



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 106

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<http://www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk>

July 2023



EDITORIAL

In the last issue we had a painting of an unknown place as our cover picture. This time we have a stained glass window, and we know where it is (namely in the former Delancey hospital), but it too has some puzzling features. The style suggests it could be Victorian, while other evidence indicates a later date. What is the significance of the monogrammed initials in most of the panels, and especially of the Wykehamist motto 'Manners Makyth Man' ? Eric Miller has been looking into it and has some of the answers—see page 21.

Kath Boothman

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2023-24

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 20th September:

Dr John Chandler—The Gloucestershire Traveller: roads and their uses through history

Wednesday 18th October:

Dr Tim Brain—Faith in Stone: Gloucestershire's Historic Churches

Wednesday 15th November:

Phillip St Lawrence—General Sir Charles Harrington and the Chanak Incident, 100 years on: the man who brought down Lloyd George

Wednesday 17th January 2024:

Tim Bridges (Victorian Society)—Victorian and Edwardian Buildings of Birmingham and the West Midlands, including some Cheltenham buildings

Wednesday 21st February 2024:

John Putley—Gloucestershire Archives @the Heritage Hub

Wednesday 20th March 2024:

Steve Parkes (Cotswold Sheep Society)—Cotswold Sheep and their history from Roman to present times

Wednesday 17th April 2024: tbc

Wednesday 15th May 2024:

AGM followed by Christine Whittlemore—A Glimpse of Cheltenham in 1850: from monster flower show to anti-Catholic riot

MORNING LECTURES 2023-24

Morning lectures 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. If you need to reserve a space please contact the Secretary, Alison Pascoe (01242 519413).

Tuesday 3rd October:

Dr Simon Draper—Making a Living on the River Severn

Tuesday 5th December:

Neela Mann—'Am I not a Man and a Brother': Cheltenham and the Slave Trade

Tuesday 6th February 2024:

Melanie King—The Secret History of Spas

Tuesday 2nd April 2024:

Members' Research and Display Event

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 26th September:

Nicola Potter—Detecting and finds from Gloucestershire

Tuesday 31st October:

Neela Mann—Bankers, Brewers and Barons: the stories behind the memorials in St Mary's Minster

Tuesday 28th November:

Anthony Nanson—King Arthur in the Cotswolds and Surrounding Region

Gotherington & Area Local History Society

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

Visitors are welcome, £3 per meeting.

Tuesday 26th September:

Jim Markland—My Name is William Davy (18th Century Persian Scholar)

Tuesday 24th October:

Jon Hart—Making a Living in the Severn Vale; the Invisible Potters of Domesday

Tuesday 28th November:

Tony Conder—The Secret World of Gloucester Docks

Swindon Village Society

Meetings are held in Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

Wednesday 20th September:

Dr Tim Brain—The Gloucestershire Regiment at Imjin River

Wednesday

18th October:

Clive Witts—The Severn Bore

Wednesday 15th November:

John Putley—Pilgrims and Pilgrimages

Winchcombe History Group

Meetings are held at Abbey Fields Community Centre, Back Lane, Winchcombe GL54 5PR at 7.00 pm (tea and coffee available) for 7.30 pm

Monday 25th September:

Dr Alan Wadsworth—Farmsteads (Recording the Past for the Future)

Monday 23rd October:

Alan Pilbeam—William Tyndale

REVIEWS

On March 22nd **Polly Baines** gave us a lively talk on **The History of the Cheltenham Charity Organisation Society**, which was the local branch (founded in 1879) of a society run almost entirely by women. She first quoted from a letter written to the CCOS in 1892 by a Mrs Ayles, who said her child was in hospital and she herself had no bed to sleep in and needed money for food. There was a wealth of case files like this one, a rich source of information on the plight of Cheltenham's poorest people, especially women. Polly had studied forty of them, focussing on families with children, and had noticed how then, as now, applicants for help had to fill in complicated and often badly-designed forms. In the late 19th century a moral panic had arisen about the problem of poverty, prompted partly by the deplorable health of recruits for the Boer War. Educated women by



The Union Workhouse, Swindon Road

then were seeking greater freedom and influence and readily took to charity work, which enabled them to get out unchaperoned into wider society. More organisations were founded: the Ladies' Sanitary Association, for example, handed out leaflets with advice on child care, which however showed little insight into the lives of the poorest. People were often forced into the workhouse rather than being given outdoor relief, and the CCOS itself concentrated its efforts on the 'deserving' poor who could be steered away from dependency. The Cheltenham authorities were well aware of the level of need before the CCOS was founded, since a report of 1870 noted that 15,000 people had no mains water. Sanitation was appalling, there were smallpox outbreaks, infant mortality was high and the workhouse was too full. The CCOS thought it could resolve this crisis, but its narrow-minded attitude gave rise to resentment, one newspaper accusing it of 'choking off needy applicants for relief'. Then in 1893 a Miss B Roberts arrived. Trained in London, she was sent to Cheltenham as an inspector but became the organiser of the local Society and transformed it, setting new standards of efficiency and good record-keeping. She styled herself Honorary Secretary and worked extremely hard, soon gaining the respect of local officials and lady workers alike. Women had been kept out of older professions such as law and medicine, but Miss Roberts' influence helped to establish social work as a new profession that was woman-powered from the start, with its own special skills. It was her custom to talk to wives and mothers, recognising that they bore much the greatest burden in a family. Polly told stories to illustrate the kinds of people Miss Roberts met and how effectively she could negotiate on their behalf. Always non-judgemental, she went to great lengths to help even the many 'wayward girls' recorded in the files. She worked for CCOS until 1906, becoming an expert on poverty, and later co-authored a Guide for Social Workers.

(For more about Miss Roberts, see page 16)

Sean Callery, our speaker on April 4th, headed his talk **Go West! Get your kicks on...the A40: a surprising journey**. At 260 miles or 420 kilometres the A40 is, Sean said, the seventh longest road in Britain, running from St Paul's in London to the other side of Fishguard in Wales. The first part of the route goes over the Holborn Viaduct, through the City, over the culverted River Fleet and past Regent's Park. A little further on are the Art Deco Hoover building (now a Tesco store) and the Aladdin factory where paraffin lamps were made, both built in the 1930s, then the former Northolt aerodrome, an important location in World War II. A Polish squadron was based there, and royal flights still land there. Between London and Oxford the A40 parts company from the M40 and goes past Bekonscot, site of the world's oldest model village, and past the home



The Hoover Building

of Wycombe Wanderers, who are nicknamed 'the chairboys' because beechwood chairs used to be made in Wycombe. The road then cuts through the chalky hills of the Chilterns, where red kites, once almost exterminated by gamekeepers, have been successfully reintroduced from Spain and can often be seen overhead. Their diet of carrion is well supplied by the A40. Sean next showed pictures of Oxford (where Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series is set) including the university's Divinity School and the botanical garden, planted originally as a physic garden and believed to be the oldest in the world. The road runs on to Witney, known for the manufacture of blankets, and through the Cotswolds. He showed a picture of the heavy-fleeced Cotswold Lion sheep, noting that Chaucer's merchant was a wool merchant. In Burford is a typical market hall, built of the local oolitic limestone, which is easily worked when first quarried. Burford church saw the imprisonment, in 1649, of a large group of Levellers opposed to Oliver Cromwell. The group's leaders were shot and are remembered now as the Burford Martyrs. The town was also the home of Elizabeth Carey, who in 1613 became the first woman to have a play published. Passing through the quarry area near the Barringtons, the A40 reaches Northleach, where there is an old prison and a fine wool church with a wineglass pulpit. Next is Cheltenham with its caryatids, Penfold letter-boxes and Regency buildings, then the road passes through Ross-on-Wye (a noted 19th century resort) and Monmouth on its way to the Brecon Beacons. These cover 520 square miles and include the UNESCO heritage site of Blaenavon. Further on, near Tenby, the A40 passes the unspoilt little town of Narberth, a contrast to modern Haverfordwest, the last stop before Fishguard where ferries leave for Ireland. Sean finished by telling the story of a local Welshwoman called Jemima who in 1797, when Fishguard was invaded, rounded up twelve French soldiers with a pitchfork and locked them in the church. Our 260-mile journey was now over, and had indeed been a surprisingly interesting one.

On April 19th we had a talk by **David Elder** entitled **Cheltenham: A Secret A-Z**. David said he would focus on things we might be aware of but knew little about. (He revealed at the end that the initials of his subjects spelled CHELTENHAM SPA. Clever!) He began with the story of the French General **Charles Lefebvre**, who was captured in the Napoleonic wars and held on parole here for two years. He lived near the High Street, enjoying an active social life, but escaped eventually after selling some jewellery to hire a carriage. A gold ring he sold is still in The Wilson. Next came **Henry Hadley**, ex-pupil of Cheltenham College and the first Briton to be killed in World War I, just three hours after war was declared. The **Exmouth Arms** was named in honour of Captain Sir Edward Pellew, who was created Viscount Exmouth for his heroic bombardment of Algiers in 1816. The **Lamp** in Clarence Street was a popular meeting place for



General Lefebvre

public speakers in the early 1900s—David told of a scuffle between liberals and suffragettes in 1911—and served as a rallying point for army recruitment in World War I. There is a street called **Tobacco Close** in Winchcombe, and David said there is another in Charlton Kings. In the 17th century Gloucestershire was the best place in the UK for growing tobacco, a lucrative trade that carried on in Cheltenham for 70 years after James I banned it to protect the Virginia plantations. Local growers even resisted troops sent to stop the trade in 1658, but cheaper tobacco from Virginia put an end to it by 1689. Cheltenham had its share of **Eccentrics**. One such was Sir Thomas Phillipps, who filled Thirlestaine House with his vast collection of books and manuscripts but did nothing to make the house comfortable for his family. Another was the concert pianist **Vladimir Levinski** (real name David Secomb), who sported a monocle and jack-boots and claimed to be the reincarnation of Liszt. **Neptune's Fountain** has a figure of Poseidon modelled on one **Dick Saunders**, a labourer and trade union leader described in the *Chronicle* as 'a tough nut to crack'. The **Honeybourne Line** caused great disruption when it was built in 1906 and attracted only 6 passengers on its first train. Used only for freight in its later years, it closed in 1976. Before St Gregory's church was built in the 1850s there was a catholic chapel on the site where an **Anti-Catholic riot** broke out, caused by local resistance (led by Francis Close) to a papal decree aimed at restoring the Catholic hierarchy in the UK. Miss **Katherine Monson** had a chequered career as a speculative builder, an unusual role for a well-born woman. Cheltenham had quite a strong collection with **Slavery**, and David told us about a few of the 50 or more local slave owners and some significant memorials in the Minster. A plaque in **Montpellier Gardens** records the first successful **Parachute** descent by John Hampton in 1838. Finally **Alma House** in Rodney Road has a fine Arts and Crafts interior, with the work all done by H H Martyn.

After the AGM on May 17th **Greg Godfrey-Williams** gave us a talk on **The History of Spirax Sarco**. Introducing himself as the UK Supply Director of Spirax Sarco, Greg joked that he hadn't been with the company long—only 28 years, whereas some people stayed far longer. It was a great business to work for. He proceeded to explain what it did. It was all to do with steam, but not steam engines (though it did once make steam cranes for Gloucester docks). It was a multinational engineering group with three main divisions: Steam Specialities, Electric Thermal Solutions and Watson-Marlow Fluid Technology Solutions. Its most important product was steam valves, an essential item in manufacturing processes of all kinds, from food and cosmetics to vaccines. The company had grown enormously since it was founded in 1888 and now employed 10,600 people globally. It began as a London importer called Sanders and Rehders, which in 1907 opened an American branch called Sarco under Clement Wells. In 1932 Wells joined the firm of Walker, Crossweller, which made spiral tubing used in steam valves and traded under the name Spirax. In 1937 Spirax acquired Sarco and both companies came to Cheltenham in 1939, initially based in St George's Road. In 1945 Spirax and its then subsidiary Sarco Thermostats moved to Charlton House, which is still the headquarters today. In 1946 Spirax



Charlton House

acquired a factory in St Marks, and Spirax Sarco was formally created in 1952. Greg told stories about Charlton House, how it was said to have a ghost in the form of a top-hatted gentleman with a stick, and a poltergeist that three times threw a mirror across a room. In World War II the house accommodated German prisoners of war, and in 2009 during renovations graffiti were found in the attics where they lived. Greg showed a letter written by Churchill in 1939 commending the company for its 'zeal and craftsmanship' and saying that their work would be decisive in the fight against Hitler. He next showed a video entitled 'History of Firsts' about the development of engineering from the 18th to the 21st century and Spirax Sarco's part in it. Charlton House, almost derelict when the company bought it, is Grade II listed and now has a huge new extension, replacing a 1970s building. New facilities are always being added to the main factory at Runnings Road, and the company continues to grow, acquiring subsidiaries at home and abroad. Its success, Greg thought, has much to do with its core values such as customer service, care for stakeholders and involvement in local communities. All staff in Cheltenham, for example, can take three days off each year to do voluntary work, and the company has given 30 used laptops to local schools and campaigned for more defibrillators in public places. Lastly he showed another video 'Our Planet Strategy', demonstrating the company's concern for sustainability.

For those members who were unable to attend the AGM on 17th May 2023, summary reports are printed below. If you did not have a copy of the accounts and would like one posted to you, please telephone the Treasurer on 01242 231837, or e-mail suebrown1492@outlook.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th MAY 2023**

The Chairman David Elder welcomed the Mayor Cllr Matt Babbage, who had agreed to be President of the Society for his term of office and to chair the meeting.

Election of Officers and Committee

The following were elected:

Chairman: David Elder

Treasurer: Sue Brown **Secretary:** Alison Pascoe

Committee: Anne Bateman, Kath Boothman, Mary Moxham, Oliver Pointer, Sue Robbins, Maggie Winterburn

Chairman's Report (*summarised*): David Elder's report took the form of a Powerpoint presentation with commentary. He said it had been a particularly busy year. Eight evening meetings and four morning meetings had been held at St Luke's Hall, with talks on a wide range of subjects. The talks were recorded, thanks to the technical expertise of John White and David Hewitt, and the recordings had proved popular with members who could not attend meetings. There were two summer walks, one on the subject of Cheltenham's Anglo-Indian connections and the other exploring the town's industrial history. The summer outing was to Chastleton House and Stow-on-the-Wold. The Society's 40th anniversary was marked by several activities including the unveiling of a blue plaque to the antiquarian Alfred Miles, a celebratory event for members, an article in the Journal and an audio-visual presentation telling the Society's story. The Society also hosted the GLHA Summer Afternoon on the theme of 'Trade and Industry' in June and contributed displays on the history of teacher training to the GLHA Local History Day in May. Also in May it launched an updated version of its website using WordPress. Grateful thanks were due to the new webmaster David Hewitt, who set it up, and to Alison Pascoe who did much of the preparatory work. Among the newly added resources were *Gloucestershire Graphics* newspapers and street directories. The Society produced three *Newsletters* during the year containing summaries of lectures, information and snippets about local history and feature articles. The annual *Journal* contained articles researched and written mainly by members. It was free to members and could be purchased by the general public. He thanked the editors Kath Boothman and Julie Courtenay for keeping up the high standards of their respective publications. The Library and Donated Books shop were further resources for members,

well managed by Sue Robbins and Oliver Pointer respectively. Both collections were advertised, with listings, on the website. Society members continued to be involved in research, notably in support of the Cheltenham volume of the Victoria County History. He thanked Sally Self and her group for all their work. The Society aimed to benefit the wider community by liaising with the Library Services, the County Archivist and local schools, and by contributing to Heritage Open Days, the Virtual Heritage Network and the Cheltenham Heritage Strategy. Julie Courtenay was standing down as *Journal* Editor after five years of outstanding service. Jill Waller had received an Arts Council citation for her work in responding to local history enquiries. Mary Moxham had taken on the role of Programme Secretary. A membership survey had been undertaken with a positive response, and a five-year plan had been developed. Membership now stood at 365. He thanked all members for their support and the committee for their hard work.

Treasurer's Report (*summarised*): Sue Brown said the Society had had a successful year and its finances were sound. This year it had a net surplus in the general account of £1,229.33. Subscriptions had increased, with membership rising from 354 to 365. Total donations amounted to £270.70, of which £235 came from people grateful for Jill Waller's help with research. As before, Gift Aid was a valuable addition to the funds. The new *Chronology of Trade and Industry* had sold well, realising £803.80 against a cost of £675, and sales of donated books raised £541. Entrance fees for meetings made a surplus of £148.87, while the 2022 summer visit showed a surplus of £35. The GLHA Summer Afternoon, hosted by the Society and supported by a grant of £300 from the Cheltenham Arts Council, made a surplus of £183.69. Turning to payments, speakers' fees had remained at the same level while postage costs, as before, had been much reduced by hand-delivery of the *Newsletters* and *Journals*. In February the committee attended a first aid course, which cost £75.31. The bank balance as at 31 March was £9,523.36, of which £8,673.36 was in the unrestricted fund and £850 in the Peter Smith Award Fund. Sue herself was willing to serve as Treasurer for another year but would then stand down, so the Society was looking for a new Treasurer.

Presentation of the Peter Smith Award: The award was given to David Johnson for his long service to the Society organising summer walks and outings and, for several years, the full programme of talks. (see page 14)

Address by the Mayor, Councillor Matt Babbage (*summarised*): The Mayor said this Society was one group that would not need him to explain the town's motto *Salubritas et Eruditio*. During his term of office he wanted to support organisations involved in health and education, and thought history, especially social history, was very much part of education. He thanked the Society for the work it does and wished it a successful year.

*SOCIETY NEWS***ANOTHER ADDITION TO OUR WEBSITE****The Brian Torode Archive**

Many members will remember Brian Torode (1941-2014), a very well regarded CLHS member who served on the committee and was a popular and knowledgeable local history speaker. He was minister of St Stephen's Church, Tivoli for many years. Brian's extensive archive of research articles and images was previously hosted by his friend Richard Barton on the btsarnia.org website, but this has recently been taken off-line. We are very pleased that Richard has passed many of Brian's research articles and some of his own to us, and these have been added to our website www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk—please visit the Database webpage.



Items included are:

□ The Story of Tivoli, history of trading and memories of the parish, St Stephen's Church history and a gallery of images

□ Other Cheltenham local history: Masters of Ceremonies, Suffolk Lawn, Naunton area, the Cemetery and its occupants, the Ladies' Col-

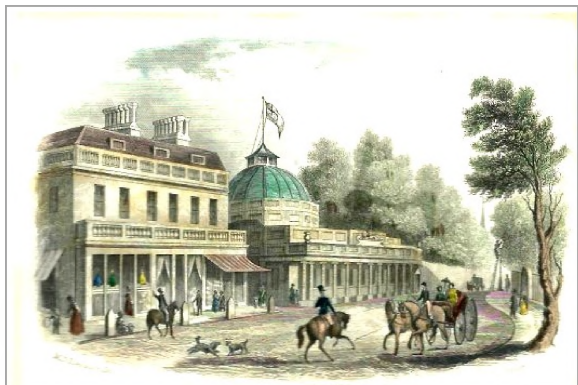
lege, the Eye Infirmary

□ Architects and sculptors: John Middleton and a gallery of images, Boulton & Sons, the Brown family and the Caryatids, William Hill Knight, Ellery Anderson

□ The Hebrew Community of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud

□ Catholic history: St Gregory's church, Anti-Catholicism, Nazareth House, the Ursulines

Alison Pascoe



A Walk on the South Side - from Cheltenham to The Suffolks

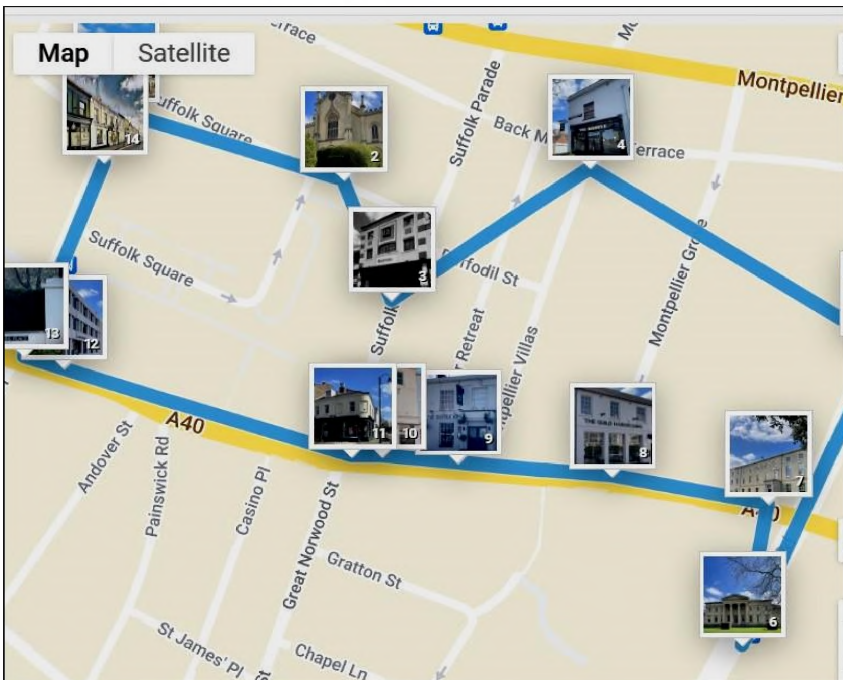
Delve into the historical legacy of one of Cheltenham's most charming suburbs - The Suffolks

Prepared by Stuart Manton and Andrea Creedon, this free self-guided walk explores The Suffolks, one of the early suburbs of Regency Cheltenham. Built around a handsome square, the area takes its name from the 15th Earl of Suffolk, owner of the estate until the 1820s.

Beginning at the Suffolk House flats, the circular route includes landmark buildings and touches upon their history. Taking about an hour, it uses the PocketSights app which you can download on to your smartphone. You can then take this tour at any time, at your own pace. You can also find other self-guided tours of Cheltenham and beyond.

Don't have a smartphone? You can still access the walk from the Resources page of our website www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk and enjoy the historic photographs and information, even without leaving home.

For more about the history of this area please see www.cheltenhamstowntown.org



Stuart Manton/Alison Pascoe

'Contemporaries of the General Sahib' walk, Wednesday May 31st and June 14th. Jim Markland led this intriguingly entitled walk around Lansdown, starting at Christ Church. We first explored the memorials inside the church, very many of which refer to people who spent time in India. It was for people like them, Jim said, wealthy members of the local community, that the church was founded in 1837. He told the story of Lord Auckland, who took his sisters on a long 'camping trip' in India accompanied by 8 elephants, 180 camels and several thousand people including cavalry and infantry. There are memorials in the church to James Gandy Gaitskill, a companion on that expedition, to Christopher Codrington, Lord Auckland's quartermaster and to Codrington's brother Robert, who lost his whole family to cholera in Simla. Among other memorials is the one to John Kedington Wish, father of the sisters who paid for the drinking fountain now in Sandford Park. Leaving the church we walked up the road to Aban Court, once the home of Robert Huddleston. He was in the China trade, shipping cotton from Bengal to Canton to exchange for tea, and was one of several such merchants who retired to Cheltenham. Lansdown



Terrace was long popular with ex-India people. Colonel Borthwick, for example, when serving in the Madras army, became regent of a small principality while the heir was still a minor, and is noted for suppressing the murderous cult known as thuggee. Walking down Malvern Place, Jim said many houses in this area used to be

rented by ex-colonials. Number 2 was home to the widow of Captain Robert Hay, who on a voyage on the *Aste//* was badly wounded in an attack by the French near Madagascar, and later in India was given an elephant which he shipped home to England. The animal died, alas, in an indoor zoo in London. Further along was Douro House where ex-navy Josiah Coghill lived. His son Kendal, later an Indian army officer, was educated at Cheltenham College and once painted over the Montpellier caryatids as a schoolboy prank. Opposite them lived General Podmore, who was at the siege of Seringatam. We walked on to Lansdown Parade, and Jim described the adventures of Amelia Fancourt, who as a young army wife was trapped for months in a fort besieged by rebellious sepoys. Several notable people lived in Lansdown Crescent too: he mentioned among others the Indian scholar Pandita Ramabai. Charles Kennedy, founder of Simla, whose memorial we saw in the church, lived on the corner of Lansdown Walk. Our last stop was near Lauriston House, Montpellier, the final home of Dr Thomas Colledge, once an eye surgeon in Macau. It had been a most interesting tour, giving us an insight into a significant section of Cheltenham's former population that has left little trace except in memorials and graveyards.

*OBITUARY***Peter Barlow MBE (1945 - 2023)**

The news of Peter Barlow's death on March 1st after a short illness came as a sad shock to all who knew him.

Peter was born in Amersham, went to boarding school at Felsted in Essex and read French and German at Trinity College, Oxford, where he joined the Officer Training Corps. In 1967 he came to work at GCHQ, but did not stay long, choosing instead to train as a solicitor. Meanwhile he had met and married Jill. Their children Alexandra and Nicholas (Alex and Nick) were born in 1975 and 1977. Peter worked as a solicitor for many years, including a term as Under Sheriff of Gloucestershire, but at the same time he was an enthusiastic member of the Territorial Army, and eventually he abandoned the law for the army. Mobilised in 1996, as a talented linguist he was sent to the Balkans, where he learned Albanian, Bosnian, Serbian and Macedonian and spent the next 16 years mainly in Kosovo providing language support to various organisations. For this service he was awarded the MBE in 2008. After his return home in 2012 Peter was employed as a freelance translator for the International Court of Justice. He had a passion for the Royal British Legion and was Chairman of the Cheltenham Branch for two years. Classic cars were a lifelong interest (he used to run a Jowett Javelin), and he and Martin Boothman jointly edited a volume of early Gloucestershire vehicle registrations for publication in the BGAS Record Series in 2019. Jill and he shared a keen interest in local history, joining our Society as founder members in 1982.

A true scholar, Peter was also a kind and generous friend and family man with a lively sense of humour. He will be very much missed.

**A Message from our Journal Editor**

In the next issue of the *Journal* I should like to include a photo essay on Cheltenham letterboxes – not the red street variety, but the rich variety of shapes and designs on your front doors. Please send me photographs of your letter boxes in all their glory, preferably in jpeg format. I will not be mentioning actual addresses in print, just the area of town or period of house; so avoid including your house number in the shot.

I'm intrigued to see what you send me! I'm hoping that they will make an attractive and fascinating collection.

Oliver Pointer hardy_pointer@hotmail.com

MORE SOCIETY NEWS

New members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Alan Eccles	Elizabeth Coghlan	Mervyn and Carol Dobson
Nicholas Wheatley	David and Sue Moisey	Eilish Ross
Jamie Henderson	Patrick and Sue Shields	Ian and Paula Cook

Society Update

Our AGM on 17th May, followed by an insightful talk on Spirax Sarco, completed another successful season for the Society. Now 41 years old, CLHS continues to go from strength to strength, recently achieving in particular some significant full-text content additions to our website. Despite looking forward with confidence, like many societies we are also mindful of the need to encourage more members to step forward to contribute on the committee. A number of individuals, who have provided sterling service over many years, have recently stepped down, or will be doing so next year. Therefore, aware of the importance of ensuring good continuity, may I make a special plea for anyone considering playing a more active role to flag up your interest as soon as possible. We'd like to invite you to one of our upcoming committee meetings to find out more about what's involved and how you might be able to help. Meetings always take place within a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, coupled with hot drinks and biscuits! The only requirements are a healthy dose of enthusiasm and willingness to work with others to promote CLHS's best interests.

David Elder

Congratulations David!

The Peter Smith award goes each year to a member who has given outstanding service to the Society. At the AGM on May 17th the Mayor Councillor Matt Babbage presented this year's award to David Johnson. The Chairman, reading the citation, said

David had done sterling work for the Society since 2011, helping to organise the summer walks and visits until 2022 and undertaking the task of organising the full programme of lectures from 2011 to 2017. The Society is most grateful to him for his hard work, commitment and reliable support.



Memories...

In the last issue we asked members, particularly those who have lived in Cheltenham for a long time, to cast their minds back and send us some reminiscences of life in the town in years gone by. Colin Miles has done just that, and here are some of his memories:

Nowadays the likes of York and Union Streets are lined with cars on either side of the street and you can barely drive a car down between them. But back in 1951 the only car I can remember wasn't usually on the street and the tarmac was nice and smooth. So when I had two weeks off school for an illness, nothing serious, and a new pair of roller skates, I spent much of the time learning to skate, especially on Fairview Road which was nice and flat – no worries about traffic. A bit hard on the knees when the pirouettes failed and, rather sadly, a couple of years later all skating ended when the council gravelled the streets.

A couple of years later at the old Grammar School we had one term with one period a week swimming lessons. It was just before morning break and involved a dash down the High Street to the old Alstone Baths, a quick lesson, then an equally quick dash back, hair soaking, by which time break was usually over. As I couldn't swim I decided to go there on my own and remember managing to finally doggy paddle. It was not long before Christmas, I was the only one in the Baths and the water was warm! The School Swimming sports day was also held there and was a very noisy affair.



The Alstone Baths were opened in 1887 and until 1936 had an open-air pool as well as a covered one. After the new Pittville pools opened in 1971 the old baths were redundant. They were demolished in 1984.

My father also used to take me to the Water Polo matches there – Friday nights if I remember right. At the time I think Cheltenham were one of the top teams.

Colin Miles

Evocative, isn't it? We'd love to hear from anyone else who can remember what Cheltenham was like in the 1950s—perhaps even the 1940s—or indeed in the later decades of the last century.

FEATURE

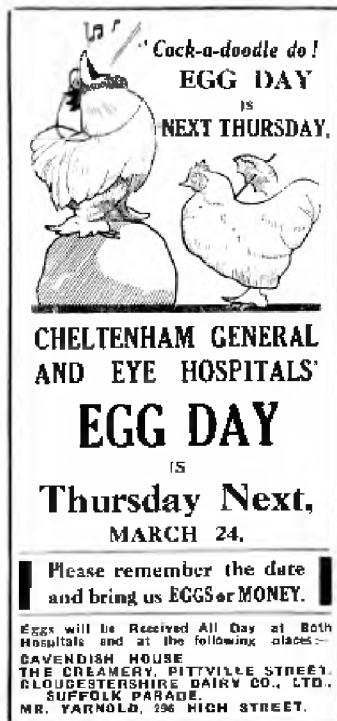
HARD TO BEAT

Miss B Roberts and the Hospital Egg Day

Following Polly Baynes' lively and informative talk on the Cheltenham Charity Organisation Society (CCOS) at our March meeting, I couldn't resist investigating the enigmatic Miss B Roberts who, as Polly explained, had worked with such dedication to support the poor of this town, but whose full name and origins were uncertain, other than a suggestion that B stood for Bea or Beatrice. Searching through online newspapers and census records, I was able to find that she was the daughter of a Welsh clergyman and lived with her sisters, known for their charitable work, at Pittville and later at All Saints. I also traced some of her charitable work after she left the CCOS in the early 1900s.

The Echo reported the death on August 5th 1950 of **Mary Elizabeth (Bee) Roberts** of Hopesay, Cheltenham, aged 91, and the fine service she gave to the Cheltenham General Hospital was reported in a separate article. Not only was she a member of the Hospital Board for many years, but she was also the originator and organiser, from 1916 to 1940, of the annual charitable 'Egg Day' for the hospital, which brought enormous quantities of eggs to the institution, as a welcome assistance to the larder and contribution to funds. The effort involved must have been considerable, as the number of eggs collected averaged 20,000 a year. There were various collection points around the town, including Cavendish House, the Blind Institute in Wincombe Street, and shops in Montpellier, Tivoli, and the Upper High Street, and donations of eggs or money to buy them were welcomed. School-

teachers were supportive of the event and many eggs came from schoolchildren in the town and surrounding county. Collections were also made in the evenings at public places of amusement. Adverts for the event appeared in the *Gloucestershire Graphic* newspapers and were displayed free of charge in the local trams.



Cock-a-doodle do!
EGG DAY
IS
NEXT THURSDAY.

CHELTENHAM GENERAL
AND EYE HOSPITALS'
EGG DAY
IS
Thursday Next,
MARCH 24.

Please remember the date
and bring us EGGS or MONEY.

EGGS will be Received All Day at Both
Hospitals and at the following places:-
CAVENDISH HOUSE
THE CREAMERY, PITTVILLE STREET.
GLOUCESTERSHIRE DAIRY CO., LTD.
SUFFOLK PARADE.
MR. YARNOLD, 236 HIGH STREET.



EGG DAY AT CHELTENHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL.

More than 17,000 eggs and £110 in money have been received in the annual Egg Day collection at the Cheltenham General Hospital, despite the difficult season. Miss B. Roberts, who inaugurated the effort in 1916 and has seen it grow to great proportions, and who is unfortunately obliged to give up after this year, is seen with some of the helpers. Left to right are the Rev. R. H. M. Bouth (chairman), Miss B. Roberts, Sister Smith, Mr. J. Cumming Smith (secretary), Mrs. Mellersh, Sister Ostick, Sister Tutor Hailstone, the Matron (Miss L. C. Fox-Davies), and Mrs. Pedlow.

used as if perfectly fresh. In 1919, 7,000 eggs donated at the March Egg Day lasted until Christmas, and in March 1934 the hospital kitchen superintendent came to the end of the supply of an astonishing 29,000 eggs which had been collected the previous March.

Miss B Roberts, seen second from left in the picture above, retired from her oversight of Egg Day in 1940 aged 80, and a large number of contributors, on making their donation that year, commented that they had made a special effort as a tribute so that she might feel satisfied with the result of the last Egg Day over which she would have charge.

(The two illustrations for this article have been taken from the Graphic newspapers, which are now available for browsing from our website.

www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk)

Alison Pascoe


The practice of preserving eggs in water-glass continued after the war. I remember my mother in the early 1950s buying several dozen small white eggs, which I fancy were imported from Poland, at a time of year when they were cheap, and storing them submerged in a big pottery crock with a wooden lid. I think she used them mainly for baking. —Ed.

FEATURE

A Cheltenham Pharmacy Advertisement from 1910-1912

As the government asks us to use our pharmacies more to save the NHS, it is interesting to look back at a Pharmacist which advertised in the 1910-1912 edition of Burrow's *Cheltenham The Garden Town*.

The firm Thomas, Saxby & Milne, formerly Thomas Bros & Prockter & Forth, operated from three shops and were also Ophthalmic Opticians.




Pharmaciae Societas
1851

Pharmacis et Medici-
nis Regibus Angliae
et Hiberniae
1851

Pharmacis et Medici-
nis Regibus Angliae
et Hiberniae
1851

THOMAS, SAXBY & MILNE


Formerly THOMAS BROS & PROCKTER & FORTH.




1825

1825

1825



**HIGH-CLASS DISPENSING PHARMACISTS,
OPHTHALMIC OPTICIANS.**



**HIGH-CLASS DISPENSING PHARMACISTS,
OPHTHALMIC OPTICIANS.**

J. ARDEN THOMAS, M.P.S.
For over 20 years Pharmacist to the Cheltenham General Hospital and Distillery Hospital.

A. C. SAXBY, M.P.S., F.S.M.C., F.R., Met. Soc.
Borough Meteorologist, Ophthalmic Optician to Cheltenham General, and Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital.

A. MILNE, M.P.S.
Member of the Pharmaceutical Society.

Five Essential Features of these Businesses are

1. All Dispensers employed are fully qualified Pharmacists by examination of the Pharmaceutical Society.
2. All Drugs and Chemicals used are of the best possible quality and guaranteed pure.

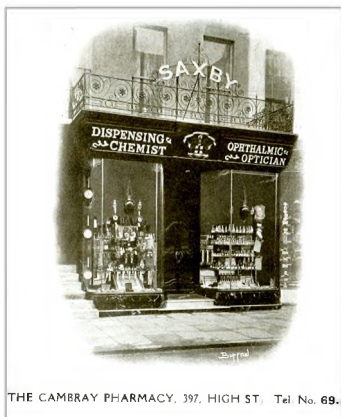
What appears to be the oldest branch operated from 397 High Street, a shop then next to the National Provincial Bank opposite what is now John Lewis. A delightful drawing of the shop appears in George Rowe's 1845 *Cheltenham Guide*, where it is described as 'the elegant shop of Mr Prockter, Chemist & Druggist. The interior is furnished and ornamented with great taste'.

By 1875 William Forth, a Yorkshireman, ran the shop. The censuses of 1881 and 1891 show that he lived at the shop together with his children, a cook and a par-

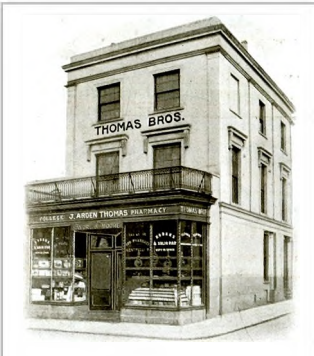
lour maid, besides two assistants who lived in. By 1910 it was known as The Cambray Pharmacy and run by Mr A C Saxby, who was not

only an Ophthalmic Optician at Cheltenham Hospital but also the Borough Meteorologist. Another branch, The College Pharmacy, was

run by Mr J Arden Thomas in Bath Road in the building which would become York House on the corner of St Luke's Road. It is recognisable today, although the shop front was removed decades ago and a large hedge now obscures the frontage. Mr Thomas was then, and had



THE CAMBRAY PHARMACY, 397, HIGH ST. Tel. No. 69.



THE COLLEGE PHARMACY, BATH RD. Tel. No. 50.

been for over twenty years, a Pharmacist at both the General and the Delancey Hospitals. Finally the third branch, The Spa Pharmacy, was run by Mr Milne in the building which has now been for over 45 years the Montpellier Wine Bar. Older members may remember it as Fildes the grocers. The Spa Pharmacy nearby is unlikely to be a successor firm, as the name disappears during part of the 20th century.

The Thomas, Saxby & Milne advertisement stresses not only that all the dispensers are fully qualified pharmacists but also that all drugs and chemicals used are of the best quality and pure. As well as the prescribing we expect of pharmacies today, these older firms also made up oculists' prescriptions and supplied meteorological instruments, barometers, thermometers and field and opera glasses. They sold photographic apparatus, chemicals and other materials, and offered advice on photography in addition to developing and printing photographs—a service which members will remember from the more recent past.

It is tempting to continue researching other pharmacies. Perhaps just two that appear in Rowe's guide should be mentioned.

The 1910 advertisement stresses that firm's qualifications, but it is likely that not all chemists were or had been qualified. In 1845 in the Lower High Street was 'the Laboratory and shop of Mrs Wells, where, beside the regular dispensing profession of the chemist, a variety of superior proprietary medicines of great popularity are prepared'. She was undoubtedly not qualified, since the first record of a woman qualifying under the Pharmaceutical Society rules appears in 1870.

It is doubtful whether Thomas, Saxby & Milne has survived, even in part, from 1845 until today, but Rowlands Pharmacy in Bath Road and the Badhams branch in Prestbury Road have both survived. Rowe states that to the right of Pittville Gates (ie in Prestbury Road) there were a number of modern shops. 'First of these is that of Mr Newenham, Chemist & Druggist, very handsomely fitted up, and in a style which would not disgrace the High Street itself. It is a pretty sure proof of the rising importance of the neighbourhood of Pittville.' The illustration shows it to be Badhams.



THE SPA PHARMACY, MONTPELLIER. Tel. No. 150.

Elizabeth Bennett

FEATURE

A Chance Meeting in Carlisle

In April our walking group headed north to tackle the 'best bits' of Hadrian's Wall, from Carlisle to Heddon. We decided to add on an extra day at the start to look around Carlisle: town, castle and cathedral.



Walking down the south choir aisle of the architecturally gloriously odd cathedral I was surprised to encounter the memorial to a man well-known to us in Cheltenham, the Reverend Francis Close. 'Surprised' in that, though I knew he moved on to become Dean of Carlisle (1856-81) after serving in Cheltenham as curate at Holy Trinity (1824-26) and then perpetual curate at St Mary's (1826-56), he is generally known as 'Dean Close of Cheltenham' rather than 'of Carlisle'. Indeed, as Alan Munden

notes in his excellent short biography, while not a dean in his Cheltenham period, 'when he was a dean he always considered himself to be the 'Rector of Carlisle'. '*

Carved in pure white marble, life-size – if not perhaps slightly larger than life – the monument has the measure of the man. He lies, serene, determined and confident, holding a book close to his chest, perhaps the texts of some of his famous sermons, over the simple but, for his brand of nineteenth century Anglican Evangelicalism, very tellingly straightforward inscription: *Erected by Public Subscription As a Mark of Affection and Esteem.*

Catching the morning sunshine against the dark pitch pine and oak surround, Close proved as elusive to photograph well as to understand theologically today. Alan Munden makes a strong case for Close's reputation and, of course, we still have much evidence of his powerful good works around us in Cheltenham, as well as in Carlisle. And yet – he must have been a difficult man to encounter, particularly if one didn't share his views on theology, racing, theatre, alcohol, tobacco, or any other of his many pet hates.

In the cathedral guidebook we were delighted to read that, in order to stop his congregation from slipping out after enjoying the choral part of a service and before one of his often hour-long sermons, Close introduced first ropes then, in 1862, elaborate metal gates across the choir aisles.

These he had closed once a service was underway, trapping the unwary for the duration. A verger we spoke to also recalled how Close had a running argument with the local railway company whose engine smoke and whistles annoyed the great man in the Deanery; a response which, one cannot help thinking, may well have goaded the drivers into more frequent shunting and prolonged use of the whistle. These stories too are authenticated by Alan Munden.



Returning later in the afternoon, when the sun had moved around, it was possible to get a more balanced image of the Dean who, though buried elsewhere, it was good to have met in memorial marble.

Oliver Pointer

*Alan Munden, *A Cheltenham Gamaliel: Dean Close of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, Dean Close School, 1997), of which we have a copy for sale, 1st edition; iv + 68 pp, b&w illus; paperback, as new. £5.00

A Mysterious Window

The photograph on the front cover shows a stained-glass window in what was formerly the administrative wing of the Delancey Hospital. Historic England dates it as c1930, though one expert has suggested to me that it might be earlier, perhaps even when the building was erected in 1880.

The monograms are intriguing. JM might stand for the building's architect John Middleton, and PB could be for Prothero, Phillott and Barnard, who inherited Middleton's practice (though Leonard Barnard's name wasn't added until 1902). The others are still more mysterious, even when you have deciphered them (NB one has been put in back to front!). Furthermore, there's no sign of D for Delancey or G for the Revd J H L Gabell, who paid for the scarlatina block. And why the boar's head above the blank shield? If Leonard Barnard was involved, the Wykehamist motto 'Manners Makyth Man' might have been inspired by his father Robert Cary Barnard, who had been a pupil at Winchester College; Leonard himself wasn't educated there.

Can any member shed light on the window? It's surprising how few people know about it.

Eric Miller



BOOKS FOR SALE



Something of a pot pourri of recently donated titles this time, to while away those hours relaxing in the deckchair, a cooling glass of something in hand. All in *very good* to *as new* condition.

Cheltenham Historical Walks No 1, The Pittville Estate (Steven Blake) (mid-1970s) £0.75

Steven Blake, A History of Cheltenham in 100 Objects (2013) £6.00

Edith Humphris, Edith & Captain E C Willoughby, Georgian Cheltenham (2008) £6.00

Anthea Jones, Cheltenham a new history (2010) £8.00

Sandford Parks Lido Swimming Pool: Our History & Community (2007) £1

Brian E Torode, John Middleton, Victorian Provincial Architect (2008) £8

Nigel Watson, When The Question Is Steam The Story Of Spirax-Sarco (2000) £4.50

Peter Worsley, Tales Of The Red Triangle A Social and Pictorial History of Cheltenham YMCA 1855-2005 (2005) £7.00

John Hudson, A Year In The Cotswolds (1995) £4.50

J A Brooks, J A , Ghosts and witches of the Cotswolds (1981) £2.00

Keith Clark, The Ghosts of Gloucestershire (1993) £2.00

Richard Morris, Wildflowers, Butterflies & Trees of the Slad Valley and the Cotswolds (2014) £2.00

Timothy Mowl, Historic Gardens of Gloucestershire (2005) £5.00

Nigel Scotland, Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire 1872-1950 (1991) £6.00

David Verey & Alan Brooks, Gloucestershire II: The Vale And The Forest Of Dean [Includes Cheltenham] (Buildings of England series, 2002) £12.50

John Sheraton & Rod Goodman, Exploring Historic Dean: Fourteen scenic walks in and around an ancient forest (2009) £3.00

David Hey, Family Names and Family History (2000) £7.50

Jon E Lewis, ed, London The Autobiography 2,000 Years of the Capital's History by Those who Saw it Happen (2008) £6.00

And remember, even though the Donated Book 'Shop' is physically packed away until we restart our Speaker Meetings in September, it is always available virtually on our website for browsing and purchases. I am always happy to receive enquiries, check the stock and deliver to you, free-of-charge locally; payment on delivery.

Have a Lovely Summer's reading!

Oliver Pointer

hardy_pointer@hotmail.com (07400 197989)

DEERHURST LECTURE 2023

A ROUTEWAY IN A BORDERZONE

Deerhurst against the background of Early Medieval settlement around the Lower Severn

by Professor John Hines, Cardiff University

23rd SEPTEMBER 2023 at 7.30pm
ST MARY'S CHURCH, DEERHURST

Tickets* £5.00 / Students £3.00
available on the door from 7.00pm (*includes a glass of wine & cheese)

www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk



photo: Mark Horton

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LOCAL NEWS

CHELTENHAM HEBREW CONGREGATION 200TH ANNIVERSARY

The Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation held its 200th anniversary celebration on Sunday 11 June 2023 with a celebratory service at the Cheltenham Synagogue followed by a reception at The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum. In her welcome speech CHC Chairman, Jenny Silverston, introduced distinguished attendees to the event, including Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis, Dame Janet Trotter DBE CVO, Lord High Chancellor Alex Chalk, Bishop of Gloucester Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, and 'three historians – Neela Mann, Sue Rowbotham and Jill Waller'.



The 'historians' were already aware that the Synagogue houses the oldest Ashkenazi Synagogue furniture in the UK, originally installed in the New Synagogue in Leadenhall Street, London, in 1761, but they were delighted to learn some new history. During recent renovation of two large panels on the walls of the Synagogue, in a prayer for the Royal Family it was revealed that beneath the existing text of the named monarch, Queen Victoria, was the name of George II. The frame-makers had gone out of business by 1730, dating the panels to c1727, even older than the furniture. See <http://www.itrails.org.uk/trails/cheltenham/history?page=1> for more information on the history of the Cheltenham Hebrew Community, or *The Hebrew Community of Cheltenham, Gloucester & Stroud*, by Brian Torode (1989), in our CLHS library.



The Hebrew Community of Cheltenham, Gloucester & Stroud, by Brian Torode (1989), in our CLHS library.

Jill Waller and Sue Rowbotham

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the November 2023 issue by
Monday 9th October 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.