



Cheltenham Local History Society

Journal 34 ~ 2018

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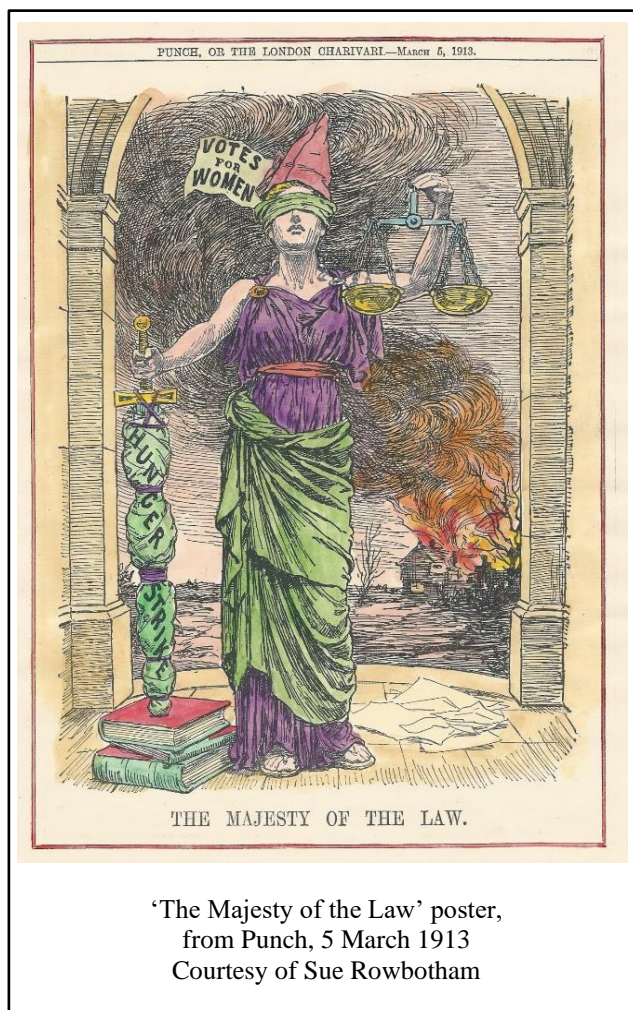
Introduction

SALLY SELF, Journal Editor

ONCE AGAIN, AND FOR THE LAST TIME, I give a warm welcome to all our readers and hope that you enjoy this, the 34th edition of the Society's Journal.

I can start off this year with some excellent news. We can welcome the Society's new editor, Julie Courtenay, who has, to the enormous relief of many of us, agreed to take over the editorship of the Journal from the autumn of 2018. Julie will be well known to many of you: she is a long-time member of the Society, has served on the Committee, has contributed the annual up-date of the Cheltenham Accessions and many of you will have met her at Gloucestershire Archives, where she has worked for more years than she cares to remember, or at Archive events.

All articles for 2019 should be sent to Julie at **editor.clhs@gmail.com**. I will keep the journal.clhs@btinternet.com email running for at least another year and will forward articles and relevant inquiries to Julie. I shall continue to be responsible for all back numbers, bringing them to the meetings and events, and will deal with orders arriving by email, mail or phone.



This year sees the end of the First World War and commemorates some women receiving the vote. We have not received any such articles for publication this year, but I would like to draw your attention to two excellent articles in previous Journals. Journal 30 (2014) contained an article by Sue Jones, 'Apathetic' Women? Who Supported the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham?' and Journal 31 (2015), Sue Rowbotham's 'The Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham, 1817-1914'. Copies of both Journals are still available.

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Cheltenham's Lost Heritage

Revisited: Part 2

OLIVER BRADBURY

Editor's note: This is the concluding section of an article that appeared in Journal 33, pp.22-34, 2017.

'Patricia', Elmwood House, Montpellier Street. In 1961 this building was known as 'Patricia' (ladies' hairdresser) at ground level and in 1970 'Nearly New Shop' above. Photographed here March 1970. This was a freestanding Victorian three bay-wide stucco house, next to Cheltenham Spa Motor Company garage, with raised front canted bay window and an entrance stair with attractive cast-iron balusters with honeysuckle pattern on stone treads. Elmwood is on 1885 O.S. map but could be c.1870 in origin. By September 1983 this building, now Halifax Building Society, was in much better condition than 1970, to then be demolished c.1984. Petrol station/garage next door incorporated a possibly late-Georgian former shop front and later rear premises; demolished c.1984.



Elmwood House, Montpellier Street, March 1970.
© the late Nigel Temple/Oliver Bradbury

Low building between Patricia and Scoops (see below), Montpellier Street. As an L-shaped building, it is on 1885 O.S. map; it was an engineering works in 1955; demolished c.1984.

Perry Lodge, St George's Road. The house was once on the site of the Magistrates' Court. This appears to have been Victorian and had a four-storey canted bay window feature that went up to the roof to then break forward as a dormer.

St Peter's Vicarage. Alterations carried out in 1916-1920; still there in 1956, but long gone by 1996.

Pittville Annexe Mill.

Pittville Circus Road, four lost 19th century houses. (See entry for Sunnyside.)

Pittville Court, No. 92 Albert Road. A boundary pier survives. With neighbouring Stanley Lawn, the sites of both houses are now the blocks of flats known as Pittville Court.

A number of houses on Albert Road and **Pittville Crescent** have gone.

Portland Cottages. Six houses in Portland Square, listed in 1926 but probably much older; listed in 1936 slum clearance.

Portland Place, in existence by 1810. On 1820 map a terrace of six houses on opposite side of the road to and south of Holy Trinity Church. Demolished 1970s.

Portland Street, No. 28. There is a gap between Nos. 18-32 (evens) and 17-31 (odds) Portland Street, when St Margaret's Road was created, inferring that 12 properties there have gone in c.1979-1980.

Promenade, The, No. 48. See entry in *Cheltenham's Lost Heritage*, p.54.¹ The 1914 postcard, reproduced below, allows a precise positioning of this charming c.1840 shop front (tree cutting through middle), which I was not able to do earlier. Previously, I wrote that 'The shop was [...] probably where the Montpellier end of Cavendish House is now situated.' This is in fact correct and the modern Cavendish House stretches as far as the 'Surveyors' (Young & Gilling) in the postcard, swallowing up three businesses in the process. It also reveals that Young & Gilling was an immediate neighbour: 'Next [to No. 48] is the Office of Messrs. Young and Gilling, House and Estate Agents, who are extensively supplied with information relative to the transfer of Houses and Lands, and can assist Visitors and others in the providing themselves with suitable residences.'² This building survives, at least at first floor level as Nos. 50-50a The Promenade. The first floor is an Edwardian addition (not there in an 1875 view) and rusticated with a central curved pediment. Young & Gilling also had now-demolished warehouses in Sherborne Place.



The Promenade, 1914.
© Author's collection

Providence Place, Portland Street. Eight houses in 1844 Directory. Nos. 2, 4 & 5 demolished 1927.

Readings, The. A late Regency villa. This building is at present untraced.

Reeve's Riding School, opposite Montpellier Gardens. On Merrett's 1834 map of Cheltenham.

Regent Court, St Stephen's Road. A pier survives.

Regent Street, former No. 24. A pair of Victorian red brick, two-storey, two/three bay-wide buildings flanking a quadrangle fronted by a one storey street wall; this was on the site of what is now a side staircase for Regent Arcade (see location illustration in *Cheltenham's Lost Heritage*). A former Horse Repository (1885 O.S. map), in 1896 this evolved into the Cheltenham Omnibus Company; ending its days as Cavendish House warehouses and demolished in September 1982. An unusual quasi-Gothic design with large Gothic gables and curious stone pinnacles along parapet. These Gothic 'bookends' appear to be on the 1885 map and might date from c.1870.

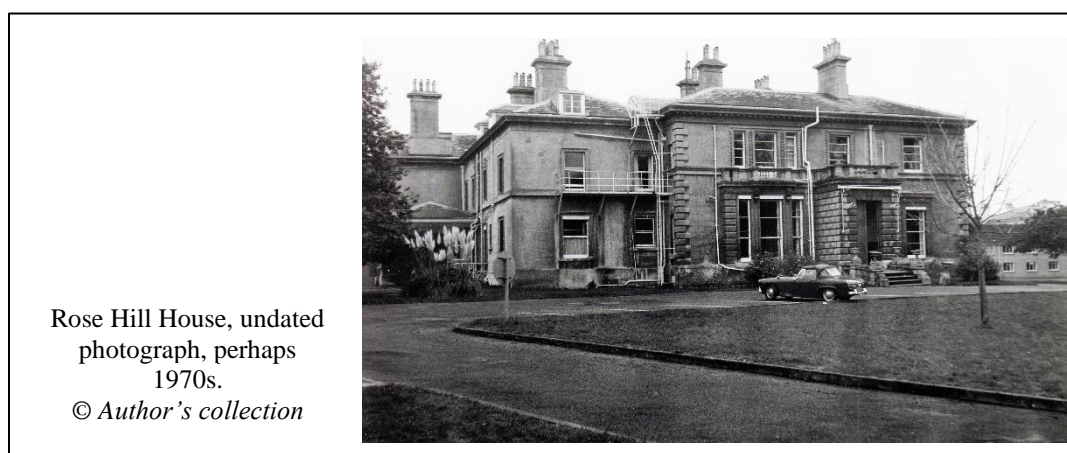
Richmond Cottages, Sherborne Street. Four 19th century houses, listed in 1936 slum clearance and photographed then. An example of the courtyards and housing which has been lost to Cheltenham.

Rivershill, St George's Road. A Victorian family residence with an enclosed yard and gardens. Demolished 1968.

Rodney Hotel, Rodney Road. Three storey stucco 1820s terrace with elaborate first floor wrought-iron balconies, which were salvaged by members of Cheltenham Society when demolished 1964. Replaced by an ugly 1960s building that was demolished in turn in the 1990s.

Rookeries, The. Possibly outskirts of Cheltenham, a c.1952 photograph shows elaborate late-Regency decorative iron gate piers.

Rose and Crown Inn, Lower High Street. Name first noted in 1741; 'house on north side of the Street now known by the *sign of the Rose and Crown.*' Pub demolished c.1980.



Rose Hill House, undated
photograph, perhaps
1970s.

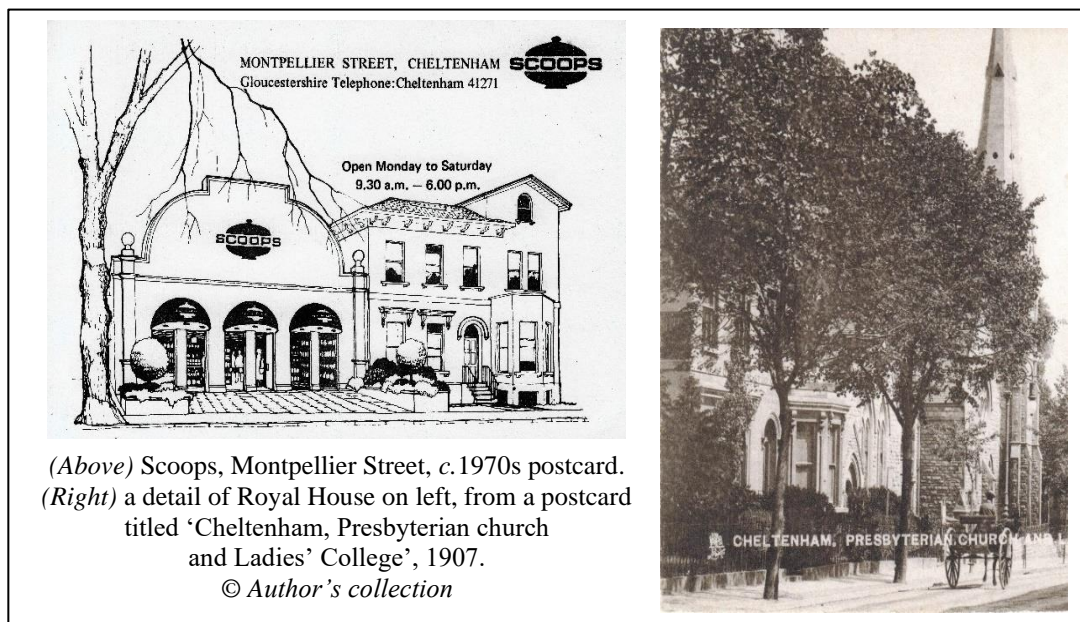
© Author's collection

Rose Hill House, Evesham Road/New Barn Lane. Originated by J B Papworth in 1824-25 and rebuilt by Waller & Fulljames, 1850-55; demolished 1991. I explained the unresolved architectural development of Rose Hill in 'Who Built Rosehill?',³ where I speculated 'that the shell of Papworth's house for Dr Shoolbred was built, but that it made no progress after Shoolbred's death in 1831, remaining between c. 1831-1850 a dormant shell.' However, when (erroneously) stating this I should have taken into consideration that the house was for sale in 1844 and clearly was *not* a shell; *The Cheltenham Examiner* (3 January) listing for sale by auction contents within the: drawing, dining and breakfast rooms; hall, stairs and landing; bed rooms; library; kitchen, scullery and cellars. Having though established in 1997 that dimensions for both the main Papworth and Waller buildings were the same, down to room sizes, along with the 1844 description, would establish that the Papworth house was built but alas there is no record of whether his intended sophisticated interior decoration was ever executed or not. Reading Papworth's ground floor plan, it can now also be established that he was adding considerably to an earlier house, as in New Barn Farm (with a building here since 1741). Echoing this, when inspecting Rose Hill in 1991 Ken Pollock felt that the rear annexe was 'Possibly an older house' and the main house (1825-c. 1830) 'Built in front of south-facing cellar windows in the rear annexe.' More so than in 1997, I now realise that Papworth's house *was* built and that the essential plan survived until 1991; though it was unrecognisably recast in the 1850s⁴ and redecorated one last time in the last quarter of the 19th century, though some of Papworth's room functions remained the same until the 1890s. Along with the basic shape of the garden layout, it is likely that in the six years Papworth worked for Shoolbred, before the latter

died in 1831, Papworth's plans for 'Pittville Lodge' (1824) were carried out but later on became simply too plain for High Victorian taste. Saying that however, Waller's more grandiose proposals were not carried out, hence the core of Papworth's building survived despite drastic remodelling. See also front and back cover.

Royal House, Montpellier Street (so called since 1887), abutting Scoops. This was a five bay-wide large Victorian house with a raised ground floor canted bay window; central arched entrance and an asymmetrical attic storey housed in a sub-Italianate gabled top storey. Royal House on 1885 O.S. map but could be c.1870 in origin. Demolished for The Courtyard site c.1984. The postmodernist Courtyard site formerly comprised a series of unnumbered 19th century properties ranging from the Cheltenham Spa Motor Company to St Andrew's Church (not inclusive) and is not just the sunken courtyard itself but incorporates a northwards continuation (five businesses) of Rotunda Terrace, No. 19 being the last original (19th century) building. This junction is marked by the survival of the Terrace's raised stone pavement steps, now incorporated into later concrete surrounding fabric.

Scarborough Lodge, Thirlestaine Road. Formerly Walworth House, Scarborough Lodge was demolished in 1963 (though empty from 1961) and the Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints built in the grounds next to site of Scarborough Lodge in 1965, 'one of Cheltenham's older "gentlemen's residences"' to quote an un-cited 1964 newspaper clipping.



Scoops, Montpellier Street. Scoops was established sometime after 1970 when the building below (engineering works in 1955) – perhaps dating from the 1890s – was converted to retail premises with very 1970s triple hemispheres above the windows and entrance, instead of a series of semi-arched waist-height windows there in 1970. The c.1890s building (not on 1885 O.S. map) was in a loosely Jacobean style with a stucco façade attached to a brick shell, with a large shaped gable, flanked by pilasters and parapet baubles at either end. Simon Sheridan recalls that, 'It was a brightly-lit, clean white shop with multiple shelves of kitchenware - plastic bowls, glass storage jars, utensils and wicker baskets; plus more random items like ceramic elephants and plastic flowers.'⁵ Scoops was on the site of The Courtyard (1985) and was still there in

September 1983, so was probably demolished in 1984. Scoops then moved to 'Boots Corner' and later changed its name to Staxx.

Segrave (Seagrave) Lodge, next to *Hotel Majestic* (formerly *Nethermuir*), Ashford Road. It took this author years to realise that *Nethermuir* (*Cheltenham's Lost Heritage*, p.72) was never entirely demolished, but in 1935 was so enlarged and stripped of its former architectural interest as to be physically unrecognisable from the building of 1932. Quite why the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* thought that 'the greatly enlarged "Hotel Majestic"' was 'one of the most attractive establishments in the town' is baffling when compared to the earlier house, with its pedimented porch and deep eaves. The ghost of *Nethermuir* can be discerned: it was the first five bays with the end pilaster, working from Ashford Road in the direction of The Park, and then another storey was added across the whole building (*Nethermuir* and extension).⁶ The best preserved part of *Nethermuir* seemed to be the (raised) ground floor balcony where something of the original feel of the French windows, glass roof and balcony piers appears to have been retained, perhaps even retaining some of the 1830s French doors. Internally 'The General Lounge' retained the 1830s cornice, chimney breast and door. The neighbouring house, *Segrave Lodge*, however survived though incorporated into the hotel. This was a storey less in height and appears to have abutted the terrace in Ashford Road nearest Park Place. This was a compact Grecian villa site-plotted on the 1833 'Plan of the Park Estate' (*Nethermuir* and *Segrave* accord with the two plots before intended 'North Lodges', though it seems just outside of Estate boundary) and was built in 1835. The porch was set back to one side of the house and had two Greek Doric columns supporting a small pediment; the narrow projecting front elevation had full-height corner pilasters flanking two windows; the raised ground floor had a wrought-iron balcony and above hood, but this was removed in later years. *Park Place Hotel* (later name) was demolished in late 1988.



(left) *Segrave Lodge* (on the left), Ashford Road, next to *Hotel Majestic*; (right) detail of *Segrave Lodge*.

© Author's collection

Shackleford, William, & Co., corner of Albion Street and Sherborne Street. Coach-builders, there from c.1850-1869. See Steven Blake, *Cheltenham A Pictorial History* (1996).

Sherborne Street, a block of buildings between Fairview Road and Trinity School Lane. Possibly Nos. 1, 3, 5 & 7, cleared by June 1966.

Sidney Lodge, Christ Church, built 1861.

Six Chimneys Farm, Six Chimneys Lane, off Gloucester Road near Gas Works. *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 February 1936, p.3, described it thus:

‘The impression given as the outer walls of the old farmhouse have gone down, is that the interior, with its heavy beams and timbered partitions, was probably older than the exterior and the six chimneys after which the house and lane were named. The chimneys were built of very dark red bricks and stood side by side, diamond wise, their “capitals” touching. The old house is coming down in order that its site may be used in connection with building developments along the lane, where a number of houses have recently been erected.’

And this was at one time the ‘Manor House’. There was also a Lower Alstone House on Six Chimneys Lane; other losses in this area are: Sandfield Cottage/Villa; Richmond House; Ness House; Maryville; Alpha House, St George’s Road; Western Lawn; and then in Overton Park area: Pembroke Lodge, St George’s Road; Eriscote; Bramleigh; Alt Dinas; Alstone Court (Alstone Court converted into new boarding house ‘Downside’ for Ladies College, 1899-1902) and Christ Church Farm.

Springfield, London Road. Demolished c.1966. Nazareth House now stands on site.

Stamp office and a chemist, Winchcombe Street.

Stanley Lawn (later Handley Cross), No. 90 Albert Road, Pittville. Built within original 1820s Estate boundary. Still there in 1953, site now the blocks of flats known as Pittville Court.

Stiles Hotel and Boarding House, No. 107 High Street, next to Pates and between Nos. 248-253 in 1957. Appears to have been 18th century - judging by window lintel with voussoir treatment seen in J.K. Griffith, *A General Cheltenham Guide* (1818), which shows two four storey town houses joined to form a single hotel.

Stonehouse Inn, No. 1 Swindon Road. *Stonehouse Inn* and Salisbury House were at the corner of Swindon Road and Dunalley Street. The two properties were formerly one house called ‘The Stone House at the top of Henrietta Street’ and must be pre-1820 (present on 1820 map) but had been divided by 1849. The *Stonehouse* was a beer house by 1891. This would explain why architecturally the pub had a domestic feeling to it. Three bay-wide two storey building with full-height astylar pilasters. A front ground storey extension cut across pilasters and there was a set back side bay with a simple reeded door architrave and original cast-iron railings survived until demolition, with the classic Cheltenham (and elsewhere) urn above the thicker railing support uprights. There was a two-storey pitched roof rear wing, perhaps stables in origin. Pub closed early 1980s, demolished post-January 1988, having been sold to the County Council for road widening in 1987.

Sudeley Villa, west side of Oxford Passage, High Street. Regency three bay-wide two storey freestanding house with ornamental wrought-iron hooded porch.

Sunnyside, Pittville Circus Road. A Victorian four-storey, including basement, stucco villa with very high porch, comprising some 20 rooms. An indenture was made between James Hinton Bowly and Cheltenham builder Charles Winstone, 18 July 1868, for the plot of land, once owned by Joseph Pitt. 'And that such dwelling house should be commenced before the 14th February 1869 and be completed fit for occupation within 12 months thereafter'. It was built, designed and freehold owned by Winstone: 'All such messuages or dwellinghouses Villas Coachhouses Stables and Outbuildings should be erected in accordance with Plans & elevations to be prepared by the said C. Winstone his heirs or assigns'.⁷ Winstone belonged to a prominent family of local builders and most probably is the same Winstone that built St Arvan's (demolished) and Goldington House (previously St Leonard's, still there), in Evesham Road, a pair of houses. Sunnyside was probably completed in 1870; an indenture, 24 April 1871 refers to 'Charles Winstone has lately erected a dwellinghouse', when it had no name.⁸ There is then a long lacuna between completion and occupation in 1875, with the house first appearing as 'Sunnyside' in 1874 (*Cheltenham Annuaire*). In 1952 Bryan Little evoked this type of sleepy Victorian mansion in his book on Cheltenham: 'In villas such as the last houses of Pittville the simpler designs were more and more encrusted, round their windows ... and in their main doorways, with ornament of a fussy and somewhat vulgar kind.' Although it would be hard to claim that these cavernous Victorian mansions shared the Regency finesse of say The Priory (c.1820-25), Little could nevertheless connect both eras: 'But the houses themselves still had in their rooms a spaciousness and strength that belonged in essence to the great days.'⁹ Sunnyside was converted into an old people's home in 1938 and physically connected to neighbouring Pengwern College (built post-1900, there in 1916) to the west, by A C Billings & Sons Ltd. Sunnyside was demolished in 1996.

Swindon Road, stretching from Queen Street to Sun Street area was houses and *Swindon Inn*; all demolished for new housing estate.



'Take=Off',
March 1970.
© the late
Nigel
Temple/
Oliver
Bradbury

Take=Off, No. 3 Montpellier Walk. The modern boutique shop concept is the creation of 1960s London, inspired by Carnaby Street exemplars. The illustration was taken by the late Nigel Temple of a countercultural-styled boutique in March

1970. With a period-name like 'Take=Off', this 1960s King's Road, Chelsea-style boutique was in operation from 1970 to 1980, a good innings for an independent retailer. Take Off Boutique (full name) was a ladies' outfitters at No. 3 Montpellier Walk.¹⁰ Take=Off was the first hipster or trendy boutique in Cheltenham, bringing Mary Quant fashion to the town. It would have been a breath of fresh air in 1970, fashion until then being very 'county' and hunting set as might be expected of a Cotswold town like Cheltenham. However, by 1980 the 1960s boutique model must have seemed quite a thing of the past, though has never actually died out since.

Thorncliffe, Lansdown Road. Both Thorncliffe and Holland House (see Holland House, Lansdown Road in article Part 1) were on the site of the County Police Headquarters, Lansdown Road. Thorncliffe faced the Lansdown Road with an elliptic carriage sweep. Only documentation is *Gloucestershire Echo* for 2 March 1934 when being demolished. Appears to be a five bay-wide typically Victorian house in a mildly classical style with corner quoins and heavy lintels over ground floor windows. Described in 1934 as ‘a very fine property with rooms beautifully proportioned’. Although demolished in 1934 the site does not appear to have been redeveloped until the 1960s with an unsightly block of flats. All that survives is a reduced entrance pier on the left of Thorncliffe Drive, perhaps belonging to N-E corner of original carriage sweep. It has a moulded top and section of rusticated stone.

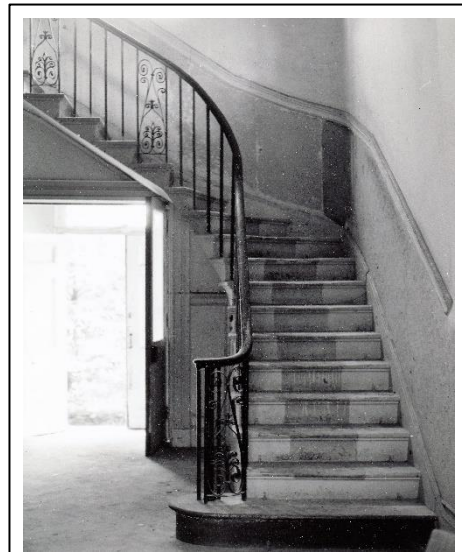
Toll house, Regency period, corner of Townsend Street and Tewkesbury Road, still in situ c.1952.

Trafalgar House, Trafalgar Place (off St Margaret’s Road), opposite and in-between the former St Margaret’s and Monson Villas. Known as Trafalgar Cottage in 1820, this became Trafalgar Place (Old Town Survey, 1855-57). It was demolished in 1965 ‘to make way for extensive development of the area by West Country Breweries. But its handsome wrought-iron balconies and portico will live to grace another Cheltenham Regency home, for they have been saved from destruction and presented by the Brewery to the Cheltenham Society.’¹¹

Unidentified Regency house interior. This house might even still be extant. This is a ground floor photograph of the entrance hall looking towards the front door. An elegant stone stair with sinuous mahogany handrail supported on plain balusters with pretty wrought-iron decorative honeysuckle infills. Another photograph reveals the stair to be full-height with a floral ceiling rose and perimeter cornice terminating what must have been a large stair for a tall house that might possibly be in the Lansdown area of Cheltenham.

Warwick Place. A series of two-storey, two or three bay wide houses built 1820s or 1830s.¹²

‘This street, long committed to the penalty of death by neglect, plays no part in the planned scenery which comes near to it on almost all sides. The houses in the terrace have only a lick of stucco, and doorways with half-round fanlights, to distinguish them from the most uninspired kind of back street dwellings of industrial Britain.’¹³



Unidentified Regency house interior.
© Author’s collection

Demolition of houses between Portland Street, Warwick Place, North Place and Clarence Road, and construction of a car park was approved as early as 1964; a compulsory purchase order was made in 1981 and Warwick Place demolished in 1983 for construction of Section 3 of Cheltenham Northern Relief Road.

Waterloo Passage, in existence by late 19th century, connecting County Court Road and High Street. Stopped up in 1968.

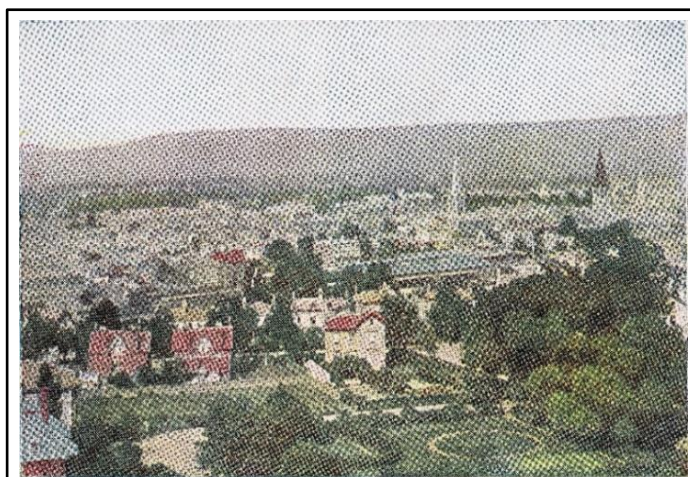
Wellington Infant School. According to Rowe 'is a neat modern erection in Wellington Street'.¹⁴

Wesleyan Chapel, Swindon Road.

Western Lawn, No. 132 St George's Road. Demolished probably early 1970s, now or was a Spirax-Sarco site.

Winchcombe Street, No. 72. A Regency shop and house above (stucco, two bays-wide and two storeys; arched domestic entrance next to shop premises), demolished c.1979-1980 for Northern Relief Road (hence the gap between No. 50a and 78 Winchcombe Street, once occupied by Warwick Buildings etc.). Scheduled for demolition in February 1979 were H. Caudle and Co. Ltd., electrical contractors, No. 72 Winchcombe Street; former Crabtree premises at Nos. 65-69 Winchcombe Street; No. 10 North Place; Friends' Meeting House, No. 26 Portland Street; a neighbouring house (No. 28); Liquorsave, Nos. 19-21 Portland Street.

Witcombe Place. Probably developed from 1819; more than three-quarters built by 1826. Nos. 1-15 listed in 1936 slum clearance. Nothing historic now left in Witcombe Place save for backs of Regency houses in Berkeley Street and curious brick remains of house next to current No. 9 including the front door aperture.



Wyborne, Bayshill, early 20th century postcard.
© Author's collection

Wyborne, St George's Road, Bayshill. The house pretty much in the middle of this (*left*) early 20th century postcard is Wyborne, a Victorian villa built in 1873. Two storeys high and three bays wide, end bay with extra storey in gable. Possibly demolished in 1962-63, certainly gone by 1970, and replaced with Rowe Court, No. 90 St George's Road. Above Wyborne can be seen Great Western Station and the semi-detached Regency house, Stonycroft, St James' Square (1820-25, demolished after 1954).

Addendum: Lost Heritage Revisited, Part 1

Aubervie, East Approach Drive, Pittville, can now be dated precisely to 1876.

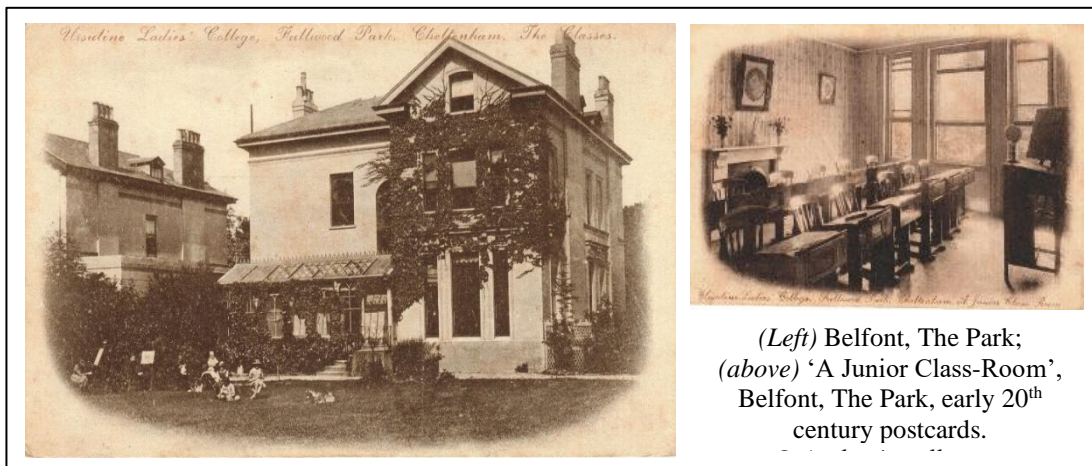
Blockley Villa, St George's Place. An L-shaped building of no architectural interest, with a courtyard. Demolished in the 1980s or 1990s, the site is the entrance to the car park.

Connellmore, Thirlestaine Road, demolished to make way for The Verneys.

Elms Court, Albert Road, Pittville, should read as 'Elmscourt'.

Langton Hotel, Bath Road, in Part 1 the location of *Langton Hotel* is erroneous; the hotel was formed by combining both Montpellier Lawn and Langton House in the 1920s. The hotel closed in 1965 and was demolished to make way for the Eagle Star tower (1968), the correct location of the two lost houses.

Lyncourt was built in 1865 and neighbouring **Belfont, The Park**, in 1868. Both were demolished in 1939. Belfont was apparently the mirror image of the extant Pallas Villa, The Park. Pallas Villa is a three bay-wide stucco two storey villa with distinctive tripartite windows flanking the recessed central entrance bay. If mirror image at the front, Belfont was compositionally the same as Pallas on the garden side too, but also with plenty of differing detail, though both have similar lean-to conservatories. Pallas has a two-storey canted bay, Belfont had a two-storey straight bay with tripartite windows. The postcard reproduced here, probably from the 1920s, shows 'The Classes' in Belfont's garden and neighbouring Lyncourt on the left and next to the entrance drive to Fullwood Park. Both houses became part of the Ursuline Ladies' College, Fullwood Park, post-1900, and another postcard here shows 'A Junior Class-Room' with the tripartite window seen in Belfont's garden and an original 1868 chimneypiece. Lyncourt was the College's Junior House and was a classic Cheltenham stucco villa, with a recessed centre like Pallas, but hosting a projecting porch. With a large garden to one side, some effort was taken with the garden elevation, with six windows (four with moulded architraves, two just attic dormers).



(Left) Belfont, The Park;
(above) 'A Junior Class-Room',
Belfont, The Park, early 20th
century postcards.

Moorend Park (latterly Hotel), Charlton Kings. A view of Moorend Park has come to light since Cheltenham's Lost Heritage Revisited, Part 1, see page 13.

Pates Infant School. I am informed that no institution of this name ever existed. The building featured in Part 1, was occupied from c.1908 by Pates Grammar School for Girls which included a junior section. The school moved to Albert Road in 1930–40 with the junior section. With the 1944 Education Act the junior school separated and as Pates Junior School was at the St Margaret's Road site until its demolition in c.1989. The school continued as the Richard Pate school. There were five timber-clad classrooms (three in a corridor attached to the building and two separate ones) which were surrounded by trees.



Moorend Park Hotel,
possibly a
1930s postcard.
© Author's collection

Acknowledgements. I am grateful for the assistance of Elizabeth Bennet, Steven Blake, James Hawkes, Eric Miller, Mary Nelson, David O'Connor, Ken Pollock, Neil Rees, Rachel Roberts and Simon Sheridan.

¹ Oliver C. Bradbury, *Cheltenham's Lost Heritage*, (Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004).

² George Rowe, *Cheltenham Illustrated Guide*, (George Rowe 1845; republished by S.R. Publishers, 1969), p.16.

³ Oliver C. Bradbury, 'Who built Rosehill?', *Cheltenham Local History Society*, Journal **13**, pp.25-33, (1997). b

⁴ Another instance of a Cheltenham Papworth building remodelled beyond recognition and now also demolished is St John's, Berkeley Street. Built in 1827-29 in the Greek style, it was remodelled in Gothic in 1867-72.

⁵ Letter, Simon Sheridan to author, 24 September 2015.

⁶ There was also an annexe in The Park direction called Park Court. This was built as Nos. 1 and 2 Segrave Villas in 1836 and then retained as Mercian Court when the adjacent *Park Place Hotel* was demolished in 1988. For photographs of the inside of the hotel and annexe exterior see *Hotel Majestic and Park Court Cheltenham Spa* pamphlet (undated).

⁷ 'Abstract of the Title of the Trustees of the Will of Charles Winstone deceased to freehold premises known as "Sunnyside" Pittville Circus Road', 1920, p.5. Gloucestershire Archives, C/DC/M 3.

⁸ Gloucestershire Archives, C/DC/M 3.

⁹ Bryan Little, *British Cities* [:] *Cheltenham* (London, 1952), p.122.

¹⁰ See 'Take=Off, 3 Montpellier Walk, Cheltenham' in *Post Office Telephone Directory Gloucester Area*, 1970.

¹¹ *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 April 1965.

¹² See *Cheltenham's Lost Heritage*.

¹³ Ewart Johns, *British Townscapes*, (Edward Arnold Ltd., 1965), p.86.

¹⁴ Rowe, p.89.

The Staffing of the Chapels of Medieval Cheltenham

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This is the second part of a paper by Michael Greet. The first part appeared in Journal 32, 2016, pp.16-30.

Background

In medieval times the purpose of a church living was to provide a livelihood for the priest who served the spiritual and pastoral needs of his parishioners. In general, with few exceptions, parishes were served by secular clergy (i.e. ordinary priests, not monks or canons regular) and some clergy had more than one living. However, as livings were often seen as a form of property, the pluralist rector of one parish who lived elsewhere might retain the larger part of the income of such a living for himself, while appointing a substitute priest (vicar) to perform the duties for perhaps one-third of the revenues of the living. Similarly, a religious house which acquired (appropriated) a parish might take the majority of parish revenues for itself to increase its income, appointing a secular vicar or chaplain to carry out the priestly duties. 'The Taxation of Pope Nicholas shows it was not unusual for the vicar only to get a fifth of the revenues'.

Rather like the 'deserving poor' in later ages, monasteries were, in the early days of their existence (long before they became wealthy), evidently viewed as being worthy recipients of 'charity' (monks being, by renouncing possessions, voluntarily poor) in the form of donations of tithes and later, church livings. Aelfric, Abbot of Eynsham, c1005 wrote, 'Beadsmen are they who intercede for us to God and promote Christianity among Christian peoples in the service of God, as spiritual toil, devoted to that alone for the benefit of us all'. Church offerings were originally divided between the clergy, the upkeep of church fabric, the relief of the poor, and (for a limited period) the bishop. Later, tithes (great tithes from major crops e.g. wheat; and small tithes of lesser crops e.g. of poultry and difficult to collect) of the produce of land replaced these and were eventually paid to the parish priest by land holders. Tithes were payable with no allowance for costs, and mortuary payments were based on the assumption that some tithes had not been paid. If a parish was appropriated the incumbent or rector usually received the great tithes and other profits of the living. The substitute priest (vicar or chaplain) appointed to do the work usually received the small tithes and/or a small salary.

'At the Synod of Westminster in 1102 it was decreed monks should not possess themselves of churches without the leave of the bishop, nor...take so much of the profits as to impoverish the priests who served them.' A Lateran Council of 1179 decree 'empowered...bishops to create perpetual vicarages in appropriated churches', and 'some convents had papal bulls enabling them...to serve the churches by one of their own number or by a paid chaplain'. In 1240 Bishop Cantilupe of Worcester ordered rectors 'in the larger churches with dependent chapels...to provide additional clergy, and if they failed to do so it should be done by the archdeacons'. *'Ne monachi ecclesias*

nisi per episcopos accipiunt neque sibi datas ita exspolient suis redditibus ut presbyteriibi servientes in iis que sibi et ecclesius necessaria sunt penuriam patiantur' (Wilkins).¹

The Right to Appropriate Cheltenham's Churches

Cirencester Abbey was given the Parish Church of Cheltenham by Henry I in 1133. In 1195 the Augustinian canons of Cirencester were given permission by Pope Celestine III to appropriate to themselves the church at Cheltenham and its subordinate chapels (including specifically Charlton Kings). This enabled them, after providing for the spiritual needs of the parish, to increase their income in order to provide hospitality to Abbey visitors and to support sick brethren. The right to do this was confirmed by Pope Innocent III in 1199 ('ad hospitalitatem sectandum et ad sustentacionem fratrum infirmorum'). The Abbots of Missenden, Nutley and Thame were ordered to implement this arrangement, and did so. The Bishop of Worcester confirmed the right again in 1216-17 ('in perpetuos usus hospitium'). The Papal Legate confirmed this in turn.²

For comparison, some figures on appropriations may be helpful. In 1291 'there were some 1500 vicarages out of a total of 8100 churches'. By 1535, of '8838 rectories 3307 had been appropriated with vicarages'. One historian has stated [on the eve of the Dissolution] that 'the spiritual revenues of the monasteries are mostly the revenues of such parish churches as had passed into the hands of the monks. The gross spiritual income' about £40,000, 'is nearly a fourth of the whole monastic gross income'. Tithes provided five-sixths of the whole.³

Professor Ross noted⁴ that there was an earlier papal indult to Cirencester Abbey from Pope Alexander III of 5 May 1178 allowing it to 'place in their vacant churches 4 or 3 of its brethren of whom one shall be presented to the bishop to have the cure of souls'.⁵

In his introduction to the Cirencester Cartulary, Professor Ross raised the question of 'How far Austin canons in general served their churches in person has been the subject of much discussion.'⁶ He noted two instances where canons from Cirencester served as incumbents (Geoffrey Brito at Milborne Port; Nicholas of Ampney at Holwell, Dorset).⁷ This paper examines the evidence for this which exists for Cheltenham, developing the analysis by Professor Ross in the Cirencester Cartulary and suggesting the names of some priests who may have served the church there.

The Living up to 1195

There is little information about the staffing of, and services held at, Cheltenham parish church and its chapels before 1195. It has been suggested that medieval priests were permitted to celebrate only one mass per day - bination, the offering up of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass twice on the same day by the same celebrant was usually forbidden. If so, more than one priest would have been needed in Cheltenham hundred. In 1086 Cheltenham's church had been staffed by 'priests' and the size of its endowment ('1¹/₂ hides') confirms this.⁸ In 1162-64 there was a 'chapter' in Cheltenham,⁹ which would have been headed by a senior priest, or prior, presumably then a vicar. Canons regular usually had to be accompanied by a colleague (socius). There had also been a priory in Cheltenham in 1086.¹⁰

There is no information about services held at the parish church, but in *c.*1143 there were to be services on three days per week at Arle Chapel (*propter servicium trium dierum capelle sue de Alra in ebdomoda*). At Charlton there were to be services on four days weekly, and at festivals (*quod singulis ebdomodis celebrari in predicta capella die dominica et secunda feria et quarta et sexta et preter hoc diebus festivis*).¹¹

Vicars, Canons or Chaplains?

Between 1133 and 1195 Cheltenham was probably served by a vicar. This vicarage was the subject of dispute between two priests, Randulf and Reginald, between 1174 and 1180. Professor Ross noted that the vicarage was also the subject of debate between many ecclesiastical authorities ('four popes, two archbishops, and several bishops, abbots and priors') over the next forty years or so. Much of the problem was that diocesan bishops tried to ensure that vicarages were created in appropriated churches 'to change the precarious tenure of a poorly paid priest, who could be dismissed at will, into a life tenure supported by an adequate if moderate income'. Thus in 1167x1169 Pope Alexander III wrote that Roger (Bishop of Worcester 1164-1179), 'was to receive no vicar at the presentation of monks unless enough of the benefice is assigned to him...to provide suitable maintenance and pay episcopal dues'. Again, in 1322, Bishop Thomas de Cobham, Bishop of Worcester 1317-27, wrote 'we receive constant complaints that in appropriated churches, and in others which have perpetual vicars, the portion assigned to the vicars is so small and mean that they cannot pay the ordinary dues, exercise hospitality, or fulfil other obligations. What is worse, others resort to the tables of religious houses and of other rectors, losing altogether the vicar's office and retaining only the name'.

The Bishops of Worcester also wished to retain direct control of parishes rather than have them appropriated. These disputes caused a lot of trouble, and Maurice of Arundel, Archdeacon of Gloucester (between 1210 and 1245), for example, lost money by the appropriation. His office had been granted the right to the income from vacant churches in the Archdeaconry, but as the churches held by the Abbey were never vacant he complained to Pope Gregory IX but lost his case.

The annual value of the benefice of Cheltenham in 1254, as assessed by the rural dean and four others (perhaps as part of the Taxation of Norwich, details for Worcester Diocese now generally not surviving), was 20 marks. It is noted that 'In 1254 Cirencester had 14 churches, with portions of five more, and pensions from nine others'. 'Four were unusually wealthy' (valued between £38 and £26 13s 4d each). The total value (spiritualities) was £303 7s 1d. Cirencester Abbey's total income (including temporalities of £88 9s 8d,) was £391 16s 9d. The value of the benefice, including its chapels, in 1291 was £24.¹² The value of the living appears to be reflected in the sum of 24s tax paid to the King in 1305 (via the Bishop of Worcester) by the parson of Cheltenham.

The dispute between Reginald and Randulf was finally settled by the papacy in favour of Reginald after he made a payment to Randulf, who withdrew his suit. In a separate case the Bishop of Hereford, who sometimes lived at his manor in Prestbury, arbitrated between Cirencester Abbey and Reginald, son of Lambert; presumably the priest who had defeated Randulf, and the Abbey accepted Reginald as vicar of

Cheltenham. Later Reginald withdrew from his dispute with the Abbey, renouncing his claim to the Vicarage and his portion of the Church.

A later Bishop of Worcester tried to set up a vicarage again but was forbidden to do so by the Archbishop. A Bull of Gregory IX (Pope 1227-41) also forbade the creation of a vicarage against the Abbey's interests.¹³

The wish to avoid costly disputes may well have influenced the later staffing of the Cheltenham churches by Cirencester Abbey.

The Staffing of Cheltenham Churches

It was unusual for members of a religious house except regular (Augustinian) canons to be allowed themselves to serve appropriated churches, though the document of 1216-7 provided that two chaplains should be allocated to serve the church (*'salva honesta sustentacione duorum capellanorum qui in eadem ecclesia deservierint'*). Thus Cirencester did not always have to use its own brethren to serve its churches, presumably if it lacked sufficient personnel or money.

An article by Dr Evans shows that in the fourteenth century, for example, the Abbey suffered difficulties from the effects of plague (1348-9, 1361-2, 1369), loss of rents, the heavy cost of hospitality to travellers, and was burdened by debts; it could not afford to repair its buildings or afford the heavy costs consequent on each change of Abbot (1352, 1358, 1361, 1363). Another factor affecting the clergy serving the living was that the Abbey's administrative effectiveness varied; the Cirencester canons were not always efficient or well-behaved.¹⁴ The second canon known to have served as incumbent of Cheltenham's parish church in 1378 illustrates this (see Nicholas Faireford, p.18).

It is therefore hard to judge which policy was followed by the Abbey in serving its churches. If canons were abundant, as in 1307, it may have staffed its churches with canons. If they were scarce, as when vocations declined in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, or when money was short, chaplains, being cheaper, were probably used more often; probably working under the canon *custos* who, being the senior priest, was presumably the one charged with the cure of souls. Service by chaplains may, indeed, have been the norm after 1217.¹⁵ However, low pay usually meant that it was difficult to attract priests with the necessary skills or qualities. In 1522, for example, in Cheltenham, the parish chaplain was paid the minimum sum set for diocesan vicars in 1439. From 1354 unbeneficed clergy had received 6 marks. However, following the black death some unbeneficed clergy were discontented with their salaries and sought higher pay elsewhere. One wonders just how effective was the ministry of such poorly paid chaplains.

Canons as Custos

Research has identified only three, possibly four, instances in which a canon was *Custos* (and apparently acting as incumbent following Alexander III's indult (in Catholic canon law, an indult is a permission or privilege, granted by the competent church authority) of Cheltenham.) In this connection Gwen Hart noted that tombs in the north wall of the parish church were assumed to be those of canons who had served in Cheltenham.¹⁶

In 1294 ‘Robert Canon of Chyltenh’ (presumably a Cirencester Abbey canon resident in the town) received ‘twelve silver spoons with a knife attached’ in the will of Giles de Berkeley. Robert may be the ‘R, warden of the Church of Cheltenham’ who on 19 November 1287 was licensed to hear confessions in the archdeaconry of Gloucester ‘and enjoin salutary penance in cases by right or custom specially reserved to the bishop’.

In 1378 a visitation of Cirencester Abbey by the diocesan bishop led to Nicholas Faireford the keeper of Cheltenham parish church, losing his office for bad behaviour.

In 1498 the office of custos of the parish church was again held by a canon: ‘John Dursley, chamberlain, kitchener, and warden of Cheltenham (Cheltynhem) Ch[urch].’¹⁷

In 1511 John Blake, cellarer and almoner at Cirencester, was ‘*custos ecclesie parochialis de Cheltenham*’;¹⁸ presumably he was the man who later became the last abbot (1522-39). A canon was also listed in 1488. The cellarer was a senior canon. From 1539, after the Dissolution, the last cellarer received the third largest pension (£8), after the abbot (£200) and the prior (£13 6s 8d).¹⁹

Chaplains serving the Church

The remaining evidence found for the staffing of the church suggests that chaplains were used in all other known instances, fulfilling the grant of the Bishop of Worcester of 1216-7.

Two deeds of the late thirteenth century refer to two chaplains in Cheltenham. They show Simon, son of Ralph le Gilur of Cheltenham, clerk, gave land in Cheltenham to the Abbey. The deeds were witnessed by W(illiam) de Amen (Ampney?), ‘*tunc temporis capellano parochiali*’ and W(illiam) de Cliva, chaplain²⁰ who presumably served the parish church.

Two other chaplains, Thomas Frenssh and Henry Somere, were to be the executors of the will, made in 1475, of a Cheltenham man, Walter Frensshe. This left rents to be applied to the maintenance of two chaplains to celebrate the service of St Mary at chantries in Cheltenham and Charlton.²¹ In 1522 the rectory of Cheltenham was worth £70. The chaplain, Richard Drake, had a stipend of £6 13s 4d. This was the minimum sum (10 marks) fixed for a vicar in the diocese of Worcester in 1439.

In Cheltenham the chantry of the Blessed Mary produced £4 13s 4d, and that of St Katherine £4. In 1535 the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* shows that only £9 16s of the Cheltenham rectory income was left available to pay clergy in Cheltenham and for church expenses. Under the appropriation as much as £64 from the income went to the cook of Cirencester Abbey to spend on food.²² In 1540 Edward Grove (see also page 19) was curate of Cheltenham, having been in 1532 curate of Charlton Kings.²³ Presumably he succeeded Reynold Lane, also curate of Cheltenham in 1540 (and possibly to be identified with Richard Lane, the former canon of Cirencester. See Appendix A.)

Roger Mutlowe or Mottelowe was curate of Charlton Kings between 1537 and 1545.²⁴

Other Chaplains in Cheltenham

The names of some other clergy who served in Cheltenham are also known, but it is difficult to identify if or where they served.

About 1220 Ivo the chaplain witnessed a gift of land in Alstone to Cirencester Abbey. He was perhaps chaplain of Arle chapel, and may have entered the priesthood late in life, as he appears to have had two sons, Robert and Thomas.

In 1230 Thomas Capellan (perhaps also a chaplain from the name), son and heir of Reginald de la Fortheye of Alstone, gave land to Llanthony Priory for his soul's health. Hugh Chaplain (capellano) was listed as a taxpayer at Westhal in 1327.

Walter at Grene, chaplain (perhaps at the chantry in Charlton) held land near (the present) Church Street, Charlton Kings, in 1403 and 1416. He also had a house in Crabbe End Way, near the church, in 1416.

Richard de la Hulle, chaplain, held land at Naunton in 1321 and before 1336; and John Lenyer, chaplain, had land in Wetefurlong in Naunton in 1370. (A man with a similar name held land in Charlton in 1430). Another man, Reginald Warkesdon, witnessed a deed, as clerk, in 1364.

At an early date a chantry's land could be held by the chaplain in his own name.²⁵

A School in Cheltenham

In 1548, after chantries were abolished, Cheltenham, where there were some 600 communicants, was suggested as a suitable site for a school ('a market town and much youth within the same'), and indeed, before the dissolution of the chantries, one of the two Cheltenham chantry priests, Edward Grove (see also footnote 23) now 60 and priest of St Katherine's chantry, had been employed by Cheltenham people to teach their children.²⁶

Lay Servants

In the early years of the fourteenth century Henry of Hampnett, abbot of Cirencester 1281-1307, charitably appointed Simon Dunt and his wife Alice, caretakers of Cheltenham parish church (*pro agendis suis de custode ecclesie nostre de Chilteh*). We can be fairly certain of the date since John of Alre (Arle) also witnessed another deed, dated c1301-4.²⁷

It seems unlikely the Dunt couple were church wardens in any modern sense since such lay officials were not normally paid, and the Dunts had their corrody (a lifetimes allowance of food and clothing, sometimes with shelter granted by an abbey). The duties may have approximated more to those of a sexton, usually assistant to the parish clerk (the earliest sexton traced by Professor Pounds being noted, later, in 1311), including for example, church cleaning, bell-ringing, and grave-digging, though Dunt himself may not have been fit enough for this.²⁸

Dunt, a tenant in villeinage in Cheltenham of the abbey, and his wife, daughter of Thomas de Muchegros, gave up his holding of a messuage, two closes, and a half virgate through his inability to pay the rent and service he owed for it (*'pretextu impotencie mee ad redditum annuum et servicium inde debitum'*). In return for this surrender the abbot granted them four quarters of wheat and four quarters of rye payable in two equal instalments at Michaelmas and Lady Day; and a silver mark, payable in two halves at Christmas and the Nativity of St John the Baptist (24 June). After the death of either of them the survivor would receive half of the payments.

A charter conveying a gift of eight acres of land to Cirencester Abbey by Simon, son of Ralph le Giler/Gyler of Cheltenham in the late thirteenth century, enables us to say that Simon Dunt held some of his land in Thickethorn (furlong), next to one of the eight acres that the Abbey received.²⁹ Dunt may well have worked later with William de Amen (Ampney), the chaplain of Cheltenham parish, who witnessed the charter.

A possible relative of Simon and Alice, John Dunt of Cheltenham, a religious, was made deacon on 6 June 1327, to work at the 'House of Lechlade', a hospital served by Augustinian priests and lay brothers and sisters. John was probably twenty-three or older. Another possible relative of Alice, Thomas Mussegros, paid tax in the Charlton Kings, Ham, Northfield area in 1327.³⁰

Accommodation for the new caretakers was not provided for in the agreement. Presumably they lived near the parish church or near the abbey's courthouse (on a site near the present Cambray).

The evidence surviving for Dunt's appointment may show it to be a consequence of the recent expansion of the church building in Cheltenham, described in 2002 as 'almost entirely in the Dec[orated] style' and defined as 'English Gothic architecture c1290-c1350'. The extra space provided there may be why some of the events listed in Appendix A were arranged to take place in Cheltenham.³¹

After the Dissolution

The names of some clergy working in Cheltenham in the 1540s are given in wills. If required extra priests were brought in for funerals. In 1542 eight were to act at the funeral of George Hurst. Three priests and his confessor, Sir Thomas Austen (or Augustyne, not a graduate, curate in 1545), plus a deacon and clerk served at the funeral of John Ball, who identified himself as 'our Lady preste' of Cheltenham in his will of 1545. He had already appeared as a 'ghostly father' in wills of 1542 and 1545. Gwen Hart suggests he was the brother of Thomas Ball (Bristowe) who followed him (see below).

In 1546 Sir Henry Cam, a non-graduate priest, was curate. Also in 1546 Sir Rychard Seddon, and in 1547 Sir Thomas Bristowe were 'ghostly fathers' of Thomas Frence and William Bycke respectively.³²

APPENDIX A.**Examples of Events Affecting the Church or its Activities in Medieval Cheltenham.³³**

In 1221 court records show John, son of Abraham of Cherleton, fled into the church (for sanctuary) and later admitted that he was a thief and abjured the realm. Separately, John of Brochampton killed Christina of Alre (Arle), fled into the church (at Arle or Swindon?), and later escaped. Also a servant of the Prior of Llanthony fell from his horse and died. It was decided that no-one was to blame for this accident. The value of the horse was 3s which went, as was usual, to church funds.

Meeting planned at Cheltenham 1323

On 8 August 1323 Walter Reynolds, Archbishop of Canterbury, asked Adam de Orleton, Bishop of Hereford, to enquire into the election (before 15 July) as Bishop of Llandaff, of Alexander of Monmouth, Archdeacon of Llandaff, by the Cathedral Chapter. The Pope had provided John de Eglescliff (former Bishop of Glasgow, who had been nominated as Bishop of Connor but failed to obtain the See) to the place, and later he quashed Alexander's appointment.

On 23 August, presumably because he was then at his manor at Prestbury, Orleton therefore summoned the Chapter of Llandaff to appear before him 'in ecclesia de Chyltenham' on Friday 9 September '*cum omnibus et singulis actis, juribus et munimentis*'.

In the event the enquiry was held at Bromyard on 4 September 'where the Elect, with the Proctor of the Chapter appeared'. Orleton wrote to the Archbishop about the enquiry on 8 September.

Ordinations at Cheltenham

Saturday 11 April 1340. No details given in the Register.

8 March 1343. By Wolstan de Bransford, Bishop of Worcester.

5 Religious and 28 Secular Acolytes.

12 Religious and 10 Secular Archdeacons.

8 Religious and 12 Secular Deacons.

9 Religious and 20 Secular Priests.

Total 114.

Some apparently came from as far as Bristol or Hereford.

APPENDIX B.**Ex-religious/Seculars Serving in Cheltenham After the Dissolution**

William Hall, curate of Charlton 1548-53. Ex-chantry priest at Charlton. Pension 10s. Aged 40 in 1548.³⁴

Stephen Pole, curate of Cheltenham 1551. Ex-chantry priest of St John's Chantry, St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester. £4 pension. Aged 50 in 1548.³⁵

Reynold Lane, curate of Cheltenham 1540. Curate of Charlton 1556-59. (Perhaps the ex-monk of Hailes, Reginald Lane, who was probably also incumbent of Stone chantry (£6 pension) and aged 53 in 1548. He claimed he had no other income but received a pension of £5 from Hailes. Curate of Dursley 1551-3.³⁶

(One Richard Lane alias Cheltenham received £5.6.8 as an ex-canon of Cirencester. As a canon of Cirencester had normally been Custos of Cheltenham Parish Church, this seems a more likely identification for the priest in Cheltenham).³⁷

Thomas Ball, alias Bristowe, of Warwick. Aged 54 in 1548. Received as former monk at Tewkesbury £6.13.4; in 1552 as former Lady service priest at Cheltenham £3.6.8. May also have been paid in error £4 as Bristowe. In 1548 a fraternity priest in St John Baptist, Bristol. Rector of Great Witcombe 1550-62.^[see footnote 36]

Payment of £4 per annum appears to have been the minimum pension paid after the Dissolution, with £5 per annum for one man 'a low, but not unreasonably low, subsistence wage'. A pension

would be extinguished, of course, by its recipient later being appointed to a living of equal or greater value. An ex-monk serving as a chantry priest could still draw his pension, however, until in 1547 the abolition of chantries meant he could apply for a second pension. However, tax was sometimes payable and could reduce a small income further. [see footnote 37]

¹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, (1961), Vol. II, pp.288-94; Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, (1907), Vol. II, p.10; F. L. Cross, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., revised 1985, pp.1380-1; G.G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, (1936), Vol. III, pp.149-162; D. C. Douglas, *English Historical Documents (EHD)*, Vol. 1, 500-1042, pp.849, 853-4.

² G. Hart, *Cheltenham, A History*, Leicester University Press (1965), pp.11, 14-5; Cirencester Cartulary (CC) II, 409/441, 410/442, 414-6; Cirencester Cartulary 1, 158/190, 165/197.

³ D. Knowles, p.291; A. Savine, *English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution*, (1909), p.91, 101, 107, quoting G. G. Coulton, *Five centuries of Religion*, Vol. III, (1936), p.149.

⁴ C. Ross, CC, Introduction, p.xxxii.

⁵ CC I, 150/82. The text is *Liceat eciam uobis in ecclesiis uestris vacantibus iiii or uel tres de uestris fratribus ponere quorum unus diocesano representetur episcopo u tab curam recipiat animarum*. The cure of souls included both the parishioners (laity) and also the members of the religious community in Cheltenham.

⁶ Ross, CC, Introduction, p.xxxii.

⁷ Ross, pp.xxxii-xxxiii; CC I, II, 332, 336, 592, 573-4.

⁸ Ed. J. S. Moore, *Domesday Book, Gloucestershire*, Phillimore (1982).

⁹ *et capitulo de Cheltenham*, CC II 412/443.

¹⁰ Knowles, p.291; M. Greet, 'The Church and its Chapels in Medieval Cheltenham,' *Cheltenham Local History Society (CLHS) Journal* 13, (1997), pp.34-8, based on J. H. Middleton, *Notes on the Manor and Parish Church of Cheltenham*. (1879-80), pp.53-72.

¹¹ CC II, 419, 425, 413.

¹² Knowles, p.290; M. G. Cheney, *Roger, Bishop of Worcester, 1164-1179*. Oxford University Press (1980), pp.173, 349; E. H. Pearce, 'The Register of Thomas de Cobham, Bishop of Winchester, 1317-1327', *Worcester Historical Society (WHS)*, 1930, p.135. 'The Oxford council of 1222 considered five marks a year (£3 6s 8d) a sufficient income for a vicar... many livings fell on average below this modest figure,' G. W. S. Barrow, *Feudal Britain*, Arnold (1956), p.318. For details of Professor Ross's account of the vicarage disputes see, CC, Introduction, pp.xxx-xxxi; CC II, 418/449; J. Sawyer (1903), pp.41-2; CC II 459-60 and pp.xxv-xxvi. *Taxation Ecclesiastica Angliae*. P. Nicholai IV (1291). Record Commission, 1802, pp.223-4.

¹³ CC I, 158/90, 167/99; CC II, 406, 420-3, (451-4). J. W. Willis Beard, 'Register of Bishop William Ginsborough', WHS (1907), p.225.

¹⁴ A. K. B. Evans, 'Cirencester Abbey From Heyday to Dissolution', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (TBGAS)*, 111 (1993), pp.115-42, especially p.130.

¹⁵ In 1307, 40 canons; in 1498, 24 canons; 1534, the abbot and 20 canons; after 1539, the abbot and 15 canons received pensions. The Abbey income for 1379 (when the abbot was mitred) was £666 13s 4d; in 1535, £1035 16s 8d. Cirencester was the richest Augustinian house, quoting Evans and Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses. England and Wales*, Longman (1971), p.154.

¹⁶ Hart, p.47, 52.

¹⁷ Hart, p.47; J.W. Bund, 'Register of Godfrey Giffard, 1268-1301,' WHS, parts III and IV, p.449. The 1287 evidence is on page 314. Robert of Cheltenham, a canon of Llanthony Priory, Gloucester, negotiated with Cirencester Abbey about the tithes payable to Cheltenham in 1251. CC II, 407/439. Also, item 843 of 'The Calendar of the Register of Henry Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester, 1375-95,' Ed. W. P. Marett, WHS (1972); *fratrem Nicholaum Faireford concanonicum vestrum custodem ecclesie parochialis de Chiltenham propter infamiam persone sue in gravem scandalum in parochial de Chiltenham et allis locis*, Sawyer, (1903), p.42. *The Register of John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury 1486-1500*, Vol II, p131, Ed. C. Harper-Bill, The Canterbury and York Society, Boydell press (1991).

¹⁸ A list of the canons and the offices they held at Cirencester is given in a document written before a visitation of the Abbey by the Prior of Llanthony in 1511. Eighteen professed canons ('Dns' ie Dominus) and seven presumed novices ('Frater') were cited to appear. Two of the professed canons listed as 'vacat in apostasia' may have broken the Rule; a third ('vacat') possibly had similar status. The abbot and prior were not named, but all other canons were listed, probably under their names in religion. Nearly all names were given as a Christian name and place name/surname, for example Johannes Brystowe, Ricardus

Syssetur. Holders of one office only were the abbot, prior, hosteler, custos (keeper/warden) of the refectory, precentor and sub-sacrist. Holders of more than one office were the chamberlain/pittancer/kitchener; chaplain and custos of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary '*capellae Beate Marie*' (perhaps the post created in 1346 to serve the Lady Chapel of the Abbey); cellarer/almoner/custos of Cheltenham parish church; and custos of the parish church of St John Baptist, Cirencester, sacrist/custos of the infirmary. The other canons were not listed as office holders. Folio 44, *Register of Prior Forest*, Public Record Office, [now the National Archives], C115/85; (ex C115/A14 or C115/6691). Gloucestershire Archives, microfilm 1103. I am grateful to John Rhodes for providing me with a copy of his transcript of this document.

¹⁹ G. Baskerville, 'The Dispossessed Religious of Gloucestershire,' TBGAS 49, (1927), pp.63-122.

²⁰ Ed. M. Devine, CC III, 469, 470, (1977). A William de Amen became a (secular) subdeacon at Northleach in 1284. A priest of this name was vicar of Drifffield, Yorkshire, in October 1287, J. W. Bund, Register of Godfrey Giffard, 1268-1301, (1900), pp.238, 331. Master G de Amen witnessed the Cirencester Cartulary III, 473, 1288.

²¹ Will dated 1 December 1475, gist given under 1476, in the volume of Hockaday Extracts for Cheltenham parish church (to 1649) at Gloucestershire Archives.

²² Hart, p.55. *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, Record Commission (1814), Vol II, p.465. *The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522*, Ed. R. W. Hoyle, TBGAS (1993), p.44; Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, (1949), p.xvi; A. R. Mayer, EHD, Vol IV, 1327-1485, (1969), pp.713, 728-9.

²³ Edward Groves later, before 1548, served as priest at St Katherine's chantry in Cheltenham and received £5 of its income of £5 18s 11d, N. Orme, *Education in the West of England 1066 -1548*, University of Exeter Press (1976), pp.123-4.

²⁴ M. Greet and M. Paget, 'Ministers and Incumbents at St Mary's' Charlton Kings Local History Society Bulletin (CKLHSB), 16 (1986), p.46.

²⁵ Ivo's sons appear in CC II, 449 and 564. M. J. Greet, 'Some Medieval Deeds of the 14th and 15th Century', CKLHSB 23, (1990), p.26. On 18 September 1378 a Walter Grene of Cheltenham was made an acolyte at Bromsgrove, W. P. Marett, Register of Henry Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester. 1375-95, (1972). P. Franklyn (1993) p.37, (see footnote 11 in Part 1, CLHS Journal 32 (2016)); M. Greet, 'No Hawlf Measures: Gifts to Cirencester Abbey and Llanthony Priory of Land in Cheltenham in the 12th and 13th Centuries,' CLHS Journal 18 (2002), pp.24, 27; (see also footnote 43 in Part 1, CLHS Journal 32 (2016)).

²⁶ N. Orme, pp.16, 31, 123-4.

²⁷ M. Devine, *Cirencester Abbey Cartulary*, Oxford University Press (1977), Vol III, 477, 487, 480.

²⁸ CC III, 477. N. J. G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish*, p.191, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), see footnote 35 in Part I, CLHS Journal 32. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., (1983), p.1267.

²⁹ CC III, 470.

³⁰ E. H. Pearce, *The Register of Thomas de Cobham, Bishop of Worcester 1317-1327*, WHS (1930), p.218. D. Knowles, R.N. Hadcock, p.369; P. Franklyn, p.37.

³¹ D. Verey and A. Brooks, *The Buildings of Gloucestershire, Vol. 2, The Vale and the Forest of Dean*, (Penguin, 1970), pp.229, 838.

³² Hockaday Extracts: St Mary's Church Cheltenham up to 1547, Gloucestershire Archives. G.Hart. *A History of Cheltenham*. Sutton 1981 p.56. A.Dyer and D.M.Palliser. *The Diocesan Populations Returns for 1563 and 1603*. OUP (2005) p.332.

³³ Cases 198, 200, 212 pp.49, 51, F.W.Maitland. Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester, (1221). Macmillan 1884. M.Paget. Crime in Charlton. CKLHS RB 37 (1997) pp.1-3. A.T. Bannister, *The Register of Adam de Orleton Bishop of Hereford 1317-27*, 1907, Vol II pp.261-4. R.M. Haines. Calendar of Register of Wolstan de Bransford 1339-49. HMSO 1966 pp.30, 210-13.

³⁴ See footnote 19, pp.65, 75, 89, 70. J. Maclean, Chantry Certificates, Gloucestershire. TBGAS v 8 (1883-4), pp.229-308.

³⁵ G. Hart. 1965 p.57, 59. See ⁽¹⁹⁾ p.94.

³⁶ See footnote 19, pp.85, 116. Maclean p.283.

³⁷ D. Knowles. *The Religious Orders in England: III The Tudor Age*. CUP (1971) pp.407, 409, 410.

Joseph Dunton (1810-1886)

Part 2, Photography and Fireworks

JULIAN HOLLAND

The first part of this article examined Joseph Dunton's introduction of archery to Cheltenham in the late 1840s and the role of Joseph and his wife Elizabeth in providing archery instruction and equipment at Cheltenham's several spas.¹ Archery activity peaked in Cheltenham with the National Archery Meeting held there in 1856 and again the following year. After that Dunton added other activities in order to make a living.

WHILE ARCHERY CONTINUED AS AN ELEMENT of Dunton's livelihood into the 1870s, it seems the years of peak activity in Cheltenham in 1856 and 1857 were never rivalled in later years. Dunton diversified his activities with photography, hairdressing and fireworks for the remainder of his career.

The first time the High Street address appeared was in an advertisement in April 1857, with the somewhat ambiguous wording: 'Letters addressed to the Photographic Institution, 371½, High Street, (opposite Pittville Street,) will receive immediate attention.'² This did not state that Dunton was offering photography and the address is given in later advertisements with no mention of photography. What was going on?

The exact nature of Dunton's role in the Photographic Institution is unclear. There had been a 'Photographic Institution' in Cheltenham since the earliest days of commercial photography in England in 1841. But by the later 1850s the title was a generic description of a studio. Whether the High Street address was already a photographic studio when Dunton acquired the lease is unclear. Commercial photography expanded greatly in England in the 1850s and Dunton was one of a dozen 'photographic artists' listed in Cheltenham in the 1858/59 edition of Slater's *Directory*.

As photography was better suited to the summer months and as that was also the time when Cheltenham was busiest with visitors and Dunton working his archery grounds, it is likely that, at least some of the time, Dunton employed a photographic operator in his studio. As recounted in Part 1, Dunton was an active contributor to the Foresters' fetes. At the fete held at Tewkesbury in July 1859, after a hearty dinner with numerous toasts, 'Mr. Dunton, whose attention was highly appreciated, provided the appropriate appurtenances for toxophilite amusement', vocalists sang comic and sentimental songs, and 'a photographic establishment, (Mr. Dunton's) also had its share of patronage'.³ Dunton cannot have been attending to both archery and photography, suggesting an employed photographer. At another Foresters' fete, at Cheltenham in 1861, Dunton again 'catered for the lovers of archery' while 'Mr. Pousty was in attendance with his photographic apparatus and "took" many of the brethren in their Forester's attire'.⁴ Was it possible Pousty worked for Dunton, or had done so previously?

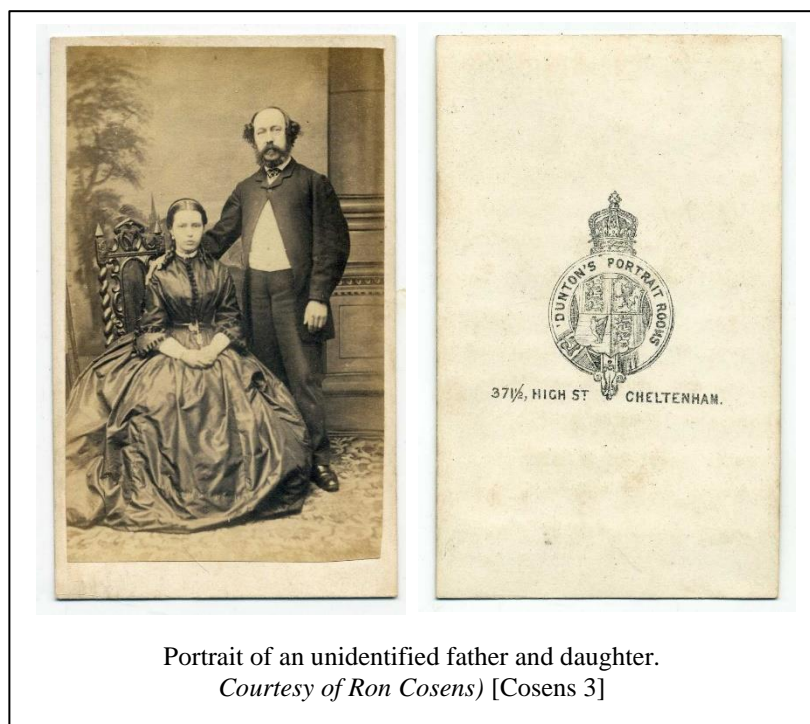
Shortly after this fete William Pousty advertised *his* Photographic Institution in Castle Green, Hereford, describing himself as 'formerly of Regent-street, London, and for several years at Cheltenham'.⁵ There is no evidence that Pousty was a photographer on his own account in Cheltenham so he must have worked for others. While firm

evidence has yet to be found to link him to Dunton, he can be shown to have been an employed photographer in Cheltenham. In January 1860, following the death of W.H. Hendley of Hendley's Photographic Rooms in Pittville Street, his sister Ellen Hendley announced her intention to continue the business 'with the aid of competent assistants', the advertisement subscribed by William Pousty as 'Manager'.⁶

The 1861 census records Joseph and Elizabeth Dunton living at 371½ High Street together with 20-year-old Susan Ricketts, described as both servant and niece. The house was situated down a private passage leading to the back of 372 High Street.⁷ It was a substantial property, with five bedrooms, sitting room, kitchen, scullery, water closet and 'other convenient Domestic Offices', as well as a cellar and yard in the occupation of 'Mr. Dunton, photographer'.⁸ Presumably two or more of the bedrooms served as the studio while the water closet or the cellar was adapted as a darkroom.

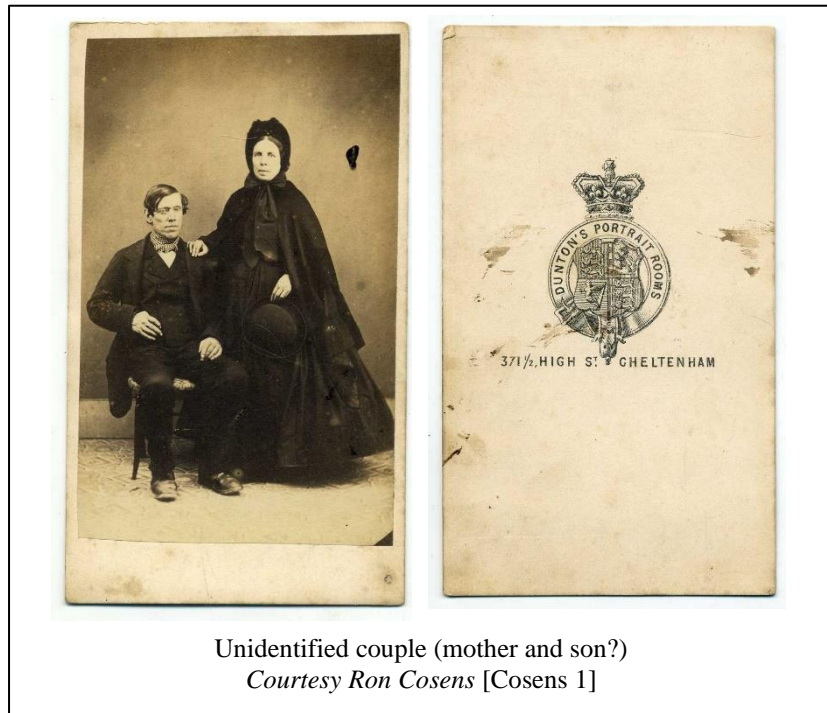
No examples of photographs from Dunton's studio dating from the 1850s have been identified but several carte de visite (CDV) photographs from the 1860s are known. The card mounts have three different printed backs. Assuming these backs each represent a discrete period, the CDVs can be arranged into a sequence.

The first group has on the reverse a crown, belt and shield pattern resembling the official British coat of arms, but with 'DUNTON'S PORTRAIT ROOMS' in the belt, together with the address printed below.

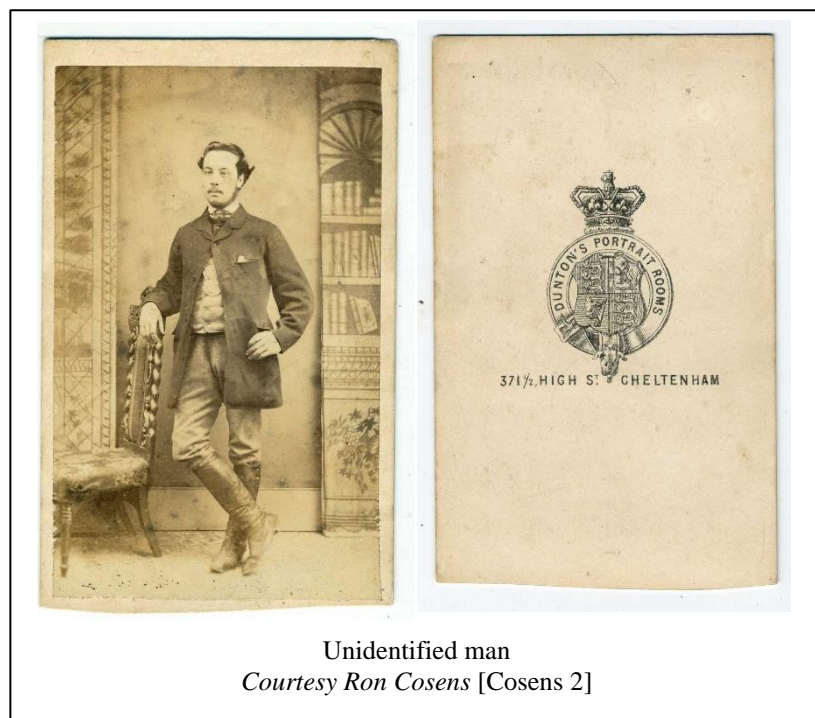


This photograph is in several ways typical of studio portraits of the mid 1860s, with its elaborate studio chair, column to one side, painted backdrop and carpet. No other examples of this column or painted landscape with church steeple have been seen, but the chair recurs and provides a clue to relative dating. Another example of this backing is known with a young woman seated at a writing desk and a painted backdrop of an Italianate scene. The studio possessed a variety of backdrops and furniture.

The second group has a very similar reverse but with a wider design of crown and a better engraved shield. Two examples are given here.

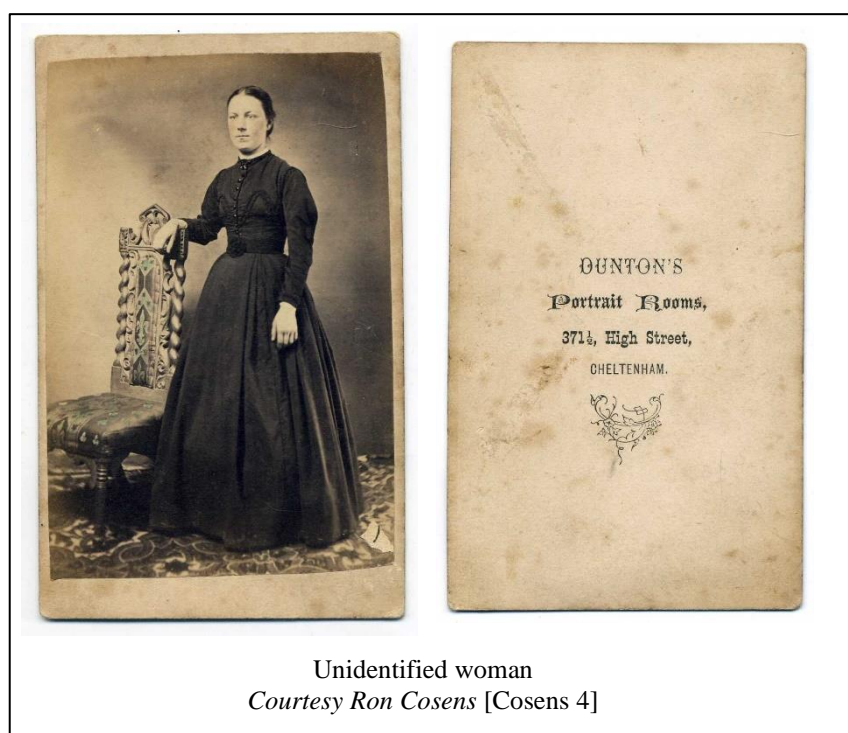


The absence of any painted backdrop or other decoration makes this portrait particularly stark but effective. Are the 'sitters' dressed in mourning for a recently deceased relative? The man is seated on what appears to be the same chair as in several other photographs.



By contrast this single portrait is debonair. The man is standing in a relaxed pose, framed between the edges of two painted backdrops with one arm resting on the chair back. The upholstery suggests this is the same chair as in the previous photograph, and clearly has the same elaborate back as the chair in the first photograph, but the two finials, mimicking the steeple in the first photograph, have been removed, enabling the chair to act as a rest (a stabiliser) for a standing subject. The chair has undergone another change – the padded central panel in the back now has a light-coloured vertical stripe. Another CDV shows the painted hanging on the left to be a view through French doors of a fountain on a terrace, a winding river and ecclesiastical ruins – suggestive of Tintern Abbey on the River Wye – in the middle distance.

On the third back, the coat of arms has disappeared to be replaced with lettering and a small decorative device.



The setting here is very plain apart from a highly patterned carpet and the familiar chair. But the chair has undergone further alteration. Both the seat and the back panel have been reupholstered with a bold fleur-de-lis pattern. The photograph has been delicately coloured with pink to the woman's cheeks and pink and green emphasising the pattern of the chair's fabric.

Dunton's career as a photographer seemingly ended in the late 1860s. He is listed twice in Slater's 1868 Directory – as a photographer under 'Artists' (p. 159) and for archery under 'Professors and Teachers' (p. 170). How much each was contributing to his livelihood at this stage is impossible to tell but it was at this point that his life received a severe jolt. His wife Elizabeth, not only his domestic companion but his partner on the archery field, died in 1867. She died of 'ulceration of stomach' on 10 June and was buried in Cheltenham four days later. She was only 57. Dunton's profession was given as photographer on the death certificate, the last certain evidence we have that this was his principal occupation.⁹

There is very little record of Dunton's activities for the next several years. The 1871 census records him as still living at 371½ High Street. Susan Ricketts is still living there and 72-year-old Mary Ricketts also, both described as lodgers and dressmakers. Dunton's occupation is given as 'archery teacher'. There is no more mention of photography. Mary Ricketts, then of The Tything, Worcester, was recorded as present at the death of Elizabeth Dunton in 1867. Susan and Mary Ricketts may have been relatives of Elizabeth Dunton and no doubt were invaluable in maintaining Joseph Dunton's home after Elizabeth's death.

In 1876 Dunton married for the second time. Charlotte Newby was described as a confectioner of 93 High Street. Although she came from Norwich, Charlotte had been living in the district for many years.¹⁰ They were married in St John's, Cheltenham, on 4 January 1876. By this stage Dunton had a new residence, 2 Bath Road, and a new occupation, hairdresser. Dunton had been working as a hairdresser for some years, perhaps since the end of the photography business in the late 1860s.¹¹ We hear no more of Susan and Mary Ricketts.

As Dunton had formerly juggled archery and photography, he now juggled hairdressing and fireworks! Kelly's 1879 Directory lists him as 'firework agent' at Bath Road and advertisements reflect this:

FIREWORKS! FIREWORKS!! FIREWORKS!!!

J. DUNTON,

Agent for Brock and Co. (Sole Pyrotechnic Artist to the Crystal Palace Company),

NO. 2, BATH-ROAD, CHELTENHAM.

DISPLAYS arranged specially for Royal Receptions, Coming of Age, Weddings, Regattas, Flower Shows, Opening of Public Buildings, &c. Illuminations of the Most Artistic kind for Garden Parties and Rustic Fetes. A Large Quantity of Fireworks for sale at Reduced Prices. Archery Made and Repaired; Secondhand Targets with New Facings, 15s. 6d. per pair. Large Quantity of Balloons from Sixpence and upwards.

NOTE THE ADDRESS:—

No. 2, BATH-ROAD (two doors from High-street).

Gloucester Citizen, 22 July 1879

As we have seen, Dunton continued to

provide archery at various fetes, and this advertisement shows the sale of archery equipment continued to be a component of his business. He also dealt in another expression of festivity – balloons. But for the remainder of his career, fireworks were the dominant element.

Dunton organised fireworks at fetes and other public occasions. For example, at the Foresters's fete in Worcester in June 1878, after a day of diverse entertainments, Dunton 'brought the proceedings to a close with a very creditable fireworks display' including various coloured lights, rockets and designs, one of them wishing 'Success to the A.O.F.'¹² At the Winchcombe and Sudeley Floral, Horticultural, and Poultry Show in late summer that year, Dunton 'sent up balloons during the afternoon' and provided a 'fair display of fireworks' in the evening.¹³

Unlike archery equipment, the storage of fireworks was attended by danger, and on at least one occasion Dunton's fireworks caused a fire, leading to a case in the Cheltenham County Court in 1876. James Rossiter owned a house in Grosvenor Street on which he took out a policy of £100 in 1868. The house had a series of occupants, a

marine store dealer, a bird seller and a dyer. Then a hairdresser, Mr Smith, took the house, followed by another hairdresser – Joseph Dunton. One day when Dunton had been a tenant for about two years, Rossiter passed by and saw what he thought were fireworks in the window. He reported this to the clerk in the insurance office, but they turned out to be dummy fireworks. Dunton had shown Rossiter a house opposite where he manufactured the fireworks, assuring him ‘there was not an ounce of powder on his premises’.

Dunton was a hairdresser throughout the period of his tenancy of Rossiter’s house. But the fireworks business continued in parallel. Dunton had ‘some fireworks in the house on the 5th of November [1875], but believed it was without the knowledge of Mr. Rossiter’. While Dunton made most of his fireworks in the other house, he ‘made some on Mr. Rossiter’s premises occasionally’. The scene was set for a mishap. Rossiter had seen dummies in the window and did not know that Dunton kept real fireworks on the premises in the winter. On 9 November Dunton was in the kitchen ‘sorting out some fireworks, when he saw a spark fly out of the fire on to the hearth, and it ignited the fireworks, which blew up, and he had a narrow escape of his life’.¹⁴

Perhaps Dunton was more careful after this – and his landlords more particular in keeping their insurers informed! By 1879 the advertisements show he was agent for the fireworks manufacturer Brock & Co., a firm established in London at the tail end of the seventeenth century. Retailing or using already manufactured fireworks limited some of the hazards of handling.

FIREWORKS. FIREWORKS.
J. DUNTON,
 Agent for **BROCK & CO.,** Sole Pyrotechnic Artistes to
 the Crystal Palace Company,
CATERER FOR THE PUBLIC FESTIVITIES.
 Over 100 Artistes to select from for Fêtes, Galas,
 and every class of Entertainment. Forty-five years'
 practical experience. Balloon Ascents, Fireworks,
 Illuminations, Decorations, Scenic Displays, Bands,
 Banners, Flags, Archery. Lamps of every description.
 ADDRESS:
J. DUNTON,
ALBION STREET, NEARLY OPPOSITE ROYAL
HOTEL YARD,
 (Corner of Gloucester Place,)
CHELTENHAM.

Gloucester *Citizen*, 6 May 1884

The claim that Dunton had ‘Over 100 Artistes to select from for Fêtes, Galas, and every class of Entertainment’ suggests an entrepreneurial activity on a substantial scale in 1884. His long involvement in the fetes of the Foresters and the Great Western Railway Widows’ and Orphans’ Fund put him in contact

with most of the entertainers available for such occasions, but the likelihood is that the demand for his services was on a modest scale. By the end of that year’s season, he was selling excess stock.

Unlike his long period of occupation of the house in the High Street, Dunton’s advertisements now show a succession of addresses.¹⁵ That Dunton often used another property for his goods, separate from his house, accounts for some of the various addresses given in these years. Advertisements in 1879 give his commercial address as

‘2 Bath Road (two doors from High-street)’ while the 1881 census gives his residence as 1 Bath Road (with Dunton’s occupation given as hairdresser). But 1881 advertisements give the business address as 24 Bath Street.¹⁶

On 28 December 1885, Dunton’s second wife Charlotte died at the age of 68.¹⁷ Dunton himself was 76 as he embarked on the new season in 1886. Flags were a sufficiently important part of the business to advertise his agency for the Gloucester flag and marquee manufacturer, Llewellyn Evans, who was more generally known as a sail maker and ship chandler.¹⁸

As the season was getting into full swing, Dunton again advertised the full range of his stock and services.

FIREWORKS! FIREWORKS!!

JOSEPH DUNTON, Agent for Brock and Co.
Sole Pyrotechnic Artists to the Crystal Palace Company, 3, Birdlip Place, Bath Road, five doors from High-street, Cheltenham. J. D. is prepared to supply first-class displays of Fireworks, Scenic Displays, Bands, Banners, Flags, Lamps, and Chinese Lanterns of every description. Proprietors of Public Gardens, Floral Fêtes, Foresters, Oddfellows, &c., or Private Families, may depend upon having any Device they may require in Fireworks from £3 to any amount. Archery Made and Repaired, let on Hire, and personal attendance given if required. Balloons from sixpence upwards. Address—Bath Road, five doors from High Street, Cheltenham. 2379

Gloucestershire Echo, 25 May 1886

Lesser advertisements appeared in the *Gloucestershire Echo* and *Gloucester Citizen* throughout July, but Joseph Dunton’s career was over. He died at 4 Birdlip Place on 21 August 1886 and was buried in Cheltenham cemetery three days later. Whether he died after a short illness or suffered a progressive decline is not recorded. The death of Charlotte perhaps hastened his end.

Despite the range of items, he offered for festivities, public or private, Dunton’s business was on a small scale. This is clear from the advertisement for the disposal of the business – ‘small capital required’.¹⁹ The advertiser was John Bowles, husband of Susan Bowles, Dunton’s niece and sole executrix.

Dunton showed both adaptability and consistency throughout his career. But after an extensive lifetime of enterprising work, Dunton’s personal estate was declared on 14 February 1887 as £17 11s 3d, a poor return for long effort. There were no children to consume his earnings or to aid his business. There are indications of recurrent

financial difficulties – the 1851 court action, a deed of assignment in 1865,²⁰ and at the end of it all, there was no comfortable residue to allow for retirement.

Dunton advertised his archery and fireworks businesses extensively, but no advertisements have been found for his photographic studio or hairdresser's shop. A successful hairdresser has a core of regular customers, making advertising redundant. Other Cheltenham photographers advertised in the 1850s and '60s, so perhaps Dunton promoted his portrait rooms in some way other than newspaper advertisements. While archery and fireworks were Dunton's vocation, the more settled and predictable occupations of photography and hairdressing seem to have provided the basis of his livelihood from the late 1850s.

The Victorian spa town of Cheltenham, with its well-to-do residents and visitors, depended on cohorts of domestic servants, shopkeepers and promoters of entertainments working hard for uncertain reward. Still, the continued strength of archery in Cheltenham on the national stage and in the international competition of the 1908 London Olympics was, at least in part, the legacy of Joseph and Elizabeth Dunton.

Acknowledgements

Ron Cosens, who runs the website Photographers of Great Britain & Ireland 1840 – 1940 (www.cartedevsite.co.uk), generously provided scans of his Dunton's Portrait Rooms CDVs. John Simpson obtained Elizabeth Dunton's death certificate.

¹ Julian Holland, 'Joseph Dunton (1810-1886) Part 1, Archery Entrepreneur', *Cheltenham Local History Society*, Journal 33 (2017), pp. 3-11.

² *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 11 April 1857.

³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 July 1859.

⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 9 July 1861.

⁵ *Hereford Journal*, 4 Sep 1861.

⁶ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 January 1860.

⁷ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 26 September 1865.

⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 and 19 March 1867. Dunton's 'compact and capital Residence' was being sold as part of 372 High Street. The tenancy was due to expire on 29 September 1867 but Dunton evidently renewed it with the new owner.

⁹ Slater's 1868 Directory was presumably compiled (or revised) about the same date.

¹⁰ Charlotte Newby was housekeeper at Hampton Villa, Leckhampton, in 1861 and cook at Brandon House, Leckhampton, in 1871.

¹¹ And, as we shall see, Dunton had been living in a house in Grosvenor Street for a couple of years in 1874-75.

¹² *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 15 June 1878.

¹³ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 3 September 1878

¹⁴ *Rossiter v. Liverpool and Globe Insurance Company*, *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 January 1876.

¹⁵ An advertisement in the *Gloucester Citizen*, 6 December 1884, offered: 'To Let, House, Shop, Parlour and Bed-room. – Apply J. Dunton, 9, Winchcomb Street, Cheltenham.'

¹⁶ 24 Bath Street is still given as Dunton's address as 'firework agent' in Kelly's 1885 Directory. Bath Street runs perpendicular to Bath Road and parallel to High Street.

¹⁷ *Gloucester Citizen*, 31 December 1885; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 January 1886. The address given was 4 Birdlip Place.

¹⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 May 1886.

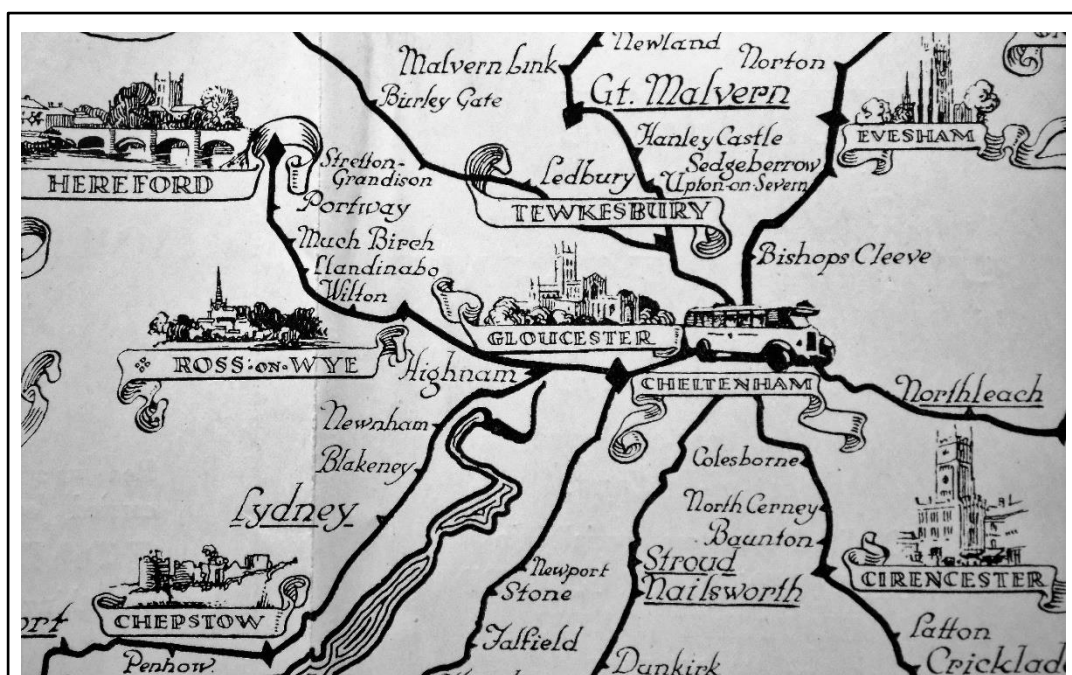
¹⁹ *Gloucester Citizen*, 4 September 1886.

²⁰ *London Gazette*, 3 February 1865, p. 532.

Black and White in Cheltenham

JOHN CHANDLER

A DAILY ANNOYANCE, IF YOU LIVED in Cheltenham during the 1970s and early 1980s (but now largely forgotten) was the simultaneous exodus of dozens, sometimes a hundred or more (so it seemed), of motor coaches each afternoon, heading off to all points of the compass and causing a temporary gridlock in the town centre. Whether because long-distance coach services are so familiar a part of contemporary life, or because interest in buses and coaches is generally consigned to ‘enthusiasts’, this unusual but important aspect of Cheltenham’s history has been largely overlooked and forgotten. Yet in its heyday, the 1930s to 1960s, the former coach station in St Margaret’s Road was the hub of a pioneering organisation, Associated Motorways (or ‘the pool’ as it was always known in the industry), which not only laid the foundations of present-day coach travel, by National Express and Megabus, but also gave thousands of passengers each year their first acquaintance with Cheltenham’s streets and buildings, seen through the window in passing *en route* to their holiday destinations. The purpose of this paper is to trace the history of the individuals and company responsible for putting Cheltenham on the road transport map, and to assess the significance for the town’s 20th-century development of this coaching phenomenon.¹



Detail from Black & White route map, probably 1929.

The artist was Cedric Buxton (1860-1954).

See also inside back cover for map of the Black & White route map,
south-west England, early 1930s

Courtesy of The Bus Archive

The 1920s saw a road transport revolution in many ways as significant as that of the railways 80 years earlier. Motor vehicles became reliable and efficient enough to replace horse-drawn traction; roads were given smooth, durable surfaces; and driving and engine maintenance skills, learned in the conflict of world war, could now be put to peaceful, profitable uses. And so the motor bus began to proliferate, typically adapted from a redundant army truck, and operated by an enterprising ex-serviceman, who rapidly replaced the old horse-and-cart village carrier with a faster, more frequent service, and then looked to new endeavours. These included: establishing a network of inter-urban services to compete with the railways on price and flexibility; serving the large housing estates being established on the periphery of towns; bussing workers to mines and factories on contract; and offering pleasure outings to places of interest and fun, so-called ‘charabanc’ tours. By about 1925 also, prompted not only by improvements to vehicles and roads, but also by recurring railway strikes, long-distance motor coach travel became an economic possibility.²

On to this stage we find a man named George Readings, who fitted exactly into this pattern. Aged 21 in 1914 he served in mechanical transport in the war, came back with an ex-army Model T Ford and ran a bus service on two days a week in Surrey. He built up the business to 13 vehicles, then sold out to a larger firm, having traded under three different names. He next tried his luck in Ireland, but returned in 1926, settled in Cheltenham and decided to copy the Bristol to London service (by a firm called Greyhound) which had started the previous year. Readings had clearly tapped into an unexploited market, as within a year he was running three services a day between Cheltenham and London, offering excursions locally and to seaside resorts, as well as opening up new long-distance routes. By 1928 separate services ran to London from Worcester and from Hereford, serving intermediate places as well, and soon afterwards a network of routes was in place between the midlands, south Wales and the west country, many of them interchanging at Cheltenham.

Readings had flair. His fleet of coaches, strikingly turned out in the monochrome livery of their eponymous company name, Black & White Motorways, was the height of luxury, including a toilet, curtains, a chocolate vending machine, a library cabinet, and an attendant. Such details would have been a seductive selling point for travellers probably more used to third-class railway carriages, a point noted by J.B. Priestley as he set off by motor coach for the first time a few years



Although used to illustrate publicity brochures (this is from 1937) this 1932 AEC vehicle was second-hand, having been acquired when Black & White took over another operator in 1933.

Courtesy of The Bus Archive

later, astonished at its speed and comfort, and describing it as ‘voluptuous, sybaritic, of doubtful morality’, and comparing its over-done comfort to the picture-palace cinemas of the day.³ But Readings also had location. Cheltenham was close to one of the great

cross-roads of the kingdom, so that any traveller between the west country and the midlands, along the recently designated A38, or between the south-east and Wales, the A40, had to pass nearby. It was an interesting location in another way, too, because as the larger provincial bus companies became established during the 1920s, the Cheltenham area was something of a frontier. To the south and around Gloucester the Bristol Tramways company was the dominant player, to the north Birmingham & Midland ('Midland Red'), to the west Red & White of Chepstow, and in the Stroud area the National, later Western National. All had an interest in developing express coach services, and by 1930 all were jockeying for position in advance of licensing and regulation which would come into force in March 1931.⁴

By 1929 Black & White Motorways was a successful brand, a limited company,⁵ with elegant vehicles, a plethora of services radiating from Cheltenham, and an efficient network of booking agents created by the second architect of the company, H. R. Lapper, formerly a sweet shop proprietor, who became its general manager.⁶ It was also trying to purchase a town-centre site, in Rodney Road, for a coach station. But at this point the bank refused to renew its mortgage, and the company entered into negotiations with Midland Red, who purchased it for £80,000 in 1930.⁷ George Readings departed, although he returned to Cheltenham later, developed a garage business (Regent Motors), served as mayor in 1956 and died in 1981.⁸ Lapper stayed on as general manager (until 1951), and the new company was chaired by Cecil Power, traffic manager of Midland Red, until his death in 1943.⁹ Although Midland Red took the lead, the purchasers were actually a syndicate comprising also the Bristol company (who owned 40 per cent) and the City of Oxford Motor Services (20 per cent).¹⁰

The new company completed the purchase of the Rodney Road site, but chose instead to develop St Margaret's Hall, which it purchased in December 1930, with its 3½ acres of grounds adjacent to the existing coach garage in Dunalley Street, and with access from both St Margaret's Road and North Place. Here it built its coach station, which opened to the public in May 1931.¹¹ Although not the first facility specifically for express services (coach stations opened in London in 1928 in Pimlico (Lupus Street) and behind St Pancras church), it was on a larger scale and predated completion of the showpiece Victoria coach station by ten months.¹² The site offered scope for improvement and enlargement, including café and offices in 1934, a garage and maintenance depot in 1938, and (unwisely in view of national events) a glazed roof in 1940.¹³

Meanwhile negotiations were under way between Black & White and its principal competing express coach operators to pool specified services. A series of meetings held during 1933 resulted in the formation in July 1934 of Associated Motorways, an 'operating agreement' between six companies – Black & White, Red & White, Midland Red, Greyhound, Royal Blue (of Bournemouth) and United Counties (Northampton). Each company contributed to the pool certain services for which they held licences under the 1930 act, and each was obliged to operate a percentage of the total mileage in the pool for an equivalent percentage of the revenue. The entire operation, which at its outset extended from London to Aberystwyth, Portsmouth to Blackpool, Nottingham to Paignton, and hundreds of destinations in between, was administered from Cheltenham coach station, through which virtually all the services passed or where they terminated. Black & White accounted for about 40 per cent of the total mileage.¹⁴

During the 1930s membership of the club expanded and changed, as companies were taken over or merged, but Black & White, with Lapper at the helm, remained the major player, and its net revenue increased from £15,125 in 1931 to £64,832 in 1941, regularly paying shareholders a 5 per cent dividend and occasionally as much as 10 per cent.¹⁵ Associated Motorways may be regarded as a cartel, which in some ways it was, although it was the 1930 legislation, not the constituent companies, which restricted competition, in a deliberate attempt to protect the ailing railway industry. In fact the pooling arrangement could be seen to improve efficiency, since the total mileage in 1935, 4.6 million, reduced by 1939 to 3.9 million, while passenger numbers increased from 0.7 million to 0.9 million.¹⁶

Wartime for Black & White was a mixed blessing. Petrol rationing imposed in 1939 restricted private motoring, so that demand for express coaches increased, although night services were curtailed and mileage reduced.¹⁷ All coach services were suspended by wartime government edict in October 1942, so that vehicles were redeployed for troop movements and, in some cases, converted to ambulances.¹⁸ Revenue remained healthy, nevertheless, and Lapper reported in 1942 to the Black & White board that the charges for contract work were considered very satisfactory. The downside came on 11 December 1940 when an enemy bomb killed one potential passenger and injured a booking clerk, completely demolished the original St Margaret's building with the main coach station offices, damaged the café, broke the main roof and glass canopy, and damaged four coaches.¹⁹ A few weeks earlier the company had agreed to give up part of its workshops for aircraft nosecone production, and relinquished more of the site in 1942; another part of the premises became a British restaurant in 1943.²⁰ The entire complex was camouflaged in drab grey at the end of 1941.²¹ Black & White reoccupied its premises in September 1945 and express coach services resumed in June 1946.²²



Typical of Black & White's elegant post-war coaches, this 1954 Guy vehicle was used to illustrate 1955 excursion leaflets.

Courtesy of The Bus Archive

The years from 1946 through the 1950s and into the 1960s are usually regarded as the highpoint for coach operation, both express services and excursions. Petrol rationing restricted private motoring for some years, and then increasing leisure before mass car ownership and cheap air package holidays meant a bonanza for the coach firms, especially in summer. Black & White had from its outset in 1926, under George Readings, operated tours and excursions from

Cheltenham, which it sold from its booking office in Paris House on the Promenade. Through the 1930s it catered, no doubt, for the better class of holiday-makers, those who resorted to Cheltenham and were attracted to a day out in the Cotswolds; rather

than for the seaside day-trippers by 'sharrer' whom such passengers despised.²³ After the war the company benefited from this excursion bonanza by continuing to promote Cheltenham as a holiday resort offering day trips from the town, as well as extended tours, even abroad. A 1955 brochure advertised an eight-day tour from London to the 'centre for the Cotswolds'. 'Spend a Royal Holiday at a Regency Town', it proclaimed, offering outings to the glorious Wye Valley, a Cotswolds villages tour, Shakespeare's country, the Malverns and Prinknash Park.²⁴

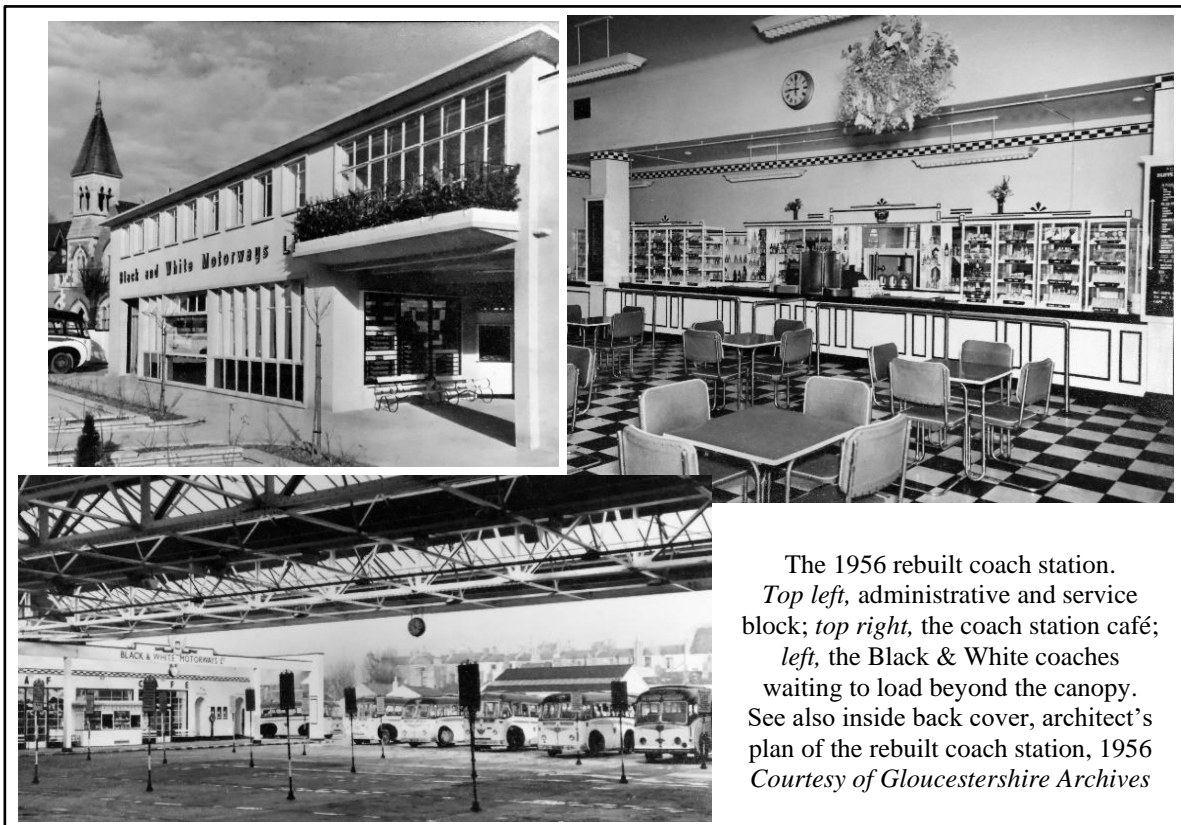
Vehicles were in very short supply after the war, leading to much making do and mending, but then in the 1950s elegant, classically styled coaches started to become available. There are national statistics for passenger journeys by express and excursion coaches during this period, and these show that express coaches carried between 15 and 19 million passengers annually in the 1930s, rising to 50 million in 1951, plateauing at about 64 million in the late 1950s, and 75 million in the early 1960s, dropping back to 67 million by 1970. Excursion passengers were at their peak between 1953 and 1956, but they gradually tailed off during the 1960s.²⁵ Apparently on a busy day around 1955 the Associated Motorways pool needed between 450 and 475 vehicles, including many hired from local independent operators, and nearly all would stop off at Cheltenham during their journey.²⁶ Black & White itself owned 61 coaches in 1933, and 114 in 1967.²⁷

It is worth reflecting on the economic impact of all this on Cheltenham. The annual reports do not record how many people were employed by Black & White and Associated Motorways during the 1930s. But the annual Black and White Ball, organised and subsidised by the company and held in Cheltenham Town Hall, claimed to be one of the chief invitation dances in the town, and attracted over 800 dancers in 1934 and 1936.²⁸ Towards the end of its heyday, in 1967, there were 219 Black & White employees and 245 in 1972 (so perhaps supporting 1,000 or more of the population).²⁹ But one should add to this all the business brought to the town's service and hospitality industries by the constant throughput of travellers, the holiday visitors, the booking agents and coach station ancillary staff, and the support to other coach companies in the area who were called on to provide relief vehicles at busy times.

Black & White saw its net revenue exceed £100,000 for the first time in 1948, £140,000 in 1955, £150,000 in 1960, and £250,000 in 1964.³⁰ Its success manifested itself, not only in the flamboyant bodywork of its iconic fleet of vehicles, but also in its rebuilt coach station, which had been improved and enlarged in stages from 1953 and, with the completion of a new office block on the site of the destroyed mansion, was officially opened in January 1956.³¹ A commemorative brochure described it as the 'Charing Cross of the Coaching Industry' and estimated an annual footfall of 2¼ million passengers.³² The new station, like its predecessor, had to cope with intense periods of busy-ness and confusion, interspersed by long spells of relative calm. This was because, to enable services to interconnect, journeys were timetabled all to leave Cheltenham together at a few specific times. In the early 1950s these were 10.45 am, 2.00 pm, 4.30 pm and 7 pm; but much later, in the mid-1970s, there were departures at 2.30 am, 8.30 am, 11.30 am, 2.30 pm, 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm.³³

The beginning of the end for Cheltenham's new coach station came soon after it was completed, as the motorway building programme of the 1960s enabled faster journey times with fewer stops. In particular the opening of the first Severn bridge in

1966 meant that Cheltenham was no longer a geographically strategic or logical interchange. East–west traffic could soon use the M4, and north–south traffic the M5, with no compunction to stop between Bristol and Birmingham. The structure of the coaching industry was changing too. Partially nationalised in 1948, including some of the bus companies that shared the Associated Motorways pool and part-owned Black & White, most of the remainder were also taken into government control in 1967 to form the National Bus Company in 1969. Coach services were rationalized under the National, later National Express, banner, so that in 1974 Associated Motorways disappeared, though Cheltenham remained the hub for the time being and the headquarters of National Travel (South West) Ltd., which was in effect the old Black & White.³⁴



The 1956 rebuilt coach station.
Top left, administrative and service block; *top right*, the coach station café;
left, the Black & White coaches waiting to load beyond the canopy.
 See also inside back cover, architect's plan of the rebuilt coach station, 1956
Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives

From 1974 onwards it is a story of decline. The Black & White name continued to appear on National Express coaches right up until 1993, though the company no longer existed, and various other National Bus Company acquisitions were grouped with it and then removed. In 1984 Cheltenham ceased to be a National Express interchange, so that whereas in the summer of 1983 there were 598 destinations available from the coach station, a year later there were only 50. Between 1986 and 1988, with a reversal of policy, all the NBC companies were split up and privatised under Margaret Thatcher's government. Locally the Cheltenham & Gloucester Omnibus Co was subject to a management buy-out in 1986 and was then bought by Stagecoach in 1993. For a short period, from 1985/6, the bus company used the coach station as its depot and tried to sell its own St Marks premises, but without success. The coach station was demolished in 1990 and became a car park. National Express continues, of course, and like Associated Motorways is actually a syndicate of many different operators, though all clothed in the same livery. Digbeth coach station in Birmingham still has something of the air of Cheltenham during its heyday, though in

less salubrious surroundings. No longer black and white, but simply white (with hints of blue and red) today's express coaches nevertheless preserve something of Readings' and Lapper's vision, nurtured in Cheltenham, with which for decades it was synonymous.³⁵

See also, inside back cover, Black & White route map, early 1930s, *Courtesy of The Bus Archive*; Architect's plan of the rebuilt coach station, St Margaret's Road, 1956, *Courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives*.

¹ Three 'enthusiasts' books cover the subject: Oxford Bus Preservation Syndicate (BPS), *Black & White: a pictorial reminiscence 1926-1976* (1978); K. Healey, *Associated Motorways* (Prestige Series 18, 2002); K. Lane, *Black & White* (Glory Days Series, 2003). Most Black & White archives are held at the The Bus Archive (Kithead Trust), Droitwich, and I am grateful to Robert Carr and Philip Kirk of the Trust for access and assistance.

² J. Hibbs, *History of British bus services* (2nd edn. 1989), 69-107, 159-66; P.S. Bagwell, *Transport revolution from 1770* (1974), 222-8.

³ J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (1934), 3-4 (1949 edn.).

⁴ Healey, 6-7; Hibbs, 166-9. For the Road Traffic Act 1930 see C. Mulley and M. Higginson (eds.), *Companion to Road Passenger Transport History* (2013), 478-9 and refs.

⁵ Gloucestershire Archives, D8552/5/4: 1928 Articles of Association.

⁶ Oxford BPS, 20.

⁷ The Bus Archive 011893: B&W board minutes 1928-31, 25 March 1930 (Lane, 9, states that the figure was £100,000).

⁸ Lane, 7.

⁹ The Bus Archive 011895, 5 November 1943; Mulley and Higginson, 443-4.

¹⁰ Lane, 9.

¹¹ The Bus Archive 011894, 14 May 1931; the conversion was undertaken by Bristol Tramways staff. Oxford BPS, 22-4, reproduces the account of the official opening reported in *Citizen* 26 June 1931.

¹² S. Lockwood, 'The first London coach station', *Old Motor* 11 (5), 1971, 346-51; Mulley and Higginson, 324, 608.

¹³ The Bus Archive 011894, 9 November 1934; 011895, 12 October 1938, 21 February 1940.

¹⁴ Healey, 7-14; Mulley and Higginson, 52-3. The agreement is The Bus Archive 015293.

¹⁵ The Bus Archive 011866: B&W annual reports, 1931-41.

¹⁶ Oxford BPS, 36-7.

¹⁷ Oxford BPS, 48; Lane, 15-16.

¹⁸ The Bus Archive 011895, 22 October 1942.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 18 January 1941.

²⁰ *ibid*, 6 November 1940, 11 February 1942, 18 May 1943.

²¹ *ibid*, 17 October 1941; Oxford BPS, 52.

²² The Bus Archive, 29 September 1945, 5 April 1946, 30 August 1946.

²³ M.J. Law, 'Charabancs and social class in 1930s Britain', *Journal of Transport History*, 36 (1), 2015, 41-6; brochures in The Bus Archive, 011879-80.

²⁴ The Bus Archive, 011880.

²⁵ D.L. Munby, *Inland transport statistics, Great Britain, 1900-70* (1978), tables B1.5, B4.1, B6.5, B9.7-8.

²⁶ Mulley and Higginson, 52-3.

²⁷ The Bus Archive, 011866, 1933 report; *Passenger Transport, the Little Red Book* (1967 edn.), 47.

²⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 January 1934, p. 3; 25 January 1936, p. 3.

²⁹ The Bus Archive 011866, 1968, 1972 annual reports.

³⁰ *ibid*, annual reports.

³¹ Gloucestershire Archives, D 14120: album of photographs and plans.

³² The Bus Archive 011880, 1956 brochure.

³³ Lane, 14, 56-7.

³⁴ This complex subject is explained by Hibbs, 208-75; see also Mulley and Higginson, 384-6.

³⁵ Lane, 71-84; Oxford BPC, 77, 81.

Cheltenham's Theatres, 1805 onwards: Part 2

JAMES RITCHIE

Curtain Up, Cheltenham's Theatres 1758-1803, Part One, was published in Journal 33, (2017), pp.38-44.

Act II - The New Theatre Royal

THE CRAMPED YORK PASSAGE BUILDING soon became too small to accommodate the enthusiastic and growing audiences, so John Bowles Watson bought land across the High Street, in former church property (see map page 40). By now this had become the newly fashionable Cambray Meadows (the site of Bath Street) and in 1805 he built a new theatre between the High Street and Bath Street at a cost of £8000.¹ A guide to Cheltenham as a 'watering place' describes the move and the new theatre thus:

*'The old Theatre however, being difficult of access, and in many respects incommodious, the spirited proprietor resolved in 1804 to build a new one, in a more convenient and accessible situation. The improvements in Cambray Mead, naturally pointed it out as an eligible spot; and here a pile of building has arisen; which adds considerable ornament to the place. The new Theatre is large and commodious in every respect; and particularly neat in its decorations, without being gaudy. The scenery and apparatus are superior to most country theatres.'*²



The Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, built in 1819.
Wikimedia Commons

The Cheltenham Theatre Royal was a typical theatre of its time, built in the early Regency style. Only one of its type survives in Britain and that is the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, built by William Wilkins in 1819. These provincial theatres were not all on the grand scale of Drury Lane or Covent Garden, but provided a more intimate environment for the audience. Cheltenham's theatre however was apparently

quite large and bore some favourable comparison with its London cousins.

The development of Cambray had mushroomed with the discovery of the chalybeate springs and the building of the Cambray Spa replaced the earlier Fowler's Cottage on Rodney Road. The chief entrepreneurs included John Boles Watson himself

as well as Baynham Jones, who built Cambray House for Colonel John Riddell, another of the investors. Watson owned property and businesses in Cheltenham including *The Dog* public house, and in addition to the theatre, had built a small house in Cambray. This he sold, together with some of the other land on the site, to the eccentric Colonel Riddell, a retired Indian Army officer and associate of the Duke of Wellington. He hoped that Riddell would not object to the strange-tasting water from the pump there but Riddell suspecting it might be mineral water with medicinal properties promoted it, instigating a doubling of property prices in the area.

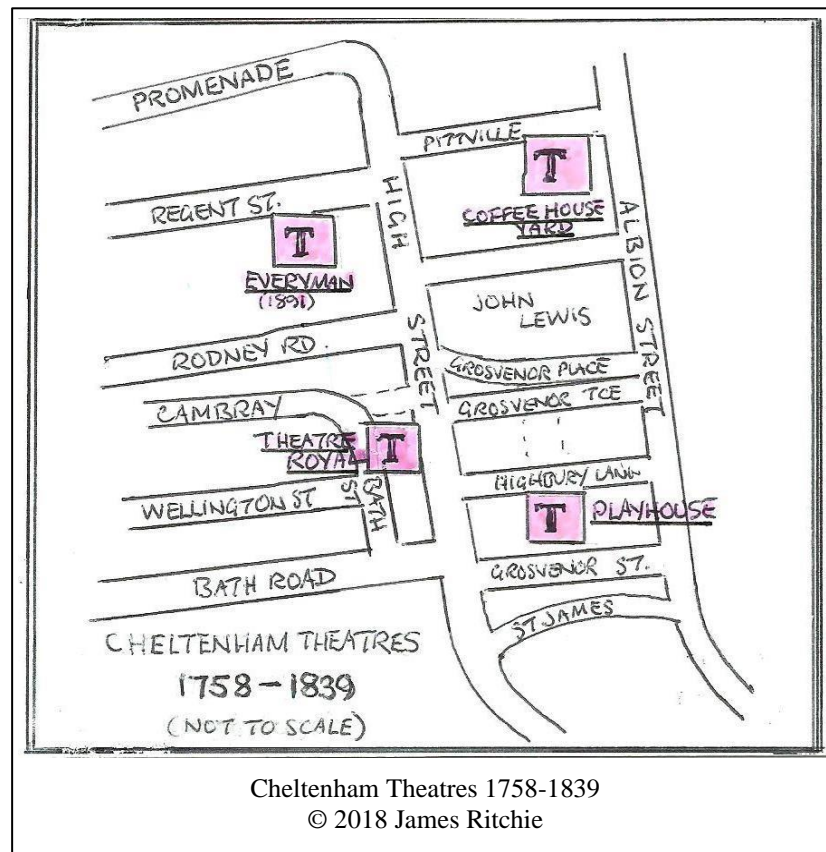
To get a feel for the Cheltenham social scene in the very early 19th century, extracts from *Ruff's Beauties of Cheltenham*, 1806 provide the following description:

A 'happy mixture of a London amusement with rural pleasure in a spot so truly rustic and picturesque, where the dullness of a gloomy day (when fog or rain absorbs every prospect)

forgotten in the

cheerful circle of the assembly or theatre. Mr Watson, the respectable Proprietor of the Cheltenham Theatre, has long been known in this part of the world for his liberal encouragement of dramatic genius. For many years he has been acquainted with first performers of the day. On his boards have been witnessed the powerful pathos of a Siddons, and the matchless energies of a Kemble!

Of the theatre itself, ... the size of the stage, and the accommodations for the company, are such, that the actor and visitor are seen to every advantage. The former has ample room for the display of attitude and stage effect; and the latter is neither suffocated with heat, nor incommoded by want of space. The "tout ensemble" is truly elegant and airy ... the internal beauty and management of this theatre reflects great credit on the liberality and judgement of Mr Watson and followed up by Messrs Ray and Gibbon, the acting managers of the house. The scenery, executed by Mr Seward, must not be forgotten and it may be said with truth, that few, if any, theatres in the kingdom exceed this in design and execution.'



Cheltenham Theatres 1758-1839

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While Cheltenham fashions were popular throughout the country at this period, those of the gentry, particularly the ladies, that thronged the theatre and later the assembly rooms, must have made a colourful and flamboyant spectacle. An example of the 'Cheltenham' influence was the Cheltenham Assembly Ball Dress (see page 49) which would have been a common sight in all the most fashionable venues in London, Bath and of course, Cheltenham.³

A further description of the 'new' theatre illustrates that

*'... the internal form of the house is well adapted to dramatic effect, every seat commanding a good view of the stage, whilst the voice of the performer, and the expression of the countenance, are heard and seen to the utmost advantage: in these respects we are assured that several of the most eminent actors of our day give it a decided preference over the metropolitan houses... our dramatic entertainments have been raised to such eminence that the theatre has become an object of attention to the London members of the histrionic profession.'*⁴

A theatrical acting phenomenon was recorded, 6 July 1805, when, in the character of Richard III, Miss Fisher – 'The Young Roscia', then only 12 years of age, produced on an effect on the audience 'not easily forgotten – for "those who came to laugh, remained to praise"'⁵

The 'rural pleasure' of attending the theatre in Cheltenham, as opposed to the hurly-burly of London life, was also expressed in the unpublished diary of the Honourable Anne Rushout who wrote in October 1809: 'Go to Cheltenham...found a house ready for us in the High Street, my brother tempted me to the Play to see Banister in "Marplot"'.

The redoubtable actress Mrs Dorothy Jordan, who had appeared in front of George III in 1788 and who had subsequently become the mistress of the Duke of Clarence, the King's brother and later William IV, appeared at the Theatre Royal on many occasions. Despite social inequalities and the reputation of the acting profession, Mrs Jordan was an actress of great charm with a pleasant personality who received many social invitations, principally because of her royal relationship. She was the principal guest at a large party hosted by the Duchess of Buckinghamshire at St Julia's Cottage, Cheltenham. However, it was while acting at the Theatre Royal in 1811, according to a vivid passage in Oxberry's 'Dramatic Diary', that she received a letter from the Duke abruptly ending their long-standing union. She never again appeared on the stage in Cheltenham.⁶ It was perhaps ironic that the same theatre commemorated the accession of William IV to the throne in 1830.

As well as commemorating Royal and other national events, the naval victories of the Nile and Trafalgar received special attention and on one occasion prompted performances to raise funds in aid of 'Nelson's brave tars'. Special performances were also staged during race meetings at Prestbury Park, but in contrast, the theatre closed for the county assizes when the focus of social life switched to Gloucester.

Supporters of the Theatre Royal included Colonel Berkeley of Berkeley castle and his friend, Lord Byron, who arranged and sponsored three benefits for the famous clown Joseph Grimaldi. He had made his debut at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1780 and is best known for his development of the modern-day, white-faced clown.

Grimaldi performed at Cheltenham three times, between 1812 and 1835, receiving half of the takings of £530. Sarah Siddons gave her final performance at the Theatre in 1812, in her greatest role, Lady Macbeth, before retiring to live with her brother John Kemble in New Street, Cheltenham. Other regular patrons were the Duke of Wellington, Lord Byron and Jane Austen (in 1816), who, with her sister Cassandra, stayed at Mrs Potter's lodgings in the High Street, next door to the original Theatre Royal, which by then had been absorbed into the York Hotel.⁷ The Duke of Wellington stayed at Colonel Riddell's Cambray House (to whom Watson had sold his Cambray land and house). The house was later renamed Wellington House or Mansion in his honour.



Angelica Catalani, 1806
by Louise Vigée Le Brun.
Wikipedia Commons

During this heyday of provincial theatres, John Boles Watson and his son, also named John Boles Watson, expanded their theatrical enterprises. They built and/or controlled a range of theatres, including the Theatre Royal, Gloucester in 1791, with an interest in theatres in Bristol, Cirencester, Tewkesbury, Warwick, Tamworth, Walsall, Worcester, Hereford and Stroud and for some seasons, of those in Birmingham and Coventry. However, Cheltenham remained Watson senior's base. He also revived performances of Handel's *Messiah*, which had fallen into abeyance in the midland and western counties. In 1809 he paid Madame Catalani 1000 guineas for six performances in Birmingham and arranged a performance by 100 performers in Cheltenham's St Mary's in 1811, which included Madame Catalani.

In about 1810, Harriot Mellon, one of the finest comic actresses of her time and popular at Drury Lane and in the provinces, while performing in Cheltenham, met Thomas Coutts, a septuagenarian banker from London. After becoming widowed, he married her in 1815, making her the wife of the richest untitled commoner in England. After Coutt's death in 1822 Harriot married the Duke of St Albans, although she was 20 years older and, perhaps surprisingly, was fully accepted by Regency society. Harriot's mother with her stepfather Thomas Entwhistle, on losing his job as a musician at Drury Lane, followed their daughter to Cheltenham and opened a music shop, where Thomas combined its running with the appointment of postmaster, acquired through Harriot's influence. Her mother, too, was active working hard to raise subscriptions for her daughter's 'benefits' at the theatre.⁸

Act III - The Gradual Decline of the Theatre

The Theatre Royal and Mr Watson had a virtual monopoly on public entertainment in Cheltenham. On Watson's death in March 1813 and the theatre's waning popularity, the new Assembly Rooms, which reopened in July 1816, soon became the social hub of the town - particularly for the 'classier' set - to the extent that a rule of 1826 stated

that 'no theatrical or other performers by profession be admitted'.⁹ In 1825 Frederick H Yates, with a connection to Covent Garden, was hoping to put on a season at the Theatre Royal but experienced a range of difficulties, starting with the high annual rent of £400 levied by the theatre trustees. This led to his writing them a letter of appeal that included the lament that the theatre 'will succumb to the Rooms'.¹⁰

During the period after Watson's death his son, John Boles Watson junior, seems to have lost all or most of his money, and pursued by creditors, had before 1819 given up control of most of his theatres, barring those of Cheltenham and Gloucester. In July of that year, a seven-year lease for the two theatres was granted by James Clutterbuck to John Crisp¹¹ of Cheltenham, a comedian, at a rent of £545 per annum,¹² although John Boles Watson retained ownership through an estate trust set up by his father. It was evident by this time that the theatre trustees had taken control of the use of the theatre and of applications for licences from the local justices of the peace.¹³

A series of managers ran the two theatres sporadically and others showed interest from time to time. These included Sampson Penley (junior)¹⁴ from Coventry, who made an offer on behalf of 'a theatrical friend' in 1821 who proposed to invest at least £500 to put the theatres 'in thorough repair (which we understand they are dreadfully in need of)'.¹⁵ Also interested was a Mr Robberds of the Royal Theatre, Stratford upon Avon, who inquired about taking over both venues in 1832 for a period.¹⁶ Jesse Wright, one of John Boles Watson's creditors, wrote to the trustees complaining that Watson still held his (Wright's) 'property' while intending to open the theatre again and that he knew of an enquiry for the use of the theatre 'that now stands void' by a religious group.¹⁷

The theatre was clearly in a major decline by the early 1820s. In 1821 John Crisp's theatres were advertised in *The Times* as being available for rent, eliciting responses from Charles Holland of London, who enquired which of his theatres was available, and James Bradley of Leicester, who asked after the Worcester and other local theatres with a view to 'make a small circuit'. In 1822 a bailiff's notice was served on John Crisp to take goods and chattels, including the complete scene of Berkeley Castle¹⁸ due to non-payment of annual rent arrears of £296. Sometime after 1823, the fashionable English portrait and miniature painter Hamlet Millet, who lived at what became the Imperial Hotel on the Promenade (later the Post Office and now Waterstone's), on seeing a performance of *Aladdin* in the town, presumably at the Theatre Royal, claimed he had written the play, having sent his manuscript to the producer for assessment but which was never returned. Consequently, Millet apparently received a cheque for 100 guineas and subsequent unspecified substantial payments.¹⁹

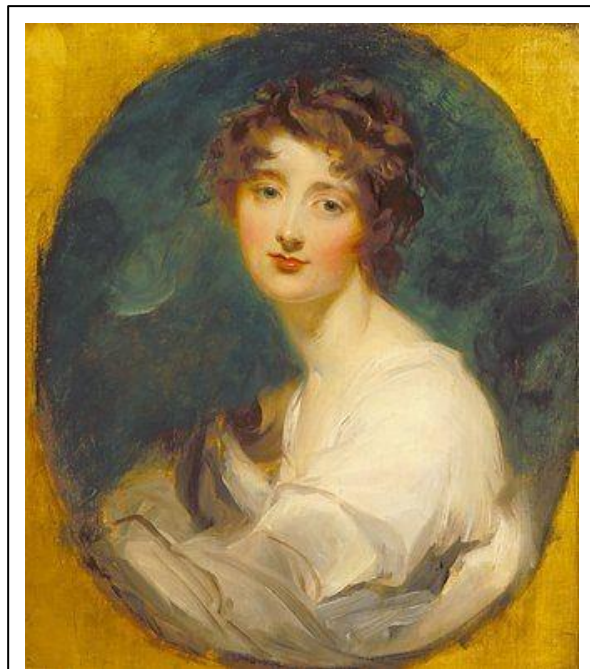
During these years, theatre managers in Cheltenham seemed to become more discouraged about the state of the theatre business, various reasons being offered. Frederick Yates made a series of complaints to the trustees over their unwillingness to give him a patent and of the difficulty of getting more than one licence a year. He, with Mr Farley, had provided all the equipment because otherwise it would cost hundreds of pounds 'to put it [the theatre] into a [suitable] state ...'. He also hoped that if the trustees would not issue a patent that they would at least provide full assistance and 'not thwart [his] schemes'; he stated that the theatre could only play three times a week; that he lived 'in constant dread of the arrival of Ducrow with his stud of horses (a person whom we could not intimidate), it is totally hopeless and I may look forward to a ruinous

loss.²⁰ He also blamed the local press and the atmosphere in the town; ‘a communication I have this day received, leads me decidedly to believe, that the amateurs²¹ withdraw their services (a circumstance which cannot be wondered at while the *Journal*²² perseveres in its attacks). Should this be the case, with the feeling which you must be aware of, exists in Cheltenham just now, and the party spirit which rages’.²³

By 1825 Watson had given up the Warwick and Stratford theatres and by 1827 had decamped from Cheltenham and most of his creditors. He continued to work from the Coventry theatre and Mrs Watson took a travelling company of actors on tour. However, Watson was keen to return to the Cheltenham and Gloucester, though the trustees were reluctant to award a contract because of his financial track record. In 1827, Watson wrote to the trustees offering to hire the theatres for a full season at the price of £400, appealing that ‘if they won’t let them to me – will they let them to anybody else who will pay down what they ask?’ A disaster in Coventry where the ‘Coventry Election Petition’ had divided his theatrical friends to such an extent that it became necessary to close their season prematurely. He had a full theatrical company which included Miss Clara Fisher and was desperate to find venues for them. He was also financially constrained in that he had been informed that ‘every shilling of rent for the Hereford and Warwick theatres must be paid to (an agent of his creditors)’. He needed the Cheltenham theatre for two days in March and the Gloucester theatre for one day in March 1827, to put on his performances, and in support, he claimed that he now had ‘a better theatrical company than was at Cheltenham any part of last season’.²⁴ Finally, he complained that the trustees had allowed Crisp to hold individual performances on application and so why not him?

Act IV – The Penultimate Act

After 1827, following her second marriage, Harriot Mellon, now the slightly rotund 45-year old Duchess of St Albans, came to live in Suffolk Lawn with her 25-year old husband and attended the theatre to see some well-known actors perform. She had of course previously acted upon the stage of Watson’s playhouse herself and her patronage of the theatre was much appreciated; ‘since Colonel Berkeley retired from the stage’ remarked the *Looker-on* ‘the Cheltenham theatre has met with but sorry encouragement. A happy change has come over the theatricals here under the patronage of Her Grace the Duchess of St Albans’.²⁵ But it wasn’t to last.



Harriot Mellon
Wikipedia Commons

Theatre management, away from London, even in a fashionable town like Cheltenham was a risky business during the 1820s and into the late 1830s: money was not easily earned. Even the weather could adversely affect theatre business, particularly

when linked to the popular race weeks in Cheltenham, Worcester and elsewhere. In 1821, Watson, whose income still depended on several theatres, lamented that,

'Mrs Watson has taken the company to Worcester and tried to secure a tenant [for the theatre] but 'tis not in mortals to command success' and even 'the weather was so bad that the entire Race Week at Worcester, Hereford and Warwick failed entirely beyond all precedent. Theatricals are bad in the extreme – I could believe them to be the worst, but I fear 'the worst remains behind [sic]'.

In 1828 too, the Cheltenham theatre managers had not fared well as demonstrated by a petition for relief of debt to the courts, in 1828, which listed 'Thomas Gladstane, joint manager (with David Terry) of the Gloucester and Cheltenham theatres' as being a 'prisoner in King's Bench Prison in Surrey'.²⁶

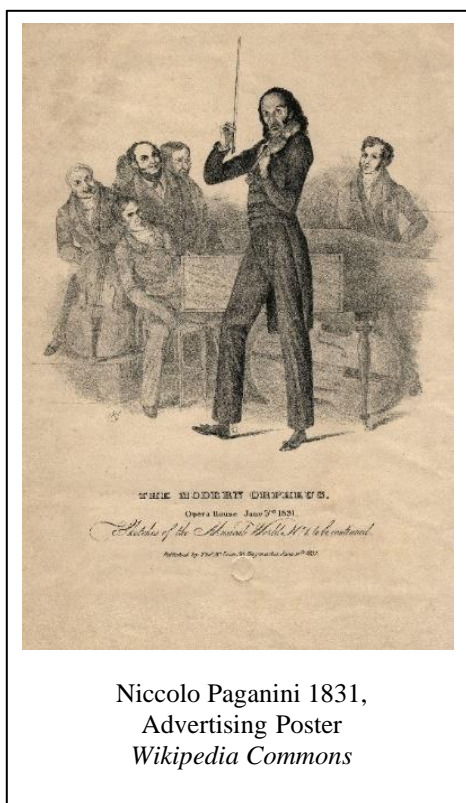
John Boles Watson had performed no better. An eternal optimist, when he applied to the theatre trustees to operate the Cheltenham and Gloucester theatres again in 1828, he strongly promoted his own skills and criticized John Crisp for his managerial style and the general failures of the Cheltenham theatre. In his application, he expressed himself in the following terms:

'[Crisp] may please and satisfy the good folk of Hereford and the country towns, but the Cheltenham theatre wants a spirit and dash in the management which his narrow style does not habit, nor do I think any management will be likely of continued success in Cheltenham who like him, sacrifices the interest of his theatre to the purpose of bringing himself and family into notice. That was one of the rocks upon which Crisp pursues still further than Cooke²⁷ did and what, indeed was a material cause in the failure of John Crisp's last season here when Charles was acting manager'.²⁸

However, regardless of the managerial style, the Theatre Royal was now entering its final 10 years with a record of steady decline.

Finale and Curtain Down

When in July 1831 Signor Niccolo Paganini, the world-famous Italian virtuoso violinist and composer with a fanatical following, was engaged to play at two sell-out concerts at the Assembly Rooms to coincide with the first meeting at the new Prestbury racecourse, Mr DeVille, proprietor of the Theatre Royal, met Paganini and persuaded him to give a third concert, for a fee of 200 guineas, at the Theatre for the 'lower orders' who could not afford the Assembly Room's prices or were even permitted to enter. However, as it was at short notice and was not supported by the gentry and nobility, insufficient people turned up to cover the fee and Paganini refused to play. An angry crowd marched to *The Plough* chanting 'Piggy



Niccolo Paganini 1831,
Advertising Poster
[Wikipedia Commons](#)

Ninny' and under pressure, Paganini changed his mind. Some of the crowd then returned to the theatre where he played to an enthusiastic crowd, but was later condemned for his 'paltry double-dealing and ingratitude' towards the townspeople, even though he had donated his fee to the poor. However, feeling threatened by the 'flash mob' of what proved not to be by genuine music lovers, he left town shortly afterwards, never to return.²⁹

For over 10 years, theatre-going in Cheltenham had been suffering from a gradual change of taste in public entertainment and in 1832 Mr Robberds of the Royal Shakesperian Theatre in Stratford on Avon commented in his letter of enquiry to the theatre trustees about taking on both Cheltenham and Gloucester theatres, that 'neither have of late been productive of profit – but I attribute it in part to the bad management and having fallen into the hands of novices and persons not understanding the proper form.'³⁰ Ad hoc engagements were staged at the Theatre Royal and typically, a licence was granted to William Aston Holland of Westminster to operate the Theatre Royal for three months from 1 January 1832, to put on an entertainment called the '*Miller Theatre of Arts*'.

By the mid-1830s the de-facto owner of the theatres was Rowland Paul, one of the theatre trustees, although nominally they still belonged to Watson and he frequently lamented to the trust's solicitors that he had long been deprived of his own property. In a Cheltenham guide of 1834 the Theatre Royal and its usage were described as,

'A neat building fronting in to Bath Street, and to which there is a passage leading from the High Street. The interior of the house is commodious, and fitted up with great taste (however) ... theatrical amusements have hitherto met with but little success in Cheltenham ... therefore, there is not what may be termed any regular theatre season, its times for opening and closing being uncertain and capricious, and depending entirely upon the hopes and fears of its managers for the time being. It is, however, generally open during the greater part of the summer, and when the London recess allows leading performers (to appear)'.³¹

As late as early January 1833, Watson, writing from the Warwick theatre, was still appealing to his solicitors, Newman and Gwinnett, to use their influence with the trustees to grant him use of the Gloucester theatre for a short period as he 'could not open in Warwick before March, previous to which, I must reorganise the company. I have reason to expect Mr Breham will perform a couple of nights'.³² By October 1833 he was asking Newman for a copy of his estate deeds to see what he could do about meeting his creditors' demands, 'In this place I cannot longer remain without endeavouring to obtain my liberty – be the price what it may'.³³ However, he was fighting a steadily losing battle with his creditors.

How badly theatres in general were doing at this time was highlighted in a letter Watson wrote to the Trust's solicitors bemoaning the low takings and the difficulty of managing theatre performers and staff in the uncertain times. In December 1835 he wrote, 'how dreadfully bad the business has been – indeed in nine nights we have not received seven pounds'. Later he stated; 'under the pressure of such times as the present ... and the great further excitement of the late outrages, I believe that I may say that theatres are not thought of.' Still an optimist, however, he continued, despite his lack of credit, to put forward proposals to pay his creditors and improve the operation of the

theatres still under his control. He proposed 'by a proper arrangement I could blend either the Hereford or Warwick [theatres] or both with them and each would greatly assist the other being at present upon an uncertain nightly arrangement – neither actors, musicians or servants can be properly treated with – every one taking advantages which under circumstances they know they possess'.³⁴ It was interesting however that the theatre was still able to put on 'difficult' plays, some with a discrete political message concerning clashes of democracy and autocracy, such as Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, staged at the Theatre Royal in July 1835 and July 1836.³⁵ Watson's time was however up, despite his continually expressed optimism, with some of his principal creditors finally losing patience. By 1835 he was in debtors' prison and was still incarcerated in January 1838 when his wife appealed to creditors to help him gain his release after three long years.³⁶

In general, this period was a thin one for theatres across the country, perhaps as other entertainments gained ground. The Gloucester and Cheltenham theatres were not running with full programmes and sometimes closed for months. Even the London theatres, such as Charles Hill's Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, Drury Lane's Theatre Royal and the Lyceum had reduced audiences or closed their seasons early. An indication of the difficulties of making ends meet is shown by the fact that when in 1819, John Crisp took a seven-year lease on the Cheltenham and Gloucester theatres, his annual rent was £545 per annum, but by about 1838 had dropped to £460 per annum. At the same time, and as a footnote to John Boles Watson junior's career, historically he was perhaps unlucky in that his prime management years coincided with what was clearly a universal downturn in theatre popularity spanning the closing Georgian and early Victorian years.

Now released from debtor's prison after three years and following appeals by his wife which described his poor physical condition 'requiring an operation on his back' and a proposal sent on his behalf to all his creditors as to how he could meet his debts, John Boles Watson applied to lease the Leicester theatre in 1839.³⁷ Despite his eternal optimism, but perhaps unsurprisingly with his track record, his application was declined and he died the same year.

In 1839, Henry John Clarke and Henry Pennfall Grattan were managing the Cheltenham and Gloucester theatres,³⁸ but in late April that year, the Cheltenham Theatre Royal was burnt down,³⁹ not to be rebuilt. One of the last performances to take place was described in the *Looker-On* as follows,

'The theatre during the past week has exhibited evident symptoms of returning vigour, though we fear they are but transient and that when 'Jim Crow' has jumped his last, the gratifying audiences of the last few evenings will again disappear'.

How prophetic this was, was not evident to the critic. The next edition of the *Looker-On* described the theatre's destruction, having first admitted that the cause was not known. It went on,

'the first [signs] were the intensive bursting of flames through the roof shortly before 4 o'clock ... in half an hour the parish and commissioners [fire] engines arrived but the devouring extent [of the fire, put it past hope of saving]. Any attempt at saving the property was quite out of the question so fiercely rapid was the progress of the

flames, which in the space of an hour from first discovery had reduced the whole of the interior – “scenery, machinery, dresses and decoration” to a mass of burning ruin.’

The walls had contained the fire, but the entire interior had been destroyed. Fortunately for the theatre owners, the theatre building had fire insurance through the Phoenix Fire Assurance company but not the manager’s possessions which included much of the equipment, properties and costumes. ‘Mr Grattan will be a serious sufferer, as well as several performers whose engagements are suddenly brought to a close’.⁴⁰

The next month a benefit concert for ‘Mrs Grattan’ was held in the Assembly Rooms to which all the ‘principal professors of the town contributed their gratuitous assistance’. Shortly afterwards, the company of the ‘Late Theatre’ announced a benefit performance to be held at the Assembly Rooms as they prepared to take their leave of their Cheltenham patrons ‘in due form’. Pieces selected were from *The Bengal Tiger*, *Love in Humble Life* and *The Spectre Bridegroom* and the *Looker-On* ‘most sincerely hope[d] the audience will be a numerous one’.⁴¹

The Epilogue

During the Theatre Royal’s latter days, a failed attempt at competition arose in the form of the New Clarence Theatre which was established in January 1831 in what had been Samuel Seward’s Sadler’s Wells puppet or marionette theatre in a property in St George’s Place. Seward had been a member of Watson’s theatre company and a talented Harlequin, and later a scenery painter at the theatre, and with his wife had run the ‘English Fantoccini’ successfully for 30 years from 1795. Following their deaths, Mr Belmont, then of the Theatre Royal, re-opened the theatre intending to provide serious theatricals, however after only a couple of years it finally closed as a theatre. The house opened as a private seminary, Gardner’s Academy, until taken over by the Church of England Reading Association, inaugurated, ironically, in 1839, the year of the dramatic demise of the Theatre Royal, by Francis Close, whose influence continued to suppress theatricals in the town for decades.⁴²

Even by 1845 when George Rowe published his *Guide*, he noted that in Cambray Place,

‘nearly opposite Mr Fluck’s Pastrycook, Confectioner and Baker shop,⁴³ ... is the entrance of what was once the Cheltenham Theatre, a building which was destroyed by fire on the night of 3 May 1839, and which has, alas, ever since remained a heap of ruins. The word ‘Theatre’ over the doorway, points where the temple of the drama once was, but the public spirit of Cheltenham has never been sufficient to procure its re-erection.’

This sight may have given Rowe the idea of developing a new theatre. Dr Steven Blake in his introduction to Rowe’s *Guide* comments on Rowe’s intention of developing the Old or Royal Well in conjunction with the architect Samuel Onley. They purchased and redeveloped the site by demolishing the existing buildings and built in their place a ‘grand new pump room’, also intended to serve as a theatre on which they staged professional drama, opera and ballet. The Royal Wells Music Hall, later and briefly renamed the Theatre Royal, opened in 1850 on the site of the Royal Well, Cheltenham’s original spa.

However, these developments clearly flew in the face of the anti-theatre views of Francis Close and his supporters. Shortly afterwards, having probably lost a great deal of money in his dealings with the Royal Well developers and the Bayshill Estate Company, Rowe's partnership with Onley was dissolved and after borrowing money for his passage, he emigrated to Australia. After the departure of Rowe, Onley discontinued the theatrical events which, according to a contemporary newspaper account,⁴⁴ 'tended to lower the establishment in the estimation of its friends'.⁴⁵



After the Theatre Royal burnt down, a permanent theatre was not to open in Cheltenham for 52 years, influenced principally by the campaign waged by Close, who 'established a "despotism of goodness" manifested by the vehement scourging of drink, races, Popery, Sunday trains, Puseyism⁴⁶ and the theatre' and who strongly opposed any rebuilding of the theatre and the establishment of any successful alternatives.⁴⁷

Dorothea Beale, who became headmistress of the Ladies' College in 1858, first occupied Cambray House in Cambray Place, Watson's former possession, and as the college grew, it dogged the footsteps of the theatres by first purchasing in 1870, Fauconberg House, followed by the 4 Fauconberg Villas which had been built over the original Well Walk, all designed by Samuel Onley.⁴⁸ Onley's (and Rowe's) former Music Hall and site of the Royal Well, was first leased by the Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1887, then demolished and replaced by the Princess Hall which now covers the final vestiges of two phases of Cheltenham's Georgian rise and decline – the spas and then the theatres.

In 1891 the New Theatre and Opera House, designed by Frank Matcham, opened in Cheltenham with the stage actress and mistress of Edward, Prince of Wales, Lillie Langtry,⁴⁹ declaring 'with us returns at last – a golden age'. After closing in 1959, it reopened in 1960 as the 'Everyman', Gloucestershire's only professional theatre.⁵⁰

¹ About £257,000 at 2015 values – quite cheap!

² J Feltham, *A Guide to All the Watering and Seabathing Places for 1813*, (London, 1813).

³ *La Belle Assemblée*, Fashions for September 1809, No XLIX, Vol VII.

⁴ Griffith's *New Historical Description of Cheltenham*, p. 69

⁵ Griffith, p.69

⁶ G Hart, *A History of Cheltenham*, (Leicester University Press, 1965), p.165.

⁷ See also Carolyn Greet, 'Jane and Cassandra Austen in Cheltenham, 1816', *Cheltenham Local History Society, Journal* 23, (2007), pp. 39-45.

⁸ Hart, p165.

⁹ M Hasted, *A Theatre for All Seasons, A History of the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham*, (Jeremy Mills Publishing, 2011).

¹⁰ Gloucestershire Archives, (GA) D2025/Box73/Bundle5 part. A letter dated 11 March 1825.

¹¹ John Crisp, later stage manager of the Worcester Theatre, while the famous actor cum theatre manager Robert Elliston was manager, on one occasion failed to provide the expected fireworks. Elliston bluffed the disgruntled audience into thinking that the (non-existent) fireworks, if ignited

would 'blow the roof off'. The audience departed in terror. *Pamphlets for the People*, ed. John A Roebuck, Volumes 1 & 2. 1835.

¹² Gloucestershire Archives, D2025/Box73/Bundle4. The sum of £545 would now equate to around £22,800.

¹³ The John Boles Watson estate trust was administered by Newman & Gwinnett, solicitors of Cheltenham.

¹⁴ Sampson Penley, junior, one of the famous and numerous Jonas and Penley theatrical performer and manager families.

¹⁵ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5 part. Letter to Theatre trustees dated 4 May 1821.

¹⁶ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle4, letter.

¹⁷ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5.

¹⁸ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle4 and Bundle5. Presumably a backdrop for the renowned amateur performances by Colonel Berkeley and other members of his family.

¹⁹ S Rowbotham and J Waller, *Cheltenham A History*, (Phillimore, 2004), pp. 68-9.

²⁰ Mr Ducrow (a 'professor of equestrian exercises') had appeared at Drury Lane in the season 1824-25 in an extravaganza titled '*The Enchanted Courser*', '*Fair Ophelia: A Life of Harriet Smithson Berlioz*'.

²¹ Amateur actors, like Colonel Berkeley, seemed to have provided invaluable support to the theatre.

²² The *Cheltenham Journal* was founded in 1824 and took reviewing the Theatre's acts seriously.

²³ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5. Letter dated 11 March 1825.

²⁴ GIA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5. Letter dated 3 April 1827.

²⁵ Quoted from ed. E H Humphris and Captain E C Willoughby, *Georgian Cheltenham*, Humphris & Willoughby, (The History Press, 2008).

²⁶ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5. Petition dated 9 May 1828. David Terry was sued for debt at the same time as Thomas Gladstane.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Notice of Distraint, 1 January 1822. John Cooke was no friend of Watson's, being the bailiff for the theatre trustees who had served the notice on Crisp for removal of the theatre's properties to cover rent arrears.

²⁸ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5, letter of 23 June 1828.

²⁹ See also L Burgess, 'Paganni comes to Town', *Cheltenham Local History Society, Journal 12*, (1995-6), pp. 19-20.

³⁰ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle4.

³¹ H W Davies, *The Stranger's Guide through Cheltenham*, 1834, p. 87.

³² GA, D2025/Bundle4, letter 1 January 1833.

³³ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle 4, letter 18 October 1833.

³⁴ GIA, D2025/Box73/Bundle5, letter 22 November 1835.

³⁵ J Ripley, *Coriolanus on Stage in England and America 1609-1994*, (Associated University Presses 1998). It is also noteworthy that taking part in these performances in 1835 were V Penley (of the Penley family noted above) and in 1836 V Crisp – perhaps a family connection to John Crisp, the manager of the time.

³⁶ GA, D2025/Box73/Bundle4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Cause unknown, but perhaps the gas lighting system or a careless match.

⁴⁰ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, April 1839.

⁴¹ *Cheltenham Looker-On*, May 1839.

⁴² The Rev Francis Close, Dean of Carlisle, the pre-eminent churchman of the town and highly influential.

⁴³ Which, as Steven Blake states, 'with its distinctive bowed front, may still be seen.'

⁴⁴ No doubt influenced by Close.

⁴⁵ George Rowe, *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide*, 1845.

⁴⁶ Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882) Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Christchurch and a leader of the Oxford Movement, which aimed to move the Church closer to its roots and Catholicism.

⁴⁷ B Little, *British Cities, Cheltenham*, (Batsford, 1951), p.87.

⁴⁸ A Jones, *Cheltenham, A New History*, (Carnegie, 2010), p.263.

⁴⁹ Lillie (Lily in the USA) Langtry, (1853-1929) born Emilie Charlotte Le Breton to the Dean of Jersey. Famous actress known for relationships with the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and Prince Louis of Battenberg. Lord Mountbatten asserted that her daughter was his half-sister.

⁵⁰ S Rowbotham and J Waller, *Cheltenham, A History*, (Phillimore, 2004), p.76.

Cheltenham Town Council: Digitising the Committees' Minutes, 1888-1937

DAVID DRINKWATER

Background

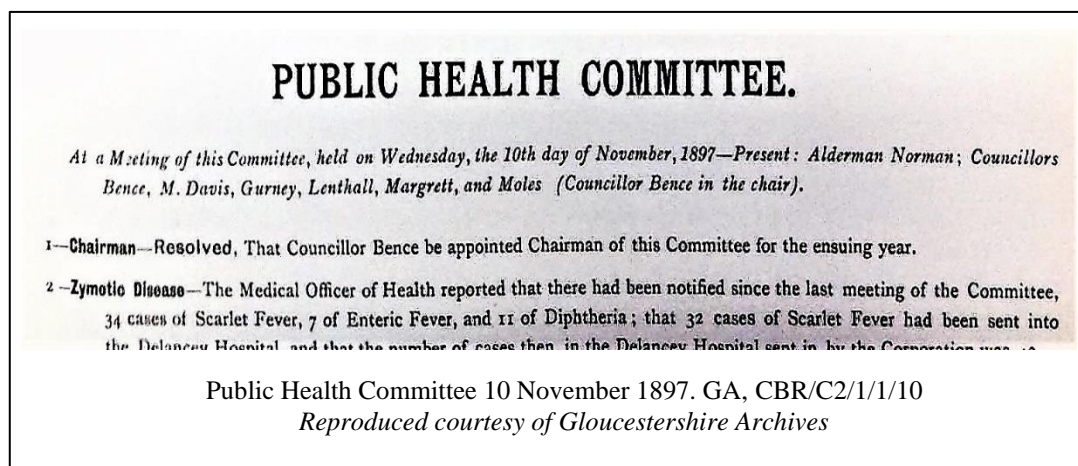
CHELTENHAM LOCAL AND FAMILY AND HISTORY CENTRE (CLFHC) hold a collection of annual, bound volumes of quarterly and monthly minutes for the numerous Committees of Cheltenham Town Council. These printed volumes start in 1896 and continue until 2010.

A search of the Gloucestershire Archives (GA) on-line catalogue showed that they had printed volumes starting in 1888 and for the same years as those at CLFHC. The GA hold similar volumes that differ only slightly in that there are a few extra pages and indexes in some volumes. The catalogue references for 1888-1903 are CBR/C2/2/1/1-16 and for 1903/04-1936/37, CBR/C2/1/2/1-34.

With the new technology now available it seemed possible to be able to quickly convert the text of these Minutes and produce a text document that could be searched.

The process and the problems

The first requirement was to produce a digital image of each page. I have used a small handheld camera to photograph thousands of documents at GA, which has resulted in pages that have been sufficiently clear for reading or for inserting in to other documents.



The first images that I took of the Council Minutes, I processed through Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. This produced text that was at times illegible, see below and compare with the above image.

'At e I wein14(of this con, m il te,, had on IVednesday, Ow I Oth day of NOVember,1897-Present : Alderman Norman; Councillors ilfuce, M. Davis, Gurnty, Unthall, Marvell, and ,11/0/,s (Councillor Bence in the chair).

1. Chairman Re5olved, That Councillor Bence be appointed Chairman of this Committee for the emming year.
2. ZY-r"tio Disease_ 'rile Medical Officer of I lealth reported that there had been notified since the last meeting of the Committee, 34 c; "'es 01 Scarlet Fever, 7 of Enteric Fever, and II Of Diphtheria; that 3.2 cases of Scarlet Fever had been sent ...'

The problems were not caused by my photography, but due to faded text or to the curved pages of the tightly bound volumes. Clearly a solution was needed, and this came thanks to Rebecca Sillence at Cheltenham Library, who suggested that I look online at the various DIY options for a hands-free iPad stand. The stand that I made – from 21mm plastic overflow pipe, pipe bends and glue costing just £6 – easily comes apart and can be carried in a small bag.

Using this stand I could photograph each volume in around 40 minutes and when all 50 volumes were completed I had about 14,000 images (this included about 700 retakes) that would need to be processed through the OCR software.

There are several 'free' websites that allow you to upload an image for conversion. The site I used was www.onlineocr.net which allowed me to convert 15 images as jpegs in an hour. This produced either a *Word* document, a text or an *Excel* file. I generally converted the images to text files but sometimes, because of the unusual layout of some pages with tables and vertical text, I needed to convert to an *Excel* file.

There were still problems with the converted text, with words being misplaced or even lines of text mixed up. Some symbols caused problems, particularly the '£' sign, sometimes turning it into a '4', an 'X, Z' and 'L' or even disappearing. Some words were consistently wrong, examples included 'Pruett' instead of 'Pruen', 'plaits' for 'plans', 'be' and 'he' would also get mixed up.

I have 'repaired' many of the errors, using the spellchecker option, but this did not find all of them. With a small number of errors still present, as well as full stops and commas in the wrong place, I would hope that the main text can be fully understood. However, I would recommend that if items of interest are found, and are to be used in research, the original documents are consulted at either Cheltenham Local Studies Centre or Gloucestershire Archives.

The Contents of the Minutes

As a evidence of the Committees' business, the records may appear rather prosaic, but as documentation of the history of our town they are invaluable. Some of the more recent details in the on-line version of *An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham* have come from the Town Council Minutes.¹

The Art Gallery and Museum Committee

This Committee regularly listed artefacts received from the public: three typical collections from 1925 consisted of:

'From Mr. W. St. Clair Baddeley, J.P. – Wig Curler from Painswick; Old Cotteswold Powder Horn; Japanese Military Flask; Hone from Painswick; Japanese Glass Bottle; Fragments of Roman Mosaic Pavements; Small Chinese Flask; Bugler's Token from Waterloo; Cigar Guard from Odessa; Carved Ivory Plaque; Rosary; Arab Pipe; Nubian Scissors; Head of a State Mexican Halberd; Sacred Jug in Carved Ivory.'

'From Mr. A. D. Passmore, Swindon, Wilts.:– Plaster cast figure of Mars found at Stow-on-the-Wold.'

'From Mrs. Sutton-Gardner:– 20 frames containing 69 prints showing Cheltenham 100 years ago collected by late W. J. Sutton-Gardner, Esq., of Cheltenham.'

Street and Highways Committee

'March 8 1893 – Lane at Back of Wellington Square – A Letter from R. J. Winterbotham, Esq., of Glenmore Lodge, requesting that in order to get rid of the unpleasant nickname of the above Lane, the name "Wellesley Lane" should be put up. Resolved, That the matter be adjourned for further consideration.'

'April 5 1893 – Lane at Back of Wellington Square – Resolved, That Mr. R. J. Winterbotham's request be complied with, but that the name of the lane be "Wellesley Road."'

It appears this unpleasant nickname was 'Murder Lane' as an entry in the online *Gazetteer* shows:

'Murder Lane Informal name, still known to older residents, of Wellesley Road. From the Dec. 1871 murder nearby of Emily Gardner, daughter of a High Street publican, for which one Jones was executed the following year (pc V Cole).'

New and Altered Buildings: Planning Sub-Committee

Gloucestershire Archives hold a collection of over 6,000 plans and associated documents for new and altered buildings in Cheltenham from 1896, with a reference starting at CBR/C5/6. These plans are numbered but until now there has been no index to them.

The Planning Sub-Committee listed, monthly, the planning applications for the town. They were numbered and gave the applicant's name and the address of the property concerned. It has been possible to extract this information and produce a searchable index.

No. of Plan.	Name.	Description.
1955	Goddard, Rev. L. E.	Detached House, Painswick Road (Amended plan)
1978	Bendall and Sons	Detached House and Motor House, Pilford Gardens, Old Bath Road.
1979	Trust Houses, Ltd.	New Lavatory, Royal Hotel Tap internal.
1980	Stewarts, Ltd., (Middlesborough)	New Lavatory in basement, 352 High Street.
1981	Bradbury, J. K.	Bay Windows, 2 Subsidy Houses, Milton Road (Amended plan).

Planning Sub-Committee, CBR/C2/1/22
Reproduced courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives

There are some early references to buildings in Cheltenham, including a cottage of 1699, built on a farm and owned by the Council.

Important Positions in the Town

In the 1890s important jobs in the town, including that of Borough Surveyor, Minister of Health and Inspector of Nuisances, were advertised nationally. The applicants along with their curriculum vitae were recorded in the Minutes.

Name.	Address.	Age.	Married or Single	Present Employment.	Qualifications.	Testimonials from
BENNETT, THOMAS	Engineer's Office, Cheshunt Local Board, London, N	38	M.	Engineer and Surveyor to Cheshunt Local Board.	Associate M. Inst. C.E., H.F.G.S., Member of Asso. of Municipal and Sanitary Engineers, and Member of Society of Engineers.	Cheshunt Local Board Joseph Tydeman, Esq. J. F. B. Frith, Esq., M.P. Wigton Local Board John McKeever, Clerk to ditto Town Clerk of Barrow-in-Furnace
BENNETT, WILLIAM	15, Wodland Terrace, Portsmouth	43		Has held no public appointment since completion of work in British Columbia, in 1888.	M.I.C.E., Mem. of Canadian Society of Engineers.	J. M. McConnollier, M.I.C.E. Walter Robert Kinnipple, M.I.C.E. J. W. Trutch, V.C.M.G., M.I.C.E. Municipal Council of Victoria, British Co Col. Hill, C.B., M.P.

Reproduced courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives, reference CBR/C2/2/1/3

From the late 1920s council employees who were retiring or had died were mentioned with details of the job and length of service they had given.

'Superannuation – (a) Baths Attendant – The Borough Treasurer submitted Medical Certificate that Mrs. Thornbury was unfit for work. RESOLVED, that she be paid a pension of £16 15s. 0d. per annum calculated on her wages for the last five years on a non-contributory basis of 20 years' service together with a refund of her contributions amounting to £32 15s. 5d. including interest'.

'Electricity Accountant– It was reported that Mr C. T. Bastin was retiring on the 31st March, 1932, ...after 48 years' service. RESOLVED, that he be paid a pension of £100 per annum calculated on his salary for the last five years ...'

'J. Bullock– It was also reported that Mr J. Bullock was due to retire on the 8th April, 1932. RESOLVED, that he be paid a pension of £44 13s 8d calculated on his wages ...'

'F. P. Yarnall—RESOLVED, That the executors of F. P. Yarnall deceased, late second assistant, Town Clerk's Department, be refunded the sum of £23 2s 9d being the amount of his contributions, including interest.'

Foster Mothers in the Town

Following the Children and Young Persons' Act, 1932, the Town Council started to keep records of foster mothers in Cheltenham:

'Mrs. Robertson, 407 High Street – The Medical Officer of Health reported that a foster child had been taken by Mrs. Robertson of 407 High Street, on the 18th November last but she had failed to give seven days' notice of reception, the notice being received on the 19th November. He also reported that the home was unsuitable for the reasons submitted by him. RESOLVED, that application be made for an order for the removal of the child in pursuance of Section 67 of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1932.'

Later minutes give lists of foster mothers, their addresses and the number of children that they could foster was recorded.

Mrs Betteridge	25 Spenser Road	1
Mrs Burgess	13 Kew Place	1
Mrs Brain	Malvern House, Malvern Road	1
Mrs Buckingham	109 Promenade	1

Conclusion and the Future

The 13,300 images produced 6.1 million words and the project has taken me approximately 750 hours to complete.

Permission by the Archives has been given to continue the project until the Minutes of 1947 is reached. This stop date is due to the 70-year rule for personal data information protection.

It is planned that the Council Minutes for 1938-1947 will be digitised during 2018. The aim is to place the transcribed Minutes and Town Plans on a Research section on the Cheltenham Local History website during 2018.

www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk

Acknowledgements: With thanks to the staff of CHELTENHAM LOCAL AND FAMILY AND HISTORY CENTRE in making the documents available, often at very short notice.

¹ Available at <http://www.bgas.org.uk/publications/cheltgazsearch.html>

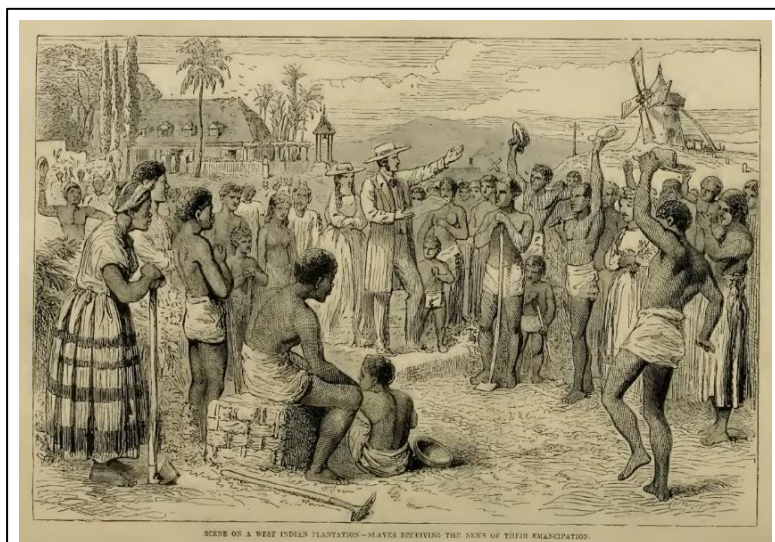
Plantocrats and Rentiers: Cheltenham's Slave-owners

ERIC MILLER

IN 1834 SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED in the British Empire, and over the next few years the government granted £20 million to the slave-owners in compensation for their loss of income – estimated as equal to some £17 billion in today's money, calculated as wage values.¹ The amounts allocated by the Slave Compensation Commission to the 46,000 successful claimants were determined by the appropriate classification of each individual slave – gender, age, type of work and level of skill – and also the level of productivity, and therefore profitability, of the territory in which the slaves worked.

Some former owners had lived on their estates – the plantocrats. Others had gone to seek their fortune, maybe starting as book keepers or overseers on estates until they could afford to buy property of their own. A few were involved in the administration of slave colonies in an official capacity. Many – the rentiers – might never have left Britain but inherited or otherwise acquired land or properties, which they would have treated simply as a form of investment.

Despite the powerful hostility of those with a vested interest, Britain had abolished the slave trade in 1807 – ending the 'middle passage' across the Atlantic – and in 1815 this move was followed by certain other European countries, signatories of the Council of Vienna. The Royal Navy pursued any ships that attempted to defy the ban. Ownership of slaves had continued, however, and even after 1834 most slaves were still bound to work out time on their estates. They received no financial compensation.



Scene on a West Indies Plantation-
slaves receiving news of their emancipation
From Cassell's Illustrated History of England

Academic researchers at University College London (UCL) have identified the people in nineteenth-century Britain who either owned slaves or otherwise benefited financially from slavery. An extensive database details the number of slaves on the estates and the sums of money involved, down to the last shillings and pence. It would not

have been possible to write this article without that research.

Some fifty individuals named in the UCL study were shown to have been living in Cheltenham and its immediate surroundings, in addition to which other beneficiaries or their inheritors came to reside in the town at other times. That compares with the numbers for Clifton though it is lower than those for Bristol and Bath. The number of slaves in which they declared an interest totalled nearly 10,000 – a striking figure for one small town, whose own population in 1831 was around 23,000. Most claimants were awarded a few thousand pounds in compensation, but by far the largest sum was over £37,000, in respect of more than 1700 slaves, while another award came to £170 for just seven. (Note that the amount of compensation was less than the assessed *value* of the slaves.) Some of the rentiers had but a fleeting connection with Cheltenham while others were persons of some standing, not only as slave-owners but in other fields as well.

With the proceeds the recipients would have been able to pay off loans, buy large houses or extend existing ones, sometimes naming them after their estates in the colonies (though they could probably do that even without the compensation). 'Railway mania' and other aspects of the industrial revolution will have been fuelled by the newly available funds. An examination of that aspect with regard to Cheltenham is beyond the scope of this article, but it should repay further investigation.

1. Claimants Listed on the UCL Database

Below are listed those claimants identified by UCL as having Cheltenham addresses, together with the name of their associated estate(s), how many slaves they had owned and the total amount of compensation awarded (rounded off to the nearest £5). The UCL website, which has been relied on extensively, gives more precise figures as well as background information on many of the individuals, which is summarised here with the addition of some further details from my own and others' research, which I acknowledge at the end.

Sir Jacob Adolphus: 7 enslaved on two estates in Jamaica – total £170. He died on 1 January 1845, aged 71, at 17 Lansdown Crescent, after a long illness. His estate was valued at £13,000. He had entered the Army as a Medical Officer in 1795 and served for 33 years, 28 of them in the West Indies, and for 10 of those as Chief of the Medical Department in Jamaica. He was appointed Inspector-General of Army Hospitals in 1827.² He was a member of one of several old Sephardic Jewish families who had settled on the Island of Jamaica³ but when living in Cheltenham he appears not to have had any direct involvement with the rest of the Jewish community in the town.

The Hon James Holder Alleyne: 579 enslaved on five estates in Barbados, four as owner, one as executor – total £13,020. In addition, he made an unsuccessful claim for £3,600 as trustee on another estate in respect of 160 enslaved; this was awarded to a relative, John Alleyne Holder. The Alleyne family was prominent in Barbados and intermarried with members of the Holder family, which had been present there since the 17th century. Other members of both families were claimants. James Holder Alleyne died in Cheltenham in 1842. No address is known for him, but *Annuaire*s gave the address of a Mrs Alleyne as 11 Lansdown Crescent in 1840 and 1 Suffolk Lawn in 1842. In 1851 the census indicated that his widow Elizabeth Mary and her daughter, both born in the West Indies, were living at 7 Lansdown Terrace. James Holder Alleyne

had been a member of HM Council in Barbados. He was a descendant of John Gay Alleyne (*d.* 1801), a leading Barbadian politician, who despite being a slaveowner publicly voiced his disapproval of the system of slavery, an opinion unpopular with the planter class at that time.⁴

Dr Thomas Bell: 159 enslaved on one estate in British Guiana – total £8,220. He was resident in British Guiana in 1832 and in 1837 but apparently returned to Britain where he died *c.*1839. His address in Cheltenham, as given in his will, had at one time been 2 Montpellier Grove, confirmed in the 1838 *Annuaire*; in 1842 his widow was at that address. The will related to a plantation at Essequibo, Demerara, which had been sold in 1839 for £20,000, said to have been larger than the purchase price paid by Dr Bell some years previously.⁵ One beneficiary was his wife, Rebecca Matilda, who had five children to care for. A contemporary writer mentioned the doctor with admiration for his knowledge of tropical medicine.⁶

Judith Bernard senior, Judith Bernard junior, The Reverend Samuel Edward Bernard and Dr William Rhodes Bernard (widowed mother and her three children) appear to have shared the proceeds of one estate in Jamaica: 188 enslaved – total £3580. In addition, all but the doctor had interests in other estates on the island: **Judith Bernard senior** 71 enslaved – total £1580, **Judith Bernard junior** 15 enslaved – total £325 and **The Reverend Samuel Edward Bernard** (as trustee) 14 enslaved – total £315. All were born in Jamaica, and their fortunes were interconnected. The family home was at 12 Cambray Place. The mother was at that address according to the 1842 *Annuaire*, and William and his sister Judith were living there in 1861. In 1881, after their deaths, the Reverend Samuel, then aged 80, was still living in that same house.

Joseph Seymour Biscoe: 279 enslaved on one estate in Jamaica – total £5,545. He died in Clifton in 1835, and the claim was probably made by his son, his widow and her brother George Law, who were the executors of his will, which was proved in Cheltenham. Her brother's later addresses in Cheltenham were first Kenilworth House, in Pittville Lawn, and then Cotswold Lodge, in Pittville Circus Road.

Henry Bromfield: 64 enslaved on one estate in British Guiana – total £3,420 (unsuccessful claimant). Henry Bromfield of Sandford Place, who died in 1837 aged 85, was described in his obituary as a former merchant of the City of London who had lived in Cheltenham for the previous thirty years. In addition to numerous charitable gifts made during his lifetime he willed £1,400 to fourteen charities, mostly to religious organisations, five of which were in Cheltenham including the Dispensary and the Female Orphan Asylum. He was buried in the burial ground of the Cheltenham Chapel. His real estate was divided among nephews' resident in America.⁷

The Reverend George Caldwell: 714 enslaved on three estates, in Antigua and St Vincent – total £13,405. His address in 1838 was 5, Sandford Place. In 1842 a Miss Caldwell was named as the main occupant. He will have inherited the estates from his father Charles Caldwell, who had been a Liverpool-based slave-trader. He lived all his life in England, was a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, 1796-1817, and was not ordained a priest until 1817, aged 44. He died in 1848.⁸

Samuel Brandford Cox: 309 enslaved on one estate in British Guiana – total £16,115, though this was paid to mortgagees of the state and Cox himself did not appear to lodge a claim. His sugar estate had been at Zeelug(h)t, in an area named by former Dutch

settlers. A township of that name exists today on the east bank of the Essequibo river delta. On coming to live in Cheltenham he occupied the then Gilstead Lodge in Thirlestaine Road and renamed it Zeelugt (today it is called Linton, home of the Cobalt Unit). He extended the building, doubling its size.⁹ He died in 1838 aged 66, by which time he had moved to Euston Square in London. One provision in his will was £24 p.a. to Richard Cox, son of 'the late coloured woman Rosetta'. For Zeelugt see also Sir Francis Ford, below.



Memorial to William Dalzell in Christchurch, Cheltenham.
Photograph © Eric Miller 2017

Mary Elizabeth Dalzell (Mrs): 176 enslaved on one estate in Barbados – total £3,825. Born in British Guiana in about 1789, she had been the second wife of Allen Dalzell, a slave-owner from Barbados. In his will he left her five named slaves – Fingal, Edward Isaac and William Francis, and Lucy and Betsy Queen. In 1841 she was living in Cheltenham at 9 Suffolk Square, and in the following year at 11 Hatherley Place, Tivoli (now part of the east side of St Stephen's Road). By 1871 she had moved to Tivoli Road and with her widowed daughter Mary Elizabeth Savary aged 53 and her grandson. The daughter had been the second wife of Lieutenant-Colonel William Tauzia Savary, of the Bombay Army. They were married at Leckhampton in 1850 and are buried there (Plot L.149), together with their two young daughters, to whom there is a memorial in Christ Church. Also in that church there is a fine

memorial to her son Lieutenant William Dalzell of the 92nd Highlanders. He had died in Barbados in 1842, possibly having gone there to see to family affairs after his father's death.¹⁰ Members of the Savary family were prominent as slave-owners in Trinidad. The Savary-Dalzell marriage was but one of several such interrelationships. For example, Mary Elizabeth's sister Anne Wilhelmina had been the first wife of **Charles Henry Darling**, who was Governor of Jamaica 1857-1863, having previously governed other islands in the West Indies, and whose last appointment was in Australia as Governor of Victoria. He died at 10 Lansdown Terrace in 1870, still owning property in Jamaica.

Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Darling, the uncle of the above-mentioned Charles Henry Darling, lived in Cheltenham for a few years, probably 1836-1840. His address in the 1837 *Annuaire* was 23 Lansdown Place but he had moved to 7 Lansdown Terrace by 1838. Sir Ralph Darling had been Governor of Mauritius 1819-1824 and Governor of New South Wales 1825-1831. He had had experience of the slave colonies in Grenada in his earlier years and when in Mauritius he made determined efforts to end slave traffic to that island. His brother **William Lindsay Darling** of Stroath House, Tidenham, had 65 slaves on two estates in Dominica. Edward Kendall (see below) made a counter-claim on one of them.

Sir Francis Ford: 215 enslaved on one estate in Barbados – total £4,590 and 325 on another estate in Barbados – total £6,955 (unsuccessful). Sir Francis was the second baronet and died at his home in Charlton Kings, Conway House (now called The Close), in 1839, having been severely ill for eight years.¹¹ A death notice described him as 'of

Barbados', where his father had died. His younger son, Captain Saint Clair St Clair-Ford, of the Indian Army, later lived at Zeelugt, formerly the home of Samuel Brandford Cox (see above). His mother was Mary Anson, whose brother Sir George Anson as MP for Lichfield in 1806 was listed as a staunch supporter of the abolition of the slave trade.¹²

Charles Gray: 220 enslaved on two estates in Tobago – total £4,585 as previous owner, not making a claim. In his will, which had been proved in 1827, he was described as 'planter of Tobago now of Cheltenham'. He left bequests to family members totalling some £17,000 and also made provision for two enslaved women servants to be freed. No address is known for him in Cheltenham.

William Attwick Hamer: 456 enslaved on two estates in British Guiana – nominal total £22,845, which went to London merchants who had provided the mortgage, and he received only a small amount of interest. He was born in Gloucestershire in 1766 and died during the voyage from British Guiana to England in 1846. The will of his wife, who died in 1856, shows her living at Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham (No 9 in the 1851 census, when she was aged 80).

Elizabeth Hamilton: 100 enslaved on two estates in Dominica – total £1885. She was the widow of Henry Hamilton, who died in 1796 when Governor of Dominica. Her father was William Lee, a plantation owner in Dominica, from whom she had inherited the estates. Between at least 1846 and 1851 she was living at 2 Pittville Lawn (now No 31) with her daughter, born in Dominica, and four servants.

Susannah Irving and daughter **Lucy Ann Irving:** 51 enslaved on one estate in Jamaica – total £1,000. **John Beaufin Irving II:** 268 enslaved on three estates in Jamaica – total £5260. Susannah Irving and her unmarried daughter Lucy inherited the estate from Susannah's late husband John Beaufin Irving. Lucy Ann died at Cheltenham in 1848, aged 41, and her mother in 1852, aged 79. Both are buried in the graveyard of St Mary's Church, Cheltenham (the Minster) together with Lucy's brother John Beaufin II and his wife. All lived at 24 Suffolk Square.¹³ John Beaufin Irving, born in America in 1810, was educated in England and travelled extensively on the continent before going to live in Jamaica in the late 1830s. He married and eventually settled in Cheltenham. When he died in 1876 his effects were under £70,000.

James William Johnston: 23 enslaved on one estate in Jamaica – total £515. Though born in Jamaica, in 1792, he had no contact with the island after he left at the age of 10 to be educated in Scotland. He spent his adult life in Canada, where he practised law and politics and served as the Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia from 1857 to 1860. Thus he will have been living in Canada at the time of the award, and his connection with Cheltenham arose only after his retirement. He died in 1873 and is buried in Cheltenham Cemetery. He was later credited with possessing 'unsullied integrity commanding eloquence and Christian humility'.¹⁴ His attitude to the possession of slaves, as a committed Baptist, is not known.

Eleanor Jopp: 7 enslaved on one estate in Jamaica – total £140. Born in Gloucestershire as Eleanor Campbell, she was the widow of Keith Jopp, of Aberdeen. He had been a merchant, at one-time co-owner of the vessel (presumably a slaver) *Magnet of Glasgow*, but he pulled out of the partnership with Messrs Bogle and Moir in 1806.¹⁵ They were married in Jamaica in 1800 and between 1802 and 1818 had nine

children, whose places of birth or baptism illustrate the family's peripatetic life – in London, Bath, Christchurch and Germany. They were in Jamaica again between at least 1811 and 1813. Keith Jopp died in 1823, in France, and from at least 1837 until her death in 1859 Eleanor Jopp was living in Cheltenham, successively at 2 Harley Place, 5 Rodney Place, Lansdown Terrace (at first No 22 and later No 7), accompanied by four unmarried daughters. Another daughter, Christiana Elizabeth, the youngest of all, had married Scotsman George Taylor in Cheltenham early in 1841.¹⁶ Eleanor Jopp's will described her as the widow of Keith Jopp 'of Keith-hall and Joppa' – two nostalgically named estates in Jamaica. Though her effects were less than £300, the daughters were subsequently able to live off dividends and to keep four servants, presumably on the strength of other investments. Their address in 1881 was still in Lansdown Terrace, this time at No 19. There is a memorial to Eleanor Jopp in Christ Church, Cheltenham, and she and some later members of the extended family are buried in Swindon Village churchyard. The daughters are buried in Cheltenham Cemetery.¹⁷ In 1798, before their marriage, both Eleanor Campbell and Keith Jopp had their portraits painted by the fashionable artist John Hoppner (1758-1810).¹⁸

Edward Kendall: 59 enslaved on one estate in Dominica – total £1,305. He was awarded one third of the compensation for the enslaved people on the Springfield estate as a trustee of the marriage settlement of the above-mentioned William Lindsay Darling and his wife Anna Rose (presumably his brother-in-law and sister-in-law). Born in 1790, he had married Anna Maria Darling in 1810. By 1841 he was a widower, living at 6 Lansdown Terrace with three daughters, a governess and four servants. By 1851 he had remarried and had moved to Packington Hall in Staffordshire.

Barrett Lee (Mrs): 418 enslaved on two estates in Jamaica – total £8,115 (unsuccessful claimant: the compensation was paid to the Dominica-born Reverend Henry Mair, a mortgage trustee). She was born in London in 1785 and was the daughter of Martin Williams, another Jamaica-born claimant. Her five older siblings were baptised in Jamaica. She was the widow of Michael White Lee, an Army officer who already owned property in Jamaica because of his brief earlier marriage to her *grandmother*, Judith Barrett. (Judith Barrett was almost twice Lee's age when they married. The Lee and Barrett families appear to have been closely interlinked and include – distantly – the Barretts of Wimpole Street.) Michael White Lee died in Cheltenham in 1847. By 1851 Barrett Lee was living at Pittville Lawn Villa (currently No 39) with her niece Cecilia Pleimner, born in Jamaica, 3 female servants and 1 male servant, and she remained there until her death in 1875. Her assets at that time were under £60,000. Both husband and wife are buried at Holy Trinity Church, Cheltenham, where there is also a memorial to both.

George McLean: 1051 enslaved on twelve estates in Grenada – total £26,430 and 246 enslaved on one estate – total £3,140 (unsuccessful claim). He died in 1858, and his will described him as 'late of Malcolm Ghur' in Bath Road (Pillar House today; he was listed at Malcolm Ghur north in the *Annuaire*s of 1852-1857). With its neighbour Mosquito Ghur this was one of a pair of villas recalling Cheltenham's Anglo-Indian connections. He had inherited some property from his older brother John, whose family became his wards. A painting of John McLean's wife and two daughters and their favourite slave Didi was offered for sale at Bonhams in 2003 together with a miniature of George McLean. The sale notes stated that the MacLean family were liberal landlords and allowed their slaves unprecedented freedoms and that they had initiated a system of work that allowed slaves to do a set task for the day, upon completion of

which the workers were free to go to their own gardens, an idea that became popular and was soon adopted by other estates.

Lucy Savage Sturgis Munkhouse: 109 enslaved on one estate in Jamaica – total £2,040. She was awarded a part of the compensation relating to an estate that had been owned by her uncle Arthur Savage, a merchant and coffee planter. The remainder went to her sister and brothers-in-law and two illegitimate cousins. Lucy Munkhouse was born in Yorkshire in 1799 and died in Cheltenham in 1889. In 1871 she was lodging at 12 Albert Place, living on ‘income from India property’.

Joseph Freeman Padmore: 83 enslaved on one estate in Barbados – total £1,790. In 1836, when living in Cheltenham (address not known) he was in correspondence with the Compensation Commissioners regarding his claim and that of his sister Rebecca. By 1841 both had moved to Jersey.

John Peart: 158 enslaved on three estates in Jamaica – total £3,135. He was born in Newark-on-Trent in 1771 and went to Jamaica after he had inherited his uncle’s estate in about 1798. He subsequently returned to England, living at 4 Oxford Street, Cheltenham, from where he wrote letters to *The Times* on the subject of railways; he was a director of several of the budding companies at that time. He died in Cheltenham in 1847. His widow Elizabeth, née Hobbs, was in 1841 living with her son-in-law Dr William Philpot Brookes, his family and servants at Albion House, the substantial mansion at the western end of Albion Street that later housed the Liberal Club. The doctor, who was the Cheltenham District Medical Officer, was mentioned in John Peart’s will.

William Hinds Prescod: 1,738 enslaved on nine estates in Barbados – total £37,285, though more than half of that was paid to his trustees. The slaves were valued at £67,045. He was the largest proprietor both of land and slaves in Barbados in the 1830s. He was born in Barbados in 1776 but was educated in England, read law at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1797. He returned to Barbados to work for his uncle William Prescod, whose estates he inherited on a life tenancy in 1815.¹⁹ By 1820 he and his wife, née Mary Brice, who had also been born in Barbados, had moved to Alstone Lodge (later renamed Alstone Lawn). This grand mansion in extensive grounds, which faced on to the eastern end of Alstone Lane, has since been demolished and the site is now occupied by Pates Avenue. In the *New Historical Description of Cheltenham* by S Y Griffith (1826) the house and owner are singled out as noteworthy sights, together with the neighbouring Alstone Villa, the residence of Major Semper (see page 63). The couple had no children of their own but adopted Mary Gurney, a neighbour’s daughter, whom he remembered in his will together with her natural mother. However, while still in Barbados, between 1806 and 1812, he appears to have fathered four children with Mary Lydia Smith, a free coloured woman, on whom at the time of emancipation he made a substantial settlement. The eldest child was Samuel Jackman Prescod, a campaigning newspaper editor and leader of the free coloureds who became the first non-white member of the Barbados parliament. To this day a number of West Indians with the surname Prescod are prominent in the cricketing world. W H Prescod must have been a flamboyant character, described as driving round Cheltenham in a blue or yellow chariot. He attended the grand fancy dress ball in Cheltenham in 1827, dressed as Robin Hood, while his wife went as the French beauty, Agnès Sorel, her extravagant dress being described in detail in the *Morning Post*.²⁰ He wrote trenchant letters to that newspaper and the Colonial

Secretary in defence of his treatment of his slaves and bemoaning his plight as 'one of that numerous class of British subjects doomed to certain immense loss'. He died in 1848, and in 1861, after his widow's death, an auction was held of his vast collection of pictures 'purchased by the deceased in Italy' and of his gallery of marble sculptures. This must have been an outstanding event, which 'attracted overflowing audiences'. However, many of the works appear to have been copies of paintings by the great masters, and the bids were lower than had been anticipated.²¹

The Reverend Richard Quarrell: 68 enslaved on one estate in Jamaica – total £3,140. He appears to have acquired the estate, owned some years previously by other members of the Quarrell family, in about 1830. The estate was said to belong to 'a professedly liberal and religious proprietor', identified as 'Master Quarrell ... residing in England'.²² A graduate of Queens' College, Cambridge, he was ordained in 1835 and by 1837 gave an address in Cheltenham, at Oxford House, though he was probably serving a curacy elsewhere at the time. There has been more than one house so named, but this is likely to have been the one in Margaret Street, where a Mrs Quarrell (presumably Richard's mother) had been listed in 1830. In 1839 and 1840 the Reverend P(*sic*) Quarrell was listed at 5 Columbia Place, near Pittville Gates.

Harriet Mary Semper: 173 enslaved on two estates in Montserrat – total £3,100 (unsuccessful). Harriet Semper claimed as a legatee of her husband Michael Joseph Semper senior, a West India merchant and plantation owner. The compensation was awarded to the executors of his brother Dudley, with whom he had been in partnership, though most appears to have been intercepted by Thomas and John Daniel & Co. Overall, claims were made in the names of a dozen members of the Semper family in respect of estates in Montserrat. Harriet, née Walsh-Porter, born in Germany, had married Michael Semper in Cheltenham in 1810. They presumably moved to Montserrat after that and had returned to Cheltenham in 1824, living in Alstone Villa (see W H Prescod above). Her husband died in 1827, aged 57, and his wife later moved to St John's Wood in London, where she died in 1873. In 1830 a Mrs Major(?) Semper was listed in *Pigot's Directory* as living at Alstone Cottage.

Solomon Mendes da Silva: 327 enslaved on six estates in Jamaica – total £6,180. He was born in Jamaica in 1781 and lived first, probably between 1837 and 1843, at Rioho Lodge,²³ Park Place (like Samuel Cox, he named the house after one of his sugar plantations). At the time of his death in 1861 his address was 5 Blenheim Parade, Pittville (now 11 Evesham Road).²⁴ His will valued his personal property in England at £6,000, but he retained estates in Jamaica and made many bequests to family members and charitable causes, including synagogues. He was a leading member of Cheltenham's Jewish congregation and is buried in Cheltenham's Jewish cemetery.



Tombstone of Solomon Mendes de Silva, which lies horizontally in the Sephardi style. Both he and his wife were born in Jamaica. The inscription is in Hebrew and English and the years are given according to the Jewish and the Christian calendar.

Photograph © Eric Miller 2017

Mary Lawrence Stevenson: 67 enslaved on two estates in Jamaica– total £1,180. She had married William James Stevenson (Receiver-General of Jamaica) in Jamaica in 1796. She died in Clifton but was buried in Cheltenham, where her will was proved in 1850.

James Law Stewart: 447 enslaved on three states in Jamaica – total £8,335. Jamaica-born James Stewart had married Anne Wilhelmina Brisset, who came of a Jamaican plantation-owning family. From at least 1835 to 1843 the family was living at Blenheim House (1 Evesham Road, Pittville) and then at Apsley House (now Tower House), Pittville Circus, before moving to Tenby.

Charles Telfair: 236 enslaved on two estates in Mauritius – £6,910. Charles Telfair was a noted botanist who settled in Mauritius and was appointed personal secretary of the Governor Robert Farquhar. An enterprising sugar ‘baron’, he improved the education and housing of estate slaves, and found less strenuous occupations for elderly ones.²⁵ In 1834 he was acting as guardian for his son, also Charles. The boy was only 12 years old at the time but went on to serve as a District Magistrate in Mauritius before retiring to Cheltenham (address not known), where he died in 1870. He is buried at Leckhampton (plot H.207).

Catherine Wordie: 114 slaves on a plantation in Jamaica – total £2,070. Her will, proved in 1837, referred to Cheltenham as her latest address and named the coffee plantation as her chief asset.

Nicola Wright: 43 enslaved on two estates in Jamaica – total £955. In 1851 she was living with her daughter Edwina and grand-daughter, both born in Jamaica, at 9 Hatherley Place, together with Edwina’s four young nieces, all born in Bombay, and a Scottish-born nephew; all these bore the surname Liddell, but so far it is not known to which branch of the family they belonged.

2. Other Slave-Owners with Cheltenham Associations

There were other individuals and families with an interest in Caribbean estates who also had connections of some kind with Cheltenham or its suburbs. Either they had lived in the town before Emancipation or came to it afterwards, or they stated in their will that they were ‘of Cheltenham’. Not all are mentioned on the UCL website. The names that follow are not in strict alphabetical order.

A plantation in Jamaica named ‘Charlton Kings’ was the property of one **Thomas Ashmead** (or his father of the same name), who in the 18th century was owner of the Old Coxhorne estate in the Gloucestershire Charlton Kings. The surname Ashmead is alive in Jamaica today, held by a descendant of a freed slave.²⁶

The wife and daughter of the Honorable **John Rycroft Best**, who played an important role in Barbados Council politics and rallied opposition to the impending threat of abolition, left the Caribbean and came to live in Cheltenham. In the 1837 *Annuaire* Mrs Best’s address was given as 4 Montpellier Spa Buildings but by 1840 she and her daughter were living at 9, Lansdown Terrace, the mother being shown in the 1851 census return as ‘attending her own affairs’ and the daughter as ‘amusing herself’. The absent father’s £30,000 in compensation must have helped towards this carefree

lifestyle. The ladies are buried at Leckhampton and have one of the most imposing memorials in the churchyard (Plot I.9).

Lady Ann Clarke, who died in Cheltenham in 1800, was a daughter and heiress of Philip Haughton, who bequeathed her a sugar plantation in Jamaica 'and all the negroes thereupon and 24 mules and 40 steers'. Her late husband Sir Simon Clarke, the 7th baronet, had also been involved with Jamaican estates. There is an imposing memorial to her in the north transept of Gloucester Cathedral.

Charles Fox Champion de Crespigny was probably the nephew of Philip Champion de Crespigny, who was awarded £2165 in respect of a claim on 104 slaves on two estates in Jamaica. Charles, who was living at 21 Promenade Villas in 1842, died in 1875, and his wife and daughter are buried at Leckhampton (Plots M.11 and L.164).

Mary Ann Ferris, who owned Trowscoed Lodge on Leckhampton Road from 1868 to 1871 and whose former married name had been Mary Ann Coote, was the daughter of **John Delaroche**, who died in 1823. In 1816 he was recorded as owning an estate at Carrisbrook in Jamaica with 150 slaves and also, in 1825, 'the estate of Coote and Delaroche' with 30 slaves. A claim in 1838 in John Delaroche's name was awarded for £26/12/2d for one slave on a Jamaican estate. This house has since been demolished, as has its neighbour, Fairfield House, which also had slavery connections (see next paragraph).

An occupant of Fairfield House in the late 19th century, **Colonel J G E Griffith**, was connected to the estate of Hodge's Pen in Jamaica, where there had previously been slaves. The Griffith family inherited the Pen from Shakepear relations, one of whom, **The Reverend John Mure Shakespear**, died in 1836 at Bahama Villa (now 66 Suffolk Road).²⁷

Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Newman Harding inherited a share in an estate in Jamaica from his aunt Eliza Mary Tharp. When he died in 1859 in the Isle of Wight his will described him as 'late of Cheltenham'.

In addition to those members of Cheltenham's Hebrew community mentioned earlier four others had had involvement with slave estates. **Moses Quixano Henriques** was one of a clan that had been important in the Jamaican judiciary and traces its descent from Jewish aristocrats thrown out of Portugal in 1492. He came to live in Cheltenham in 1834, trading as a gentleman publisher and bookseller at the Royal Library, 384, High Street and resided at 4 Oriel Place.²⁸ He had a claim on two slaves on an estate in Jamaica.

Living in Cheltenham from 1834, at 1 Lansdown Terrace, were **Isaac Baruch Lousada** and his daughters. (In 1840 Isaac was at 29 The Promenade.) They were related to owners of plantations in Jamaica and Barbados, some of whom were partners in the firm of Barrow and Lousadas. In 1885 one of the Barrow family, **Major-General de Symons Barrow**, came to live at Courtfield, in Charlton Kings. His father had been a West India merchant with a plantation in Jamaica and an interest in three others in Barbados. He was reputed to have been the first owner to free his slaves before Emancipation became law.²⁹

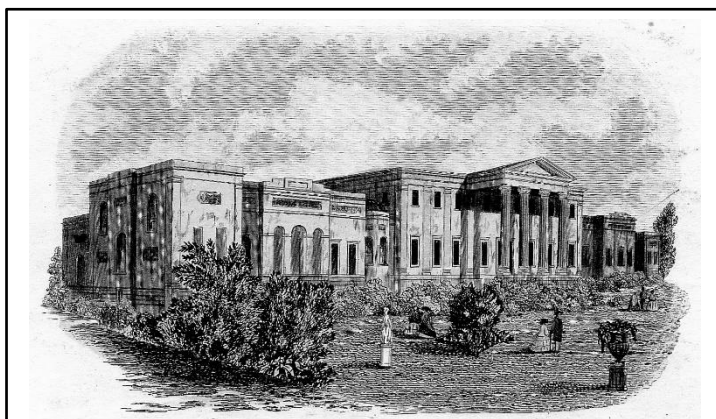
Frederick Shedden Sanguinetti was born in Jamaica in 1847, the youngest son of Moses Sanguinetti, a British Subject of Italian/Jewish extraction and a sugar planter who was awarded £830 in respect of 42 slaves on three estates. Frederick became a colonial civil servant and worked in the Jamaican administration. His mother originated in Cheltenham and he was buried at St Mary's, Charlton Kings.³⁰

Thomas Jarvis junior was a member of the Council of Antigua. His children lodged unsuccessful counterclaims for ownership of enslaved people on an estate on that island. In his will, proved in 1805, he left a total of £32,000 to his children, with a codicil written in Cheltenham which left his second wife 'the proceeds of his sugars in England and Ireland'.

The will of **Bermingham Nugent**, formerly of Demerara but in London in 1827, referred to a mortgage for 124,000 guilders (the equivalent of approximately £1m today) secured on an estate in Grenada. When it was proved in 1836 he was described as 'late of Cheltenham'.

The will of **George Ramsay** (proved in 1800), who had earlier been a mortgagee of two estates in Jamaica, described him as 'late of Bath but now of Cheltenham' (in 1796). His son, Lieutenant-Colonel George William Ramsay of the West India Regiment, received the Cheltenham house (not identified) after his wife's life interest.

James Robert Scott inherited a share in four estates in Jamaica from his uncle William Chisholme who had died in 1802. However, in his will, which he made on his marriage in 1823 to Harriet Gray of Cheltenham, there was no mention of property or enslaved people in the West Indies. His wife's interest on his estate was conditional on her living in Scotland. He called his house in Cheltenham Thirlestane (an 'i' has since crept into



Thirlestane House c.1850. J R Scott built the main section with the pediment and columns. Engraving by G P Johnson from *Norman's History of Cheltenham*

the name), after his family seat in the county of Selkirk. It was offered for sale in 1831, agents describing it as a 'most distinguished mansion ... erected during the last seven years in extraordinarily good taste, at an outlay of nearly £100,000 by James Robert Scott, Esq'. It was bought, still unfinished, by Sir Thomas Phillipps to house his famous collection of paintings.

Dame Frances Stapleton, who graced Cheltenham society in the early 18th century and lived in the Great House, was involved with plantations in the West Indies before Emancipation. Both she and her first husband Sir William were heirs to West Indian estates and they lived on one of their plantations on Nevis. After Sir William died she married General Walter Hamilton, whom she accompanied to the Leeward Islands when he was appointed Governor-General but soon returned to England.³¹ She died in 1746, and her will, which stated that she was 'of Cheltenham', mentioned plantations

and estate in the island of St Christopher 'and all the negroes and slaves thereupon' and similarly for an estate in Nevis.

Robert Stokes junior, a celebrated Cheltenham architect in the 1830s, was born in Jamaica in 1809. He inherited a quarter share in the proceeds of the sale of the lease of a plantation in Jamaica and 33 enslaved people on the death of his father in 1819. The proceeds will have helped fund the boy's education and training in England.³²

Francis Onslow Trent made an unsuccessful claim on an estate in Barbados. In 1841 he was living at Cheltenham, without his family, who were shown at Leamington Priors in the same census.

Margaret Watts, who with her sister had inherited thirty-five slaves from their mother, was living at 6 Rodney Terrace at the time of her death in 1846.

Francis Workman of Barbados and also Montpellier Parade, who died in 1821, was the mortgagee of enslaved people in Jamaica.

Mary Wray was part-owner of an estate in Jamaica, with 85 slaves. In 1826 she was living with her mother Martha at Greville Villa, The Park (now 36 Gratton Road).³³ From 1840 their address was Oakfield, The Park, a mansion in extensive grounds on the corner of St Stephen's Road.

Finally, it is worth mentioning – though emphatically he was not a slave-owner – that **The Reverend William James Gardner**, who was born in Cheltenham in 1825 and was ordained as a missionary, sailed for Jamaica at the age of 24 and spent his life there dedicated to improving the spiritual and material welfare of his congregation. In 1872 he wrote an authoritative history of Jamaica, reasonably objective but also showing an intimate understanding of its African culture.³⁴

Conclusions

The names and circumstances of the people mentioned above reflect Cheltenham's position as a 'honey-pot' for colonial servants and their families, living comfortably at prestigious addresses. That they benefited from the proceeds of slavery and the estates on which the slaves were employed is in a sense incidental. The saying ran that people weren't rich because they owned slaves but owned slaves because they were rich.

The UCL project is still in progress and more discoveries are yet to be made. For example, in the town's churches there are memorials which record people's connections with the Caribbean and whose names appear, but without a known address or family connection, on the slavery database. A quite different aspect is that there were others who had been born in the Caribbean but were living in Cheltenham in humbler capacities, for example as servants. Further investigations along both lines could lead to a sequel to this article.

Acknowledgements

Sources and background reading – in addition to the UCL website <https://www.ucl.ac.uk> – include census returns, local directories, James Hodsdon's *Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, the website <http://pittvillehistory.org.uk>, *The Price of Emancipation* by Dr Nicholas Draper (2010), *Slavery and the British Country House*, Ed Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann and Margaret Tweedie, *A History of Barbuda under the Codringtons* (e-thesis, University of Birmingham, 1981).

I also thank Chris Jeppeson and Rachel Lang of UCL, James Hodsdon, Mike Rigby, Sue Rowbotham, and Jill Waller for help and advice.

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- ¹ *Independent* newspaper, 24 February 2013. By the same reckoning, £1,000 in 1834 was the equivalent of about £85,000 today.
- ² *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 4 January 1845.
- ³ Marcus Roberts *Anglo-Jewish History* www.jtrails.org.uk/trails.
- ⁴ *Genealogies of Barbados Families*.
- ⁵ Report from the Select Committee on East India Produce, 1840.
- ⁶ John Hancock, *Observations on the Climate, Soil and Productions of British Guiana*, 1840.
- ⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 11 and 18 February 1837.
- ⁸ www.ucl.ac.uk
- ⁹ See also *Cheltenham Local History Society (CLHS) Newsletter* **83**, November 2015.
- ¹⁰ Stanley Rudman, *Victorian Legacy*, 1998.
- ¹¹ David O'Connor, *Lives Revisited*, Charlton Kings LHS, 2005.
- ¹² historyofparliamentonline.org
- ¹³ http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com
- ¹⁴ www.findagrave.com
- ¹⁵ David Dobson, *Scots in the West Indies*, Volume 2.
- ¹⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 6 February 1841, amongst other newspapers.
- ¹⁷ Stanley Rudman, *Victorian Legacy*, 1998.
- ¹⁸ H P K Skipton, *Little Books on Art: Hoppner*, 1905.
- ¹⁹ Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, 2010.
- ²⁰ *Morning Post*, 26 March 1827.
- ²¹ *Cheltenham Looker-on*, 23 March and 13 April 1861. For more on Alstone Lodge and W H Prescod see articles by Jill Waller in *CLHS, Journal* **15** (1999) and by Glenn O Phillips in *Journal* **16** (2000).
- ²² Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837*, quoted on the UCL website.
- ²³ Later No 7, renumbered as 16 in the 1950s.
- ²⁴ James Hodsdon, *Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham*, 1996.
- ²⁵ See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and Gloucestershire Archives D1245/F.39.
- ²⁶ For more on the Ashmead family see article by David O'Connor et al, Charlton Kings Local History Society (CKLHS), *Research Bulletin* No. 62.
- ²⁷ Mike Rigby, article in Leckhampton Local History Society *Research Bulletin* No. 43, 2004, and private note.
- ²⁸ Brian Torode, *The Hebrew Community of Cheltenham*, 1999.
- ²⁹ David O'Connor, *CKLHS Research Bulletin* No. 63.
- ³⁰ David O'Connor, *Lives Revisited*, CKLHS, 2005.
- ³¹ See Anthea Jones, *Cheltenham – a New History*, 2010.
- ³² See also Robert Stokes, James Hodsdon, 'From Pittville to Parliament', *CLHS Journal* No 30.
- ³³ Aylwin Sampson, *Laid out with Taste and Judgement – The Park, Cheltenham*, 2010.
- ³⁴ He was the nephew of the Cheltenham stonemason William Montague Gardner, see *CLHS Journal* **31** (2015)
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‘Keape a mastye dawge or byche ...’

7 May 1576

Any man that wyll keape a mastye dawge or byche that he shall keape him musseled or tyded uppe, or pay a payne, [a fine] for there can not goe in the streate, neither any women or chylde nor best nor pygge with out hurte or danger of lyffe & therefore desyrynge you Mr Stewarde to see summe good order to be had therein or elles there ys noe man or best can escape for they shalbe devoured with thesse mastyfes that be in the Towne of Cheltenham ~~or hundred~~.¹

¹ Gloucestershire Archives, D855/M5. With thanks to Jill Barlow and John Putley for drawing this to our attention.

‘Did Cut and Cast Down His Bones’: Law and Order, 16th and 17th Century

ALEX CRAVEN

IN THE SUMMER OF 1551, A PRIEST, out walking, happened upon a group of young men laying nets in a lane to catch hawks that were breeding in an adjacent grove. The priest was George Ligon, whose nephew, William Ligon of Arle Court, held a substantial estate in Cheltenham, including the manor of Redgrove in the south-west corner of the parish. When the men refused to stop, he rushed back to his nephew’s house, interrupting the household’s dinner to deliver the news.

The Lignons immediately set out to confront the interlopers with several of their servants, all armed with staves and various farming implements. When they began breaking down the nets, a violent confrontation was inevitable. But the men they rushed to meet were not strangers, nor common thieves, but their ‘nigh kinsmen’. Their argument was with William Read, who owned the grove where the hawks had been raised, and his brothers John and Gabriel, the sons of George’s cousin Richard. Accompanying them were Henry and Nicholas Norwood, whose father’s manor of Leckhampton bordered Ligon’s estate in Redgrove. Despite the kinship between the Lignons and the Reads, the resulting brawl, fought with swords, pikes, bills, staves, and fists, was close and nasty.

John Read remembered William Ligon striking Gabriel Read so hard with a staff that Gabriel sank to his knees defenceless; George Ligon recalled a companion of the Reads sneaking to attack an unarmed Ligon servant from behind. The brawl seems to have been ended when John Read was struck down from behind with a sharp bill, which he complained

‘did cut & cast down his bones and flesh from the top of the blade of the shoulder until the middle of the back, cutting with the said stroke five of the ribs of your said subject clear in sunder, so that his lights and lungs might easily have been in so much that your said subject of the said grievous wound from the time of his said hurt until Candlemas last past, being twenty weeks...’¹

Almost a century and a half later, in 1693, another armed brawl near Cheltenham was only resolved with the intervention of the House of Commons. This time, the quarrel centred upon ownership of a tree, known as the Forden Elm. The tree grew next to a highway near to Forden House (the future Charlton Park), which belonged to John Greville. His brother, Giles, was lord of the manor of Ashley, within Charlton Kings, and the tree in question had been planted near to the house by one of their ancestors. But although the Grevilles were lords of Ashley, their manor was held of Sir Ralph Dutton’s manor of the hundred of Cheltenham, and it was not clear which manor had the rights to the wastes, the uncultivated marginal lands that bordered the fields.

Dutton’s steward, John Prinn, had tried to assert his master’s rights by ordering the felling of the tree, but Greville threatened to shoot the workmen. In the meantime, ‘some poor people’ (commanded, claimed witnesses, by John Greville) chopped down

the tree during the night, taking away the roots and branches. The next day, when Prinn and the blunderbuss-wielding constables confronted this 'rabble', numbering 40 and still chopping up the tree, Greville appeared nearby with a hand gun. Prinn, armed with a warrant from a local Justice, demanded Greville's gun, though the latter was on his own land and qualified as a gentleman to own a gun. No wonder, then, that Greville refused and 'gave him a box on the ear', leaving Prinn 'black and blue several Days'. Greville was bound over to appear before a Justice, but had his case dismissed at a private session. Taunted by Greville, Prinn had the case brought before the House of Commons. Perhaps wisely, the Commons carefully determined that Greville had not breached Dutton's privilege as a Member of Parliament, and discharged the case.² However, Prinn still had the last laugh, buying Forden House from the Grevilles in 1716.

At first glance, these two 'riots' appear to be worlds apart. The naked aggression of the sixteenth-century confrontation is apparent, each side claiming the other attacked without thought or provocation. Fought with sharp weapons and agricultural implements, it resulted in grievous wounds. In contrast, despite the presence of firearms, the only violence of the seventeenth-century brawl was a single blow to the face resulting in bruises and hurt pride. Whilst the Ligon had confronted the Reads with armed retainers and asserted their rights through force of arms, Prinn confronted Greville with the local constables and a warrant from a Justice.

This greater disciplinary power of the law and legal officers in the later seventeenth century is particularly apparent if one considers that, at the time of the brawl in 1551, William Ligon was the sheriff of Worcestershire and his brother-in-law was the sheriff of Gloucestershire, William Read was a future sheriff of Gloucestershire, and both would serve as Justices within the hundred of Cheltenham. The two cases also reveal the greater stratification of society in the 1690s compared to the 1550s. In 1551, the Reads shared the dinner of a tenant at his house whilst the Ligon fought alongside their servants, but in 1693 Greville was a remote commander of the poor of his manor, who were dismissed by some witnesses as 'a rabble'. Yet Greville could also pose as a champion of the poor man, giving his tree to them to frustrate Dutton's plans to use the wood to repair the local gaol.

However, both incidents were at core the same, revolving around disputed rights to the marginal waste lands that bordered their possessions. The Ligon was fighting to assert their right to the lane and hedges that ran between their lands and those of the Reads; Prinn was asserting Sir Ralph Dutton's right to the Forden Elm to emphasise his right also to the highway in which it stood. This was not merely a matter of honour, though. The value of the wood that grew in the lanes and hedgerows of the manors was certainly not inconsiderable. But more than this, both cases demonstrate the crisis of authority created within the manor of Cheltenham by an absentee lord (the Crown in the 1550s, Sir Ralph Dutton in the 1690s). Elsewhere, lordship over a hundred had been reduced to little more than a few customary pecuniary rights, but Cheltenham hundred was a liberty which was merged with the manor of Cheltenham, clouding the question of authority.

The resident gentry within the hundred had long been struggling to establish their estates as autonomous manors. The Ligon in Arle, the Grevilles in Ashley, and the Norwoods in Leckhampton were just three such families. Although Prinn was undoubtedly a gentleman, as a barrister he was looked down upon by Greville, and as

steward of the manor of Cheltenham he was resented as the agent of the absentee lord. That the struggle over the Forden Elm represents a larger struggle for authority within Cheltenham is aptly symbolised by Dutton’s plan to use the wood to repair his gaol, and Greville’s recruitment of the poor to defeat it. It was through such brawls as these, and the legal battles which followed, that the gentlemen of Cheltenham hundred established and defended their rights against their neighbours. One can easily imagine that it was a constant struggle.

¹ TNA, STAC 3/2/5.

² Parliamentary Archives, ‘Mr Greville’s Case’, PET 1/23; *House of Commons Journal*, XI (London, 1803), pp. 84-87.

Elm Trees in the Local Landscape



A section of the 18th century estate map, from the Prinn and Russell records, of Charlton Park, (ref. D7661, Box8/1).

Reproduced courtesy of Caroline Magnus and Stokesay Court and Gloucestershire Archives

Elm trees must have been a noticeable feature of the area. Records exist of relatively small parcels of land with 83 and 69 elms. Well Walk, planted in the winter of 1739, with a double row of elms on each side, became an imposing avenue. Elms were used as important points in the defining of boundaries: hence Piff’s Elm, Maud’s or Maules, Fluck’s, Haydon’s, Pope’s and the Forden Elm, featured in this article. Felling elms was deplored, as when the trees were felled to make way for St George’s Road. Their presence has led to the naming of roads, such as Elm Street, Elm Close, Elm Court and Copt Elm Road. There are also dwellings, namely The Elms, Elm Villa and Elmview Cottages, and there was Elm Farm, Leckhampton and Elmfield School, Gardner’s Lane. Sadly, in the 1960s Dutch Elm Disease returned to the country from North America and wiped out millions of trees. A few copses and hedgerows still contain sapling elm trees, marking where elms once stood, but as soon as they get to a certain size they are attacked.

Errata

Journal 33, (2017), ‘Being Divine’- Sarah Bernhardt at the Town Hall, by Roger Beacham, page 21, note 6.

To clarify the meaning of the footnote, it should be read as:

‘*The Times*, 11 April 1923, on-line edition, accessed 7 October 2010, refers to the Requiem Mass. Sarah had been raised as a Catholic and as a young girl had felt attracted to the life of a religious sister.’

Recent Books and Articles on the History of Cheltenham - 2017

STEVEN BLAKE

Baker, Norman J., *Prestbury Past & Present Volume Two*, published by Prestbury Local History Society, 2017. 121 pages. £10.00. Chapters on the early history and development of Prestbury, including its roads and fields, with detailed studies of Home Farm and Lower Mill.

Elder, David, *Cheltenham in 50 Buildings*, Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2017. 96pp. £14.99.

Graham, Nigel, *A Snapshot of the life of St. Silas Church 1885-2016*, Gran Books Publishing, Cheltenham, 2017. 84pp. Unpriced.

Hodsdon, James, 'Facts and fallacies: a reappraisal of the early years of the Cheltenham waters', *The Local Historian* **47(2)**, April 2017, 138-48.

Inder, Pam, *The Rag Trade. The People Who Made Our Clothes*, Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2017. Includes (chapter 3, pp.47-62) an account of a Cheltenham dressmaker, Rebecca Thomas of Promenade Villas (c.1830-1902) and the 1867 Workshop Regulation Act.

Law, Susan C., *Through the Keyhole: Sex, Scandal and the Secret Life of the Country House*, The History Press, Stroud, 2015. Includes information on the private life and 1830 divorce of Edward Law, Lord Ellenborough of Southam.

O'Connor, David (editor), *Charlton Kings Local and Family History Society Research Bulletin* **63** (2017). 58pp. Articles on Charlton Kings by a number of authors, including Castletown House and Courtfield (David O'Connor and John & Beverley Wisdom), Burghill (David O'Connor), 7 Hambrook Street (David O'Connor), Charlton Kings dissenters 1689-1852 (Anthea Jones), the bankruptcy of Major General English (David O'Connor) and Miss Roche's School (James Linton).

Sandles, Geoff, *Brewing in Gloucestershire*, Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2016. 96pp. £14.99. Includes several Cheltenham breweries.

Whitney, Charles E., *We Will Remember Them. Old Decanians Who Lost Their Lives as a Result of Conflict*, Logaston Press, Almeley (Herefs), 2014. 82pp. £5.00. Wartime casualties from Dean Close School, Boer War onwards.

Wills, Jan (editor), 'Archaeological Review No. 40, 2015', *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* **134** (2016), includes (p.292) the report of an excavation at Farm Lane, Leckhampton, which revealed evidence of occupation from the Mesolithic to early Roman periods. Recording at the former industrial estate at 205 Leckhampton Road (pp.292-3) revealed two brick-lined limekiln pots and adjacent brick and stone walls.

The street-by-street database of the **Pittville History Works** website (www.pittvillehistory.org.uk) is continuing to grow, and a number of new articles have been added to the site during the past 12 months, including the history of The Grange, Evesham Road (James Hodsdon), Black swans on Pittville Lake (Julian Holland), Florence Earengay and Women's Suffrage in Cheltenham (Sue Jones), plus a photographic survey and transcriptions of the graves and memorials of Pittville residents in Holy Trinity church.

New information is regularly added to the **South Town, Cheltenham Spa. 200 Years of Local Trading History** project (www.cheltenhamouthtown.org), which is well worth checking by anyone interested in the Bath Road, Suffolks and Tivoli area of the town.

Gloucestershire Archives: Cheltenham New Accessions 2017

JULIE COURTENAY, Collections Leader

The following list is a summary of new archives for Cheltenham that arrived at Gloucestershire Archives during 2017. The Archives is very grateful for these donations and deposits, and for news of records held elsewhere, whether in paper or digital format.

We aim to add at least brief details of all new ‘accessions’ (batches) of archives to our online catalogue (ww3.gloucestershire.gov.uk/CalmView/) within 15 working days of their arrival. The online catalogue will explain if there are any restrictions to accessing particular records. It can take longer to process large accessions, so there may be a delay before a full description of each item appears on the catalogue.

Members of the Cheltenham Local History Society continued to volunteer regularly at the Archives, helping to list some large solicitors’ archives and thus make them accessible for the first time. We really appreciate this support and always have a variety of activities on offer for volunteers. As from 2018 we will be publicising details of newly completed catalogues each month.

As many readers know, the Archives has embarked on an ambitious partnership project *For the Record*, to create an onsite and offsite Heritage Hub. To keep up to date with the project, especially any changes for visitors to the Archives, please see our website www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives. If you would like to receive quarterly updates from the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub, please let us know at archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Bruton Knowles of Gloucester, estate agents and auctioneers: files relating to BK’s Cheltenham office, and to industrial and commercial properties and land, 1985-1997 (Gloucestershire Archives catalogue reference **D2299**, accession 14353)

Cheltenham Borough Council: various accounts and reports from late 19th to late 20th centuries, including the Urban Sanitary Authority and Water Works annual accounts, 1880-1897; the report of Expenditure Inquiry Committee, 1906-1907; and estimates for the general rate, 1942-1974 (**CBR** acc 14572); the Local Plan Review, 1991-1992; draft strategy for regeneration, 1996; Lower High Street neighbourhood renewal area first progress report, 1997; Cheltenham civic pride urban design framework, 2008; Character Area Appraisals and Management plans for Sydenham; Lansdown; Pittville; Eldorado; The Suffolks; Bath Road; Tivoli; St Luke’s; College; Leckhampton; Lower High Street; The Park; St Paul’s; Dean Close and Hatherley Road; Suffolk Square; Fairview and All Saints; The Poets, Cheltenham Central; St Mary’s (Charlton Kings), 2008-2009 (**DC148** acc 14304)

Cheltenham & District Orchid Society: secretary’s correspondence and other papers, 1976-1978; attendance record, 1985-1998; Show committee minutes, 1994-2000; photograph album of 25th anniversary dinner, 2000 (**D9447** acc 14401)

Cheltenham Methodists: press photo of Bethesda Chapel Bazaar, May 1914, and leaflet about 160th Birthday celebrations, 1988; re-dedication of St. Matthew’s as a shared place of worship, 1972; Order of Service for uniting St. Matthew’s and Bethesda, 1989; tape recording of Mr.

S.R. Grove's (1876-1978) recollections of St George's Street Chapel, 1978; copy of the 'Wesley Messenger' 1948; programme for Open-Door Week at St. Mark's, 1979 (**D3418** acc 14395.1); press cuttings relating to vandalism and arson at Whaddon Chapel, 1990s (**D7028** acc 14395.2)

Coroner's records: inquest files, 2000-2002 (**CO**, acc 14587) [restricted access]

Deeds of properties in Columbia Street, Victoria Street and York Street, 1853-1904; St Paul's Street, 1835; Townsend Street, 1834-1841; and Upper Norwood Street, Leckhampton, 1835-1837, all in the manor of Cheltenham (**D14407**); deeds for 12 Oxford Parade and house numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 in Edward Street, 1824-1936 (**D14574**)

Dowty Heritage community archive project: photographs belonging to a former Dowty employee, including some Dowty offices (one with staff identified), one of the Rotol Brabazon propeller, and various groups and locations, not all identified, [1950s-1960s]; also includes one photograph of the Cheltenham Young Persons Orchestra, taken by Cheltenham Newspaper Co Ltd, 1950 (**D14045** acc 14298)

Holst Birthplace Museum: sound rushes for films about Holst by Demeter Films, 1970s (*see D13572 acc.13572 for the films*); 8 DVDs made by Tony Palmer, the maker of the original film, in preparation for his 2011 film "In the Bleak Midwinter" (**D13572** acc 14428)

R Inglis: administration of the estate of the late Robert Inglis of Cheltenham, 1852 (**D14365**)

Leckhampton Women's Institute [*group closed in 2014*]: committee minutes, 1975-2014; minutes of group rallies, 1966-2014 (**D2933** acc 14567);

Leckhampton Evening Women's Institute: committee minutes, 2007-2015; records of monthly meetings, 2011-2012; scrapbooks, 1946-2013 (**D2933** acc 14309);

Loveridge family: cash book of Mrs Clara Loveridge's front room shop at 1 Whitehart Street, 1925-1930; condolence card for George VI issued by Evans and Co of Osborne House, High Street, and sent to Mrs Loveridge at 247 High Street, 1936; Miss M S Loveridge's membership card for the Wesley Church Choir, undated, c.1937; programme for Cheltenham Methodist Youth's first Eisteddfod, 1946 (**D14429**)

D G Martin slide collection: slides and script for talk "Cheltenham Past and Present" comprising views of buildings and street scenes, and giving information about each one, 1960s-1989 (**D12083** acc 14510)

New Court School: photograph album relating to New Court School, containing photographs and memorabilia, 1967-1970, compiled by former school secretary, 2016. [*The school closed in 1969 and the pupils and some of the staff transferred to Dean Close School*] (**D14470**)

R W Paterson of Gloucester and Cheltenham, architect: photographs and memorabilia of Robert W Paterson copy articles of association for R E and C Marshall, 1903; photos of architectural projects undertaken by R W Paterson, 1940s-1950s; sale particulars of Leckhampton Court Estate, 1912 with correspondence about the water supply, 1956; legal papers concerning Ashmeade Lodge, 1910-1949; papers about the development of Tower Lodge (1938)-1989; tree planting on Leckhampton Hill, 1970-1972; notes and related papers concerning the history and development of Leckhampton Hill, 1970s-1980s (**D3867** acc 14388)

St Mark's bellringers: information display boards entitled 'St Mark's Bells Today' and 'St Mark's Bell Restoration Plan', c.2003; information on the peal of 5 bells cast by Messrs Rudhall of Gloucester for Colesbourne Church in 1719 (**D14433**)

J Smith: papers relating to administration of estate of the late John Smith of Cheltenham, 1834-1850 (**D6415** acc 14368)

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 Newby, Charlotte, wife of Joseph Dunton 30
 Newman and Gwinnett, solicitors 53
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Park Place Hotel	8	Siddons, Sarah	48
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Paul, Rowland	52	Six Chimneys Lane	8
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Pittville Circus Road	3, 9	St Julia's Cottage, Cheltenham	47
Pittville Court	3	St Margaret's Road	38
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Plough Inn or Hotel	52	Staffing, early church, Cheltenham	18
Portland Cottages	4	Stanley Lawn, Albert Road	9
Portland Place	4	Stiles Hotel and Boarding House, High Street	9
Portland Square	4	<i>Stonehouse Inn</i> , Swindon Road	9
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Pousty, William, photographer	27	Sun Street	10
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Reeve's Riding School	4	Toll House, Townsend Street	11
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Ricketts, Susan and Mary	30	Walworth Lodge, Thirlestaine Road	6
Riddell, John, Colonel	46	Warwick Place	11
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Rodney Hotel	5	Watson, John Bowles	45
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<i>Rose and Crown Inn</i>	5	Wellington House or Mansion	48
Rosehill House	5	Wellington Infant School	11
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