¹ He won awards for his photographs in 1888 - in Class Three he was awarded a bronze medal for *Norwegian Views* and in Class 11a for *Old Inn Yard*³² and in 1890 he presented ‘fourteen very beautiful and artistic landscape photographs which he took in Norway’ to the newly opened Mayfield House in London.³³ Miss Beale said ‘of all the likenesses of her, she personally preferred the photograph taken by Mr Barnett on the occasion of the Empress Frederick’s visit to the College, because in that she looked genial and motherly’.³⁴

Early on in Domenico Barnett’s career the *Cheltenham Looker-On* reported,

It is gratifying to be able to record that Mr Domenico Barnett, the son of one of our greatest English composers Mr John Barnett of Cheltenham, may be classed with the best. ³⁵ *His performance of Chopin’s Polonaise in E flat was deserving of the highest praise: the work like all Chopin’s is extremely difficult but Mr Barnett conquered all the difficulties with a skill which showed how entirely he is master of the mechanical demands of the instrument and with a bravura and brilliancy which won him the warm applause of a crowded audience. It is really most remarkable how musical talent seems to be hereditary amongst the Barnetts. Last year the Misses Barnett had a most brilliant success and the year before that Mr John Francis Barnett [...] appeared with great applause both as a composer and a pianist”.*³⁶

Domenico Barnett’s death was fully reported in the Cheltenham papers.³⁷

‘The death of Mr Domenico Barnett took place on Thursday morning at his residence Cliff Cottage Leckhampton Hill Cheltenham [where he had lived since at



least 1891]³⁸. *Since the end of last summer he had been declining in health.*³⁹ *He was 70 years of age at the time [...] Mr Barnett had the true artist's disposition of a retiring character and was seldom seen in public. He was an artist to the tips of his fingers and was a talented man who loved art for its own sake and certainly for no renown which it brought him'.*

Timeline

1839 25 August born at 25 Warren Street Marylebone London⁴⁰

1839 1 October baptised at Trinity Church Marylebone⁴¹

1841 Census living at Mortimer Street Marylebone⁴²

1851 Census living at Monson Villa St Paul's Cheltenham⁴³

1854 Living in Neuwied Rhineland-Palatine Germany⁴⁴

1857 Living in Fleischergasse Leipzig Saxony⁴⁵

1857-1860 studied at Leipzig Conservatoire, then moved back to Cheltenham⁴⁶

1867 Started teaching music at Cheltenham Ladies' College⁴⁷

1871 Census living at Liverpool Place, Cheltenham

1881 Census living at *Cotteswold*, Leckhampton Hill, Cheltenham⁴⁸

1911 27 December died Cheltenham: will administered by Charlotte Julia Marsh, spinster; effects £4309.13s.11d.⁴⁹

The children of John and Eliza Emily Barnett were: Domenico Dragonetti Joseph (1839-1911); Rosamund Liszt Marie (1841-1910), married Robert Francillon; Clara Kathleen (1844-1931), married Henry Munroe Rogers; Julius Lindley (1846-1922); Ernest John (1849-1855); Eugene (1853-1905); Reginald (1853-1922).

¹ John Barnett, born Bedford; son of Prussian watchmaker Bernhard Beer and Hungarian mother; on settling in England they anglicised their name to Barnett; obituary *Cheltenham Echo*, 17 April, 1890.

² On his tombstone in St Peter's cemetery, Leckhampton, Cheltenham.

³ In total he wrote over 2,000 compositions and was described as a 'composer with a charming view of melody': *The Mountain Sylph*, was performed at the Lyceum, 1834 and he was congratulated by Queen Victoria; *Fair Rosamund*, Drury Lane, 1837, *Cheltenham Ladies' College Magazine (CLCM)*, 1890; *Farinelli*, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 27 December 1911.

⁴ He was 'dear Old Bob' in one of Charles Lamb's essays, obituary *CLCM* 1890.

⁵ Obituary, *CLCM* 1890.

⁶ Additionally he was Musical Director of the Olympic Theatre, obituary *CLCM* 1890.

⁷ By 1881 the family house was *Cotteswold*, Leckhampton Hill, Cheltenham, census reference RG11/2567/112/30. After John Barnett's death the house was sold to the Mayor of Cheltenham, Rogers, C.K., *The Story of Two Lives* (1932) Plimpton Press.

⁸ Young, P.M., *Alice Elgar, Enigma of a Victorian Lady*, (1978).

⁹ Obituary *CLCM* 1890.

¹⁰ John Francis Barnett wrote the oratorio *The Raising of Lazarus*; also cantatas, *Paradise and the Peri*; *The Ancient Mariner* and *The Building of the Ship*, *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 27 Dec 1911. Kathleen and

Rosamund, after their musical training in Germany, sang in Italy as The Sisters Doria and in 1868 in John Barnett's *The Ancient Mariner*, *Musical News*, 23 April 1910.

¹¹ *Cheltenham Echo*, 30 December, 1911, p.20.

¹² Rogers, C.K., *Memories of a Musical Career*, (1919). Little Brown & Co, Boston.

¹³ *Cheltenham Echo* 30 Dec 1911 p.20.

¹⁴ For more information on the school and his time there see: Raikes, E., *Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham* (1908) and Dorothea Beale and others, *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* (1898).

¹⁵ He (and his father) taught in room number 7 (which was later divided) and then room number 12, In Memoriam, CLCM, 1912, 65, pp.66-71.

¹⁶ Florence Cecily Steadman, F.C., *In the Days of Miss Beale*, (1931), p.100.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.* Steadman, p.100.

¹⁸ In Memoriam, CLCM, 1912, 65, pp.66-71

¹⁹ *Cheltenham Echo*, 30 Dec 1911, p.20.

²⁰ CLCM 1893

²¹ Steadman, F.C., *In the Days of Miss Beale*, (1931), p.58.

²² In Memoriam, CLCM, 1912, 65, pp.66-71 .

²³ Borough of Cheltenham Art Gallery, *Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture in the Permanent Collection* (1926).

²⁴ BCAG, *Catalogue*, items 64 to 72 inclusive, presented by the artist's executors in April 1918.

²⁵ www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/domenico-d-j-barnett

²⁶ Catalogue, Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society's Exhibition, 1833.

²⁷ Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University reference MS.Thr 470 (857).

²⁸ In Memoriam, CLCM, 1912, 65, pp.66-71.

²⁹ Another St Ives artist, Fred Milner, lived near to Domenico Barnett, just down the hill at 5 Grafton Terrace, Leckhampton. Census reference RG12/2042/5/4.

³⁰ Elmer Domenico Hayley Lever, born St Ives 5 August 1907, *Adelaide Advertiser*, 9 Sept 1907 via London correspondent.

³¹ In Memoriam, CLCM, 1912; Steadman, C., *Miss Beale: A Study of her Work and Influence* (1931).

³² *The Photographic News for Amateur Photographers*, 1888 Vol. 32, p.242.

³³ CLCM, Autumn Term 1890, p.100.

³⁴ Steadman, F.C., *In the Days of Miss Beale*, (1931), p.100.

³⁵ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 27 April 1861 p.273.

³⁶ Also CLCM 1896, 'We need hardly say that the performance of Mr Barnett and Miss Charlotte Mark of a duet for two pianofortes by Reinecke was a real artistic treat.' Also CLCM, 1909, 'On July 9th Mr Barnett gave an invitation orchestral concert conducted by Mr Phillips, at which one of the items was a composition only written by Miss Janet Salisbury.'

³⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 28 December 191; *Cheltenham Echo*, 30 December, 1911, p.20.

³⁸ In 1891 he was a lodger at Cliff Cottage, 1891 census reference RG12/2042/51/22.

³⁹ He was ill with jaundice when he was in Cornwall during the summer and this condition worsened, In Memoriam, CLCM, 1912, 65, p.p66-71.

⁴⁰ London Trinity (Marylebone) Parish Registers and registered Pancras London reference 1/292.

⁴¹ Parish register, Trinity Church, Marylebone, London.

⁴² Reference HO107/675/9.

⁴³ Reference HO107/1973/292/1.

⁴⁴ Rogers, C.K., *Memories of a Musical Career* (1919) Little Brown & Co, Boston

⁴⁵ *Op.cit.* Rogers.

⁴⁶ *Op.cit.* Rogers.

⁴⁷ *Cheltenham Echo*, obituary, 30 December 1911, p.20.

⁴⁸ Reference RG11/2567/112/30.

⁴⁹ Register of Wills.

Lord Dartmouth, the ‘one who wears a coronet and prays’ and the 18th Century Religious Revival in Cheltenham

ALAN MUNDEN

IN APRIL 1739 THE TWENTY-FOUR YEAR OLD George Whitefield (1714-1770) attempted to preach at Cheltenham parish church, but his reputation had gone before him and he was refused admittance, so instead he preached to upwards of 2,000 people who had assembled at the Plough Inn bowling green. He reported:

*'Many were convicted [of their sin]. One woman wept greatly because she said I was crazy; and some were so filled with the Holy Spirit that they were almost unable to support themselves under it.'*¹

This was the first of several visits that Whitefield made to Cheltenham. Earlier in the month in Bristol, Whitefield had begun 'field preaching' (as it was then called) wherever a congregation could be assembled. This unusual method of reaching the masses was then adopted by John and Charles Wesley and became a characteristic of much of the 18th century religious revival or awakening. Many of the clergy of the Church of England were fearful of what was dismissed as 'enthusiasm' or 'methodism', and unless they were sympathetic to the movement, invariably banned Evangelical preachers from their pulpits. They objected to their doctrine and were jealous that large numbers of people turned up to hear them.

By the mid-18th century Cheltenham had a resident population of about 3,000, and after it had developed from being a market town into a spa town, many came to take the waters, to enjoy the socialising, the promenading and the general hedonism of the day. But yet at the same time, evangelical preachers came to Cheltenham and proclaimed the good news to the residents and visitors alike.

The catalyst for encouraging the revival in the town was William Legge, the second Lord Dartmouth (1731-1801). He succeeded to the baronetcy in December 1750 and five years later was converted to the Christian faith through the energies of Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon. Politically Dartmouth was a Whig and became a member of Lord North's cabinet. He served in various capacities, as President of the Board of Trade, Lord Privy Seal, Lord Steward and Secretary of State for the Colonies. From his time at Westminster School, William Legge had known the poet William Cowper, and in 1764 he was influential in securing the ordination of John Newton and his appointment to be the curate in charge of Olney in Bedfordshire.² From 1767 Newton and Cowper composed hymns and the collection was published in 1779 as the *Olney Hymns*. Lord Dartmouth was known as the 'Psalm-singer' and Cowper alluded to him in his poem on 'Truth':

*'We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays'.³*

Given his influential position in society, and his Christian commitment, Lord Dartmouth was able to initiate and support gospel causes in various parts of the country and this included securing the appointment of evangelical clergy to parishes. In Cheltenham he provided the opportunity for evangelicals to preach the gospel. His position in society meant that those from a similar social background to his own were exposed to evangelical preaching. In this enterprise Lord Dartmouth was supported by the Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791). They shared the same Calvinistic beliefs and in 1787, when she was seriously ill, he was considered to be the person most fitted to continue her Christian work.⁴

Whilst Lord Dartmouth was staying at the Great House⁵ in Cheltenham during 'the season' he took the waters and enjoyed the company of the numerous visitors who had gathered in the town. In 1757 he invited several of his evangelical clerical friends to preach in Cheltenham - Martin Madan, Abraham Maddock, James Stillingfleet, William Talbot, Henry Venn and Samuel Walker - and three or four times his own chaplain, George Downing was permitted to preach in the parish church, but then this permission was withdrawn by the incumbent. After being excluded, Downing preached twice a week at the Great House and always to a large congregation on Sunday evenings.

When George Whitefield returned to Cheltenham in 1757, he was again refused admission to the parish church, but undaunted, he stood on a tombstone in the churchyard and preached on Isaiah 5, v.1. His sermon was so moving that many in the crowd started to weep and after pausing he too was reduced to tears. In the evening at the Great House, Whitefield administered holy communion and William Talbot preached. The next day Whitefield preached in the morning on Isaiah 55, v.6 and then in the evening at the Great House, and so many turned up to hear him that he stood on a table in front of the house to address them. The following day he was joined by Charles Wesley, together with those who had travelled from as far afield as Bristol, Gloucester, Rodborough and Tewkesbury and the revivalist preaching continued in Cheltenham for several days. Whitefield's final visit to Cheltenham was in 1769, a year before his death in Georgia, America.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) may have been in Cheltenham in October 1739 (he was certainly in the locality but does not record preaching there). His brother John (1703-1791) may have been in the area in 1742 and 1743, but the first reference to Cheltenham in his *Journal* was in May 1744. He preached on Ephesians 2 v.8 'to a company who seemed to understand just as much of the matter as if I had been talking Greek'.⁶

John Wesley's *Journal* which has been described as '*a vehicle for apologetic and propaganda, a selective and slanted account*'⁷ was both a diary and a collection of anecdotes, one of which referred to a great storm that had taken place on 14 June 1754.

'It began near Cheltenham ... and passed on over Coleford, in a line about three miles broad. It was rain mixed with hail. The hail broke all the windows it had access to, stripped all the trees both of fruit and leaves, and destroyed every green thing. Many of the stones were as large as hen eggs: some were fourteen or fifteen inches round. The rain occasioned such a torrent of water in the street as bore away man and beast. A mile or

*two farther; it joined with the waters of a mill-dam, which it broke down, and carried away several houses.*⁸

When Wesley preached in Cheltenham in March 1766,

*'the house would not hold half the people; and the wind was keen enough. However, I thought this the less evil of the two, and so preached abroad, where we were tolerably sheltered.'*⁹

He returned in October and *'it being too cold to preach abroad, at six I preached in the chapel, and fully declared the whole counsel of God.'*¹⁰ The chapel was situated in Albion Street on a site opposite to Pate's Almshouses.¹¹ It had been built in 1723 by a Presbyterian, a Mr Millett, and on his death it was closed and reopened in 1764 by a Methodist schoolmaster and preacher Samuel Wells. After his death in 1779 several denominations conducted services there – the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, the Wesleyan Methodists and Baptists. An early supporter and correspondent of John Wesley was Penelope Newman. She ran a bookshop in the town, and after her conversion banished plays and novels from her shelves and became very active within the local Methodist community, leading groups, speaking at meetings and in visiting local towns and villages.¹² In 1782 she married Jonathan Cousins, one of the ministers within the Gloucester circuit.

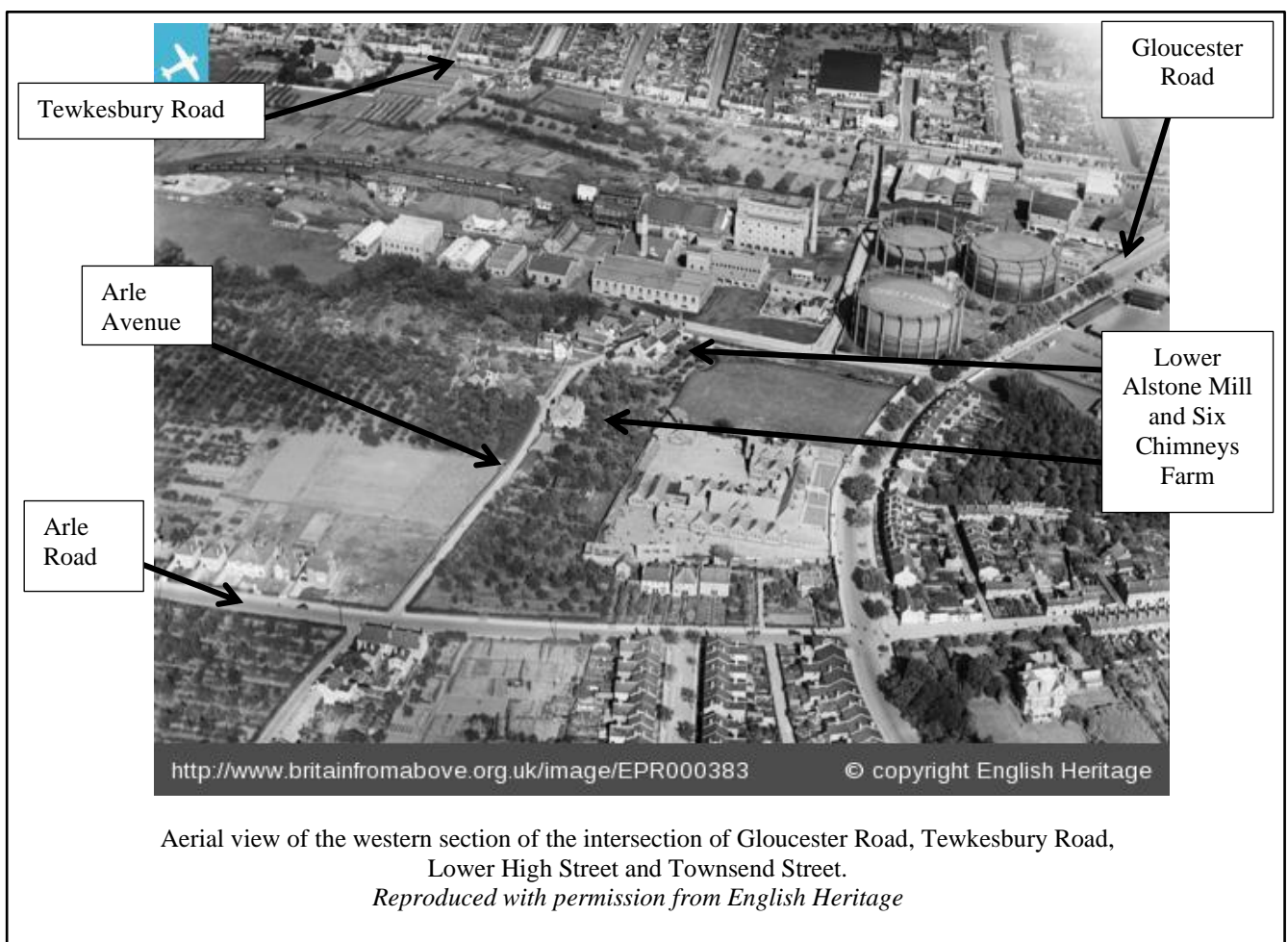
In March 1768 the mob were 'noisy and mischievous' at Gloucester, but Cheltenham was described by Wesley as a 'quiet, comfortable place.'¹³ They were quiet too when Wesley preached in the market place in August 1771, and three years later he preached there again. *'As it was the high season for drinking the waters, the town was full of gentry.'* This was the largest congregation that had ever heard him in Cheltenham. *'Some of the footmen, at first, made a disturbance; but I turned to them, and they stood reprov'd.'*¹⁴ Ten years later in August 1784, *'I preached at noon to half a houseful of hearers, most of them cold and dead enough.'* He expected to find much the same situation at Tewkesbury, but there he found a larger and more responsive congregation.¹⁵ That was his last recorded visit to Cheltenham. The Methodists continued to meet in the Albion Street chapel until it became unsuitable and the services were transferred to premises in a passage between the High Street and Albion Street. Funds were raised for a permanent building and a site in King Street was purchased for £199 10s (£199.50). The foundation stone of Ebenezer Chapel was laid in September 1812 and the chapel was opened a year later on 15 September 1813.

The other evangelical luminary who was active in Gloucestershire was Rowland Hill (1744-1833): the Countess of Huntingdon considered him to be 'the second Whitefield',¹⁶ In Gloucestershire he was based at Wotton under Edge and in London at Surrey Chapel and exercised a widespread itinerant ministry. Throughout Gloucestershire he was instrumental in preaching the gospel and in supporting the erection of chapels. On 5 July 1808 he preached at the laying of the foundation stone of his chapel in St George's Square, and returned on 2 August 1808 to preach on the morning of the opening of the chapel. In the evening the preacher was William Jay the minister of Argyle Chapel, Bath. Some of the early ministers of the Cheltenham Chapel were members of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and in 1819 Portland Chapel (North Place Chapel) became part of the Connexion.

- ¹ L. Tyerman, *The Life of the Revd George Whitefield*, (London, 1890), Vol. 1, p.199.
- ² Between 1765-77 John Newton addressed twenty-six letters to 'a nobleman' [Lord Dartmouth]. R. Cecil (ed.), *The Works of the Rev John Newton*, (Edinburgh, 1845), pp.129-168.
- ³ T. S. Grimshawe, *The Complete Works of William Cowper*, (London, 1876), p.515.
- ⁴ Seymour, A.C.H., *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, (London, 1844), Vol. 2, p.13.
- ⁵ The Great House was located near to the parish church, and roughly on the site now occupied by St Matthew's church.
- ⁶ *The Journal of the Rev John Wesley AM*, (London, Dent edition, 1906), Vol. 1, p.467.
- ⁷ H.D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast. John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, (London, 1989), p.13.
- ⁸ *Journal, op.cit.*, Vol. 4, pp.322-323.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p.248.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p.272.
- ¹¹ For the history of early Methodism in the town, see G.H.B. Judge, 'The Early History of Methodism in Cheltenham, 1739-1812,' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (1920), Vol. 12, pp.180-191.
- ¹² L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev John Wesley*, (London), 1890, Vol. 2, p.560.
- ¹³ *Journal, op.cit.*, Vol. 3, p.319.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p.24.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p.274.
- ¹⁶ Seymour, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p.211.

'1720 and All That' – see facing page

Aerial View, c.1930 of the Gas Works and Gloucester Road School.



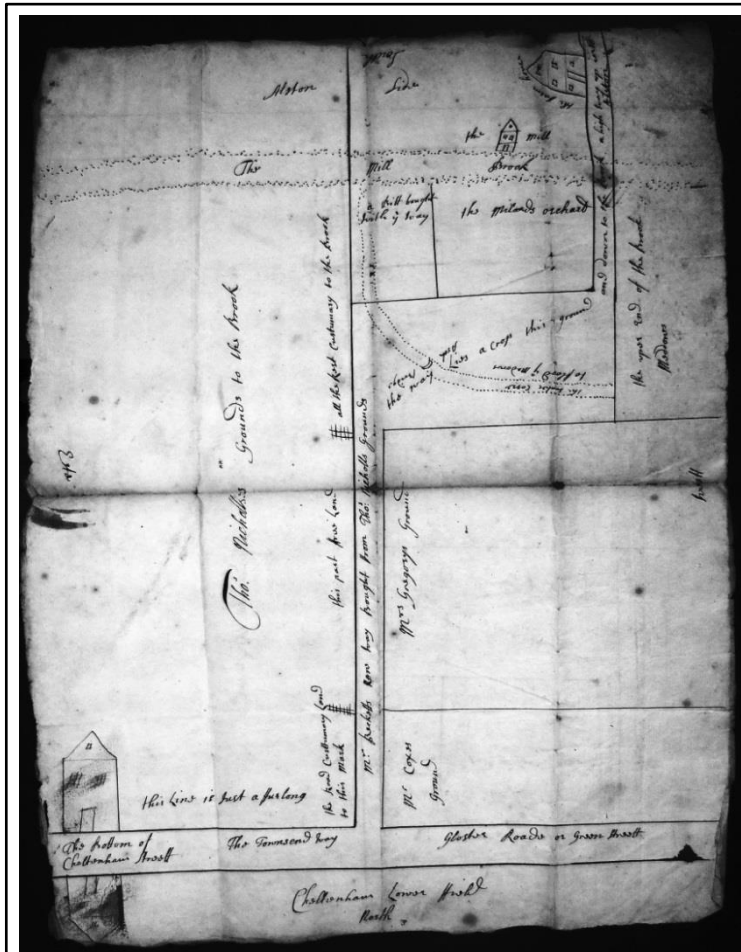
Aerial view of the western section of the intersection of Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury Road, Lower High Street and Townsend Street.

Reproduced with permission from English Heritage

‘1720 and All That’

SALLY SELF

THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY volume for Cheltenham is now well under way. Cheltenham’s ‘Big Red Book’ is going to happen at last and as a result of the hard work of the Society’s cataloguing volunteers, new post-Reformation information about the town is beginning to emerge.



Sketch map, c.1720 of a section of a western area of Cheltenham, the land of Jesus College, Oxford. The orientation is not conventional but drawn from four viewpoints: here the south is placed at the top. Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives, (D8285/Box3),

We have found a sketch map which shows an area which is often referred to as the ‘Gas Works corner, where the big Tesco is.’ More accurately, it is the western quadrant of the intersection of the Lower High Street, with the Gloucester Road, Townsend Street and Tewkesbury Road.¹ From associated documents it is likely that it was drawn c.1720. The map includes an indication of scale, ‘This line is just a furlong,’ and four buildings: two of which, ‘at the bottom of Cheltenham Street’ appear to represent the end of the built-up area of The Street, early 18th-century. The others represent ‘The Mill’ and ‘the farm house’: the Mill site and a building² is still there but ‘Six Chimneys Farm’ is now under housing on Arle Avenue.

Two other captions are of interest: ‘the water course to flood the meadow’ and the ‘arch bridge’; both of which could well be seasonal – the

flooding of the meadow would, most likely, be undertaken in the first part of the year, to either provide an early flush of grazing for animals, February to April, or to encourage a good hay crop in mid-summer, both of which would be vital to the town’s economy

¹ Two of these roads did not exist in 1720: Townsend Street was an unnamed road in 1809, developed around 1833; Gloucester Road was named as such by 1820, and followed the line of the Tram Road

² This is Lower Alstone Mill; the present building, now derelict, is of a later date than 1720

Cheltenham Grammar School

Fifty Years Ago

DAVID ALDRED

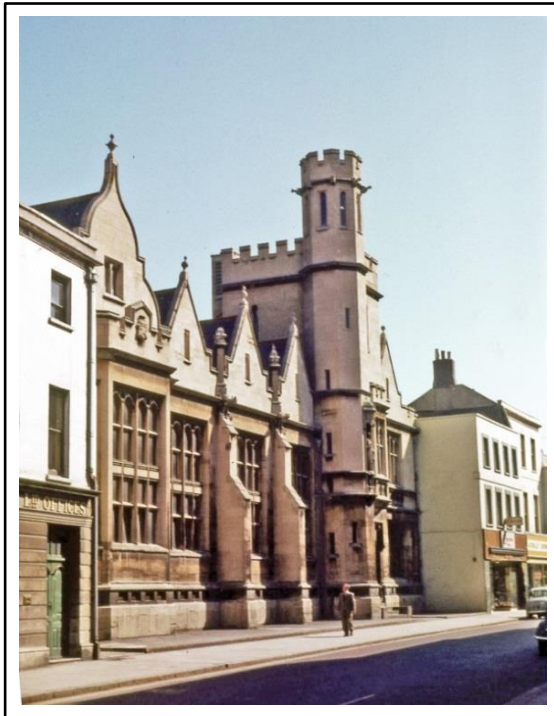
THERE MUST BE MANY MEN in Cheltenham, now into comfortable middle age who, with a bit of help, might remember Wednesday, 28 April 1965. Why? It was the first day at the brand new Cheltenham Grammar School in Hester's Way. The historic building in the High Street had served its purpose. During 1964 I took my camera to school several times and it seems appropriate on the fiftieth anniversary of the move to publish for the first time a selection of the photographs I took.

Of course, in those days it was known as just Cheltenham Grammar School, for Pate's Grammar School was the girls' grammar school in Albert Road. Anybody who has seen Alan Bennett's play 'The History Boys' will have a good understanding of the culture in which we were educated. School often provided good entertainment for boys who had passed the eleven plus examination. In those days of the early 1960s few teachers were really feared; many were respected, but we really played the game with those, often just starting their career, who had not yet learned the tricks of the trade. Looking back it's a wonder we learnt anything in their lessons!

To many of us, the highlight of the day was lunchtime when we were allowed around the town, providing we were correctly dressed; school blazers or grey suits, caps for the juniors and mortarboards (dappers) for the older boys, with their black tassel to distinguish the grammar school from the public schools. Many a time we made first for Leopold's where 4d bought one of their famous drippers. Officially the department stores and large shops were out of bounds. Cavendish House still remains today, but Wards, on North Street corner, and Shirers and Lances in the Colonnade, have gone. So too have Woolworths in the lower High Street (before it moved to The Strand) and Banks bookshop in the upper Promenade. Dodwells stationers opposite the school was a favourite destination. Judging by the materials brought into afternoon school, one was left hoping they had all been paid for!

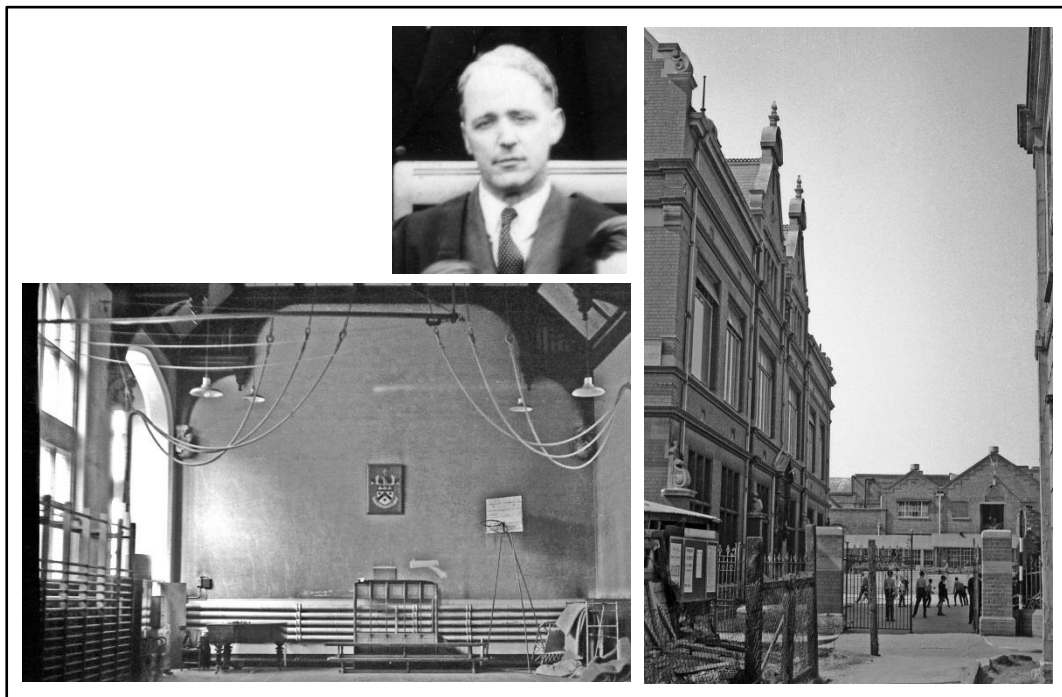
Yet there were some disadvantages of the town centre location! Games' afternoons meant a bus journey to the school's present site. If we missed the bus at eight minutes past two, we knew we would be late and incur the wrath of Illtyd Pierce. Not until we reached the sixth form did we discover how human he was after all! The move also brought relief from the obligatory start and end of term services in Saint Matthew's church. No more would we troop in crocodile formation across the High Street to sing '*Lord dismiss/behold us with thy blessing*', depending upon the occasion.

Hopefully these photographs will stir some memories by providing an insight into a lost world when the grammar school still represented the long tradition of education in the heart of the town.



Cheltenham Grammar School (*left*) is one of Cheltenham's lost buildings. It oozed late Victorian confidence. The main entrance stood just beyond the tower with its statue of Richard Pate. The boy's entrance is hidden by the corner of the Fleece Hotel, part of the brewery complex. This area of the High Street is again being redeveloped as part of the restructuring of the Brewery quarter.

The photograph of the grammar school's rear entrance, (*below right*) taken from Bennington Street, shows Bennington Hall edging into the right-hand margin. The entrance in the centre, led both to the grammar school (ground floor) and the art college (first and second floors).



(*Above left*) The room facing the High Street on the near side of the tower served as the main hall and gym. We all knew that the penalty for climbing the ropes higher than the angels was a whack across the backside, but the bravest still persisted!

On the other side of the tower was the headmaster's study. Arthur Bell (1952-1971) (*above top*) oversaw the removal of the school to Hester's Way. How many readers remember buying little red bricks for 6d to attach to a card to help raise funds?



The main corridor (*above left*) looking back towards the High Street. The PE equipment has to be removed from the hall for the daily assembly. Looking the other way down the main corridor (*above right*): beyond the arch can be seen the 'glasshouse'; two classrooms built in what had once been a hall. They must have provided the worst learning environment in the whole school as everyone who walked past could see into them and those inside could likewise look out.



The school library (*left*) lay off the main corridor to the left of the previous photograph. It was always used as a teaching room and so when we were expected to use it as a library, I can't quite remember!

The view from the playground looking towards Saint Matthew's church (*top, facing page*):

the brewery tower on the right still stands as a token reminder of what was once there. The boys' entrance from the High Street is hidden by the woodwork classrooms on the right. The fives court can be seen in the right foreground. Fives was a very popular break and lunchtime activity and possession of this court was highly prized.

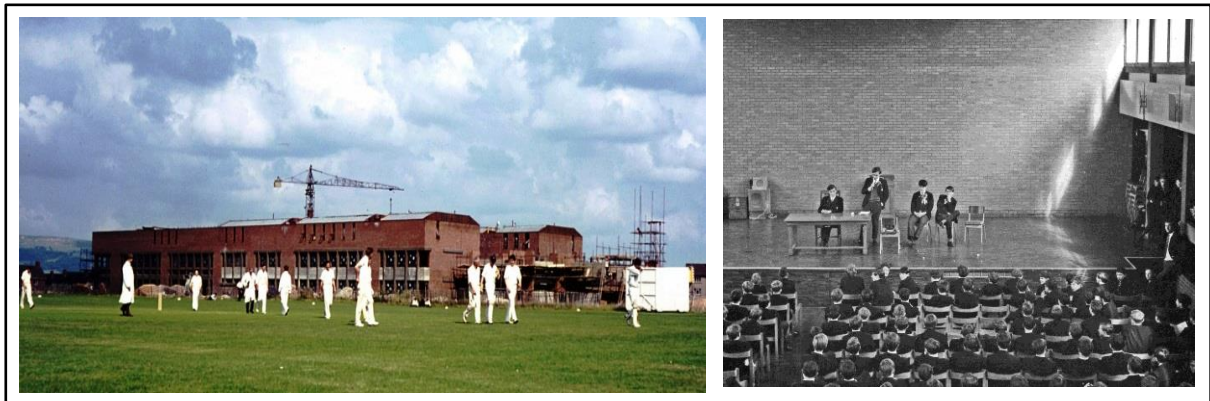


The Lowryesque scene (*below*) was taken from one of the first floor windows seen in the preceding photograph. The white prefab served as the dining hall whilst the wooden building behind the bike shed was used by the art college. The picture also provides a good view of the brewery yard. The sweet smell from the brewing filled every nook and cranny of the school. It still lingers in the memory of my contemporaries.





The music room (*top right*): the only clue is the piano, otherwise it could be any room. I cannot guess why a map of the Ukraine should be on the blackboard. The art room (*top left*): in all my photographs of the classrooms there is a complete absence of any wall displays to stimulate learning and reward achievement. Even in the art room there is not a single item of pupil's work on display. How times in schools have changed. A ground level view of the playground (*above bottom*). Science laboratories stood on the ground floor of the three-storey building and the music room and the art room on the first floor.



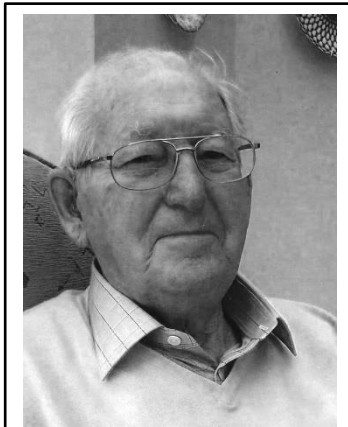
The new school (*above left*) was taking shape in the summer of 1964, when the annual 1st XI versus Staff cricket match took place. I remember being told that the new school had no pretensions to being an attractive building because of its location! The only architectural feature was a copper dome over the library block, still being built when I took this photograph. The moat which surrounded the building not only provided security but also unlimited possibilities for adolescent boys. This is my only photograph of the interior of the 1965 school (*above right*). It shows the hustings for the 1966 mock election. I remember being impressed by the spaciousness of the interior but less so by the ubiquitous bare brick walls. The building was demolished in 1996 and is itself now also part of Cheltenham's history.

Breakfast for a Penny: Leopold's, Bakers and Confectioners – Part 2

BOB LEOPOLD

Editor's note: 'Breakfast for a Penny: Leopold's, Bakers and Confectioners – Part 1' appeared in Journal 30 (2014).

After the War



Bob Leopold,
September 2014
Image © Chris Benthall

MY STAY IN THE ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE was due to come to an end on 3 March 1948 and in the previous September I applied for a month's leave to train as a baker. Unfortunately, one was not allowed to be instructed in one's own firm so with the connivance of father's friend, Mr Townsend, it was arranged that I would be taught by him. However, unofficially, I went to our own company and Mr Townsend signed my papers. No one was any the wiser and I re-joined the company the following March. During my national service, the family firm was turned into a limited company called Leopold and Son Ltd. So Peter and I set off on our careers.

The bakery was as it had been for twenty or so years; it was too small and difficult to keep clean. Our plan was to incorporate the Albion Street Bakery so that all our production would be under one roof. However, the wartime building regulations were still in force and if one wanted to build, existing walls had to be used; it was not possible to demolish and build afresh. We wanted to get on with the reconstruction and Morrisons of Tivoli were successful in tendering. Had we waited for a few months wartime regulations were rescinded and we could have done just as we wanted. Doing it in this way cost about twice as much as it should have done but we had a nice bakery with a tiled floor, two new thermostatic ovens – both gas fired – and above all plenty of space.

Ingredients were still rationed but it was possible to buy all sorts of things to extend them. South Africa exported 'XL Jam' which was top quality and by rebalancing recipes could be incorporated as, of course, it contained sugar. Another product was marshmallow powder which was a bag of sugar with a pound of gelatine placed on top before the bag was closed. On opening the bag all one had to do was scoop out the gelatine and you had a bag of sugar. The public, who had not seen sweet stuff for years, would buy anything that came along. We bought a pie-making machine that we ran continuously during the day making jam tarts. The next thing was cream buns and I can remember when, on a Saturday morning, the firm was making 400 dozen to try to keep the customers happy. And so it went on until things settled down to a more normal atmosphere.

In 1957 the subsidy was taken off bread and the three big bread companies had a meeting to decide how much the price was going to be. Bread was 7½d (3p) for a 2lb (0.9kg) loaf but the trade wanted 11d (4½p) to make economic sense. Allied Bakeries (Westons) and Spillers wanted 11d but Rank said they were going to charge 10½d (4p) and that became the standard price. This meant that small bakers struggled to make a living and the wages of the operatives were held down. Small bakers went out of business in droves and the monoliths went on their price cutting way. As a result we vowed never to buy another bag of flour from Ranks.

Instead, we obtained our flour from Workman's Flour Mill in Dursley. Their accountant was Ivor Howard, a very astute chap, who was doing the accounts for several bakers in Bristol and aware that they were not making any money. Also at this time, Allied Bakeries were buying up small bakers to increase their business and every time a firm was bought, Workman's lost sackage,¹ and so lost several accounts. Max Workman, who was well into his sixties, was not interested in any changes, so Ivor suggested that he should form an alliance between the Mill and the small bakers. The Mill would supply the flour, thus consolidating their output, and the bakers would run the bakeries. The bakers would draw bread from a central bakery, earn a better discount than was obtainable elsewhere, and at the end of the year, there would be a dividend to all shareholders and if there was anything left over the bakers would have a bonus.

This scheme was started in Bristol and despite many setbacks was very successful. Tony Bright, who was Workman's sales manager, was a very clever fellow and he was the brains behind the execution of this scheme and eventually there were nine of these family-run-plant bakeries all of which produced high quality sliced bread to augment their own crusty bread production. Our trade name was the Family Loaf and we were a force to be reckoned with in the west country. We supplied nearly every supermarket chain in the west and the same bread was sold under a multitude of names. As production went on each day, the reel of wrapping was changed to the appropriate supermarket chain and the same bread went into every outlet. Cheltenham was the second bakery to be built and a six sack plant was installed producing 1,300 loaves an hour – all was going well! A sack of dough was processed every 10 minutes and the fermentation time was 2 hours. This meant that at any time there were always 14 bowls of dough in varying stages of fermentation. However, if the plant broke down, and this happened quite regularly (usually caused by a strap of tins jamming in the oven), the 14 bowls of dough would go 'rotten', a trade term for over ripe dough, and have to be thrown away. Disposing of three and a half tons of uncooked dough is not easy, so five pounds of salt would be added to each bowl which had the effect of holding the dough in a stable state. Then, when the breakdown was sorted out, new dough would be made using half the normal flour, no salt and half a bowl of the original dough. This produced a normal dough which was then processed in the usual way. Eventually all the 'rotten' salted dough would be used up.

The floors of the bakeries were tiled with steel plates in the mixing area but the weight of the bowls was such that the floors still broke up, causing a constant nuisance. A process was invented which instead of fermenting the dough for two hours, ripened the mixture by brute force. This was called the Chorleywood process as it was invented by a research laboratory in that area. Instead of having a five horsepower motor, which was the norm, an 80 horsepower motor was used and the

dough was mixed by a high speed rotor which ripened the dough in a few minutes. This mix was then fed straight into the divider (which split the dough into loaves) and, of course, did away with all those bowls of dough. Although it took three years to make this plant profitable, we were eventually very successful. Every plant bakery in the United Kingdom ultimately used this process, as it was a real money saver. The bread, although of reasonable quality, could never compete with a loaf made properly in the old-fashioned way.

Expansion

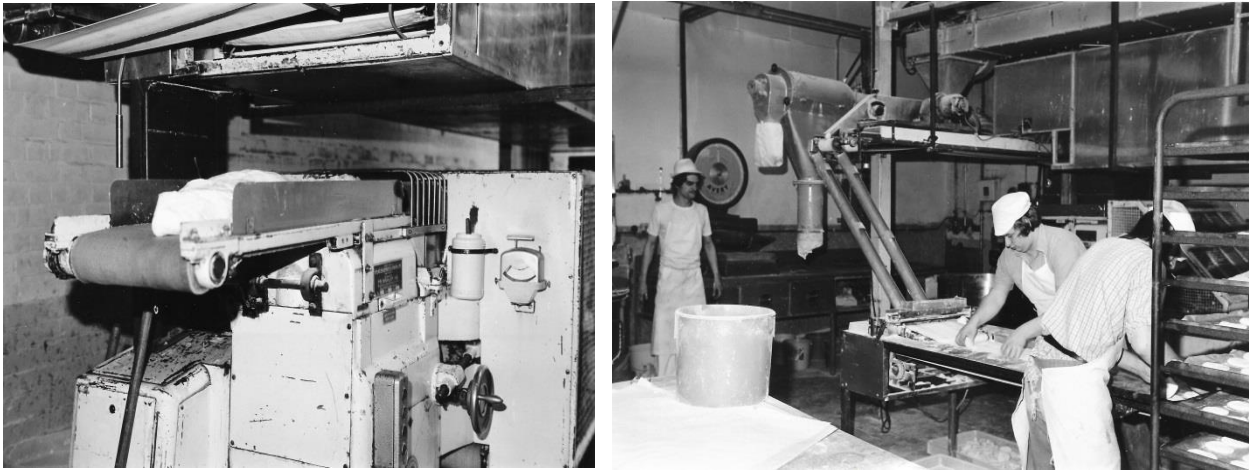
At this time Leopold's acquired the rear premises of the fishmongers next door. There was a very large freezer on the premises and Peter and I started experiments freezing bread and confectionary. After a year or so we decided to build a substantial modern freezer. The reason for this was to try to put an end to night shift work. Under the traditional way of working, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays the staff did not have enough to do; Thursday was better but on Friday some of the bakery staff went home early and then returned to do a night shift until about 4am. The Saturday dayshift, which started at 4am, went on until 11pm. By freezing goods it was possible to even out production over the week and the soul-destroying Friday shifts were finished, to the relief of many of the staff. However, one of our workers asked if they could permanently work night shifts: this was against the law, but if one could get all the men involved to agree, it became a working proposition. This was started and the night shifts worked very happily from then on.

This method of working with freezers became so successful that we ended up with 4,500 cubic feet of freezer space. Later on we were to discover that we were the first people in the west country to use freezing commercially.² During the ensuing years, as fast foods became popular, hot-dog salesmen came to us for their rolls as they could just arrive and take good quality rolls off the shelf. We eventually had a turnover of 100,000 rolls a week which then became the mainstay of our business.

At this time, Peter and I had become ambitious and Charles and I found a shop for lease in the main street on the corner of Trinity Street in Tewkesbury. A lease was negotiated for seven years with an option for another seven years at £175 a year. The shop was fitted out and although the customer space was only 6ft x 6ft (2m x 2m), from the moment it opened, it was an total success.

The people who owned our Cheltenham property also held the café next door and in 1961 they went bankrupt and had to sell both properties. They had difficulty doing this as Leopold's had such a long lease at a very beneficial rent. They eventually approached us and we bought the whole site for £6,000. We let the next door property to a restaurateur and had our shop for very little. This purchase enabled us to create a more spacious shop. Over a weekend, we reckoned we moved 10 tons of brickwork with the help of our van men and we took out the staircase that went up to the café, enabling us to increase our customer space threefold. Incidentally while alterations were taking place, we discovered a baker's oven between the shop and the preparation room at the back. How right it was that what had originally been a bakers should revert to being one again.

In 1961 Hester's Way estate was being developed and we decided to take a shop there. The developers were having difficulty letting them and we got a 21-year lease for £800 for which Peter gave his personal guarantee. This meant that if we failed he would be responsible for the rent for the rest of the lease. After a slow start, Alice Greer, who had been manageress of a dairy in Yorkshire, took over and from then on we never looked back; it became our flagship shop. In 1982 the rent went up to £6,800 which came as a bit of a shock. However, the turnover had gone up from £250 a week in 1961 to something like £2,000 a week in 1981 so it was still a good enterprise, and much to Peter's relief, his personal guarantee was cancelled.



Bob Leopold comments that he had an idea for speeding up and improving their bread making machinery one weekend. He promptly sat down and designed it, on the back of the proverbial envelope, commissioned the necessary equipment and it was put into bread production shortly afterwards.

Photographs courtesy of Bob Leopold

That Family Loaf again

Ten years had passed and it was now necessary to replace the ailing machinery, while at the same time we were constantly having staffing troubles. If they could be replaced by new machinery it would also ease the workload of the managers. One of the directors had a vision; his idea was to amalgamate with Bristol who were in a similar position. They were approached, and Weymouth also asked to join, and as a result, a massive automatic plant was built in Avonmouth. Over the next few years the output of the Family Loaf Bakery was to go from strength to strength.

During this period, the Cadena Café was in decline and Tesco bought the whole lot for three million pounds and so found themselves members of the Family Loaf enterprise. When their buyer found out that he could buy bread at a hitherto unheard of price, he rang up and wanted us to supply the whole of Tesco in the south west. Much to his surprise he was refused because it would have taken the whole of our production. He said if we would not toe the line he would buy the bakery. His dream was short lived, however, as the business was not for sale – not even to Tesco. He said we were the only company ever to refuse Tesco's orders and was furious, but it was satisfying to us to be able to tell a Tesco buyer he was not wanted.

Flour had been delivered to our bakery by Joseph Rice of Gloucester ever since I could remember, first by horse in the 1930s and early 1940s and then by lorries. These men used to carry a total of 48 bags of flour weighing 140lbs (63.5Kg) each up a steep flight of stairs every 10 days or so and for their trouble were given 2/6d (12½p) each out of the petty cash. Bulk delivery had been used in the big bakeries for many years and now the millers approached us with a subsidised offer for a 12 ton silo, which soon paid for itself as the flour was bought more economically in bulk.

The multiples who were engaged in a price war were all producing bread that had a high water content that had been baked for the minimum time, resulting in soggy bread that was not very pleasant to eat. The Family Loaf was made from premium flour and was baked for long enough to produce really nice bread. Thus the success of the Family Loaf was assured by the flawed policies of the multinationals.

In 1972 Max Workman died and the community lost a fine citizen who was mourned universally but especially around Dursley where he had set up a charitable trust and was very well respected. As a result of this, Workman’s Mill was sold to Spillers Ltd, Tony Bright became redundant as his services as coordinator of the Family Loaf group were not required.³ Another result of this buy out was that the



Now Argos, in 1918 this was the headquarters, bakery and shop of Leopold and Sons Ltd.

© Image Christopher Benthall

Family Loaf members, who owned one half of the shares, found themselves linked with Spillers who were represented on the board of each bakery by a director who looked after their financial interests. The union was very amicable and the two groups became good friends and business partners. From Spillers’ point of view the amalgamation was a very lucrative investment as Workman’s Mill was closed and they not only gained several thousand sacks of flour a week but also the dividends from all the Family Loaf bakeries.

In 1973 we sold our High Street property to a developer and set about moving the bakery to Mead Road where we rented a property from the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society. We had an agreement with the developer that we would have a year to relocate. When the year was up and we were due to collect our money there was a slump in the property market and the chap who had bought our site in the High Street could not get the rest of his loan to pay for it. He came to see us and agreed to pay a further ten percent for us

to release him from his contract. Under this agreement the property reverted to us. This site remained vacant until 1981 when it was developed and sold to Sun Alliance who let the two shops to Argos and Superdrug, both of which are still trading there.

In 1974 Peter and I went to the National Exhibition at Earls Court in London and having seen all that we could, we went to an electronic’s exhibition which was

conveniently next door. While there we came upon a small computer that could do wages. This would be a boon to us and we decided to buy one at a cost of £1,000. Much to salesman's fury we decided to wait until we got home to finalise the deal and the next day we contacted Borough's and arranged for their local representative to call. Glancing through his catalogue, I asked what these other machines did as they were about the size of a small piano. His reply, that they would do wages, invoicing and sales accounts both weekly and monthly, set us thinking, and although the cost was £5,000 we grasped the nettle and bought one. Then came the task of installing it and training the staff, who on hearing that we were actually going to have a computer nearly had heart failure.

It took about a month to get the girls orientated and when they discovered that it was really just a glorified typewriter they took to it like ducks to water and we never looked back. It solved no end of problems and eased the workload immensely. This machine had only 16,000 bytes of memory and was not at all like today's computers. Each customer had a card with a magnetic strip and all their business details were entered through the keyboard; orders were logged in a similar way, the invoice was calculated immediately, then totalled and the continuous stationery would print out a record. All the details of the transaction would be transferred onto the card and the card ejected. At the end of the run the computer would make a list of goods required to make up these orders which was then transferred to the production sheet. This was a huge benefit as it was always accurate. At the weekend the cards would be put into the machine one by one and a statement for each customer would be printed. This could be done on Friday afternoons with the statements ready to go out with each customer's order on Saturday morning. It was not altogether fool-proof, though, as the machine had all sorts of failings but the benefits far outweighed these.

By the year 1980 or thereabouts, computers had developed considerably and we were approached by Borough's representative, who now worked for a programming company that was just starting up in Cirencester. He told us about this new machine that had a memory so vast that we could never fill it up. The old machine was now obsolete and had been written off the books, so we took the bull by the horn and ordered one. A program devised by myself was written especially to meet our needs. This eased the workload even more and when the staff got used to it, after a series of small setbacks, they looked upon it as a tremendous help and used it as if it was just a new typewriter. The program was so user-friendly that we could teach a new girl to master it extremely quickly. Unlike the old Borough's machine it never broke down and was extremely reliable; the old magnetically striped cards went out of the window.

The Final Years

In 1979, Locke's, a well-known old-established bakery went into administration and was for sale. Delme Locke, who was an old friend, accepted our offer and we bought the business. Delme worked for us for the next five years and we also took on two office workers and a bakery worker. The extra turnover put us in a strong financial position and when we eventually moved to Chiltern Road we did extremely well. Incidentally, Locke's, which was started by Delme Lockes' grandfather in about 1880, was the leading baker and confectioner in Gloucestershire at that time. During the period of our stay at Mead Road there was an interesting occurrence. We made a lot of sponges which were sold for trifles and other confectionary. For these we used a

special Spiller's cake flour. The recipe never failed until one day a batch turned out just like crumpets. We eventually traced the problem to the flour and Spillers were contacted. Silicone had just been put onto the market and its selling point was that nothing would stick to it. Flour silos had to be emptied and fumigated periodically to stop insects contaminating the flour. This was expensive and it was thought that spraying internally with silicone, would minimise the considerable cost. However, even though the silicone was hard and dry, it contaminated the flour, causing the sponges to drop in the oven. This cost Spillers a lot of money and proved the need for thorough testing of technical innovations.

While we were at Mead Road, the Sunshine Laundry closed and when the building cooled down we were overrun by mice. Bait put down by Rentokil initially had no effect whatsoever, so their area director came the following day and put down blue powder on the runs, magically disposing of the problem overnight. We did very well at Mead Road, until in 1983 the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society wanted the building back and we got our marching orders. Cheltenham at this time was bursting at the seams and there appeared to be no property of the size we wanted to rent or buy. After much research we decided on a property in Chiltern Road. We would have preferred a larger building, so we went ahead and built a new bakery on the site. It was the first time we had ever had the opportunity to design a place from scratch and we included all the modern conveniences, including a forklift truck which, on the level site, proved to be invaluable.

Whilst at Chiltern Road my brother Peter wanted to slow down and in September 1984 he retired, but remained as chairman in a consultative capacity. I was promoted to managing director and ran the company very successfully until 1987 when we took on a general manager, as I also wished to retire. From August 1987, I gradually relinquished the reins and left on 31 December, although I remained as managing director. John Hogg, our general manager, ran the business very effectively until 2000 when he too wanted to step down. In the period from 1905, when the firm was started, to the end of the 1990s, a sack of flour had gone from £2.25 to £32.50, a loaf had increased from under a 1p to around a £1 and our turnover went from about £300 to nearly £2,000,000.

In 2000 we sold the business to a Forest of Dean baker, Ronald Keir based at Yorkley, who traded under the name of Thurabread. That firm went bankrupt two years later which caused us many problems as the leases we passed on to Keir reverted to Leopold and Son Ltd., as was the law in those days. It took us two years to resolve this, during which time the firm had no income.

This brings us to the present day and is a classic case of clogs to clogs in three generations, as all our children have gone off on their own and been very successful in their chosen fields. However, the original company name of Leopold and Son Ltd. was not sold and went on to become a small property company which is still running today and belongs to our children.

¹ A sack of flour was and still is 280lbs [127Kg] and a bag is 140lbs [63.5Kg] in weight

² It was also discovered that in about 1889 Bametts were the first firm in the West Country to have freezers and had a thriving business supplying ice to all the surrounding district

³ Tony was snapped up by Spillers who recognised his talents and he went on to further successes

The Carvings of William Montague Gardner



1



2



3



4



5



6

1. Lt-Col. Cyprian Bridge, Harwich. 2. The twin of number 1 at St Philip and St James's, Leckhampton.
3. Capt. John Bowen at St Peter's, Leckhampton.
4. Philip Justice at Trinity, Cheltenham.
5. Capt. Edward Stopford at St Lawrence's, Swindon.
6. Maj. John William Dawson at Holy Trinity, Cheltenham.

*Image 1 © Mrs Janet Mann (Harwich);
Images 2 – 6 © Eric Miller. Nos. 4 and 6 are
reproduced by permission of
Trinity, Cheltenham*

William Montague Gardner, Sculptor and Engraver (1804-1873) and his Circle

ERIC MILLER

THE STATUE OF KING WILLIAM IV that now stands in Montpellier Gardens (see Cheltenham Local History Society's *Journal* No. 30, pp.21-29) was the work of William Montague Gardner. It appears to be his only large-scale sculpture, and his main occupation was as a monumental mason and engraver. Information about him is sketchy but it is clear that he was active in Cheltenham from about 1830 to 1845 after which, charged with bankruptcy (for a third time), he moved to Leamington Spa and continued his work in that town.

Memorials bearing the name 'Gardner' or occasionally 'Gardner of Cheltenham' are to be found in a number of churches in and around Cheltenham and also much further afield. This article sets out what can be ascertained about W.M. Gardner's life and career and attempts to distinguish his work from that of several other masons with the same surname who were active at about the same period. It also addresses his relationship to Lucius Gahagan, junior, a member of a celebrated family of sculptors, based in Bath, with whom he had a brief business partnership. Despite the fragmentary evidence, he deserves to be rescued from obscurity.

His Life and Family in Cheltenham and Leamington

In its report on the unveiling of the statue of King William in 1831, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* mistakenly attributed it to Richard Barrett (not further identified) of Bristol but the following week corrected that handsomely, stating that '*this superb work of art*' had been '*wholly and solely designed and executed by Mr W M Gardner, sculptor, of this town*'. To emphasise the fact, in the same edition the sculptor advertised for sale plaster of Paris models of the statue. His address was then 12, Colonnade. In 1830, when first mentioned in a local directory, as an engraver and sculptor, he gave the address of 4 Clarence Street.¹ He later made several moves to

W. M. GARDNER, Sculptor, Engraver, &c.
12, COLONNADE, Cheltenham,

GRATEFULLY acknowledges to his Friends and the Public the support he has received, and respectfully informs them, that, by the 20th inst. he will have ready for SALE exact MODELS in Plaster of Paris, bronzed, or painted, from 3 to 4 feet high, of the STATUE of the KING, now erected in the IMPERIAL WALKS to commemorate the Coronation of his most Gracious Majesty, William IV.; the execution of which Statue was entrusted to him, and according to his own design, and assisted only by his regular workmen, has been so successfully completed.

Orders for Figures, Busts, Arms, Monuments, Tombs, Chimney Pieces, Marble Tables, &c.
Brass-Door and Window Plates, Projecting Letters, in Wood and Sign Writing, executed in a style and at a price that gives satisfaction to his employers.

✍ Visiting cards engraved and printed.

Advertisement
Cheltenham Chronicle, 15 September, 1831

addresses in the High Street, and from at least 1841 to 1844 he and his wife Anne and seven children were living at 378, the High Street on the corner of Regent Street, opposite the George Hotel. He also had an address at 10 Pittville Street², possibly for business purposes.

W.M. Gardner's place of birth and occupation were revealed fortuitously in a notice in an Australian newspaper of 1863, announcing the forthcoming marriage in Sydney of Caroline

Colquhoun, a widow. She was stated to be the daughter of George Gardner Esq of Marshfield, Gloucestershire, and the ‘*sister to William Montague Gardner, sculptor, London and Cheltenham*’ (my italics).³ She evidently thought sufficiently highly of her brother to make mention of his name and profession. The parish register for Marshfield (about 10km north of Bath) records his baptism on 15 July 1804, the son of George and Ann Gardiner (*sic*)⁴. The father’s status and occupation were not given.

Gardner’s business cannot have been very prosperous, for his name appears twice among the cases of insolvent debtors at the Gloucester Quarter Sessions, in July 1833 and in July 1839.⁵ He was discharged on both occasions but in November 1845 he was due to appear again on a similar charge before the Bristol District Court.⁶



W.M. Gardner’s last premises were at 378, High Street, at the junction with Regent Street, later occupied by Mr Turnball, glover and hosier.
Rowe’s Illustrated Guide, 1845

The bankruptcy order of 1839 described him as trading first as ‘S B Gardner and Co’, later as ‘Gardner and Gahagan’ and finally as ‘Gardner and Co, on his own account’. The first of these entries suggests that W.M. Gardner was perhaps apprenticed to, employed by, or in partnership with another member of the family whose initials were ‘S B’. However, no such person can be identified: no sculptor or mason of that name was listed in *Pigot’s Directory* for 1830, for example.

As for the partner named Gahagan, this was probably Lucius Gahagan Junior (c.1801–1866, originally

Geoghegan, pronounced ‘*Gay-gan*’), whose father and uncles all practised in Bath. (Lucius, senior, had carved the original statues on Pittville Pump Room of Hygeia, Hippocrates and Aesculapius in 1827.⁷) At the time of the 1841 Census, the younger Lucius was living in Charlton Kings and he was still listed there as a sculptor in *Harper’s Directory* of 1844. By 1861 he had moved to Bath, occupying the house of his father, who had died in 1855. Gardner’s partnership with Gahagan, though it may not have lasted very long or been particularly close, would nevertheless have enhanced Gardner’s prestige.

His last advertisement in the *Cheltenham Annuaire* was in 1846, but he had evidently left the town by then. In the 1851 Census he was not listed in Cheltenham, or indeed anywhere else, but he reappears in 1861 living at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, still practising as a sculptor and engraver, and employing 2 assistants. His name appears in Leamington directories up until 1872, the year before his death and burial in that town.

William’s daughter Esther, a dressmaker, continued the engraving side of the business at 2 Regent Street (immediately adjacent to 378 High Street), Cheltenham, together with her three younger sisters, according to the 1851 Census. Another unmarried daughter, Louisa, must have accompanied him to Leamington, where she practised independently as an engraver and copper plate printer until at least 1881.

Other Stonemasons Named Gardner

William Montague Gardner does not appear to have created any other large sculptures apart from that of King William IV. The monuments in churches that can be identified as being his work are good examples of funerary art. Carved in white marble, they incorporate such conventional elements as draped urns and armorial or military regalia. In one virtuoso case the inscription is carved on marble that has been shaped to simulate a partially-unrolled scroll and in another it is a draped cloth.

*A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660 – 1851*⁸ lists instances of W.M. Gardner's work and there are four entries in the second edition of *The Buildings of Gloucestershire*⁹ for 'Gardner of Cheltenham'; in the first edition these had been attributed to W.M. Gardner himself. Some works may have been produced by others named Gardner, possibly related, but it is reasonable to suppose that any whose date falls during the years when William Montague Gardner was in Cheltenham or Leamington were his. Confusion has also to be avoided with the stonemasons George Gardner of Tewkesbury (1792 - 1856) and Richard Gardner of Stow (17751 - 853). For all that, it is clear that he left more works than was previously supposed (see Appendix).¹⁰

The sculptor's name 'GARDNER' also appears on several large vaultstones, dating from 1822 to 1838, in the graveyards of Holy Trinity Church, the Cheltenham Chapel (Jenner Gardens), Leckhampton Church and doubtless elsewhere. Here the 'A' in the name is incised distinctively as an inverted 'V'.¹¹ In one case (at Leckhampton, 1823) the address of Albion Street is added, and in another (Cheltenham Chapel, 1825) the name is given as John Gardner, of Duke Street. The only John Gardner recorded in Cheltenham at the time of the 1851 Census was a 'billiard marker', born in Cirencester in about 1794, living at 20 North Place. More significantly, during the 1840s John had been listed in trade directories as managing billiard rooms in Regent Street, being the same address as W.M. Gardner's daughters had their dressmaking business.¹² During the same period John Gardner's son, another William, born in Cheltenham in about 1828, was working as a carver and gilder at the 20 North Place address. Nearby in North Place, at No 18, there lived some years later, George Richard (or possibly Orchard) Gardner, born in Leamington in about 1832. The 1881 Census described him as an 'ornamental carver'. In 1851 his address had been 3 Weales Passage (in the High Street, roughly opposite Henrietta Street). He was then still an apprentice, living with his mother, a nurse born in Middlesex.¹³ These coincidences of address, including one in Leamington, strongly suggest family connections, though the precise relationships are not clear.

William Montague Gardner's Own Work

Memorials signed 'Gardner Sc. Cheltenham' (or variations thereof), are to be found in the Cheltenham area in Holy Trinity Church¹⁴; nine in number, (seven more than are given in the *Biographical Dictionary*, while none is mentioned in *The Buildings of England*), and also in churches at Swindon Village (1), Prestbury (1), Leckhampton (1 – a particularly fine example, not mentioned elsewhere) and Bishop's Cleeve (1). After his move to Leamington he created monuments nearby at Old Milverton (2) and Leamington Hastings (1), but he does not appear to have done any similar work at All Saints Church in Leamington itself, where he would later be buried. (It must have

been galling for him to find that several of the memorial plaques in that church were supplied by the more prolific G. Lewis of Cheltenham.)

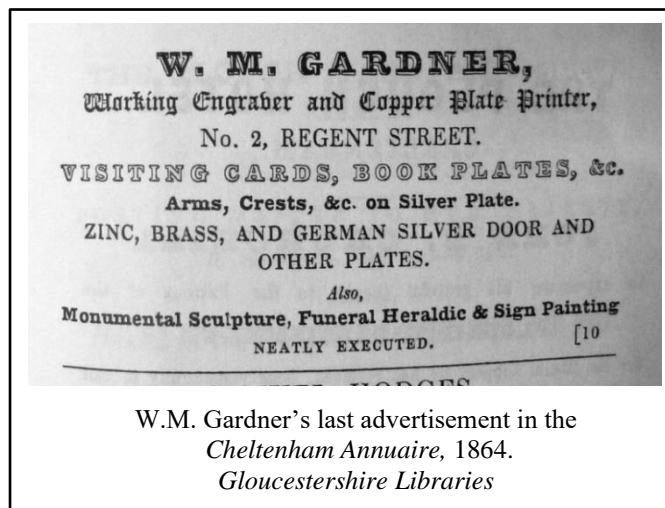
The *Biographical Dictionary* includes several memorials at distant locations. Though at first sight this looks improbable, it appears that the subjects had Cheltenham connections. Even more conclusively, at St Nicholas's Church, Harwich (Essex), the signature 'W M GARDNER Sc. CHELTENHAM' is plain to see on the brackets of a memorial to Lieutenant-Colonel Cyprian Bridge, who died in Cheltenham in 1843.¹⁵ His address had been 10 Promenade Terrace (renumbered 117 Promenade), and his family had, and still has, roots in Harwich. He also has a memorial in St Philip and St James's Church, Leckhampton. The pieces in the two churches are virtually identical and although no signature is visible at Leckhampton, it is clear that both were the work of the same hand.

Three further examples are to be found at St Martin's Church, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire: to Charlotte Edwards (d. 1838), Anna George (d. 1845) and Courtland Skinner Shaw (d. 1854) – this last plainly signed by Gardner of Cheltenham. Dr Shaw, formerly of Tenby, had retired to Cheltenham and was living at Vittoria House when he died. That connection may explain why his memorial was installed in South Wales, but there is no obvious reason why Gardner should have been commissioned to produce the two others.

Similarly, there are two monuments in St Andrew's Church, Presteigne (Powys, but in the Diocese of Hereford), both of which have small plaques with the legend 'Gardner and Co, Cheltenham' engraved on them.¹⁶ One commemorates the Reverend James Beebee (d. 1841) and the other Captain Edward Parsons, who died in 1813 during the Peninsular War, and four brothers. Their dates of death ranged between 1799 and 1824, but it is not known when the monument was installed, as it was raised by their brothers and sisters. Though neither of these families had any settled connection with Cheltenham, at least the Parsons (and the above-mentioned Courtland Skinner Shaw) had visited the town to take the waters,¹⁷ when they might have visited Gardner's workshop.

His Work in Context

William Montague Gardner should perhaps have counted himself lucky to be awarded the task of carving the statue of King William, but his other later creations were worthy examples of funerary art. Though evidently not the best of businessmen, he was one of a number of sculptors and marble masons who served a cosmopolitan clientèle, from their workshops in Cheltenham. Their range and ambition are exemplified by D.A. Bowd's advertising 'monuments and mural tablets for the East and West Indies'.¹⁸ We have already noted work by G. Lewis at Leamington, and a later memorial at Presteigne was carved by W. Winstone, a member of another dynasty of Cheltenham masons.¹⁹ Cheltenham had



become an important centre for carving and sculpture, anticipating the achievements of Boulton and Sons and H.H. Martyn. Gardner's work thus cannot be seen in isolation. It is hoped that more examples of his work will come to light as a result of this article, and the entries in the *Biographical Dictionary* will be brought up to date in due course.

Appendix

A selected list of William Montagues Gardner's work in the Cheltenham area

Montpellier Gardens: Statue of King William IV (1831)

Memorials in Churches

Note: Only the first name given on the memorial is shown below. Several of the people commemorated are of wider interest, but it is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate on their lives.

Holy Trinity Church (Trinity Cheltenham): Mary ANNESLEY (1845), John BERRY (1836), Elizabeth BODEN (1827), Major John William DAWSON (1832), John GUBBS (1840), Lowman JEFFERY (1841), Philip JUSTICE (1827), Sarah LANGFORD (1838), Charlotte Mary Amy TYLER (1831)

St Michael and All Angels, Bishop's Cleeve: The Reverend R L TOWNSEND, DD (1830)

St Peter's, Leckhampton: Captain John BOWEN, RN (1843)

St Philip & St James's, Leckhampton: Lieutenant-Colonel Cyprian BRIDGE (1843)

St Lawrence's, Swindon Village: Captain Edward STOPFORD, RN (1837)

St Mary's, Prestbury: Edward SOUTHOUSE (pronounced 'Soot-house') (1829)

¹ *Pigot's Cheltenham Directory*, 1830

² *Cheltenham Annuaire*, 1842

³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1863. The announcement also indicated that a nephew of Caroline and William's was the Revd William James Gardner, of Jamaica, later to be the author of the first authoritative history of that island.

⁴ The spelling with an 'i' must be counted as a clerical error

⁵ Gloucestershire Archives, Q/RID/2 1833-1844

⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 1 November 1845

⁷ The statues were removed in 1938 and replaced in 1965 with new ones carved by Boultons

⁸ Gunnis, R. F. et al, *Online Database of the Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851*, pub. Paul Mellon Centre & Henry Moore Foundation (Yale University 2009)

⁹ Verey, D and Brooks, A, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire* (2002)

¹⁰ In the *Biographical Dictionary* he is identified as Gardner 'of Cheltenham, Pimlico and Leamington' (my italics). It is not clear when exactly he could have worked in that part of London and what he might have achieved there. The present editor of the dictionary is presently investigating how Pimlico came to be mentioned in the first instance.

¹¹ George Rowe did the same in his *Cheltenham Guide* of 1845

¹² The Census enumerator noted that there were two No 2s in Regent Street.

¹³ W.M. Gardner also had a son named George, but he was born two years earlier.

¹⁴ Now known as 'Trinity Church, Cheltenham'.

¹⁵ I thank Mrs Janet Mann of Harwich for sending me confirmation of these facts

¹⁶ I thank the Reverend Prebendary Stephen Hollinghurst for this information. Photographs of the monuments are to be found on the website www.flickr.com/photos/52219527@N00/8682245885

¹⁷ There are several entries for members of the Parsons family in the Pittville Visitors' Book between 1830 and 1851.

¹⁸ *Cheltenham Examiner*, September 1853, page 5 column 3

¹⁹ On tombstones in the Cheltenham area the carver's names S. and H. Winstone are also to be found, as well as Charles senior and junior. By 1857 the last of these, with an address in Sherborne Terrace, had also branched out as a builder, eventually employing as many as 26 men. Winstonian Road in Fairview was created by him. He died in 1899, aged 77.

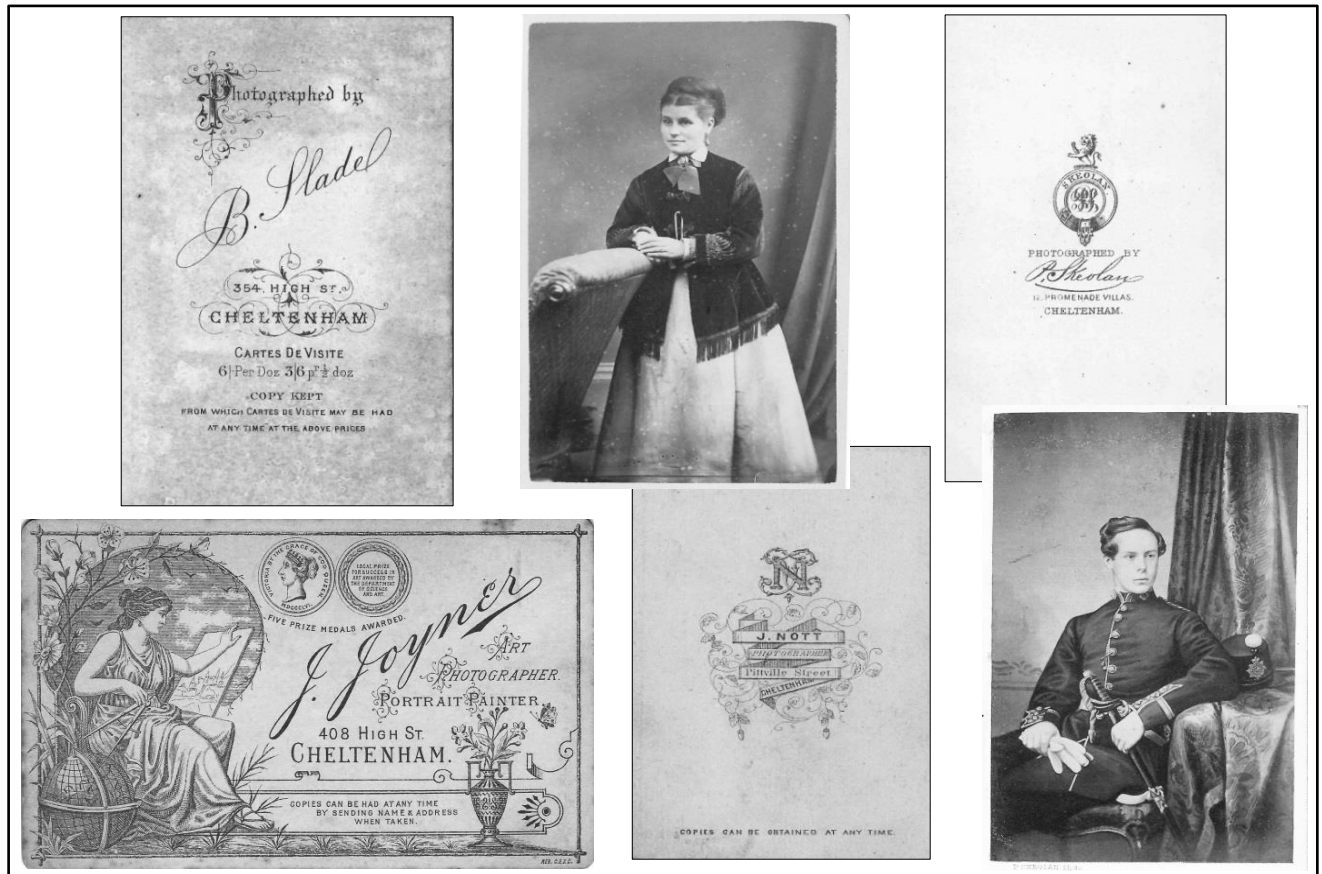
Celebrating Cheltenham Photographers

SUE ROWBOTHAM ☎ 01242 580035 ✉ suerowbotham22@gmail.com

2015 MARKS THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY of the foundation of Cheltenham Camera Club by many distinguished local amateur and professional photographers. The Club, one of the oldest in the country, is celebrating with a number of events this year, including the publication of '*Capturing the Moment - 150 Years of Photography in Cheltenham*', edited by Sandra Prowse. This fascinating and well-illustrated book tells the story of the club, and its place in the history of Cheltenham.

Over 150 professional photographers and photographic studios have been in business in Cheltenham since John Palmer opened his Photographic Institution in Imperial Gardens in September 1941, just six months after the first photographic studio opened in London. Many wealthy residents and fashionable visitors have posed in a studio in the town, particularly during the period up to 1918.

Sue Rowbotham has been collecting cartes-de-visite (CDVs), the larger cabinet photographs and postcards of Cheltenham for many years, and is compiling a database of local photographers. The CDVs below come from her collection. If you have CDVs or other photographs taken in or around Cheltenham, and would like to know more about the photographer or to have help dating your photo please contact Sue: she would be particularly interested to see photographs that have names, dates or reference numbers on them.



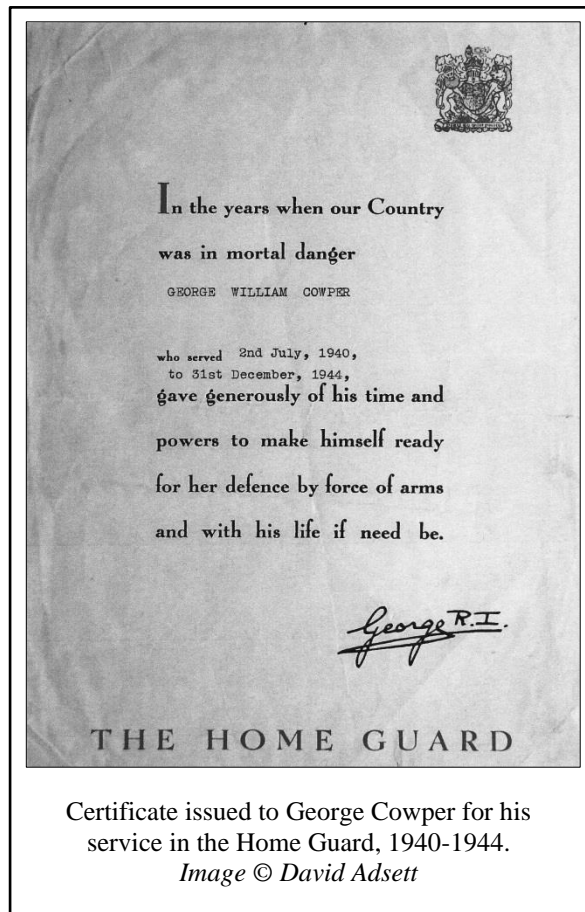
Words of Encouragement and Appreciation: Memories From the Second World War

VIRGINIA ADSETT

QUOTES FROM PUBLIC SPEECHES, catch-phrases from wireless programmes, song lyrics, Pathé news clips, they all have a resonance today and evoke life at that time. Among the printed material that has survived, I was interested to come across three official messages of appreciation - all three have the royal coat of arms at the top and were produced to thank specific groups of the population at particular times during and after the war.

The first of these certificates was issued to George Cowper, but I have no further information about him, only that he was a member of the Home Guard from 2 July 1940 until 31 December 1944. The Home Guard was originally set up as the Local Defence Volunteers against a feared German invasion, in response to the Secretary of State's wireless broadcast on 14 May 1940. Anthony Eden called for men

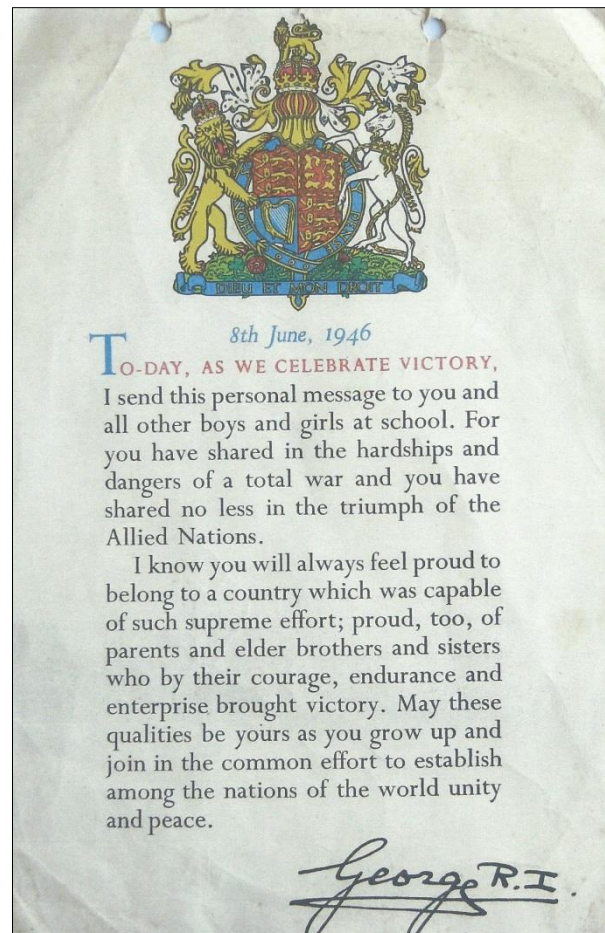
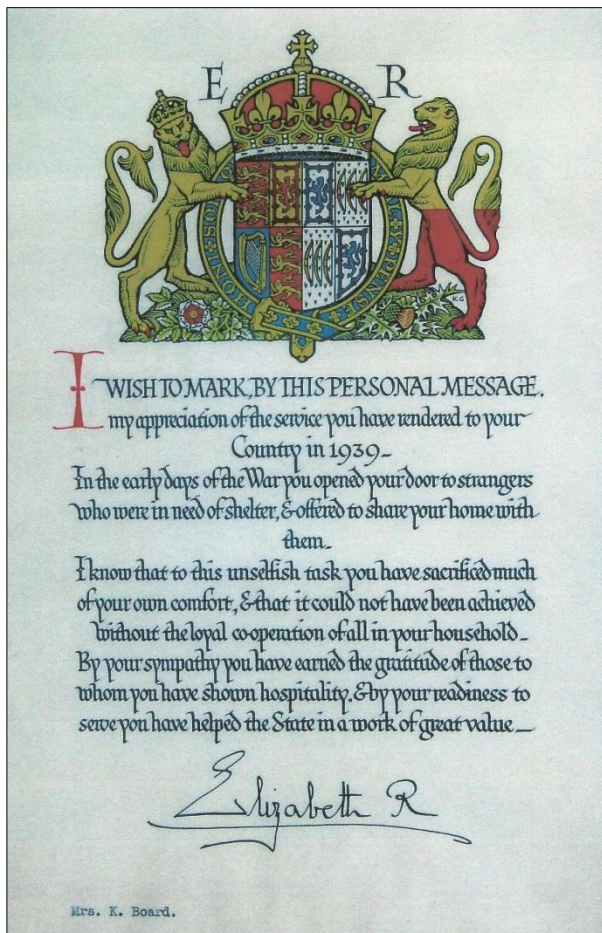
aged between 17 and 65 who were not in military service to enrol at their local police station. By July, George Cowper was one of the one and a half million who had volunteered and the Home Guard continued until the threat of invasion passed and the organisation was formally stood down on 3 December 1944, and finally disbanded at the end of 1945. A special certificate was sent to each individual member, personalised by adding his name and dates of duty, and signed by King George VI.



Perhaps the letter of appreciation that is more commonly seen, as there were so many issued, is the one sent out to all school children a year after the end of the war, dated 8 June 1946, once again signed by King George VI. On the back, *Important War Dates* lists significant events between 1939-1945, with space in the blank bottom

section, under *My Family's War Record*, for the child to add his or her own family histories. The certificate was attractively produced with the royal coat of arms in colour and printed on card, although not personalised with an individual child's name.

The third letter looks at first glance similar to the second, being the same size and format, with a royal coat of arms at the top with a message underneath, and again printed on card. However on closer inspection, this one relates directly to the evacuation, and is signed 'Queen Elizabeth' (the present Queen's mother), not the King, and with her own coat of arms and crown on top. These were produced to thank those householders in the reception areas, who had taken in evacuees under the Government Evacuation Scheme, Operation Pied Piper, in 1939. An estimated 320,000 letters were sent out.¹



Two attractive and colourful certificates.

(left) A certificate, issued in 1939, to specifically thank householders who had taken in evacuees;

(right) a similar one, issued in 1946, was sent to all children.

Image © David Adsett

Under the Pied Piper operation, Cheltenham was designated as a reception area for evacuees from Birmingham. As early as June 1939, provisional plans were already quite detailed, setting out the number of evacuees expected and how they would be transported to the town. They would arrive over two days, with school groups the first day and mothers with younger children the second. On day one special trains were scheduled to arrive at 11.15am, 3.15pm and 3.41pm at Cheltenham (Lansdown) Station bringing school parties from Nechells School – 250 seniors, 350 juniors and 220 infants, all mixed; Moseley Secondary School – 480 boys; St Edward's High School for Girls – 370 girls and Upper Thomas Street School – 330

senior boys, 330 mixed juniors and 220 mixed infants. The 2.02pm train to Charlton Kings Great Western Station was scheduled to bring evacuees from Oldham Road School – 320 senior boys and 300 senior girls, and 210 children from St Benedict's Road Infants School. In all a total of 3380 persons; 2550 were expected for Cheltenham and 830 for Charlton Kings.

These and other details about the provisional arrangements for evacuees are from a letter and enclosures sent to Gloucester Council by Charles Tortonese, the Billeting Officer for Charlton Kings Urban District Council on 15 June 1939.²

The signal was given by the government to start Operation Pied Piper on 1 September 1939 and the plans were put into action. Although parents had registered their children to be evacuated with their schools, many had a change of heart when the Operation began and the numbers of actual evacuees to Cheltenham were far fewer than expected. An example of this is the report in the *Gloucestershire Echo* which stated that only 267 children from Nechells School arrived and the shortfall in expected and actual numbers was reflected in other reception areas.

Richard Board, Chief Billeting and Reception Officer for Cheltenham, recorded a total of 1,200 children arriving on 1 September 1939.³ Even so these arrivals, through the official Government scheme, meant a large number of billets were needed. An added pressure on these householders was the fact that the expected heavy bombing did not materialise during the early months of the war, but the requirement to maintain the children continued. On day two of the Operation, three train loads of mothers and young children from Birmingham arrived, a total of 650 from the poorest areas of the city.

The wireless broadcasts announcing practical changes to future evacuation schemes and the letter of appreciation from Queen Elizabeth, the present Queen's mother, were to keep the support of those looking after evacuees at a crucial time, when there were mutterings questioning the need for evacuation to continue. Subsequent evacuations were in response to obvious crises, the very real threat of invasion, the Blitz in London and other major cities and the V1 and V2 rocket attacks. On these occasions, people were aware of what was happening and were more willing to put themselves out to help fellow citizens in real danger. There was no need for a special letter later on in the war to thank and encourage householders to do their bit for the war effort by taking evacuees.

It was Walter Elliot, Minister of Health, who had the idea of a personal message of appreciation from Queen Elizabeth to maintain support at a tricky time in the war. It is generally known, that the government successfully moved children and other vulnerable sections of the population away from the big cities to the perceived safety of the countryside just before war was declared on 3 September 1939. Less well known is that five months after war started, Walter Elliot announced the introduction of important changes to government policy on evacuation in Parliament. Later that day in his wireless broadcast to the nation, he reviewed the situation, announcing that,

'Nothing touches our lives more closely than evacuation. Out of the experiences gained since the outbreak of war the Government have made plans for the future. I explained these plans in the House of Commons today. But evacuation plans

are matters for the home, and I think that you would like to hear them tonight. In 1939 no one knew how or where the war would develop. So the Government offered to move all the children from the most dangerous areas, and many of their mothers, at once, all together, as quickly as ever it could be done. A million and a quarter people have moved under the Government scheme in four days, and many others made their own arrangements. A great number have returned, but a great number have stayed. Today, nearly six months since the war began, there are more than 400,000 children billeted in reception areas. Winter has gripped all Europe and halted the war in the West, but when winter passes the danger comes again. We must look ahead.'

'Our evacuation plans for 1940 are simple. In the first place, we shall not, in general, try to move adults at all. In the second place, we are drawing up plans in advance for the children, but we shall not move them at all, in any area, until air warfare is developing in such a way as actually to threaten our civilian population. Thirdly, and this is most important, we are intensely anxious that the ground already gained should not be lost. We want to secure the hosts in the reception areas, those who have given hospitality to children, that they have done, and are doing, a national service second to none. It is just over a year ago that the Secretary for Scotland and I spoke to the countrysides, asking them in the name of the Government, for hospitality for the cities if danger came near. It was their response that made evacuation possible. ... But the householders, in the receiving areas, take pride of place. Tonight I have the honour to announce that a message is to come to them from Her Majesty the Queen. The Queen desires to show Her appreciation of the great public spirit shown by those householders who during the last six months have sheltered children unknown to them and provided for strangers a home ...'

Walter Elliot concluded his speech by announcing the Government's intention *'to ease the burden which evacuation puts on the hosts,'*⁴ by introducing practical measures that would help to address the most common causes of complaints by householders in dealing with their evacuees.

The purpose of his speech, at that precise point in the war, was to boost morale and keep householders motivated. By announcing both the Queen's personal message to each of them, and the introduction of practical measures such as raising the billeting allowance, providing mid-day meals for the evacuees and setting up special facilities for sick or difficult children, he hoped to do just that. It is suggested though, that he had not discussed it with the Queen before his broadcast, and although she gave her agreement to the message, she rebuked him for associating her name with a Government measure about which she had not been previously consulted, saying that he was *'a good Scotsman, and will appreciate my caution, I hope.'*⁵

The letters were sent out to the householders involved, with the Buckingham Palace S.W.1. postmark on the hand-written envelope. Individual names were added to the message itself, and both the one I have and the one in Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum's (The Wilson's) collection⁶ have the addressee's name typed in the left hand bottom corner of the letter. The Museum's copy was sent to Mrs. K. Board. Interestingly the date and accession number show that the letter was given to the Museum as part of a collection of personal material relating to Richard Board. Richard Board played a significant role in evacuation during World War Two.

As the Chief Reception & Billeting Officer for Cheltenham, with his officers and a team of volunteers, he was responsible for dealing with the heavy demands for billeting in this designated reception area, throughout the war. Generally it was the usual practice at that period for women to be formally addressed by their husband's name or initials, and I would have expected Richard Board's wife to be referred to as Mrs. R. Board. Perhaps in the case of the special letters they were sent to women addressing them by their own first names? My own copy of the Queen's message does not offer any helpful clarification either. It was sent to a Mrs. M. A. Chilves, but there are no clues to the names those initials stood for, so she could be either a possible Mrs. Margaret Anne Chilves or refer to her husband's names, perhaps Mrs. Michael Alan Chilves? Because we know the message to Mrs. K. Board and Richard Board's personal material were part of the same donation, it seems logical to suggest they came from the same family. What I do not know for certain is whether Mrs. K. Board was his wife, or even his mother. While the message survives to illustrate a particular time and situation in World War Two in this area, it would be lovely to discover more details about Mrs. K. Board's identity, and what that initial 'K' stood for.

Poppit Beads

On a lighter note, to many of us growing up in the 1950s, the mention of 'poppit' beads immediately conjures up an image of those popular polythene beads that could be simply popped together into whatever length you wanted, to make into necklaces and bracelets. The beads came in a variety of bright and pastel shades with a matte, shiny, translucent or pearlised finish, and they were available in different sizes, ranging from the largest at two beads per inch, medium at two and a half per inch to smaller ones at three per inch. They all incorporated a unique ball and socket design so they could be easily joined together and taken apart with a satisfying popping sound. They were inexpensive to buy, lightweight and robust, and offered endless choices in how you used them.



Those
colourful
beads, that
many of
us will
remember,
from the
1950s and
1960s.

*Image ©
David Adsett*

Although I have discovered that it was possible to buy special connectors to hold multiple strands together, as well as coloured discs that could be inserted between the beads, I do not recall seeing them either at the time or since. What I do remember vividly is my mother still wearing her different coloured single strand poppit necklaces chosen to match her outfits well into the 1960s. They are brilliant objects for reminiscence' as few of those who remember poppit beads can resist picking them up and having a go for themselves to relive that familiar popping sound. Today the equivalent might be in the pleasurable effect of popping bubble wrap, though without the resulting customised jewellery to wear.

Polythene is one of the more common trade names of Polyethylene, a thermoplastic discovered at ICI's laboratory in Cheshire as a result of a laboratory accident in 1933. It was at first a low density polythene, developed for military purposes, in particular for insulating British radar cables in the Second World War. After the war, the material was released from sole military use for commercial development, and in 1953, a high density polythene was produced.⁷

There is a connection between poppit beads and Cheltenham. When giving talks at meetings to which I had taken 1950s material, I met a couple of ladies who told me they had worked in a factory in Cheltenham in the 1950s which extruded soft plastic into poppit beads. They had fond memories of the owners and remembered that working with the plastic was quite fiddly and they could only handle the extruded plastic for short bursts of time as it was so hot. It was busy at the end of the meeting and there was no time to take any details and unfortunately I have not come across any similar connections since. I have not got the name of the factory or any details about the number of employees, whether it had originally been set up to support the war effort or how long it remained manufacturing. I wonder if anyone remembers this local factory? It would be interesting to discover more about this intriguing local link.

Editor's note: The author would be pleased to hear of any further information regarding poppit beads. Please contact the Editor in the first place.

¹ Shawcross, William, *Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother: The Official Biography*, Macmillan, 2009, p63

² They are held at Gloucestershire Archives, reference C/CDA/V/5/15(1939-1941)

³ Collection held at Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery (now The Wilson)

⁴ Walter Elliot's broadcast on the Government Evacuation Scheme, 15 February 1940, www.primarysources.org.uk - accessed 2012

⁵ Shawcross, William, p.63

⁶ The letter in The Wilson, reference 2000.50.3 1-2 (1.87)

⁷ The advantages of polythene are that it can be extruded and moulded and all at a very low cost. It has extensively replaced enamelled kitchenware and has introduced squeezable bottles, (a squeezable washing-up liquid container was the first in 1951), and airtight food containers

Seton Peacey and His ‘epic of a Cheltenham family’

DAVID ELDER

WHEN I WAS CONDUCTING RESEARCH for the literary anthology, *Down Cheltenham Way*¹, I came across one of Cheltenham’s hidden masterpieces of literature which is also of great interest from the local history point of view. The book in question is *The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen, Centenarian*², a 575-page novel which was written by Seton Peacey in 1934 when he was just twenty-one years of age. Described by the poet, Lady Margaret Sackville, as ‘the epic of a Cheltenham family’,³ the work won immediate recognition on both sides of the Atlantic, not only receiving favourable reviews in the United States but also being the choice book by the Book Society of Britain.

Biographical details

John Baron Seton Peacey was born in 1910 in Mordiford, Herefordshire, the youngest son of the Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Peacey who later moved to 1 Lansdown Terrace in Cheltenham. He was educated at Brandon House School, a preparatory school for public schools, which operated in Painswick Road until 1937⁴, before going on to attend St. George’s School in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. However, by the age of fifteen he had persuaded his parents that his future lay in journalism. He initially worked for the *Wembley News* before landing the job of assistant editor of *The Critic*, the literary and dramatic review, in 1931. A year later he succeeded in having his first novel, *The Crutch*, published which was then followed, just two years later, by *Caroline Quellen*. He continued to develop his writing career through embarking on an ambitious trilogy, the first of which, entitled *The Achievement of William Cargoe*, was published in 1935. However, bouts of ill health and then the outbreak of the Second World War suddenly put his writing career on hold. A few days after the outbreak of war he volunteered to join the army but was initially rejected on grounds of ill health. Nevertheless, six months later he was allowed to enlist and quickly rose through the ranks to become a lieutenant in the Royal Army Service Corps. He died on active service in India at the age of 32, leaving his widow, Belinda (née Wilkin), whom he married in 1937.

The obituaries⁵ paint a picture of Peacey as a simple, happy, modest man who was generous in his praise of others and possessed a good sense of humour. He was also a highly courageous individual, since when volunteers were sought to test the effects of mustard gas, he put himself forward without hesitation. Described by Lady Margaret Sackville as ‘an intelligent lover of Cheltenham’ he was also vocal and passionate about resisting any attempts to damage or destroy the beauty of the town. He played an active part in the establishment of the town’s Literary Society⁶ which began with a banquet at the Queen’s Hotel on 11 October 1934 where he not only mixed with other well-known writers, including Francis Brett Young, Cecil Day-Lewis, Lady Margaret Sackville, John Moore and W. H. Davies, but also heard Graham Greene deliver the society’s inaugural speech⁷.

The novel

The novel tells the story of Caroline Quellen (née Dom) who was born in 1796 into a wealthy upper middle class family. Her father, who is a banker, seizes the opportunity to develop Domville following a similar strategy adopted by Joseph Pitt to develop the Pittville estate: *'...and, though other estates were being developed in Cheltenham for the accommodation of the same class of resident, he (George Dom) was sanguine enough to anticipate that Domville, by reason of its architecture and its situation, would attract retired officers of high rank, merchants and planters returned from the East and West Indies and rich invalids.'*⁸ After Caroline marries Frederick Quellen she takes over the banking business and estate management from her father once it becomes apparent that, whilst her husband lacks the necessary business acumen, she has nevertheless inherited this quality from her father.



The front cover of the novel, *The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen*, by Seton Peacey.
Image © David Elder

However, as one local review puts it, it is perhaps the local Cheltenham background and atmosphere that is 'not less interesting than the people of the story and their doings.'⁹ And so, throughout Caroline's life, which spans 105 years, there is a kaleidoscopic picture of Cheltenham's history, from the promenades and rides of daily life, to significant events such as the opening of the Assembly Rooms by the Duke of Wellington, Windham Sadler's ascent in a balloon, and the launch of a new service between Cheltenham and Gloucester using Gurney's steam carriage in the days before the railways. Famous Cheltenham figures make their appearances too: from Francis Close, described as having a handsome face which was made ugly by 'an icy fanatical wrath [that] shone in his eyes',¹⁰ to Miss Beale who 'walked quickly with determination'¹¹ and 'who taught brilliantly, and would one day, be a force, even a power – not neutral, but

militant – in the world of education for women'.¹²

Reflecting Peacey's interest in literature there is also a strong representation of writers, who either lived or visited Cheltenham, from Adam Lindsay Gordon to Sydney Dobell, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Sir Walter Scott. Of particular note is Lord Byron who came to visit Cheltenham on several occasions.¹³ Byron appears in the novel's seventh chapter (entitled 'The Shameless Pursuit'), the author setting the scene thus:

'Morning, noon and night, the talk centred on Byron and his affairs. In Cheltenham - for the ladies, at least - the despatches from the Peninsula paled before the discussions about Lady Caroline Lamb, who was said to be absolutely crazy for love of him; and Lady Melbourne, who hoped to secure him for her niece, the

beautiful Miss Milbanke. While, at Georgiana Cottage on the banks of the Chelt, not so very far from Chalverly Lawn, dwelt Lady Oxford with whom he was in love. Rumours of the wildest dissipation conflicted with tales of the severest asceticism. All the while, Mr. Liddell and Mr. Ruff, the Spa's book-sellers, fed the adoring throng with hot-pressed copies of The Childe Harold.'

In this chapter the action is instigated by Caroline's friend who dares her to speak to Lord Byron, even though there's no chance of her being properly introduced to him. However, an opportunity presents itself when Caroline is out walking her dog and notices the poet strolling up the Well Walk. This chance encounter allows her to engage in conversation with Byron. As they walk together, they admire the famous view of the Malverns from the stile, which Byron recalled from his youth, and which reputedly reminded him of the Scottish mountains.

In fact, Peacey was so interested in Byron's connection with Cheltenham that he bought a large table from a local bookseller which was reputed to have been 'the table at which Byron was seated when he proposed to Miss Milbanke'.¹⁴ The table had been kept at 1 Lansdown Crescent until it was offered for use in Pittville Pump Room or the Municipal Offices.

The novel ends with a soliloquy which sums up nineteenth century life in Cheltenham thus:

*'That day is done: but pious eyes
By aspiration led and fancy prompted
May see Lord Byron staring at the Malverns.
And in the stones that hide the old Well Walk,
Perceive an avenue of phantom trees;
In Cambray glimpse the Duke;
Hear echo yet huzzas for Waterloo.
A French king walks the High Street.
On Cleeve, there're races.
In the church
Dean Close's pulpit thunders still excite
A ghostly congregation'¹⁵.*

Conclusion

Although largely forgotten today, *Caroline Quellen* was undoubtedly a remarkable achievement for such a young writer as Seton Peacey. Lady Margaret Sackville commented: '*To produce a novel, mature in imagination, experience, and expression in early youth has never (as far as I am aware) occurred before in the history of any literature*'.¹⁶ Whilst it remains an outstanding piece of fiction which may still be enjoyed anywhere throughout the world, it also deserves a special place in Cheltenham's own literary history, in particular because of its detailed and accurate portrayal of social life in nineteenth century Cheltenham. And so, if you're struggling to come up with a suitable gift for a partner or friend who is keen on Cheltenham's local history, you could do no worse than buy a copy of Seton Peacey's classic Cheltenham novel!

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

² Peacey, Seton, *The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen, centenarian* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1934. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1934). Note: although quotations from the novel are cited from the U.S. edition, occasional spelling corrections have been made to reflect the original English edition.

³ Sackville, Lady Margaret, Lieut. J. B. Seton Peacey: an appreciation in *Gloucestershire Echo* 8 July 1943 p.3 col.3.

⁴ 'Brandon House sold' in *Cheltenham Chronicle* (24 April 1937), p.6 col. 3.

⁵ See, for example: Sackville, Lady Margaret, Lieut. J. B. Seton Peacey: an appreciation in *Gloucestershire Echo* 8 July 1943 p.3

⁶ The need for a more general literary society in Cheltenham, other than one based on specialist literary interests, such as those being met by the Shakespearean Society or the Dickens Fellowship, was promoted at a meeting at the Queen's Hotel, 16 May 1934. One of the suggestions made was to confine the society's activities to just six meetings, from September to March (excluding December) in the hope that this "would leave us with the whole of the summer to live hopefully with great expectations of some eminent author inviting the Cheltenham Literary Society to a garden party at his home!" see 'Town to have a literary society: decision at meeting yesterday: plan outlined' in *Gloucestershire Echo* 17 May 1934 p.5 cols 5-6.

⁷ Literary Society: Well-known authors to attend banquet. *Cheltenham Chronicle* 29 September 1934 p.3 col. 5.

⁸ *The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen, centenarian*, p.57.

⁹ "The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen": interesting historical novel by local author *Gloucestershire Echo* 23 April 1934 p.4 cols 5-6.

¹⁰ *The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen, centenarian*, p.281.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.358.

¹² *Ibid*, p.360.

¹³ In the novel we are told that Byron "had come to Cheltenham on the 3rd. of September [1812] and was staying in the High Street at No. 420". P.69.

¹⁴ In fact, the table was also reputed to have been used by the Duke of Wellington when he visited the Reading Room of the Assembly Rooms, see "Town offered Wellington relic" *Gloucestershire Echo* 4 February 1950 p.4 col. 5.

¹⁵ *The Chronicle of Caroline Quellen, centenarian*, p.575.

¹⁶ Sackville, Lady Margaret, Lieut. J. B. Seton Peacey: an appreciation in *Gloucestershire Echo* 8 July 1943 p.3 col.3.

Day and Night Coaches from Cheltenham – January 1835¹

Name of Coaches		From	To
<i>Magnet</i>	<i>Day Coach</i>	<i>Cheltenham</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Mazeppa</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>
<i>Paul Pry</i>	<i>Night Coach</i>	<i>Worcester</i>	<i>D^o</i>
<i>Paul Pry</i>	<i>Day Coach</i>	<i>Cheltenham</i>	<i>Carmarthen</i>
<i>York House</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Bath</i>	<i>Birmingham</i>
<i>Pilot</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Cheltenham</i>	<i>Coventry</i>
<i>Defiance</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Worcester</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Bristol</i>
<i>Travellor</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>
<i>Omnibus</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>
<i>Omnibus</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Gloucester</i>
<i>Imperial</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Leamington</i>
<i>Hibernia</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>D^o</i>	<i>Liverpool</i>

¹ Gloucestershire Archives, D2025/Box10/Bundle1: the coaches were advertised as running from the coach office adjacent to the Royal Hotel, Cheltenham, coach proprietor Thomas Haines.

The Restoration Inn and John Dobell & Co, 1836-1953

JOYCE CUMMINGS AND VIC COLE

THE NAMES OF *THE RESTORATION INN* AND OF JOHN DOBELL are well known in the town and their association with Cheltenham goes back a considerable way. This article aims to give a brief outline of their history.

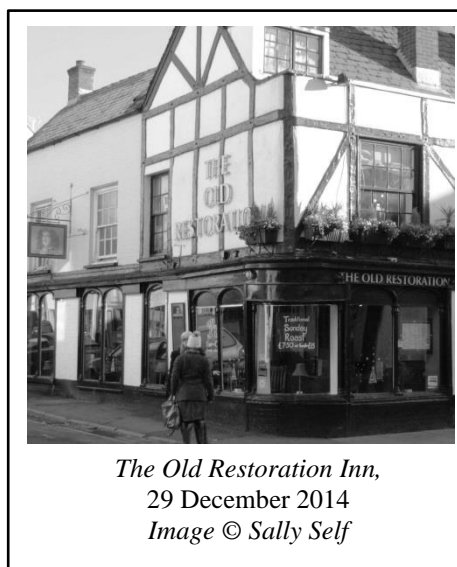
By the time of John Dobell's arrival in the 1830s, Cheltenham was a considerable town with a steadily rising population. In 1821 it was 13,396, by 1831 it had risen to 22,942 and in 1841 there were 31,411 inhabitants.¹ The days were long gone since the visit of George III in 1788 and the time when the river Chelt had been directed down the street to cleanse it of its filth. Up to the time of the King's visit, scarcely a mansion of any consequence had been built. The number of lodging houses was under 30 out of 530 dwellings in the town, with only a mere 10 in the process of being built.

However, by 1800 considerable developments were happening in the north-east area of the town, in the St James's area and between Albion Street and the High Street.² In lodgings at 71 High Street, at this time, was Simeon Moreau, Cheltenham's first Master of the Ceremonies. By 1806, John Fisher owned the land on which 70 and 71 High Street stood and also most of Grosvenor Street. The *Old Swan* coaching inn, built on land owned by Corpus Christi College, was numbered 60 High Street.

The premises at 70 High Street, on the corner of High Street and Grosvenor Street³, was occupied by Joseph Robinson, a printer: he is thought to be the publisher of *The Post Office Map*. Next door was a tailor's shop, followed by a greengrocer.

In 1836, during the reign of William IV, John Dobell came to Cheltenham from London to establish the firm of 'Dobell's Wine and Spirit Merchants'.⁴ His upbringing as a Quaker must have influenced his attitudes. He firmly believed in '*direct trading, small profits and short credit*' – a view at odds with the contemporary financial trend but quickly gaining success for him. Two years after arrival, he gained the Royal Warrant for his business and was appointed '*Wine Merchant to Queen Victoria*'.

The Dobell family lived at 246 High Street, near the junction with Gloucester Road, most likely the site of the former *White Hart* public house, and next to this house John Dobell built premises for bottling and storing wines and spirits. It was undoubtedly a well-selected location, with much to be said for setting up this type of business in an



*The Old Restoration Inn,
29 December 2014
Image © Sally Self*

area which was soon to be rapidly industrialised. It was already overpopulated with poor working class families who were flocking to Cheltenham for work. The house had surrounding land which could be built on and plenty of space for the horse drawn drays bringing large casks of wine, shipped over from the continent, for bottling in Cheltenham. In 1842 *The Restoration Inn* was named in *Harper's Directory* not as a public house but as a 'Wine and Spirit Merchants'; the name of the inn does not appear to have been used again until about 1951.

In the 1851 census John Dobell is recorded as living at Detmore House in Charlton Kings, a far more salubrious address. The same census gives Cheltenham's population as 35,051. In the census of ten years later his occupation is given as '*Wine Merchant and Farmer of 31 acres, employing three farm labourers and seven wine trade servants*'. By 1871 John Dobell had 20 acres of land and employed two men.

After John Dobell died in June 1878, the firm continued to be run by his sons, with the exception of Sydney, the eldest, who was not business minded but gained some renown as a poet. From his time in Charlton Kings, John was remembered as a benefactor to poorer inhabitants, providing them with soup two or three times a week and selling clothes and bedding to them at a nominal price. At Christmas he took several hundred of the poorer children into his home and together with Mrs Dobell and their 10 children (five boys and five girls) distributed toys, books and plum cake. His many acts of kindness were appreciated by the Charlton Kings community.

The firm continued to prosper; on the 1885 general revision list of Royal Purveyors their right to use the royal arms was confirmed. In 1901 the firm became a limited company under the management of John Dobell's sons and grandsons. Ralph Dobell died in 1951. In 1954 the firm amalgamated with A.S. Bartholomew Ltd, bringing the three Dobell public houses under the new umbrella: *The Restoration Inn*, situated at the corner of Grosvenor Street and High Street, *St Alban's* in County Court Road, and the *Britannia* in Fairview Road. Hitherto, these three public houses had always been known by the blanket name of *Dobell's*.

The Dobell public houses would have been run according to John Dobell's own strict, austere lifestyle. He would not have approved of any raucous or drunken behaviour; although he offered wine, spirits and beers over the bar at wholesale prices the conditions would not have encouraged the drinker to stay overlong. The atmosphere in the bars was solemn, almost church-like; the public section was at one time divided into compartments which did not allow friends to meet or socialise.

John Dobell also started the Dobell's tradition of employing only women as landladies and barmaids, the women being picked for their strong character, standing no nonsense from any customer and strictly enforcing the house rules. The women themselves wore an informal uniform, dressed modestly in smart black outfits with little ornamentation. A 'No Smoking' rule was strictly adhered to until World War 1; one landlady was so adept at sniffing out the slightest puff of cigarette smoke and quickly dealing with the culprit that she earned herself the nickname *The Priestess*. Such was the effect these ladies had on customers that it is said that one ex-landlady, even 10 years after she had retired at the usual age of 70, still wielded her formidable influence over former Dobell's patrons when she met them while out shopping in the town.



The Restoration Inn, (top, arrowed) and (below) the upper or eastern section of the High Street. The tram lines are visible in the centre, early 20th century.

Photographs supplied courtesy of David Hanks

John Dobell & Bartholomew Ltd

Following the merger in 1954, structural alterations were carried out on the *Restoration Inn* to provide a pleasant lounge area and during the work a well was uncovered. By 1960 the Company name had changed to Dobell (John) and Bartholomew Ltd (in association with Tyler & Co Ltd).

In 1977 it was rumoured that the brewery company Ind Coope Ltd proposed to demolish *The Restoration Inn*, prompting a petition of 1,300 names to Cheltenham Borough Council to save the pub although no application had been submitted to the

planning department at that stage. Mr J.J. Jeffries, Cheltenham's Conservation Officer, stated that the inn was a timber framed building with parts dating back to the 16th century although nothing of the original external building remained. Although it was not structurally dangerous the building had a limited lifespan and he advised piecemeal work to maintain it in the short term.

Councillors on the planning committee were unanimous in wanting to save the pub, putting various views on record. *'I will do everything I can to encourage the retention of this building', 'it presents a fantastic picture at that end of the High Street'* and *'it is the only building in the Strand with character'*. Mr G.S. Walker, Chief Assistant Planning Officer, advised caution, as he was wary of 'propping up' buildings in the town; nevertheless he reminded committee members that *The Restoration Inn* was within Cheltenham's Conservation Area and they therefore had control over applications to demolish buildings within that area.

Pressure was brought to bear on the council to 'spot list' the building but members and officers were reluctant to do this as they feared the implications if the Department of the Environment turned down the application, Despite their misgivings councillors voted 6 to 5 for an application to be submitted, with a positive outcome. On 2 March 1977 *The Restoration Inn* was registered as follows:

'Inn and house, now inn. 17th century, with later alterations and additions including range to right c.1820-1850 and those c.1880-1900 and mid-20th century. [The main (left) range: timber-framed and rendered with pseudo timbering applied on the first floor, [with] a renewed artificial slate roof, with one off-ridge brick stack to front and brick stack to rear; [the] range to [the] right is stucco over brick with [a] concealed roof and renewed left brick stack. Granted GRADE II LISTED BUILDING STATUS'⁵

The exterior is variously two and a half storeys and three storeys with a miscellany of dormer, casement and sash windows with a continuous 19th century shop front with six sections. The official listing goes on to describe the interior, stating finally that; *'Together with numbers 54 and 331, [the] 17 century fabric is the best-know pre-Regency domestic survival within the boundaries of the early town,'*

Editor's note: While I would not want a reputation for encouraging members to frequent public houses, it is well worth the while to print off the full listed building description for the Restoration Inn and walk round the building and perhaps also visit the interior!

¹ Information from the Census returns of 1821, 1831 and 1841

² In 1800, the High Street had only nine side roads or alleyways.

³ Grosvenor Street was originally Yatman Street, then Gyde's terrace: Hodsdon, J., *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, Gloucestershire Record Series 9, (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1997)

⁴ John Dobell was born in Cranbrook, Kent in 1792

⁵ For a full description of the exterior and interior, see 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' issued by the Department of the Environment: Borough of Cheltenham, 1983.

Information now available through the following web address, accessed 20 December 2014:

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-474759-the-restoration-inn-gloucestershire>

Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham, 2014

Compiled by STEVEN BLAKE

Aldred, David, 'George Freeman: Extraordinary Entrepreneur', *Tewkesbury Historical Society Bulletin* **23** (2014), 14-21. An account of the life of George Freeman (1780-1869), a Tewkesbury-based lace manufacturer and philanthropist, who lived in Cheltenham between 1846 and 1869.

Hodges, Lynda, *The Life Story of our Church. St Mary's Church, Prestbury*, published by St Mary's Prestbury PCC, 2013. 36pp. £1.50.

Hodsdon, James, 'Montpellier: the British diffusion of a French place-name', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society* **45** (2013), 12-30 [includes Cheltenham's Montpellier].

Hollingsbee, Ian M.C., *Inside the Wire. The prisoner-of-war camps and hostels of Gloucestershire 1939-1948*, The History Press, Stroud, 2014. 178pp. £12.99 [includes sections on Swindon Village Camp 649 (pp. 59-60) and Leckhampton Court Camp 263 (pp.139-173)].

Jackson, Dennis, and Price, Monica, 'Decorative stones of Cheltenham Part 2: Shops and public buildings', *Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club* **46.1** (2014), 188-209.

O'Connor, David (editor), *Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin* **60** (2014). 60pp. Articles on Charlton Kings by a variety of authors: including Brian Lickman, 'Our Home Front Part III' [refers to the 1941-3 National Farm Survey]; David Morgan, 'The Lilleybrook in Charlton Kings'; David O'Connor, 'Charles Cooke Higgs – an Eccentric Benefactor'; Holy Apostles – in the Bishop's Hands'; 'Charlton Kings and its Catholic Community'; 'The Unfortunate Denwood Harrison' [refers to the suicide of a local clergyman in 1904]; David Sage, 'Charlton Church Post Office'; Mary Southerton, 'Living-in Servants in Charlton Kings 1841-1891'; and a number of shorter notes.

Scheer, Christopher, 'The Importance of Cheltenham: Imperialism, Liminality and Gustav Holst', *Journal of Victorian Culture* **19.3** (2014), 365-382.

Sillence, Rebecca, *Prestbury Remembers World War One. Centenary Memorial Trail*, privately published, 2014. 28pp.

The Eureka Partnership, *Cheltenham Union Volume 1: Workhouse Births and Deaths 1836-1852; Apprentices 1845-1853. Cheltenham Union Volume 2: Workhouse Births 1908-1914; Baptisms 1886-1914; Register of Removals 1899-1903. Cheltenham Union Volume 3: Workhouse Deaths 1866-1904*. Further details available at www.eurekpartnership.com.

Wills, Jan, and Hoyle, Jon (editors), 'Archaeological Review No. 37, 2012', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **131** (2013), includes notes on watching briefs in Cheltenham (102 Evesham Road, the Art Gallery & Museum and Trinity church, p. 254) and at Prestbury (Prior's Piece, Mill Street, p, 261),

Gloucestershire Archives: Cheltenham New Accessions, 2014

JULIE COURTENAY, Collections Team Leader

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 some accessions, the online catalogue entry may be an overview of the whole collection rather than an item by item description as it inevitably takes more time to appraise, sort and catalogue larger collections. 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.

Ten members of the Society have been volunteering regularly at the Archives over the last year, helping to list some of our large solicitors' archives and thus making them accessible for the first time. We really appreciate this support and always have a variety of activities on offer for volunteers. The coming year is particularly exciting as we are planning and developing activities for our HLF funded project *For the Record*. Please see our website or contact us if you would like more information or to get involved.

Website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives

Email: archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk

All Saints parish (additional): register of services, 1983-2001; quinquennial inspection reports, 1967-1991; parish magazines, 2013 (GA collection reference P78/2, accessions 13539 and 13398)

***Amnesty International, Gloucester & Cheltenham group:** newsletters, 2000-2005; correspondence about specific cases, 2005-2010 (D13538)

Cheltenham Art Club (addl): newsletters, 2012-2013 (D11487, acc 13479)

Cheltenham Borough Council (addl): private street works, owner's and occupier's reference book, 1904; street re-numbering books for High Street, Cheltenham, 1955 (CBR, acc 13436)

***Cheltenham Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and related local Peace Groups (addl):** records of Cheltenham CND, Cheltenham Action for Peace and Winchcombe Action for Peace, c.1982-c.2008 (D11731, acc 13488)

Cheltenham Christadelphians (addl): records include minutes, 1946-1990s; marriage register, 1984-1999; registers of attendance, 1960s-1990s; visitors book, 1989-1997; constitution of faith, nd; nomination papers, 1990s; appointment plans with roll of members, 1980s-1990s; appointments plans, 2005-2013; papers relating to church events, 1980s-1990s; certificate for the solemnization of marriages at Christadelphian Hall, Knapp Road, 1965 (D13500)

***Cheltenham Graduates' Club:** minutes, 1954-1967; accounts, 1962-1973; attendance registers, 1954-1997; programme cards, 1964-1977, 1992-2009; other records, 1955-1997, including survey of members' interest in proposed activities, 1960s-1980s (D13566)

***Cheltenham Group of Artists:** records include various minutes, 1920-1993; constitution, rules and "history" sheet, 1929-c.1990; sales catalogues for exhibitions (excluding war years) 1923-2009; visitors books, 1994-2001; membership subscriptions and related records, 1947-1998; correspondence of secretary, treasurer and president, 1969-1983; applications for grants, 1993-1998, papers concerning Cheltenham Arts Council, 1973-1993; agreement with Glenfall House Trust, 1995; papers of and relating to former member Gwilym Jones (d.1972) ARCA including newscuttings, photographs, sketch book and other original art work, c.1953-1972 (D13630)

***Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation (addl):** records include correspondence concerning visits of Lord Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi, to the Cheltenham congregation, 2010 and 2011; papers concerning Heritage Open Day, 2011; programmes and correspondence concerning National Holocaust Memorial Day, 2002-2012; correspondence concerning the Office of Small Communities, 2007-2012; correspondence with Rabbi Pink of Birmingham, including repair of Torah scrolls, 2011-2012; correspondence concerning the Liberal Jewish Community of Gloucestershire, 2008-2009; photographs of the interior and exterior of Cheltenham Synagogue, 2002-2007; cemetery records, including lists and registers of burials at Elm Street, compiled [mid-late 20th century]-2011 (D3883, acc 13607)

Christ Church parish (addl): records include orders of service for consecration and re-consecration, 1866-1888; copy purchase deed of Vicarage, Malvern Road, 1920; notice of listing of church as of special historical or architectural interest, 1955; "The Story of Christ Church, Cheltenham" by J K Cavell, undated; plan

for work on the east end of the Church, 1974 (P78/3, acc 13605)

Drake family of Cheltenham (addl): personal records of Tony Drake and his family, including records of Drakes department store, 1888-1980s (D13066, acc 13411)

***Gloucestershire County Council (addl):** plans, correspondence and planning applications concerning development at St James Station, 1986-1991 (K1988, acc 13445)

Hands family of Cheltenham: deeds and associated documents mainly relating to property in Rutland Street, 1738-1932; copy photograph of resident Bill Hands meeting Queen Mary after a bombing raid damage in Brunswick Street, [1942] (D13533)

***Holst Birthplace Museum Trust:** film footage about Holst, commissioned by Cheltenham Borough Council and made by Demeter Films, 1970s (D13572)

***Holy Trinity parish (addl):** records include registers of marriages, 1962-2005, banns, 1948-1999, confirmations, 1913-1996 and services, 1884-1889, 1903-1914; register and plan of burials in the crypt, undated; vestry minutes, 1864-1880; PCC minutes 1951-1992; copy deed of consecration of Holy Trinity 1823; pew deeds, 1824-1882; other property papers, 19th-20th cent; Charity Commission papers, 1888-1923; Holy Trinity National School infants' school plans and building fund accounts, 1893; renovated day school plans 1908; book and plan of memorials in church, undated (P78/4, acc 13599)

***Methodist Circuit records (addl):** circuit register of marriages, 1915-2004; cutting from the Methodist Recorder giving a review of the life of the circuit, 1978; order of service for the rededication of St. Matthew's as a shared place of worship, 1972; St Mark's Methodist Church minutes, 1974-2003; land registration papers, 1916-2009 (D3418, various accs); order of service for the uniting of the Tewkesbury and

Cheltenham circuits, 1991; notices book, 2011-2013 (D7028)

Price: records of **Myfanway Price**, nurse and co-founder of the Royal and Penryhn Nursing Home in Cheltenham, including nursing certificates and some photographs and prints of Cheltenham General Hospital, 1920-1946 (D13671)

Quinton: marriage settlement between **Mary Augusta Quintin** of Woodleigh, Cheltenham, spinster, and George Nugent Ross Esquire, late lieutenant in the 12th Madras Native Infantry, now of Swanston, near Edinburgh, 1872 (D13385)

St Aidan's parish (addl): registers of services, 1955-1994; District Church Council minutes, 1955-1994; papers relating to inauguration of church, 1958; plan of church and site relative to proposed development, 1995-1996; quinquennial inspection reports, 1973-1983 (P78/15, acc 13541)

St Luke's parish (addl): records include registers of marriages, 1992-2008, banns, 1984-2002, and services, 1991-2004; annual church meeting and PCC minutes, 2004-2008; "History of St Luke's 1854-1954", by Rev T J Eastwood, Vicar; "A History of St. Luke's Church 1854-2004", by Alan Munden, 2004; parish magazines, 1984-2014; charity papers, 1933-1999; property papers including correspondence relating to the sale of the Bath Road site, 1968-1970 (P78/7, acc 13600)

St Mark's parish (addl): records include registers of marriages, 1977-1992, banns, 1982-2011, confirmations, 1962-2012, and services, 1968-1994; papers relating to building of the National Boys School, including plans and receipts, 1886-1888; papers concerning construction of parish hall including plans, 1911-1922; other property papers, 1918-1983; alteration of

boundaries, 1934; papers concerning Alma church, 1952-1956 (P78/8, acc 13540)

St Mary's parish (addl): registers of baptisms, 1939-1970, and services 1985-2008; annual church meeting minutes, 1975-2007; PCC minutes, 1991-2008; log book, 1966-2009 (P78/1, acc 13601)

St Matthew's parish (addl): registers of banns, 1879-2008, and services, 1985-2003; church log book, 1966-2009 (P78/9, acc 13602)

St Michael's parish (addl): registers of baptisms, 1975-2007, banns, 1985-2005, and services, 2001-2010 (P78/17, acc 13604)

St Silas' parish (addl): registers of services, 1979-2001; annual church meeting minutes, 1959-1970; district church council minutes, 1976-1999 (P78/14, acc 13542)

Theatre programmes: relating to The Falcon Players, Cheltenham Civic Playhouse, County Drama Festival, Cheltenham Youth Drama Festival, 1945-1947 (D13650)

Willans, solicitors of Cheltenham (addl): title deeds of properties in and around Cheltenham including 56 Brunswick Street, 1936-1992; 57 Hatherley Road, 1925-1951; 6 Knapp Villas, formerly 3 Knapp Road, 1871-1993; 36 Leighton Road, (1903)-1987; Dunluchin, 359 Old Bath Road, (1891)-2000; 39 Princes Road, Tivoli, formerly 2 Fairlight Place, (1895)-1983; 93 St George's Place, formerly 3 St George's Parade, 1885-1995; 38 Winchcombe Street, formerly 82 Winchcombe Street, (1814)-2010 (D5907, acc 13468)

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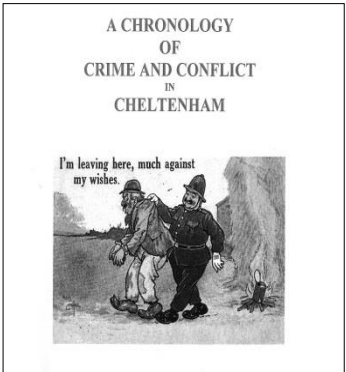
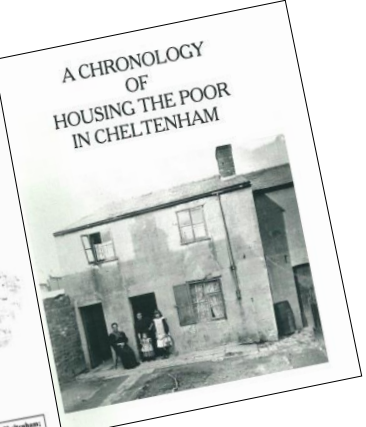


This fine looking gentleman, on an equally well turned out horse is the noted Cheltenham builder, A.C. Billings. He hunted, it is said, in order to make contacts with gentry who might require building work on their mansions.

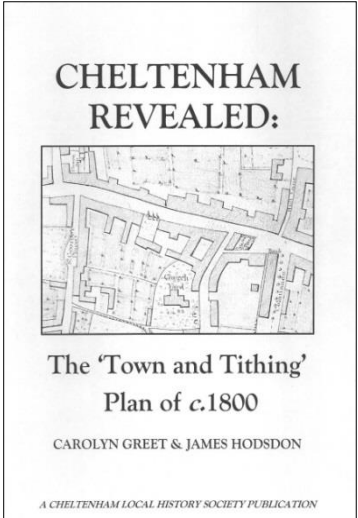
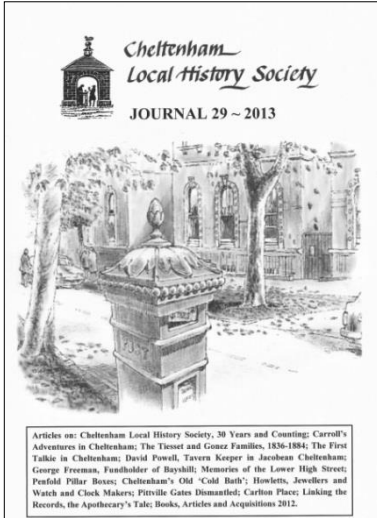
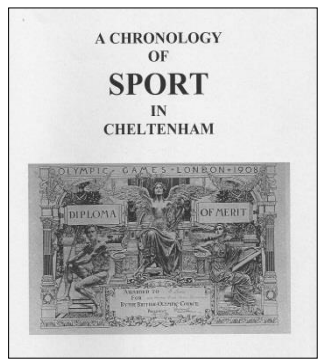
See Anthea Jones's article 'Dr Grace Billings' pp.23-26

Courtesy of Dr Robert Billings

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Other publications:
**Cheltenham Revealed:
 The Town and Tithing Plan c. 1800**
Compact Discs
**Cheltenham Old Town Survey
 1855-1857**
**St Mary's Cheltenham Parish Records
 1558-1804**
Pittville Subscription Book 1830-1853



Articles on: Cheltenham Local History Society, 30 Years and Counting; Carroll's Adventures in Cheltenham; The Tisset and Gouze Families, 1836-1884; The First Talkie in Cheltenham; David Powell, Tavern Keeper in Jacobean Cheltenham; George Freeman, Foundholder of Bayshill; Memorials of the Lower High Street; Perford Pillar Boxes; Cheltenham's Old 'Cold Bath'; Howletts, Jewellers and Watch and Clock Makers; Pittville Gates Dismantled; Carlton Place; Linking the Records, the Apothecary's Tale; Books, Articles and Acquisitions 2012.

A CHELTHENHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION