



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 104

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council
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<http://www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk>

November 2022



EDITORIAL

This year is our Society's 40th anniversary, and on October 4th we had a celebratory gathering (with cakes!) to mark the occasion. See page 12 for an account of the event, and page 14 for the Chairman's comments. As a further nod to the passing years and changing times, we have also given this Newsletter a slightly different look, with a coloured heading and a modern typeface replacing the Times New Roman we always used before. We hope you will think it's an improvement.

Kath Boothman

November 2022

Cheltenham LHS

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EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2022-23

We are continuing to hold evening meetings at St Luke's Church Hall, at 7.30 pm on Wednesdays rather than Tuesdays. For the benefit of members who are unable or reluctant to attend in person, talks will be recorded and can be viewed online for up to four weeks after the event.

Wednesday 18th January 2023:

Louise Ryland-Epton—VCH - Leckhampton

Wednesday 15th February 2023:

David Elder—Cheltenham's Poet Laureates

Wednesday 22nd March 2023:

Polly Baynes—The History of the Cheltenham Charity Organisation

Wednesday 19th April 2023:

Robert Rimell—The History and Development of the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens

Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 7.00 pm

AGM followed by Greg Godfrey-Williams—The Story of Spirax Sarco

MORNING LECTURES 2022-23

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke's Church Hall on Tuesdays. A donation of £3 from all attending is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no extra charge) from 10.00 am and lectures begin at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the hall is limited and is on a first come, first served basis. If you need to reserve a space please contact the Secretary, Alison Pascoe (01242 519413).

Tuesday 6th December 2022:

David Aldred—Cheltenham's Lung: the long making of Cleeve Common

Tuesday 7th February 2023:

Neela Mann—Aristocrats, Admirals and an Architect: Glimpses of early 19th century Cheltenham social history

Tuesday 4th April 2023:

Sean Callery—Go West! Get your kicks on.... the A40. A journey with many surprises.

Congratulations!

We are delighted to report that Sally Self has been chosen to receive a VCH Outstanding Contribution Award for her work on Cheltenham's Victoria County History. It is a nationwide award granted to people who have made exceptional contributions to the VCH. Well done, Sally. You richly deserve it.



*FOR YOUR DIARY***Leckhampton Local History Society**

www. leckhamptonlhs.weebly.com

Meetings take place in St Peter's Church, starting at 7.30 pm

Tuesday 29th November 2022:

Amy Woolacott—350 years of dress in monumental brasses 1260-1640

Tuesday 31st January 2023:

Alexandra McConnell—A history of the Dowty Group, using archives from the Dowty collection and Sir George Dowty's memoirs, with a focus on the role of Sir Robert Hunt

Tuesday 25th March 2023: tbc

Tuesday 25th April 2023:

Caroline Alexander—Ladybird Books: Douglas Keen and his life in Leckhampton

Gotherington Local History Society

Meetings are held in Gotherington Village Hall, starting at 7.30 pm.

Visitors are welcome, £3 per meeting.

Tuesday 13th December 2022:

Alan Pilbeam—the Royal Progress through Gloucestershire in 1535

Tuesday 24th January 2023:

Dr Simon Draper—Lordship in the Landscape

Tuesday 28th February 2023:

Andrew Breeze—Celtic Goddesses and Ancient Gloucestershire Paganism

Tuesday 28th March 2023:

Kirstie Bingham—Midwife, Herbalist, Surgeon.....Witch! Women and Medicine in Tudor England

Tuesday 23rd May 2023:

Dr Alan Wadsworth— Farms and farmers: a history of one farm from historical documents

Historical Association

Meetings begin at 7.30 pm and visitors pay £3. Cheltenham meetings are held in the Teaching Block, University of Gloucestershire Park Campus, and Gloucester meetings at the Oxstalls Campus.

Monday 12th December 2022 in Gloucester:

Bill West—The Apple Tree Wassail (A revival in Gloucestershire)

Monday 16 January 2023 (check Association's website for the venue):

Dr Jonathan Clements—The Song Dynasty in China

Monday 20 March 2023 (check Association's website for the venue):

Dr Matthias Reiss—Presidential Greatness and Economic Crisis: Franklin D Roosevelt and the New Deal

*REVIEWS**Summer events and visits June-October 2022***GLHA Summer Afternoon
'Trade and Industry'**

Saturday 25th June at St Andrew's Church, Montpellier

Our last local history afternoon at St Andrew's was back in 2018, when the theme was 'health and learning' (Salubritas et Eruditio, as on Cheltenham's coat of arms). This time we again had a dual theme, with a talk related to each subject. There were also three guided walks, one going to locations associated with the Wilson family, one exploring the



history of trading in the Suffolks and the third looking at Regency architecture. In the past we have had displays by our Society in the main hall, while other societies had stalls in the Garden Room and the Mews Room. This time the main hall was given over later in the afternoon to refreshments in the form of an excellent tea with home-made cakes. At the start,

however, everyone gathered there while Steven Blake, as Chairman of the GLHA, formally opened the event. Our Chairman David Elder then came forward to say that 2022 marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of our Society, and to play a recently created video (with Steven Blake as narrator) telling the story of Cheltenham from the earliest times. This was much appreciated by the audience, who numbered about 90.

The various walking groups then set out and the rest of the company assembled in the church for the first talk, given by Sue Rowbotham on the theme of shopping in Cheltenham. It had been a market town from the middle ages, Sue said, with a corn market, a mop fair and a pillared market house in the High Street, later replaced by a larger edifice with a magistrates' court above. By the 18th century livestock was no longer sold in the town centre, though there were still numerous slaughter houses. In 1822 a market arcade selling millinery and fancy goods was built leading off the High Street. It was demolished in the 1870s and replaced by Bennington Street. Montpellier Arcade, built by Jearrad in 1832, still survives. A third arcade, opened in 1908, once led in an 'L' shape from 105 High Street to 15 Winchcombe Street. Now disappeared without trace, it had a glazed roof and contained many shops and stalls. Near Boots corner was the handsome Colonnade, opened in 1791 with six shops and demolished only in the 1930s, by which time the Promenade had developed into the town's main shopping area. In 1872 Cavendish House already had over 20 departments and sold furniture made in its own workshops. Sue showed pictures of other once well-known shops

such as Ward's (where Primark now stands) and views along the High Street. Beckingsale's at no 187 was described in Rowe's 1850 Guide as the best grocer and offered, besides many imported products, a 'royal sausage' made from pigs originally bred by Prince Albert. Farther afield, Gloucester Road, where trams ran from 1899 to 1930, had a good variety of shops in the 19th century. Sue showed old and new photographs to demonstrate how some of them are still commercial premises today and a few even have connections to the original occupants. Elsewhere many little local shops have disappeared: Roman Road for example once had six, now all converted to houses. Nevertheless shopping in Cheltenham still offers many attractions including the Regent Arcade, department stores, markets such as the regular farmers' market and street stalls such as Woody's, the High Street greengrocer. Asked by an audience member how she saw the future, Sue said she thought prospects were bright, especially for small shops.

The second talk, by Amber Patrick, was about the history of the Whitbread brewery in Cheltenham. Previously, Amber said, it was Flowers' brewery, one of many in the town. She showed a picture of the vast brewery buildings (there was a malthouse on site too) in Henrietta Street, and a list of all the other breweries that operated on or near that site between 1760 and 1963. Agg-Gardner's was the first, then Cheltenham Original. Rebuilt by William Bradford after a fire in 1898, by 1945 it was owned by the Cheltenham and Hereford Breweries. Over the years it expanded, as Amber showed with a large and complex layout plan. The company archives, where she had done some cataloguing, revealed that in World War I the brewery supplied brandy and soda water to the hospital, and at the end of the war paid off the women workers who had stood in for the men, rather than just dismissing them. Such paternalism was unusual. Using a long series of pictures from various breweries she then explained the processes involved in the making of bottled beer, from the malt mill that crushed the malted barley, via the mash tubs, coppers, sacks of hops, cooling process and fermentation of the wort to cellar storage in barrels. Breweries naturally had to modernise, and little remained now of the old installations. Amber showed old advertisements for brands such as Cheltenham Bitter and Cheltenham Ale, and explained that most of the beer was delivered to 'tied houses'. These are fewer nowadays, but some pubs still have signs up showing that they are or were tied houses. As for the brewery, most of the site is taken up by Premier Inn—which, however, is owned by Whitbread.

It was then time for tea and a chance to browse round the displays. At 4.00 pm Steven Blake closed the meeting, thanking everyone involved. All agreed it had been a very enjoyable and successful day.



On the evening of July 6th, and again on July 20th, Amber Patrick led a walk entitled **Surviving and Lost Industrial Sites in Cheltenham**. We started from the Bayshill Inn and stopped first in the car park near the synagogue. We would have to use our imagination, Amber warned us, for not much of Cheltenham's industrial heritage is still visible. This car park, for example, was part of Jessop Gardens, one of many plant nurseries in Cheltenham. To the west was the Central Depot of Cheltenham Corporation, with railway sidings, while the original St James Station, opened in 1847, was opposite what is now St Gregory's School. The station was moved in 1894 and occupied the east side of St James Square until it closed in 1966. At the top of Synagogue Lane she pointed out the old fire station and engine house, and beyond, on St George's Place, the former Crescent Bakery, built in 1903. We walked through Waitrose car park and stopped near the tunnel leading to the Honeybourne Line. Under the car park, Amber said, was once a coal depot with railway lines running into it, and on the far side of the Chelt was Upper Alstone cornmill, which became a sawmill in the 1920s. By 1900 the public Alstone Baths, where many Cheltonians can still recall learning to swim, had been built north-east of the cornmill, just across Great Western Road (which owed its name to the railway) near the Alstone Spa. Passing through the tunnel we came out by the river under the footbridge, and Amber noted that we were near Millbrook Street, a name indicative of industries using water power. We followed the river path towards Gloucester Road, where there was once a cattle market and an abattoir, the skins of the slaughtered animals being sent to the skin yard over in Alstone for processing and sorting. As



we turned into Gloucester Road Amber told us that the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tram Road ran through here from 1811 to 1861, bringing coal and other goods from Gloucester. Farther up she drew attention to the site of the Albion Brewery and the former Hop Pole pub, and at the junction with Tewkesbury Road the gasworks offices built in 1881, notable for their high quality brickwork. Along the lower High Street we stopped to notice Wilks the Ironmongers, the name still visible in the once fine stonework. We walked up Henrietta Street, where Whitbread's Brewery stood until 1998, to Dowty House on St Margaret's Road. Once a retirement home, originally for Dowty workers, it is now being converted into flats. Finally Amber led us through the new Brewery Quarter and pointed out the last remaining brewery building. We had certainly had to use our imagination a good deal, as expected, but it had given us many intriguing glimpses of Cheltenham in its more industrial days.

Visit to Chastleton and Stow, Wednesday 17th August

At 9.15 on a rather grey morning our party boarded the coach at Royal Well and headed for Chastleton House, a National Trust property near Stow-on-the-Wold. We were shown round in two groups. The house, we



learned, was built in 1607-12 by Walter Jones, a wool merchant whose less prosperous descendants could not afford to modernise or even maintain it, so that by the time the Trust bought it in 1991 millions had to be spent on renovations. Even so the interior looked very shabby and worn, in keeping with its age and history. We started in the main hall. Here was a table 18 feet long at

which in earlier times the servants sat, while the family ate on a raised dais. Passing through the 'white parlour' we came to the dining room, where pictures in stained glass of Charles I and his queen were on show, indicating that this was a royalist house. Upstairs we admired the fine tapestries and crewel-work bedcover in the Fettiplace room, a bedroom furnished for Walter Jones' son Henry when he married a member of the wealthy Fettiplace family. A large room with an ornate plaster ceiling and elaborately carved panelling was where Walter Jones entertained, hoping (in vain) to impress and gain entry to higher social circles. Nearby was the bedroom where the last owner Barbara Clutton-Brock, whose late husband had inherited the house in 1955, lived accompanied by 30 cats (the guide told us) until she died in 2006. In a small library we saw the Juxon Bible, from which it is said that Bishop Juxon read to Charles I on the scaffold. In another bedroom we heard the story of Arthur Jones, who fled, pursued by Roundheads, after the battle of Worcester and hid in a secret room in the house. The soldiers came after him, but his very resourceful wife drugged them and he escaped. The family suffered, however: Cromwell fined them so heavily for supporting Charles II that their fortunes never recovered. On the top floor we came to the 72ft Long Gallery, once used for indoor games and dancing. It had fine views over the gardens. We then went down to the kitchen, with its blackened ceiling, ancient cooking utensils and collection of pewter plates. Apart from a Victorian range, which was used until 1952, little had changed here since the 17th century. After a glance into the beer cellar we emerged to wander round the pretty gardens and the croquet lawn. The rules of croquet, our guide said, were first formulated at Chastleton.

We then drove on to Stow and had lunch. Afterwards we assembled to meet Nigel, the Chairman of the local Civic Society, and his colleague Rob, who gave us a guided tour of the town. We went first to the nearby

St Edward's Hall, where the town council meets, to see an extensive collection of Civil War portraits in a big upstairs room. Royalists, Charles I and Prince Rupert prominent among them, hung on one side of the room and Parliamentarians, notably Oliver Cromwell and his wife, on the other. It all commemorated the fact that the last battle of the first Civil War took place at Stow on 16th March 1646. Going out into the square Rob told us something of the town's history. Situated 800 feet up on the



northern edge of the Cotswolds at the intersection of such important roads as the Fosse Way and the Salt Way, it had its heyday in the middle ages thanks to the wool trade. The merino sheep brought by the Romans had helped to produce the breed called the Cotswold Lion, prized for the quality of its heavy fleece. Cotswold wool was exported far and wide, and merchants came to buy and often settled in the area, ploughing money into the local economy and funding such fine churches as Northleach and Winchcombe. We stopped outside a pub called The Stag at Stow which, Rob said, was one of several coaching inns. A turnpike road came through the town, and from 1870 to 1963 there was a railway station just outside Stow, on the Cheltenham to Banbury line. Walking on, he pointed out the Kings Arms, where Charles I stayed after the Battle of Naseby in 1645. At the market cross we learned that in 1476 Edward IV gave Stow a charter to hold twice-yearly markets, and the town had celebrated its quincentenary by holding a big medieval fair in 1976. After



the Battle of Stow the Royalist troops were chased into the square, where 200 were killed, 1500 more being imprisoned in the church. Walking down Digbeth Street we turned right towards Sheep Street (once a drove road), stopping to look at a former brewery. Through a narrow alley known locally as a 'ture' we came to St Edward's church, a Saxon foundation with a 15th century tower. On either side of its north

door grows an ancient yew tree, said to have been Tolkien's inspiration for the Gates of Moria in *Lord of the Rings*. Finally, back in the square, Rob pointed out an antique shop which was the former home of William Smith (1739-1869), a geologist noted for creating the first geological maps of Britain. Sadly, he died in a debtors' prison. Feeling both well exercised and well informed after our walk, we boarded the coach to drive home. As ever, we had had a good day out.

REVIEWS

Dr Tim Brain's talk On Wednesday 21st September was entitled **The Gloucestershire Regiment in Europe 1944 and 1945**. He said the talk was based on the memoirs of his uncle Gilbert Brain, the youngest of his father's five brothers, who had fought with the Glosters, as they were commonly known, in World War II. The regiment was founded in the 17th century and had a cap badge featuring the sphinx, a memento of its role in the Napoleonic wars in Egypt. The second battalion, which Gilbert was to join, saw its first serious action in the war covering the retreat to Dunkirk in May 1940. It suffered such heavy casualties at Cassel that it had to be reformed, and Gilbert was one of the new recruits who went for training at the Horfield Barracks at Bristol. Tim showed a picture of a Bren gun carrier, a small tracked vehicle that carried a 4-inch mortar as well as six men and the reliable magazine-fed Bren gun. Each infantry battalion (Gilbert was in the 2nd battalion of the Glosters) had a Bren gun platoon, and Gilbert was eventually a sergeant in charge of one of these. In 1944 his battalion was transferred to the 56th Independent Infantry Brigade and spent some time on home duties undergoing training on moors, which, Tim commented, was not ideal preparation for fighting over French farmlands. In June they went to Normandy, coming ashore in landing craft and fighting their way towards Bayeux. Tim showed an on-screen map with icons moving about, a most effective way of explaining the actions at various locations. At Tilly-sur-Seulles, when the British had to retreat, Gilbert's platoon covered the rear until they were under fire themselves, and he was awarded the Military Medal for covering his own men's retreat and picking up a wounded comrade. Gilbert described in his memoirs how they fought their way into Caen, taking heavy casualties. In later actions the Glosters were under the command of the Staffordshire and then the West Riding Infantry Divisions. They captured Epaignes, crossed the Seine at Rouen and, with the Canadians, attacked Le Havre. Though it was well-fortified, resistance collapsed and the Glosters swept in, taking the garrison and liberating the town. Next they had to take Antwerp, then there was more fierce fighting on the way to Nijmegen, where they stayed for most of the winter, the Germans having flooded the polder to cause delay. In the spring (Tim continued to show the movements on his 'live' map) the Glosters used Bailey bridges to cross the IJssel at Arnhem and the 56th Brigade passed through and took the town. On May 8th Germany surrendered. Between D-Day and the surrender 13 officers and 132 other ranks of the Glosters had been killed, and 22 officers and 546 other ranks wounded—an impressive roll of honour. After the war Gilbert could have stayed in the army as an officer, but he elected to go back to his job as an engineer with the Bristol Aircraft Company. He became a senior manager—evidence, as Tim noted, of his uncle's excellent leadership skills.



On October 4th, when we celebrated the Society's 40th anniversary, we began with a talk by **Jim Markland on Cheltenham's East India Company Physicians**. Jim said few people knew that many of the ex-colonials who settled in Cheltenham had worked for the East India Company. He proposed to talk about four such people who were all doctors. The first, Thomas Christie (1773-1829) he had written about in the Newsletter for March 2021. After an adventurous early career as an army surgeon in Europe he eventually found himself, with his regiment, in Ceylon. There he was appointed garrison surgeon and stayed on to make a career as superintendent of the hospitals, treating a great variety of diseases and highly thought of in his profession. His greatest achievement was to eradicate smallpox almost entirely on the island by using live vaccine. His work is well-documented in his own systematic medical records. In 1809, newly married, he returned to England and settled in Cheltenham, where he helped to set up the new Dispensary and wrote a book about his experience with smallpox in Ceylon.

The second doctor was Richard Warren Coley (1779-1864). He too had an eventful early career, as surgeon on a whaling ship that got captured by the French and retaken by the navy. After that he was soon appointed first assistant surgeon on the man-of-war HMS *Tonnant*. In 1806 when the navy blockaded the French at Mauritius he was naval surgeon on HMS *Cornwallis*, which was then sent on a year-long 'cruise' against Spanish ships and ports down the west coast of South America and around the Pacific, taking in Australia and Hong Kong. After these travels Coley was put in charge of a hospital ship in Penang, a very challenging job. Back in England in 1814 he took a wife (Mary Mallet) and settled to practise in Cheltenham, where at that time there were not many doctors. His surgery in Cambrai prospered and he died a wealthy man.

The third doctor was Thomas Colledge, about whom Jim wrote in the last issue of the Newsletter. He was a born doctor, Jim said, who joined the East India Marine Service in 1819 and went to China four times on ships trading in tea, cotton and, notably, opium. He then took a job as a surgeon in Macau, opening an important eye clinic there in 1827. He stayed twelve years in China, married his wife Caroline there and served as physician to Lord Napier, the Superintendent of Trade. In 1839, shortly before the First Opium War began, he came back to England and two years later settled in Cheltenham, living at Lauriston House, Montpellier. He was highly regarded, notably for his work at the Cheltenham Ophthalmic Infirmary in St George's Place. He died in 1879.



Colledge's grave in Shurdington

The fourth doctor was David Hartley (1810-1882). Less is known about him, but he was probably also a surgeon in the EIC Marine service. He sailed on the convict ship *Warrior* to Australia and later ran Cheltenham General Hospital for 40 years. Though considered a martinet, he was reputedly good with children.

Jim concluded by thanking Jill Waller for her help with his research.

On October 19th Helen Wallimann treated us to a very entertaining talk entitled **Growing up in the Savoy Hotel, Cheltenham, 1945-1960s**. It was a mixture of history and first-hand account of life seen through a child's eyes. Built as a private residence called Glenlee in 1847 by Samuel Onley, it was later extended and leased for use as a boarding house by the Cheltenham Ladies' College from 1886 to 1901. In 1912 it was bought by a Mr T Curtis, and called Curtis' Hotel. It changed hands again in January 1924, when Frederick Gregg acquired it, renaming it Savoy Hotel in 1926. In July 1942 it was requisitioned by the American Air Force until 1944. Frederick Gregg died in August 1942 and left the hotel to his brother William and his sisters. Having regained the property, William was keen to sell it.



How did a Swiss couple and their family come to buy and run the hotel? Helen's father, Anton, was working as the manager of Brown's Hotel in London. He had sufficient savings to enable him to buy a hotel and move out of London. As part of his duties at Brown's he built up a good rapport with the regular clients, one of whom was William Gregg, owner of the Savoy Hotel in Cheltenham. William informed him that the Savoy was up for sale and said he wanted him to buy it. The transaction duly took place and the family moved in towards the end of 1945.

In 1945 the hotel was unlicensed and occupied by several elderly long-stay residents. Provided that the children obeyed the commandments that 'Thou shalt not be noisy' and 'Thou shalt at all times show respect and consideration for guests', they had almost free run of the hotel. They got to know the staff, notably John Ivanovitch, the Russian waiter who taught them how to fold serviettes, and Old William, the gardener who told them off when their football damaged the plants.

They also knew the long-stay residents well, finding their little idiosyncrasies amusing. Colonel and Mrs Vickers lived there from 1957 to 1962. Helen demonstrated how in the dining room Colonel Vickers always held the chair for her, ensured that she was comfortable, then sat down himself but because of a 'gammy leg' he placed his chair a long way from the table, which he then pulled towards him, leaving her to shuffle forward. Another interesting character was Mr Howard, the racehorse owner who always wore riding breeches.

Using the internet, Helen has been able to trace the history of many of the long-term residents. These stories can be found in her book *Living in Hotels; Brown's in London, the Savoy in Cheltenham; A Memoir*.

Sue Brown

Anniversary Celebration

Our morning meeting on October 4th was a special occasion to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Society. By starting a bit earlier than usual we had time to listen to two talks, watch an audio-visual presentation and enjoy a leisurely refreshment break with drinks and the



home-made 'birthday' cakes illustrated on the front cover. At one side of the room was a display all about the Society's 40-year history. The meeting began with a welcome from the Chairman, David Elder, who then introduced Jim Markland and invited him to give his talk.

(See page 10.) The next item on the programme was the 6-minute audio-visual presentation created especially for the 40th anniversary. It told how CLHS was founded by Michael Greet and Steven Blake in 1982 and, against the background of events in the world



Jill Barlow was one of the few original members present

decade by decade, how it has evolved. Then it was time for Michael and Steven to cut the cakes and for drinks to be poured, which made a very pleasant half-hour interlude.

The second illustrated talk was by Benedict Sayers from The Wilson. His subject was one of the two scrapbooks in the museum's



Cutting the cakes

collection made by Ida Wilson (1875-1963), sister of Edward Wilson of Antarctic fame. He described it as a 330-page volume full of memorabilia of all kinds from programmes and maps to letters and drawings. Ida, who never married and lived all her life in Cheltenham, was known to her relations as 'the squirrel' for her habit of collecting things. He read out a poem about the family written one Christmas by her father. There



were political cartoons, posters, photos and obituaries of prominent people and much about World War I and the 1911 Coronation. The scrapbook was a real snapshot of national history.

At 12.30 pm David closed the meeting, thanking all the helpers and especially Maggie Winterburn who made the three delicious cakes.

We had had a morning to remember.

LOCAL NEWS

The New Local Studies Library

The Cheltenham Local and Family History Library has now been relocated into the main Public Library on Clarence Street. To ensure continuity of service we have done everything possible to move all the resources formerly on the open shelves in the old Local Studies Library into the new location. If you wish to view historical newspapers such as the *Cheltenham Examiner* or the *Echo* a microfilm reader with print facility is available to book. Bound volumes of the *Cheltenham Looker-On* are on the open shelves, as before. The new library's book collection mirrors that in the old library, with books useful to Cheltenham researchers at the beginning, followed by the Villages Collection of books on places such as Charlton Kings, Prestbury and Leckhampton. After that come books relating to the history of the county, such as *The Gloucestershire Domesday Book* and Samuel Rudder's *History of Gloucestershire*. The *Transactions* of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society are all available to view, as is the *Cotswold Life* magazine, another useful resource for local historians.

Cheltenham Street Directories, the Cheltenham *Guides*, the Electoral Rolls and the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* photographic supplement have also been moved over into the main building and are all still available on request. CLHS members may also be aware of the other collection held in the Cotswold room, which includes theatre programmes and an extensive photographic collection. This material is currently being catalogued but is available on request. The Cheltenham Map Collection is on open access in the two map cases. We have some exciting new additions which we think will be of interest to all.

We have done all we can to make the transition to the new Local Studies and Family History Library as easy as possible for our readers and researchers. The move has raised the profile of the department, and we hope that in its new form it will attract and inspire more local historians. If any Society members would like to visit, please let me know and I will be more than happy to guide them through the collection.

Christopher Rainey
Customer Advisor



SOCIETY NEWS

New members

A warm welcome is extended to the following :

Gwyneth Jordan and Chris Faulkner	Louise Meehan	Thelma Rees
Sue Wilsdon and Chris Davis	Adrian Quick	Philip Collins
Charlie Heavy and Mark Hughes	Jane Lethbridge	
Robin and Moira Andrews	Anne and Stephen Gale	
Sharan Studer and Graham Beckett	Gwyneth Gibbons	
Jane and Peter Thomas		

Society Update

Forty years ago on 21 September 1982 the Society's very first talk was given by a Mr C Bishop and the subject was John Middleton, Cheltenham's famous church architect. Since then the Society has gone from strength to strength, and the two talks given on 4 October (see p12) to mark our special anniversary show how this town we love to explore continues to reveal new and fascinating aspects of its remarkable heritage. This year has also been an opportunity for us to look forward as well as back, hence our recent publication of a five-year plan which seeks to map out our priorities over the coming years (see <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/aboutus/>). As well as continuing to provide an informative programme for our members we also look to engage with a wider cross-section of our community and go on contributing projects which benefit and celebrate Cheltenham's heritage. If you have suggestions or comments about how the Society could improve its offerings please contact me on 01242 517281 or via davidelder.net@gmail.com

David Elder

Footnote to our latest Blue Plaque

Following the recent article, 'A Human Dynamo' - *Alfred James Miles (1853-1932)*, in *Journal 38, 2022*, a member of the Society has emailed to say that her mother, when a pupil at Pate's Grammar School in the early 1920s, knew Miss Miles as Headmistress. This connection continued into Miss Miles' retirement, when the member's mother, as one of the Pate's Old Girls Association, used to visit her at her cottage in Amberley, near Stroud. These visits continued until Miss Miles died. It is also likely that the two families knew each other, at least on nodding terms. The member's family lived on Hewlett Rd not far from St Anne's, the Miles' family home.



Miss Miles (second from left) and visitors

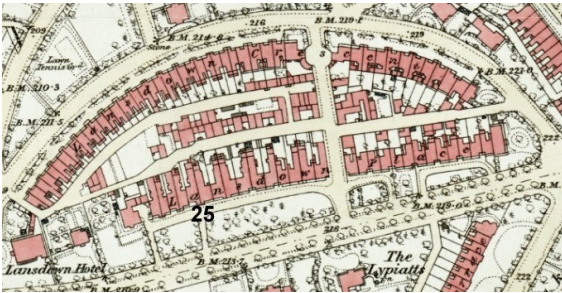
Sally Self

FEATURE

A House through Time: 25 Lansdown Place

When a relative moved into an apartment in the house, I was prompted to look into its history. This is the result.

Lansdown Place is one of the most prestigious residential addresses in the country. Built between 1825 and 1838, it comprises two matching terraces each of fifteen pairs of houses, mainly three storeys high, with basements and service ranges to the rear. Lansdown Walk separates the



two. George Rowe in his 1845 *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* describes 'a carriage way and pleasure ground in front, beyond which is a pavement of great breadth', while 'the windows command healthful and extensive views of the open country, unobstructed by any erections of importance.' The whole area is listed Grade II* - considered to be particularly important and of more than special interest.

Over the years No 25 had a series of owners or tenants, perhaps the most interesting being an army officer who had served in India and a businessman who had made his fortune in the Yorkshire woollen trade.

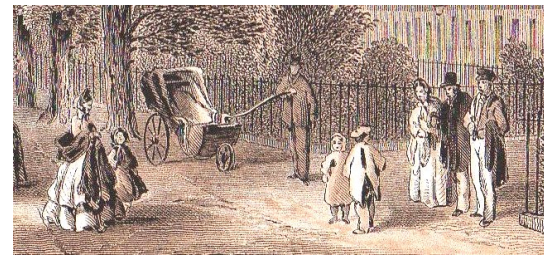
Some might have stayed as visitors, for example a Mr and Mrs Lloyd who in 1840 and 1842 paid a subscription (one guinea for the season) allowing them to enter the walks and rides in Pittville Park.

The Lloyds would probably have travelled there by horse-drawn carriage. Some residents employed and provided accommodation for their own groom or coachman, but if they didn't possess their own carriage, they could take advantage of several livery stables nearby. Slater's Directory for 1858 listed four 'fly-proprietors' whose address was given as 'back of Lansdown Place' and another who was 'back of Lansdown Crescent'. Charges depended not only on the number of passengers and the distance travelled but also on the number of horses, ponies or even donkeys that drew the carriage. Alternatively, they might choose to go by wheelchair, as long as their journey wasn't longer than two miles!



The Pittville rules permitted nursery maids of subscribers with children to enter the pleasure grounds, but they were not allowed in the main areas unless accompanied by their mistresses.

The Campbell family, who occupied the house from 1848 to 1870, had



A street scene showing a wheelchair for hire

three servants, two of them being a mother and her 15-year-old daughter. The Bookers, who followed them, had in order of precedence a butler, a cook, a housemaid, an under-housemaid and a maid. Vacancies for servants were advertised in the local newspapers, for

example 'Wanted, good plain cook - apply between one and three, at 25 Lansdown Place'. No 24 next door wanted a 'a strong country girl, as kitchen-maid'. The entire contents of the house, with its opulent interior furnishings, were sold by auction in September 1844. In January the following year the house itself was for sale freehold, boasting a carriage drive to a portico entrance, a conservatory leading to the elegant drawing room, and a choice cellar of wines, plus a carriage house, stabling and coachman's rooms.

Major-General Andrew Campbell

The house may have remained empty until the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Andrew Campbell and his household. His was the grandest family to have occupied the whole house. He had served in India from 1804 to 1830 and his last appointment had been in charge of the Honourable East India Company's artillery in Gujarat.

Andrew Campbell married twice. His first wife Margaret Hay, whom he had married in Edinburgh in July 1819, died in India in September the following year, six days after the birth of a son, who himself lived only a few months. Campbell retired from the army in 1831 and in 1836, at Bath, he married Nicola Maxwell, the daughter of another army officer. The couple appear to have travelled widely afterwards. There is a record of the birth of a 'son and heir' on 20 April 1840 at Naples. Nothing more is heard of the child, however, and it seems likely that he died, since Robert Mitchell Campbell, who was born in France on 16th September 1841, was their only living offspring. At the time of the 1851 Census Robert, then 10 years old, was living with his parents at No 25 Lansdown Place. The following year he would enter Cheltenham College as a day pupil, and he later served in the Royal Engineers. The family may have lived for a time at the family seat at Avisyard, Ayrshire. When Queen Victoria visited Scotland in 1842 Andrew Campbell was among the officers attending a reception in her honour at Dalkeith Palace.

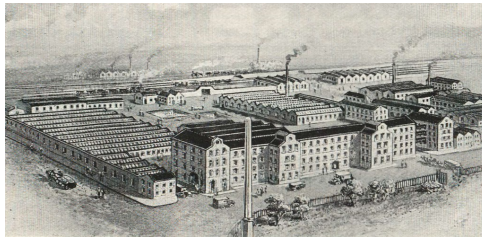
The highlight of the Campbells' stay at No 25 was a gathering held in June 1855, attended by leading members of Cheltenham's society. The *Cheltenham Looker-On* reported that they entertained 'a select circle

of friends' to dine, followed by a party including Sir William Codrington and several other officers of the Gloucestershire Hussars. They assembled in the drawing room for 'an elegant reception and ball' for which Major and Bretherton's Quadrille Band played.

The general died in 1860 and his wife in 1869, leaving their son Robert, who had resigned from the army in 1867, as the householder. In 1870 No 25 was advertised again: 'a capital freehold residence, with good stabling, to be sold, or let on lease, unfurnished'. The house was probably rather run-down by then, and the next owner was not one of the gentry but a man who had earned his considerable wealth from trade.

Robert Booker, Wool Merchant

Robert Alfred Booker arrived from Bradford in 1876, with his wife, an unmarried daughter



Bradford Mills

aged 21, a butler, a cook and three maids (who were also unmarried). Robert Booker was 59 and had retired from the wool trade. He had once been a stockbroker in partnership with his brother but during the 1850s and '60s earned his living as a manufacturer and seller of worsted cloth. The firm of Whitaker and Booker operated a spinning mill (probably within the complex illustrated above).

By 1885 a Mrs Holmes was listed as the occupant, the Bookers having moved to an even grander detached mansion, Stratford House in Suffolk Square. When Robert died in 1898 he left £70,000 (over £9 million in today's money). In addition to bequests to his wife and family, he left money to various religious charities. By then his daughter Amy Isabel had been married to William Powlett Shakespear. He was the son of Major-General George Bucknall Shakespear, who is buried in Leckhampton churchyard.

A Boarding House for Cheltenham Ladies' College.

During the 1890s the house appears to have been empty. However, next door, No 24, had been bought in 1864 by Cheltenham Ladies' College as a boarding house. In 1893, to cater for their growing numbers, No 25 was annexed. Named St Helen's, the house was looked after by Miss Anne Wilderspin.

Lansdown Place Today

Over the years the houses within Lansdown Place have been home to a wide range of people, from the age of Victorian prosperity and privilege to a more egalitarian era. No 1, for example, had once been the residence of the Duke of Gloucester, but by the 1950s it was the Montpelier Spa Hotel together with Nos 2 and 3. This was favoured by new recruits to GCHQ, until they had found accommodation of their own. By 2021 No 25 had been divided into eight individual flats.

Eric Miller

FEATURE

Heir Hunters and Dunalley School

Episode 17 of series 6 of *Heir Hunters* was repeated on Channel 4 in June 2022. It was originally broadcast on BBC television in 2012. This episode features Dunalley Street School in Cheltenham, which opened in 1859 and closed in 1999. *Heir Hunters* normally deal with cases of a person's estate



where no will has been made. The search for heirs in the case of Dunalley Street school was unusual in that respect.

The land for the school was donated in 1858 by a Cheltenham trader called John Crew, a London-born baker and grocer who died in 1872. The *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 15 July 1852 places him at 86 High Street, and in the *Chronicle* of 12 December 1854 he is described as a grocer and

baker with shops in the High Street and Winchcomb Street. In accordance with the School Sites Act of 1841, when the land was no longer of use to the school its ownership was to revert to the original donor.

When the school opened in 1859 it used the Joseph Lancaster method of learning. Under this system, created by Joseph Lancaster, an English Quaker and public education innovator, as one pupil learned something he or she was rewarded for successfully passing it on to the next pupil. The equivalent nowadays is peer tutoring. The use of 'monitors', as these pupil-teachers were called, was partly to avoid the cost of employing assistant teachers, thus enabling the school to run on a limited budget. The school was known as a 'British' and later a 'Council' school.

In 1905, as recorded in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 15 April, plans to adapt the school for girls and infants only were approved. The following year (*Chronicle*, 31 March 1906) buildings were altered along with aspects of the way the school was run. After it closed in January 1999, the land was sold to developers, and the proceeds were owed to the descendants of the original benefactor. The school buildings were converted to flats and additional housing was built on the land. The *Heir Hunters* TV programme told how John Crew's beneficiaries were traced. Crew had six children, one of whom (a daughter, Grace) in turn had six children. One of her children was Ada Grace Ward (1868-1951). In the programme Eric Miller is shown talking about the Red Cross hospital at Leckhampton Court, where Ada was the commandant. She was awarded the MBE in the 1918 Birthday Honours.

The land given by Crew had previously been used for market gardening. Anthea Jones, author of *Cheltenham, a New History* (Carnegie Publishing, 2010), also appeared in the programme explaining how the land ended up in Crew's ownership. Twenty beneficiaries were traced, and one who lived in the Cheltenham area was featured in the television programme.

Clifford Williams

BOOK REVIEW

A Chronology of Trade and Industry in Cheltenham New edition 2022

Compiled by Jill Waller with Sally Self and Sue Rowbotham

Gloucestershire may not be readily associated with industry, but the county has in fact a very rich and varied industrial heritage. While Cheltenham does not have one particular industry which dominated the town, this updated Chronology reveals both the surprising number of industrial enterprises that have operated here and their sheer diversity.

The entries are derived from a wide variety of sources. The earliest is taken from a Manor Court roll of 1275 regarding brewing ale without a licence, and the latest relates to the current year. The contents are arranged in sections, by subject area, in alphabetical order (from Aerospace to Utilities). Together with the table of contents and an index it is easy to locate topics of interest to the reader. Perhaps one of the most surprising sections is 'Tobacco', which runs to a third page and has entries from 1586 to 1948.

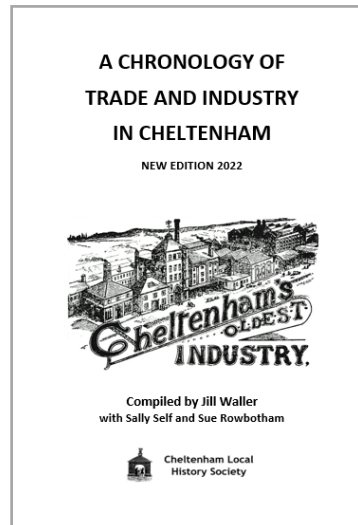
There are more than 30 relevant and interesting photographs and line illustrations, which have reproduced well. One initial concern on opening the book was the apparent lack of references, but in fact, on page 90, a footnote invites readers who require a more specific reference for any entry to contact the Society.

It is never easy for societies to decide how much of their research they should provide to the general public without charge but perhaps, sometime in the future, the Chronology could be put online, in a searchable form with references. Not only would it deservedly reach a much larger audience, but it is likely to stimulate interest resulting in additional information becoming available.

The compilers are to be warmly congratulated on providing this valuable contribution to the record of Cheltenham's industrial past.

Ray Wilson

Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

*FEATURE*

A Small Item of Cheltenham Museum Memorabilia

Not being able to resist small colourful objects with a historical connection, I recently acquired this lapel badge from a well-known on-line auction site, which in turn prompted some research.

In October 1937 Cheltenham Town Council received a request from the Museum Association to hold its annual conference (celebrating its 50th anniversary) in the Town Hall in 1939. The request was granted, not least because Cheltenham regarded the hosting of such conferences as a useful means of bringing revenue into the town. However, in this case Mr W Ansell, chair of the Finance Committee, warned that the Chamber should be prepared to accept a deficit of up to £25. The Town Council, he added, had also made a grant towards the conference.

In July 1939 some 400 delegates from all over the world - South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and other parts of the Empire, with six delegates from the American Association of Museums - 'and their ladies' descended on the town. Detailed reports of the conference in the local press indicate a very busy week: an evensong service at Gloucester Cathedral; a garden party at Lydney Court hosted by the President and Lady Bledisloe; a Mayoral reception; a trip to Cotswolds villages and sites, followed in the evening by the Association's Jubilee reception in the Town Hall; and finally a tour to Deerhurst Saxon Church, Tewkesbury Abbey and Overbury Court. As well as visits to Cheltenham's and other local museums the Conference delegates also staged an open display of their own exhibits in the Town Hall. The programme produced for the week included a reproduction of the familiar etching by George Cruikshank, entitled 'The Morning Promenade at Montpellier Spa, Cheltenham, in 1838', copied from a picture in Cheltenham Museum.

In his opening address the President paid a tribute to Cheltenham, saying that 'no more beautiful venue could have been chosen for the Jubilee gathering of the Association. We are meeting in the garden city of the West, beautifully located by nature, excellently administered, and well planned.' Other speakers included Sir Robert Witt, chair of the National Collection Fund, claiming that Museums needed more recognition and that 'publicity is the life blood of a museum, as it is the life blood of a business. It is no good having fine things if no one knows of them.' He also urged that Museums should keep things fresh, as the public liked something new - 'a museum rearranged was almost a new museum. Almost any work of art looked different in a new position and in new company.'



Another notable speaker at the Conference was Sir Mortimer Wheeler, who stressed the need for more funding for Museums. This resulted in the Conference passing a resolution to 'urge the Prime Minister to recommend the establishment of an inquiry, preferably in the form of a Royal Commission, into the condition and administration of the museums of the country and to consider means whereby the material of artistic, scientific, and historical importance which they contain may be more adequately preserved and more actively utilised for cultural and educational purposes.' In a handsome brochure produced after the Conference, grateful tribute was paid to the hospitality, both civic and private, received by the members of the conference in the town. On an optimistic note, the Conference declared 'let us return from our new dedication strong in the belief of the dignity and essentiality of our profession. Convinced of that and fortified further by our contacts elsewhere, we can face the next 50 years with assurance and satisfaction.' And now some eighty and more years later, let's hope the delegates would be just as pleased with their enduring achievements for the town as The Wilson reopens its doors once more.

Adrian Courtenay

Proclamation of a New King

For the first time in the lifetime of many, perhaps most, Society members a new monarch was proclaimed recently. Even those who witnessed the Queen's accession are very unlikely to remember the last time we had a new king, so it is interesting to recall how such events happened in the past in Cheltenham.



This old postcard shows the Proclamation of King George V on May 9th 1910 on the steps of the Town Hall, and the crowd that gathered to hear it. The photo was taken by E M Bailey, whose name is written across the bottom of the tree. A little further down, in the same handwriting, is the legend 'Proclamation of King George 5th Cheltenham May 10th 1910'. The card would have been marketed without delay. This copy was sent as a late birthday greeting on May 26th 1910.

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Elizabeth Bennett



BOOKS FOR SALE



News from the CLHS Donated Books 'Shop'

In our Society's 40th Anniversary year it feels appropriate to highlight books for sale written and illustrated by Aylwin Sampson, a Founder Member.

Combining broad historical interests with his training in printing and graphic design, Aylwin created many short books relating to the various places where he lived. Arriving in Cheltenham as senior lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the Gloucester College of Art, he was soon producing local tourist material and contributing regular *Scene by Sampson* features on local people and places to the *Echo*. He served many committee roles for the Society, memorably creating the Society's logo and cover illustrations for the *Journal* for around 35 years. His illustrations combine accuracy of architectural detail with a real feel for the atmosphere of the place. Often accompanied by his meticulous calligraphic text and an eye for pleasing layout, Aylwin's books come highly recommended as keepsakes, reminders of particular buildings or places, ideal presents (being very light to post!) and are full of 'I never knew that' moments.

The early landscape format *They Lived here in Cheltenham* (1981 and '86, £1.50), developed into the excellent *Cheltenham Companion*, with text by Steven Blake. An ABC of the town, this mine of information ran through three expanding editions and was abridged into the 2003 *Cheltenham Outlined* - copies of all are available at £2.00/£2.50.

As well as short booklets on a Holst town trail (£1.00) and a history of The Queen's Hotel (£1.50), we have copies of Aylwin's rarely available magisterial history of The Park and surrounds, *Laid out with Taste and Judgement* (2010, £8.00).

His features for the *Echo* were reprinted as *Scene Again* (1990, £2.50) and *Scene Together* (1992, £2.50) - delightful guides to people and places throughout the county, complemented by the charming *Town Walks in the Cotswolds* (1992, £1.50) and *Gloucestershire Worthies* (1996, £3). For a full list of Aylwin Sampson's books for sale, please see the full Donated Books 'Shop' For Sale list on our website: his books are in the sections on Cheltenham, the Cotswolds and Gloucestershire.

Oliver Pointer

Please address all orders and enquiries to hardy_pointer@hotmail.com (07400 197989) Delivery is free within Cheltenham, by post beyond. Payment by cash or cheque on delivery, or by bank transfer beforehand.



**Cheltenham Arts Council - Celebration of the Arts in Cheltenham
11 September**

Based on the very successful outcome of this Heritage Open Days link event last year, which brought us several new members, we again took a stall to join in this celebration of the many cultural and artistic avenues active in Cheltenham. The chance to network with similar bodies in the town is an invaluable one, and all too rare.



Though held on a Sunday this year, the glorious early autumn weather drew many people into the centre of town. We were able to greet existing members again after the summer break and tell them about the exciting range of talks on offer in the coming season. We met a good number of people keen to learn more about our town's historic culture and were able to answer several immediate questions about the history of Cheltenham. By the end of the afternoon we had given away all the membership leaflets we had brought, and we are receiving applications to join us as a result. Our stall this year featured the excellent 40th Anniversary display. It drew positive comment on its attractive appearance and great interest in its range of content. As before we had copies of older *Newsletters* and *Journals* for browsers to take away. Both display and past publications showed the diversity of interests and skills among our membership; promoted our regular Society activities; and highlighted our mission to explore, record and celebrate Cheltenham's heritage.

Oliver Pointer

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QUERY CORNER

Frank Fenner

Frank Fenner (1811-1896), a local tobacconist in Cambridge, was also an England cricket player, and a very successful sports administrator/promoter who not only brought Town and Gown together to play in the same team (making Cambridge one of the top three cricket teams in the country), but also created Fenner's Cricket Ground in 1848, which is where the University teams still play. However despite this success he suddenly left Cambridge in 1862/63 aged just over 50 to take up a new role as proprietor of the Royal Hotel, Cheltenham. I don't yet know why; either he was forced out by the University for some reason or he was made an attractive offer to take over the Royal Hotel AND inject some energy into making Cheltenham the best local cricket team, and the home of the Gloucestershire County Cricket Club. This he achieved, but only in part. I know the Jessop family were much involved in cricket in Cheltenham, but have no evidence that they or any other locals enticed Frank away from Cambridge. I am related to Frank Fenner and am writing a book on his life, and on 19th century sport in Cambridge. If you can help, please contact me at nigel@cambridgesportstours.co.uk.



The Royal Hotel stood where John Lewis is now
Picture courtesy of Jill Waller

Photos of Croft Street, Leckhampton

An enquirer is looking for photographs showing Nos 1 and 2 Fossil Cottages, which stood at the top of Croft Street until they were demolished in the post-war years to provide a carpark for Crook's Laundry. Please contact the editor (see below) if you can help.

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the March 2023 issue by
Monday 13th February 2023
to the Editor: Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End Cheltenham GL50 2QA
Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: kboothman3@gmail.com

We are always very pleased to receive contributions from members—articles of any length, interesting facts and photos, memories, comments, are all welcome.