

**A CHRONOLOGY
OF
HOUSING THE POOR
IN CHELTENHAM**



**Compiled by
Jill Waller, Heather Atkinson
and Sue Rowbotham**



*Cheltenham
Local History Society*

INTRODUCTION

Housing the Poor: Social Housing for All was selected as the theme of this year's Gloucestershire Rural Community Council's County Local History Afternoon, to be held on 3 October 2009 at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Longlevens, Gloucester. This book was compiled to accompany a display put on by Cheltenham Local History Society at this event.

Persistent images of Cheltenham as a Regency town full of retired colonels, or a centre of education with famous, high-achieving schools, ignore the social problems and poor housing that have also played a large part in the town's history. This Chronology takes a look at Cheltenham's poor and needy, and how they were provided for over the years by the church, the state, and by wealthy benefactors and local philanthropists, some of whom exhibited extraordinary kindness.

Much of the research for this book was reliant on secondary sources, and the compilers would welcome any corrections or contributions that the reader feels should be included in any amended future edition.

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(With apologies to those we may have omitted to mention.)

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A Cheltenham slum dwelling in the 1920s. Some of the town's poorest residents inhabited streets and courts off Swindon Road, such as Swindon Place, where 38 houses shared just three earth privies.

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The extract from the Cheltenham Old Town Survey 1855-7 (illustration 16) is reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives and Cheltenham Local History Society.

A CHRONOLOGY OF HOUSING THE POOR IN CHELTENHAM

ALMSHOUSES, CHARITABLE HOUSING &c

- 1507 Date carved above the door of a **church almshouse** at the **Chester Walk** entrance to the parish churchyard. The house accommodated 4 poor inhabitants and was supported by charitable donations. It was demolished in **1813** by the **Vestry**. (There is no evidence that the house was originally built to house the poor – the **Vestry** leased various houses for this purpose until a **parish Workhouse** was built in **1808-9**.)
- 1574 **Richard Pate (1516-88)** was born and probably educated in Cheltenham before studying Law at **Corpus Christi College, Oxford**. He became MP for **Gloucester** three times and was appointed to the commission, set up in **1546** for confiscating **Chantry** property. In **1574 Queen Elizabeth I** granted **Richard Pate** the endowments of the two **Chantries** (of **St Katherine** and of **St Mary**) in the **parish church**. He endowed a free **Grammar School** and an **almshouse** with these funds. The **Chantries** and their priests were supported by income from properties, the majority along the **High Street** but also a few further afield including in **Swindon Village, Gloucester** and **Leigh**.
- 1578 **Richard Pate** founded his almshouse for six elderly poor, situated on the north side of the **High Street** opposite **Rodney Road**. The stone building had a chapel attached, an orchard, pasture and a patch of garden for each inmate, who received a small weekly income (1s with an additional 4d every quarter) and 40 yds of black cloth yearly for gowns. The inmates shared a kitchen, but each had their own room. It was obligatory to attend the chapel twice a day, for an hour at a time, throughout the year. If there was no service, they still had to attend and pray on their own.
- At least two of the inmates were to be women, and all had to be at least 60 years of age and born in either Cheltenham parish or **Leigh**, ‘void of all notorious crimes’. It was common until recent times to assume that the really destitute had brought destitution upon themselves. **Richard Pate** was therefore unusual when he generously stated in the original Indenture that there should be consideration for those who had become paupers ‘by having or breeding of many children, or by fire or tempest, by robbery, or by wreck on the seas, or by unwise lending and suretiship [sic], or by sickness or such other means ...’.
- Any poor person in the **Pate’s Almshouse** who committed any offences, such as larceny, adultery, drunkenness, begging, swearing, victualling, or any other business, get married, or be absent for 14 days without permission, could be expelled from the Hospital by the Schoolmaster (of the **Grammar School**) or his deputy, the Usher, who both had responsibility for the inmates. **Pate’s Almshouse** was also known as the **Trinity Almshouses** to the townsfolk, as over the entrance door was inscribed ‘Holy and Indivisible Trinity Alms-houses, founded by Richard Pate Esq, A.D. 1578’.
- 1585 Three years before his death, **Richard Pate** established the **Pate Foundation**, entrusting the **Grammar School** and **Almshouse** to his *alma mater*, **Corpus Christi College, Oxford**, with the proviso that three quarters of the income from the former **Chantry** properties should provide for ‘the perpetual maintenance and foundation of a free **Grammar School** at Cheltenham ... and also a **Hospital** or **Almshouse** for six old poor people’. Over half the original Chantry properties still belong to the Pate Foundation, and are therefore still managed by the College. Funds have been raised on these properties for well over 500 years, and some of them display the **Corpus Christi College badge** on the outside of the building – a ‘pelican in her piety’ (e.g. Nos. **271** and **317-21 High Street**).
- 1599-1800 The accounts show that the ‘Paupers’, as the inmates of the **Pate’s Almshouses** were called, received the same amount of money – 1s weekly – during this period with no increase until the **1800s**. The sum of £15 12s consistently appears in the records, indicating how during this period the Schoolmasters and Ushers were negligent in their duties and allowed the Almshouses to deteriorate.
- 1617 A group of philanthropic men in **Charlton Kings** bought up various **Chantry** endowments in their parish. They also purchased a house, set a half-acre garden, which they divided up into nine dwellings, or **almshouses**, for poor and infirm people who needed homes.
- 1720 **Anne Goodrich** gave an almshouse of six rooms on the **High Street** in **Prestbury**. In **1856** there were 10 people in the almshouse, but by **1889** only 3 men and 3 women, and later only 3 people in all. Until **1958** a large sign hung outside proclaiming ‘The Gift of Anne Goodrich for the Religious Poor, **1720**’.
- The **Goodrich** family were yeomen of some standing in **Prestbury**, at one time farming **Lower Noverton**. Ironically their success diminished after **1750** and parish records show that eventually members of the Goodrich family had to apply for **parish relief**.

- 1804 The solicitors to the managers of the **Pate Foundation**, the Fellows of **Corpus Christi College, Oxford**, advised that the now-dilapidated Almshouse could be removed from its public position on the **High Street**, this change being effected under the **Cheltenham Inclosure Act of 1801**.
- 1811 **Corpus Christi** exchanged the **High Street** site of **Pate's Almshouse** for the inferior site of the present almshouse in **Albion Street**, now known as **Pate House**. This new, much smaller site, had no room for a chapel let alone an orchard. The **High Street** site was bought by **Thomas Smith**, a banker, for £250. Once the inmates had left, **Smith** resold the property for £2,000; the **Vittoria Hotel** was built there soon afterwards. The site has also housed **Woolworth's** and latterly part of the **Beechwood shopping arcade**.
- 1812 The women in **Pate's Almshouse** needed somewhere to do their washing, and the builder advised **Corpus Christi** that he could add a shed at the back of the site for this at a cost of £20-£30.
- 1817 In a Bill in Chancery filed by the Parish of Cheltenham, costing £14,000, an explanation was given by representatives of **Corpus Christi College** as to why the **High Street** site of the old **Pate's Almshouse** was allowed to be exchanged for such an inferior site in **Albion Street**. The move was effected under powers of the **Cheltenham Paving and Lighting Act**. Apparently the old **Almshouse** was in a 'state of great decay' in **1809**, and rebuilding or repair would be a great expense to the **Pate Foundation**. The banker **Thomas Smith**, under the new Paving Act, offered to remove the **Pate's Almshouse** and replace it on the back street site at his own expense. It was felt the new accommodation provided the inmates with more convenience; in particular they each had a bedroom or second room to their apartments that they had not had before.
- 1826 £25 was received by **Prestbury parish**, to be used for the Sunday School, repairing the (**Anne Goodrich**) almshouses and to supply coal to the poor.
- 1834 A list of **Charlton Kings parish** properties included the 'Alms Houses occupied by divers poor people'. These were the old long range of houses purchased before **1700**, as well as new **1826 Almshouses** – five tenements occupied by **Thomas Moss, Charles Wheeler, Thomas Bloxsome, William Clapton** and **Margaret Ashmead** 'with the gardens thereto belonging'. These homes had no amenities until **c1918** and occupiers had to fetch water from a pump.
- 16 Jan 1836 **Col. Ollney** died. His generous bequests included £8,000 to build, endow and maintain almshouses for 10 poor men and 8 poor women on condition that a piece of land for the project was conveyed to the Trustees within 10 years of his death. A site measuring 100 ft x 160 ft was selected near the **new St Peter's Church, Tewkesbury Road**, and a public meeting was held on **6 January 1846** when time had almost run out to convey the land. The 10-year delay was caused by a pending law-suit in **the Irish Court of Chancery**, which had led to some doubts as to whether the bequest would be released. Although the land was purchased, the almshouses were never built, the land remaining as market gardens, as the Irish court case proved unfavourable.
- 5 Oct 1858 An indenture made between **Catharine Ball**, with 5 others, and **William Fowler Heather**, with 2 others, was enrolled in Chancery. The indenture was to grant a piece of land, part of a field called **Breach Hill** in the parish of **Leckhampton**, 40 ft x 90 ft. Two **Almshouse** cottages would be erected on this plot (now on **Shurdington Road**, at the **Bath Road** end) for '4 poor aged or infirm women, giving a preference to those within the district of **St Philip's** or the parish of Cheltenham'. The Almshouses still stand, bearing the inscription 'CB AD **1858** In Memoriam'.
- 26 Jan 1860 **Mrs Catharine Ball** died. According to the *Cheltenham Examiner*, amongst her charitable bequests she left £300 for the erection of almshouses for poor widows of **St Paul's, Cheltenham**, and £300 'for the endowment thereof'.
- c1860 The conditions for the **Catharine Ball Almshouses**, built in **Leckhampton**, were that 'no occupant should take any inmate or lodger without express permission in writing'; and that 'every occupant could be removed if necessary'. After all the running costs for the Almshouses were paid out of the income from investments, 'the surplus is to be divided among the inmates of the cottages in cash, clothing, or otherwise'. Trustees could, however, require contributions from the inmates if funds should be insufficient to pay outgoings.
- 15 Apr 1863 The *Cheltenham Examiner* published a letter from **Andrew Paul**, surveyor to the **Pate's Charity Estate**. He was responding to a claim by **Mr Goding** at the Easter Vestry meeting that the **Pate's Almshouse** was then uninhabitable – apparently the rooms were damp, the floors had rotted away, the houses almost in ruins and the inmates were in temporary shelter in other lodgings'. **Mr Paul** said this was a gross exaggeration – there was some damp in the west end of the building arising from defects in the adjoining premises. The interior required little more than 'a general cleansing, colouring and painting'. The boarded floors on the ground floor were being taken up to allow ventilation, a process not thought necessary when the building had been erected nearly 50 years previously. He admitted that the masonry in the front wall needed some remediation, but the inmates had 'only been removed to save personal discomfort to half a dozen aged people'.

- 1867 A pauper resident at **Pate's Almshouse**, **Mrs Hester Percy**, described as 'a scold and a slanderer', was expelled from her home.
- 1882 The Cheltenham branch of the **Charity Organisation Society** (CCOS) formed a small committee to consider setting up an improved dwellings company locally. The aim was to provide better standards of working-class housing and also a return on any investment in the scheme. The **Cheltenham Cottage Company** (registered office – **131 High Street**) was formed and the aim was to build cottages that could be let from between 3 and 4 shillings per week. The 'moving spirit' behind this scheme was the **Rev. James Albert Owen**, a master at **Cheltenham College** and local philanthropist.
- May 1882 The **Cheltenham Cottage Company** bought land in **White Hart Street** for £185 and added 5 cottages to one already existing there. They cost £485 to build plus another £65 in improvements to meet the satisfaction of the viewing committee. By **June 1884** all six cottages were let. Some of these were later bought by the **Great Western Railway** and demolished in **1903** to make way for the railway embankment carrying the Honeybourne line.
- Oct 1882 An extensive plot in **Millbrook Street** was bought by the philanthropic **Cheltenham Cottage Company** for £1,000. A terrace of 34 cottages was built, to be let at 3/6d and 4/6d depending on size, with the first one ready to be let by **June 1884**.
- Nov 1882 The directors of the **Cheltenham Cottage Company** decided against purchasing any more land. In **Feb 1904** the company revealed that, while it might consider purchasing other cottages, its main short-term aim was to pay off the company's debts of £1,210. Although the company may never have provided a satisfactory return for its investors, it did provide housing of a reasonable standard to people who could otherwise only afford overcrowded slum conditions. The Cheltenham Cottage Company was still managing its properties over 100 years later.
- Jun 1897 To commemorate **Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee**, the inmates of the **Pate's Almshouse** each received £1.
- May 1899 The foundation stone was laid for 10 cottage homes for the aged poor next to **Naunton Park**, funded by a generous donation from **John Alexander Hay** and his wife **Marianne Louisa**, as a memorial of their long residence in Cheltenham. The couple lived at **The Ronans** in **Old Bath Road** (no longer extant) and **Mrs Hay** had already donated a thatched arbour to the **Naunton Park** gardens in **1894**. One of the **Hay Memorial Cottage Homes** was for a resident nurse.
- 1904 An extension of two additional cottages and two communal washhouses were added to the **Hay Memorial Cottage Homes**. The whole complex, totalling 12 homes, had been designed by the Borough Surveyor, **Joseph Hall**. The contractor for the main block was **Allen Wilson**, but **Messrs A.C. Billings & Sons Ltd.** claimed to have built Hay Homes in an advert when the opening of the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** was reported in the *Chronicle & Graphic* on 18 Jul 1925. Billings also built the **Bucklehaven Almshouses** and the **Strickland Homes**. The management of the **Hay Memorial Cottage Homes** was vested in the Mayor, Alderman and Rector of Cheltenham.
- 1906 **W.H. Horsley** became the managing director of the **Cheltenham Cottage Company** – he had been Company Secretary since **1882**.
- c1910 In **1892 Lord Rowton**, politician and philanthropist, had set up the first Rowton House in London, a working men's hostel for homeless men. Each man had a 'cubicle' to sleep in, with clean sheets, and hot water for washing in at 6d (2.5p) per night. Discipline was strict, and the buildings were closed in the daytime, so men had to queue up to book in for the night. Many 'Rowton Houses' were established all over the country. By **c1910** there was a **Rowton House** in Cheltenham, next door to **Shamrock House** (formerly a public house with lodgings for the Irish community) in **Grove Street**, just off the **Lower High Street**. It was used to accommodate homeless men.
- 1910 **Mrs Caroline Strickland** died, leaving everything in her will to her sister, **Eliza Standish**, a spinster, who had lived with her at **Deodar House, Kings Road**, Cheltenham (*see Sept 1911*).
- Sep 1910 Plans for eight almshouses at **Moorend, Charlton Kings**, were submitted by the architect, **J.M. Pizey** of Bristol, and passed by the **Charlton Kings District Council**. These opened as the **Bucklehaven Almshouses** in **1911**, for impoverished gentlefolk, the gift of **John Charles Buckle**, a wealthy baker and ship owner of Redland, Bristol, who died in **1899**. (His ancestors had lived in the **Boddington, Elmstone Hardwick, Staverton** and **Uckington** villages on the outskirts of Cheltenham for several hundred years). Buckle left a large sum of money in his will, the equivalent of £1.5 million in today's terms, some of which was to build the Almshouses and pay a weekly income to its residents. In the original deed Buckle stated that the Trustees were to elect aged and infirm men and women 'giving preference to persons who have occupied better positions in life and through misfortune have become reduced in circumstances'.

The houses were built of **Cleeve Hill** 'weather stone', and each had 'an entrance vestibule, fitted with seats for the convenience of the occupants'. It was planned that a further row of houses would be added at right angles to the original eight **Bucklehaven Almshouses**, but this did not happen for another 87 years (*see 1998*). The first homes were originally approached from **Sandy Lane Road** across a cast-iron bridge, but the entrance is now re-located in **Stockton Close** (*see 1964*).

- Sep 1911 **Eliza Standish** died and her will included a bequest to establish an **almshouse** or **almshouses** for poor persons being residents in the parish of Cheltenham, at an approximate cost of £2,000 for the land and building to be called '**The Caroline Strickland Home**' or similar (*see 1910*). The remainder of the money was to be invested to keep the **Almshouses** in proper repair, with surplus income used to pay a weekly allowance to the inmates. Six Trustees would 'select suitable persons and remove unsuitable persons'.
- 1913 First reference to the **Sunset Home**, or '**Pensioners' Home**', provided by a £1,000 legacy of **Miss Voile** (*see 1917*).
- Oct 1913 Plans were passed for the erection of 5 almshouses in **Hales Road**, to be built in bungalow style, under the terms of the will of **Eliza Standish**. The site purchased for them, for £395 10s, was 113 ft x 103 ft with a covenant on 30 ft of land at the back. This area could not be built on, unless for greenhouses or an ornamental structure, so the residents' view would not be spoiled (*see 1995*).
- 1914 The date when the **Caroline Strickland Almshouses** were opened, which appears on the wrought iron arch at the front of the building. There were 5 almshouses, all self-contained with their own front door, with communal gardens at the front and rear. They were rent-free.
- Aug 1914 **3 Monson Terrace** was purchased for £310 and called the **Sunset Home** – a 'shelter and haven of rest for aged pensioners'. The Home accommodated eight women, in their own bed-sitting rooms, rent free; also gas for lighting and cooking, and a weekly coal allowance of 1s. (5p) A caretaker was appointed who 'spares no pains to make the inmates happy and comfortable'.
- 1917 The **Cheltenham Charity Organisation Society (CCOS)** Annual Report stated that only £700 of **Miss Voile**'s legacy remained, the interest of which was for the **Sunset Home** (*see 1913*). The Home was 'an increasing burden on the Society'. Due to the War, outgoings were higher, with less income from subscriptions. At this time one penny per week was paid by residents over 60 years of age, with an income of 5-10s week. (25-50p).
- Post-1918 **Nos 2-9 Malvern Road (1-7 Lansdown Terrace)**, were converted to flats for war widows by the **Officers' Families Association**, and renamed **Evelyn Court**. The Association also developed **Evelyn Close**, off **Greenfield Drive, Sandy Lane**, for the same purpose.
- 31 May 1922 The will of **Henry David Gregory Chambers**, a gentleman from Reading, comprised a charity for setting up almshouses. A Trust Fund for the establishment of a number of these, to be known as the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** (named after Mr Chambers' sister), invited schemes for submission from interested parties. Immediately, the **CCOS** Committee made an offer to administer part of this fund in Cheltenham. By **5 July 1922**, this had taken effect, with the **CCOS** Committee as Trustees.
- Dec 1922 The amount of the legacy for the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** in Cheltenham was £12,080 and the site, in **Tennyson Road**, was chosen.
- 4 Jul 1924 The scheme for the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** in Cheltenham was approved. The cost of land, building and furnishing and equipping ten almshouses was not to exceed £4,000. It was specified that one room should be set apart for the reception of pictures and photographs, as per the Schedule. A Matron could be appointed, whom the Trustees could 'dismiss at their pleasure'; she was to have a room in the residence and a salary of £30 per annum.
- 8 Jul 1925 The **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** were officially opened. Qualifications for residents were that they should be 'poor persons of the Protestant faith, and of good character; reached the age of 63 years; not in receipt of **Poor Relief** (other than medical); and who are, from age, ill-health, accident or infirmity, partly or wholly unable to maintain themselves by their own exertions'. Married couples, or two sisters could share an almshouse and each receive a stipend. The stipend was 5s a week, (25p), reduced if the almsperson had other income of 15s a week.
- 1929 The regulations of the **Sunset Home** were amended and defined, stating that it was for women over 60 years of age, with a guaranteed income of 10s (50p) weekly, none of which could be **Poor Relief**. Inmates would be provided with a room free of charge, gas for lighting and cooking with a coal allowance of 1s 6d (7.5p) weekly. All inmates should provide sufficient furniture for their room and observe the strictest cleanliness. Inmates not in receipt of the **Old Age Pension** must belong to the **Cheltenham Provident Dispensary**, or have some other means of medical relief approved by the Committee. The Committee had power to remove an inmate for breach of these regulations, insobriety, misconduct or any other reasons deemed sufficient.

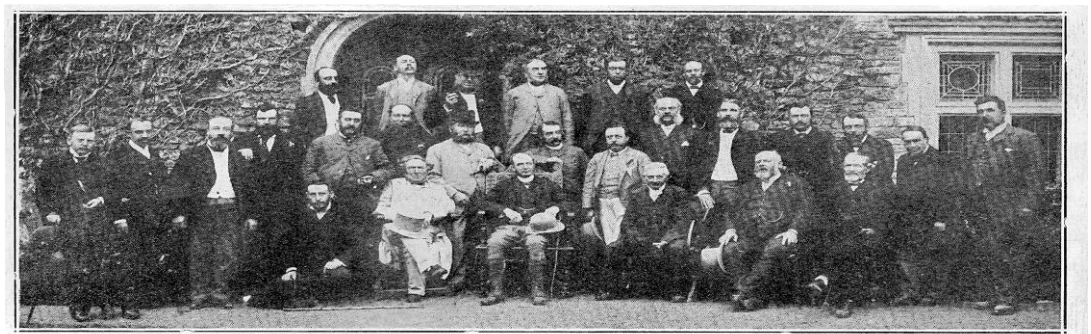


1. Josephine Butler, the great Victorian social reformer, wrote of Cheltenham where she had lived for 10 years: 'There are low class brothels and slums which would be a disgrace to London or New York.'



2. This photo of the Frances Owen Memorial Homes for 'rescued children' was taken between 1892-1900, when the Home was situated at Cambray Villa. Frances Owen and her husband, the Rev. James Owen, were involved with many charitable causes in the town.

3. Cheltenham's Board of Guardians, 1889. An excursion of Guardians and ex-Guardians to Cirencester Park, 13 September 1889.



CHELTEMHAM GUARDIANS IN 1889.

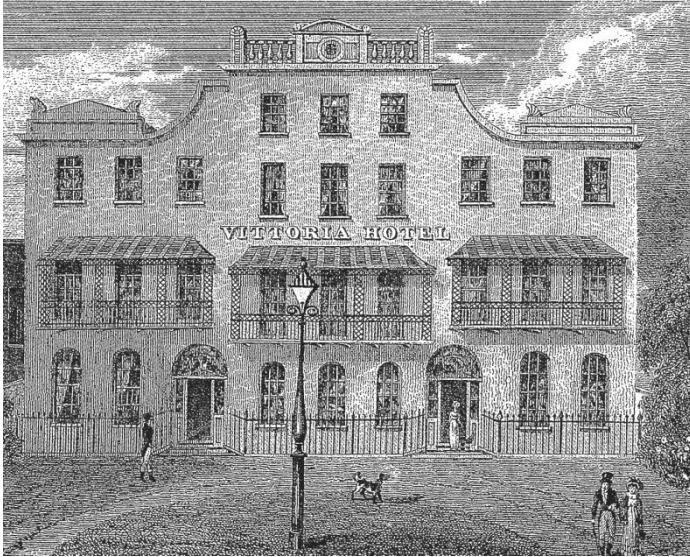
This shows a party of the Cheltenham Board of Guardians, ex-Guardians, and friends at an excursion—the first of a short annual series—to Cirencester Park on September 13th, 1889. The block is made from a photograph recently presented to the Board by Mr. H. E. Branch. The four other known survivors of the party (there may possibly be a sixth) are Messrs. T. H. Packer, J. L. Brookes, T. Hewinson, and W. Price (formerly of Charlton Kings, now of Ealing).
 Back (left to right)—Ald. G. Norman, Messrs. E. Shenton, J. Tanner, J. Price, J. L. Brookes, and J. Cypher.
 Middle row.—Messrs. H. E. Branch, T. H. Packer, J. Fisher, J. Dutton, W. Price, A. Weaver, J. T. Darby (Union Architect), F. Ticehurst (Deputy Clerk), Ald. Simms-Bull, G. M. Kite, J. B. Taylor, T. Hewinson, H. G. Margrett, H. Neale, and C. W. King (Vice-Chairman).
 Front row.—Messrs. G. Lyne, S. Onley, W. F. Hicks-Beach (Chairman), W. Heath, B. W. Pearce, and J. D. Steel.



4. The Female Orphan Asylum & School of Industry for Girls was opened in 1808 and moved to this site in upper Winchcombe Street in 1818. This engraving shows Charlotte House (right), built in 1834, which was used as an Orphan Asylum until its demolition in 1958. Note that Pittville Gates are in the background.

- 1933 **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses**' residents included a married couple, two sisters, four widows and three single women, and the new Matron. Four residents were over 80 years old. The previous Matron, 'greatly beloved by all in the Almshouses and the Trustees' had just left for a new post.
- Jun 1936 The **Catharine Ball Almshouses** and £200 consolidated stock at 2.5% were vested to the **Official Custodian for Charities** by order of the Charity Commission. The Trustees continued to run the Almshouses as before.
- 1938 A legacy by **Augusta Louise Green** apportioned £5,290 to the **Sunset Home**, enabling it to move to larger premises. The will, dated **11 May 1926**, stipulated that the home be 'for women in any station in life, preferably from the county of Gloucester, who in their old age are in needy circumstances...'. A codicil to the will provided a legacy for a '**Home Help fund**' to provide for women in their own homes or rooms.
- 1939 The **Sunset Home** moved to **3 Carlton Street** at a cost of £1,050. The property purchased had a frontage of 69 ft 6 ins, with the additional **Carlton Cottage, 1 Carlton Street**. The **Monson Terrace** property was sold for £475.
- 1941 The **Official Trustee for Charitable Lands** took over the **Strickland Home**, although the Trustees continued to run it. The Trustees were always the Mayor, four senior Aldermen, and two local Reverends. The value of funds held at this time was £4,400 in stocks and shares, with an income of approximately £185. Inmates received weekly payments of 9s (45p) which, together with rates, gas, tithes, insurance and the gardener cost £137, leaving £48 for cottage repairs.
- 1944 The inmates of the **Caroline Strickland Home** received £1 each as a New Year gift. (This became an annual gesture).
- 1947 An anonymous gift of £100 was given towards repairs at the **Caroline Strickland Home**.
- 1948 Stipends were no longer paid to residents of the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses**.
- July 1948 Following legislation, all almshouses became regarded as '**Social Housing**'. There was a rule that if a person had sold their own house, or had a certain amount of capital; they would not qualify to live in an almshouse.
- 1950 The **Sunset Home** had 8 elderly female residents, who looked after themselves. Each had their own room, which was rent free, with free light and gas for cooking. A matron lived on the premises whose services were available as required, but if ill, the residents had to go into hospital.
- 1954 **Pope's Close**, a scheme of bungalows for the elderly, was built on the site of **The Elms, Swindon Road**, the former mansion of **Admiral Sir Tristram Ricketts** who had donated land for the **Union Workhouse** building. The Elms had been used to house the Workhouse children in the later years of the 19th century.
- 1955 The covenant concerning the 30 ft of land behind the boundary of the **Caroline Strickland Home** was lifted, enabling builders to erect a bungalow as part of the development of **Strickland Road** (*see Oct 1913*).
- Apr 1955 **Pate House**, the **Albion Street almshouse**, was registered as a Grade 2 Listed Building.
- c1958 The **Rural District Council** purchased the **1720 Anne Goodrich Almshouses**, described as 'three picturesque and ancient thatched cottages' in c1950, and replaced them with flats for the elderly in what is called **Anne Goodrich Close** off the **High Street, Prestbury**.
- 1958 Due to falling income from investments, it was decided that new **Caroline Strickland Home** residents would receive 10s weekly, whilst the existing residents would continue to receive 12s 6d. By **1962** the financial situation had improved and all residents received 12s 6d weekly.
- 1960 The **Charities Act** came into effect. The **Charity Commission** officially transferred lands and funds held by charities to the **Official Custodian for Charities**, who would then sanction any major expenditure of the Trustees of the Charity. The Act was phased in over a number of years.
- 1960 When the **Charities Act** came into existence, the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** were detailed as 'Land containing 2,100 square yards or thereabouts, situate at the junction of **Tennyson Road** and **Brooklyn Road, St Mark's**...together with the Almshouse building erected thereon'. The Home and its land were vested with the **Official Custodian for Charities**, but still run by the Trustees.
- 1961 A new building was erected at **Anne Goodrich Close**, in stone with two storeys at the front and a single storey behind, providing six dwellings. A plaque recalls the earlier one which hung outside the original **Anne Goodrich Almshouses**, and bears the inscription 'The Gift of **Anne Goodrich** for the **Religious Poor, 1720**. Rebuilt **1961**'.
- Dec 1961 Due to financial difficulties, the **Sunset Home** Trustees asked the **Charity Commission** if they could charge residents a small rent, to be reclaimed from the **National Assistance Board**. No stipends (weekly payments) were being paid to the residents at this time.

- 1962 The **Sunset Home**, and the **Cheltenham Family Welfare Association** (formerly known as the **Cheltenham Charity Organisation Society**) were registered with the **Charity Commission**.
- 1962 Due to financial difficulties, the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** residents were asked to pay a small weekly contribution. This cost could be reclaimed from the **National Assistance Board**.
- 1964 A story is told of the **Bucklehaven Almshouses** at this time. Apparently the **fire brigade** had been summoned and on arrival the firemen expressed doubts as to the strength of the cast iron bridge at the **Sandy Lane Road** access to the homes. They decided to risk all by 'taking a run' at it; fortunately the bridge held under the weight of the engine. After this it was decided that the bridge was no longer safe. The entrance to the site has since been moved to **Stockton Close**.
- 1965 The **Sunset Home** was passed over to the **Official Custodian**. The following year the **Trustees** of the Home successfully applied to the **Official Custodian** to set up a fund for the 'extraordinary repair, improvement or rebuilding' of the Sunset Home. An annual sum of £40 was to be invested for the purpose.
- 1967 Central heating was installed at the **Sunset Home** at a cost of £960. 14s. 9d, paid by the **Charity Commissioners**, to be repaid using shares owned by the **Sunset Homes Charity**.
- 1967-8 The six residents at **Pate House** lived rent-free, but no longer received gratuities, nor were they required to wear special dress to indicate that they were beneficiaries of charity. Nomination for places in the Almshouse rested with the Churchwardens of the **Parish Church**. Places would be advertised generally if no nominations were received after 14 days. Boys from the **Grammar School** maintained the gardens and girls from **Pate's Grammar School for Girls** gave some garden seats for the residents to use.
- Oct 1969 The Minister of State described Cheltenham's **Rowton House** as a 'hell hole'. **Rowton House** and **Shamrock House** could house up to 70 men, some sleeping on old sofas at a rent of £6 per week, with food cooked on a communal basis.
- 1970 The **Hay Memorial Cottage Homes** were extensively updated and the work included rewiring, the installation of heating and hot water systems, repainting and fencing.
- 1974 A mortgage was taken out between the **Official Custodian of Charities** and Cheltenham Borough Council, for £14,000 for major improvements to the **Catharine Ball Almshouses**.
- 1975 The **Sunset Home** Annual Report stated there were eight ladies in bedsits and two in small flats, with a resident warden. There was a £547 deficit in the accounts, and weekly charges to residents were increased by £2 and £3.
- 1975 The Annual Report described the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** as 'a block of 6 single and 4 double flats for pensioners ... self-contained, unfurnished and centrally heated, each having a sitting room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. Shops and a bus service are near at hand. The Warden's bungalow was completed and the back garden landscaped at a cost of £277'. Due to the increased cost of fuel, residents were asked to pay an extra £1.10 a week for heating.
- 1976 Rent for the **Hay Memorial Cottage Homes** was £11.65 per week, which included £1.50 as a contribution to the heating costs. A £6.50 rent allowance was paid weekly by the Council.
- 1976 An £18,000 improvement scheme was proposed at the **Caroline Strickland Home**, to install a new boiler house, kitchens and bathrooms. After Improvement Grants were taken into consideration, a mortgage of £10,400 would need to be raised. The **Hay Trust** offered three cottages to the **Strickland Homes.**, so that residents could move out of their homes while they were being updated. By this time nominal rents were being paid by the residents.
- Early 1980s **Cheltenham Cottage Company** was bought out by a Manchester-based investment company.
- 1985 The Annual Report of the **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** stated that every effort was made to keep accommodation charges to a minimum, but costs had rise to £13 for a single flat and £18 for a double flat, with 35p extra per week for heating.
- 1987 **Rowton House** was completely refurbished and re-opened by **Charles Irving** for the **Stonham Housing Association** as **Grove House** Neighbouring **Shamrock House** was partly knocked down and its bricks and staircase used in the new building.
- Jul 1987 **Pate House** listed its own scheme with the **Charity Commissioners of England and Wales**. There are eleven elected **Trustees**.
- 1990 In 1956 **Richard Carr-Gomm**, a young man who was concerned about lonely old people in Bermondsey, London, had bought a house and let four elderly people live there while he kept house for them. This developed into a charity run by volunteers, and called the **Abbeyfield Society**. Now there are Abbeyfield Houses all over the country providing supported sheltered housing for older people. In 1990 an **Abbeyfield House** was opened at **Prestbury**, providing eight studio flats for rent, which may be paid with **Housing Benefit**. There is also an **Abbeyfield House** in **St Luke's**, Cheltenham, which has seven residents. The homes have a resident housekeeper, who cooks two meals a day for the residents, who provide their own breakfast.



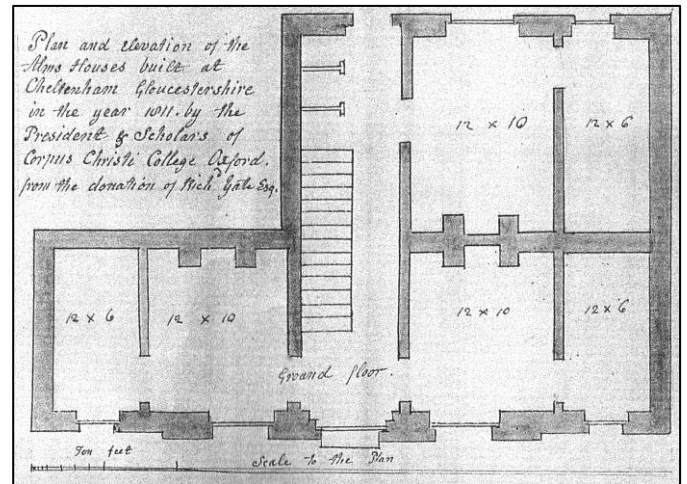
5. Vittoria Hotel, High Street, built on the site of the first Pate's Almshouse, and the location of part of the Beechwood Shopping Arcade in 2009



6. Richard Pate (1516-1588), founder of Pate's Almshouses and Cheltenham Grammar School.



7. The second site of Pate's Almshouse, Albion Street, c.1890. It was still in use in 2009



8. Plan of Pate's Almshouse, Albion Street, dates 1811

9. The Corpus Christi College badge, described as a 'pelican in her piety', on 271 High Street, 2009.



10. Conservatory and back of Pate's Almshouse, Albion Street,

- 1996 **Grove House**, belonging to the **Stonham Housing Association**, was used for single homeless men and women (who were kept completely separate). It had 19 rooms and cost £74.97 per week for bed and breakfast, paid for by benefits.
- 1996 The **Sunset Home** accommodated eight elderly ladies with an average age of over 80 years, with a resident warden.
- 1998 With the help of a significant grant, a further 18 units were added to the eight homes at the **Bucklehaven Almshouses**. The **Board of Trustees** also involved a **Housing Association** in administering the day-to-day running of the Almshouses.
- Sep 2000 The **Sunset Home** had difficulty letting 2 of the flats due to their small size and lack of light. Application was made to the Council for funding to allow remodelling. The former warden's flat was now being let as an additional almshouse.
- 2001 A new block was built to the rear of **Pate House**, with a courtyard garden and freestanding conservatory. The new block provided further flats for the residents, at a cost of £32.50 per week, whilst flats in the main building were £37.00 weekly.
- 2004 Rents at **Pate House** were increased to £35 for the new block and £40 for the main building.
- 2009 **Anne Goodrich Close** is now administered by **Cheltenham Borough Homes**. Suitable elderly tenants are allowed to choose to live there under a new scheme called '**Choice Based Lettings**'. Rents are approximately £65.00 per week, but **Housing Benefit** may cover this cost.
- 2009 The **Bucklehaven Almshouses** in **Charlton Kings** currently consist of 26 units, mostly single occupancy but some are for couples. The residents have to be aged 55 and over with an income at **benefits** level. The **Sovereign Housing Association** administers the day-to-day running of the home but meets quarterly with the governing Trustees.
- 2009 The **Strickland Homes** in **Hales Road** are still occupied by five elderly residents, who pay rent to **Cheltenham Borough Homes**, with **Housing Benefit** if necessary. Shortly the properties will be administered by the **Almshouse Association**.
- 2009 The **Sunset Home** currently has eight flats, with rents payable of £70-£80 per week, which may be paid by **Housing Benefit**. The residents continue to receive monthly visits from the Trustees.
- 2009 The **Jesse Mary Chambers Almshouses** are all occupied, and it has never been necessary to advertise for residents. Rent is payable at £70 - £80 per week, and residents have to pay all their own bills. **Housing Benefit** covers some residents.
- Sep 2009 Applicants to **Pate House** have to have been born, or now reside, in the ancient parishes of Cheltenham or **Leigh**. '**Pate House** is for ladies aged 60 or over who are either single or widowed.' As there is no resident warden, each must be capable of catering for herself and maintaining her own flat unaided. Flats in the older front building have separate sitting rooms, while those in the new block are bedsits. Laundry facilities are shared by the occupants. Rents are now £37.00 per week for the rear block and £43.00 per week in the main building, payable monthly. A small gift of £10 is given to the residents at Christmas, plus any personal gifts from the Trustees. The current residents are aged between 61-86 years of age, and most have been resident for about 11 years. The oldest lady to have lived at the Almshouses was aged 96, and the longest recorded stay is 24 years.
- Sep 2009 There are four residents at the **Catharine Ball Almshouses**, living in separate flats, for which they pay rent. Trustees, including the Reverend of **SS Philip and James' Church**, visit regularly and ensure that the flats are maintained, and the residents are able to manage.
- Sep 2009 The **Hay Memorial Cottage Homes** are being re-roofed. Still affiliated with the Council, and with rents being paid, they will shortly be administered by the **Almshouse Association**.
- Sep 2009 **Grove House**, in **Grove Street**, is still a **Stonham Housing Association** hostel, a high-support project providing a 24-hour service to 19 men over 25 years of age. It has 18 single furnished bedrooms, each with a hand basin, with shared bathrooms, kitchens and a communal garden. **Stonham Housing Association** has numerous properties all over Cheltenham, providing supported housing for vulnerable people with complex needs who otherwise would be homeless.

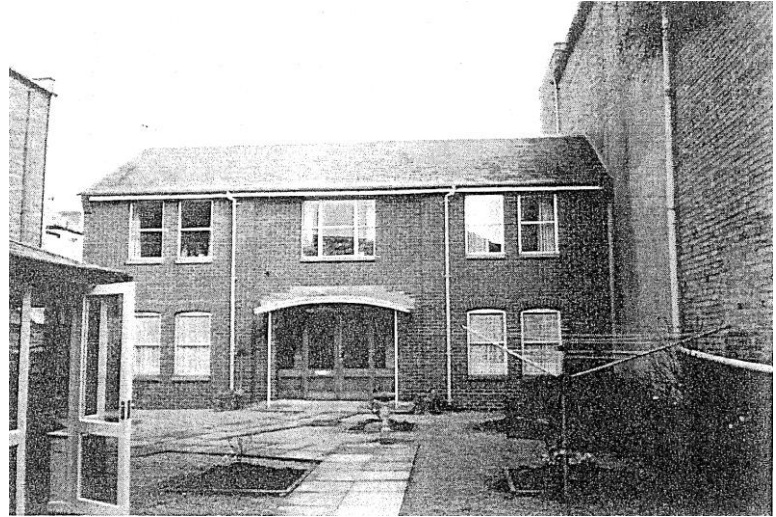
ASYLUMS & ORPHANAGES

- 1806 **Mrs Williams** of **Prestbury** founded a **Female Orphan Asylum and School of Industry** for girls. It opened in a converted thatched barn in a lane off the upper **High Street**. **Queen Charlotte** became its patron in the early years. Orphans and 'half-orphans' aged from 8–15 were accommodated at the **Asylum**. When places became vacant replacement orphans were elected to enter the **Asylum**. The day's work consisted almost entirely of housework, with an hour's reading and spelling practice every evening, and religious worship and instruction at each end of the day.

- 1818 The **Female Orphan Asylum** moved to **Winchcombe Street**.
- 1823 The **Female Orphan Asylum and School of Industry** occupied a new building in **Winchcombe Street**.
- 1834 The **Female Orphan Asylum** once again occupied a new, purpose-built building, named **Charlotte House**, in **Winchcombe Street**.
- Jul 1839 A **Servants' Home** was established, at **6 Grosvenor Street**, to afford a home and protection to 'really respectable female servants out of place'. It was felt that these women were most at risk of losing their respectability when between employments. The servants paid a very small sum for board and lodging, and the home had a resident matron.
- 1842 Specimens of needlework made by the girls in the **Female Orphan Asylum** were presented to Her Majesty **Queen Victoria**, who was so pleased with the present that she became one of the patrons of the Asylum.
- 3 Sep 1845 An appeal appeared in the *Cheltenham Examiner* for subscriptions in support of a **Female Refuge** set up by the **Magdalen's Friends Society**. The appeal was on behalf of the 'Degraded Class of Females in Cheltenham . . . her only House of Refuge is the grave'. The Society stated that they had 'united for the purpose of bringing the gospel to the abodes of the degraded females of Cheltenham and of opening a **House of Refuge** for their reception and instruction'. The Refuge was not named in the modern sense of providing asylum from abusive partners – it was for females who 'have wandered from the paths of virtue and who pursue a wretched and destructive course of vice to prolong an existence of misery'.
- 19 Jan 1848 A Protestant Asylum for 20 'whole orphan' boys 'whose connexions have seen better days', on a plan similar to the Orphan Asylum for Girls, was first proposed in the press. At this time there was no refuge for such boys other than in the **Workhouse**.
- 16 Feb 1848 The *Cheltenham Examiner* reported on the **Female Refuge** at **North Parade House** in **Winchcombe Street**. The home had received 54 applications for admittance since its foundation. Of these 36 had been accepted and 15 were still resident. Of the women who had left, two were conducting themselves respectably in service, several others were supporting themselves in an honest and virtuous manner, but some had fallen back into 'old habits of vice and profligacy'. The Medical Officer declared that the majority of women who entered the Refuge became changed characters. 'Those who witnessed the condition of the **High Street** from dusk to midnight might wish that the Refuge were established in that very street, as a standing witness against the indecency of its nightly parade.'
- 30 Oct 1850 An appeal was launched by **J. Finch**, a **High Street** druggist, for setting up an **Asylum for Orphan Boys**, of respectable descent, 'where they will be boarded, clothed, educated and taught useful trades. At this time the only refuge available to such boys was the **Workhouse** – 'and as the generality of children there must necessarily be of the lower class, they are considered unfit to be associated with those who have been brought up in superior habits, and for whom I now plead'. It was proposed the boys would be taught tailoring, shoemaking, knitting and gardening.
- 7 Mar 1855 The **Boys' Orphan Asylum** was yet to be built, although some progress had been made towards it, according to the *Cheltenham Examiner*. It was to be a **Protestant Asylum** and a piece of land had been secured for the project. **Miss Jane Cook** had granted a site for building the Asylum, on **St Margaret's Road**. Unfortunately she had died without this piece of land being formally conveyed to the Trustees. However, the subsequent owner, **The Rev. M. Bonner**, had kindly made good the gift of land promised by **Miss Cook**. It was still to be another 10 years before the Boys' Orphan Asylum was built.
- 24 Mar 1855 The *Cheltenham Looker-On* announced that a new **Home for Ladies** would be opening in the town, for ladies suffering under 'reverses of fortune', either by the death or relatives or by pecuniary losses; 'who have lost the shelter of a home and the comforts they were accustomed to'. There was only one other like it, in **Queens Square, London**. The ladies were to pay 10s 6d or 12s per week depending on the size of accommodation. The home opened in the Autumn of **1855** at **2 Berkeley Street**, occupying two large houses. In **8 April 1857** the *Cheltenham Examiner* reported that the home already had among its inmates 'relatives of officers high in the military and civil services, of the clergy, of the medical profession and of noble houses'.
- 4 Jun 1862 It was announced that the plans for the **Asylum for Orphan Boys** were on view at the shop of **Mr Finch**, druggist.
- 25 May 1865 The laying of the foundation stone of the **Asylum for Orphan Boys** took place. The Rector laid the cornerstone and made an appropriate address. He informed the large number of spectators that the idea of founding such an institution had been entertained by **Mr John Finch** for over 20 years, during which time he had been working tirelessly for its cause. The Committee now had £1,270 in the bank, with a further £200 promised so that the project could be completed.

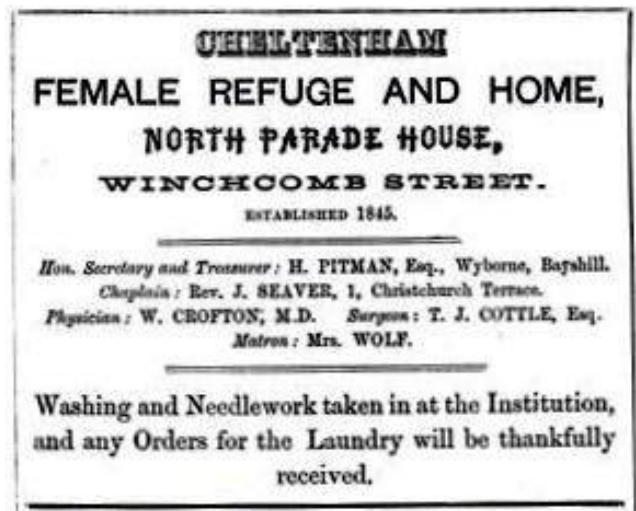
- Aug 1866 The new **Asylum for Orphan Boys** opened in **St Margaret's Road**. 'Whole orphans' were elected to the places at the home.
- Aug 1869 The children from the **Asylum for Orphan Boys** were taken by horse-drawn brakes on an outing to **Cowley Manor**.
- 1873 The rules of the **Asylum for Orphan Boys** stated that on admission each boy had to bring 2 shirts, 2 pairs of drawers, 2 pairs of stockings, 2 night shirts, 1 pair of slippers and 2 pairs of shoes – 'one of each such articles must be entirely new'. The boys were to be taught some useful trade, such as shoe-making, tailoring, carpentering or gardening, and 'at a competent age the boys shall be placed out to trade'.
- The Matron of the Asylum had to make sure the boys' days were filled – they were to rise at 6.00 in summer, 7.00 in winter, and every morning make beds, clean boots and shoes, sweep the hall and passages, 'and assist in all such other work, *at all times*, as the Matron may direct. After breakfast they were to take exercise in the Exercise Yard. All this before leaving for school at 9.00. Lunch times and evenings, when the boys were not at school, were also filled with chores and exercise, although they were allowed 'at least one hour for recreation' on their return from school at 4.00. Bedtime was at 8.00 in winter, 9.00 in summer, 'after the reading of a short portion of Scripture and prayer by Matron'.
- 1874 The **Home for Sick Children** was established at **Belmont House, Winchcombe Street**.
- 25 Mar 1874 The *Cheltenham Examiner* reported that some of the girls from the **Servants' Home** had been lured into prostitution at a **brothel** at **16 Vernon Place**.
- 15 Sep 1875 The **Servants' Home** moved from **6 Grosvenor Street** to **4 Clarence Parade**.
- 29 Nov 1876 An advertisement appeared in the *Cheltenham Examiner* announcing that the new **Home for Incurable Children** at **Sherborne Villa** had vacancies. This subsequently became the **Home for Sick Children**, when it became clear that many were curable with the right attention, and moved to **Belmont House** in **Winchcombe Street**.
- 12 Mar 1879 The **Home for Sick Children** was described in the *Cheltenham Examiner* as containing 'about two dozen children (mostly girls), gathered in from various parts of England, clean, happy-looking and comfortable, and yet whose home experience was that of poverty, scant clothing, and unrelieved suffering, for their parents are generally of the very poorest'. Children were accepted up to the age of 13 years.
- 21 Nov 1884 The **Poor Sisters of Nazareth** arrived in Cheltenham and lived at **10 St James' Square**, beside **St. Gregory's Church**. The Sisters of Nazareth had originated from a religious order, founded in **c1850** to care for the elderly in France. The Archbishop of Westminster, **Dr Wiseman**, had arranged for five members of the Order to come to London to help with the utterly poor there. The Sisters were among the first to wear a religious habit in the streets of London for over 300 years and lived in absolute poverty themselves, collecting waste food each day. Houses were set up where they cared for poor and infirm children and elderly. The London Sisters severed their connection with France as their work for children was disapproved of (they had been founded solely to care for the elderly), and formed the new congregation of the **Sisters of Nazareth**. Every house they ran was to be called **Nazareth House** and their work spread beyond London to the rest of the country.
- On 26 November **Father Wilkinson** brought back from the **Workhouse** several old people and three children, **Edward McPartlin** and his two sisters, to this first **Nazareth House** in Cheltenham.
- 7 Nov 1885 The late **Mrs Frances Owen** had originated, and had been the most earnest promoter of, the **Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls** in Cheltenham in **c1880**. A memorial fund had been set up in her name and it was decided to use it to fund the **Home for Friendless Girls**, which had opened in **Greville Terrace (Gratton Road)** the previous year. The Home had moved to new premises at **Belleville, Hewlett Street**, and re-opened as the **Frances Owen Memorial Home** on 7 November. Frances' widower, the **Rev. J.A. Owen**, carried out an opening dedication ceremony on **2 December 1885** at the small house in Hewlett Street.
- Dec 1885 The annual report showed there to be 18 inmates at the **Asylum for Orphan Boys**.
- Oct 1886 The **Frances Owen Memorial Home** for **Little Girls** moved to larger premises at **2 Alexandra Villas** in **Hewlett Road**.
- Dec 1886 The **Poor Sisters of Nazareth** moved from **St James' Square** to **1 Sandford Place**, opposite **Cheltenham College**.
- Feb 1887 The **Cheltenham Sisters of Nazareth** had been providing 'soup dinners' in the hall at the house adjacent to **St Gregory's Church** throughout the winter, to about 100 people daily.
- Apr 1887 An 'Après midi musicale' was held at the **Rotunda** to raise funds for **Nazareth House**.
- Jan 1888 A Grand Oriental Bazaar was held in aid of funds for **Nazareth House**.

11. (right) The modern block at the rear of Pate's Almshouses in Albion Street, 2001.



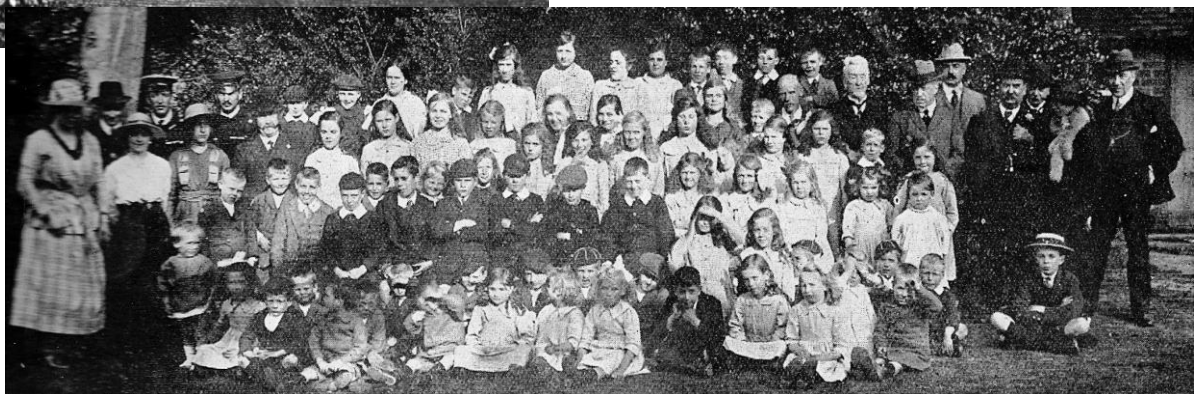
12. (above) Pates Almshouse plaque, 2009. The plaque on the first Almshouse read 'Holy and Indivisible Trinity Almshouses, founded by Richard Pate Esq.'

13. (right) An advertisement for washing and needlework at the Female Refuge, North Parade House, Winchcombe Street, early 1900s. In 1848 the Medical Officer had reported that several women from the Refuge, founded in 1845, had fallen back into 'old habits of vice and profligacy'.



14. The Elms (left), now the site of Pope's Close, was purchased by the Board of Guardians in 1822 to accommodate children from the Parish Workhouse.

15. (below) The annual outing for children from the Elms, 20 August 1920. The outing to Lower Lode was donated by Mr James T. Agg-Gardner, M.P. for Cheltenham. The photograph shows 'a happy group of children on the lawn after tea'.



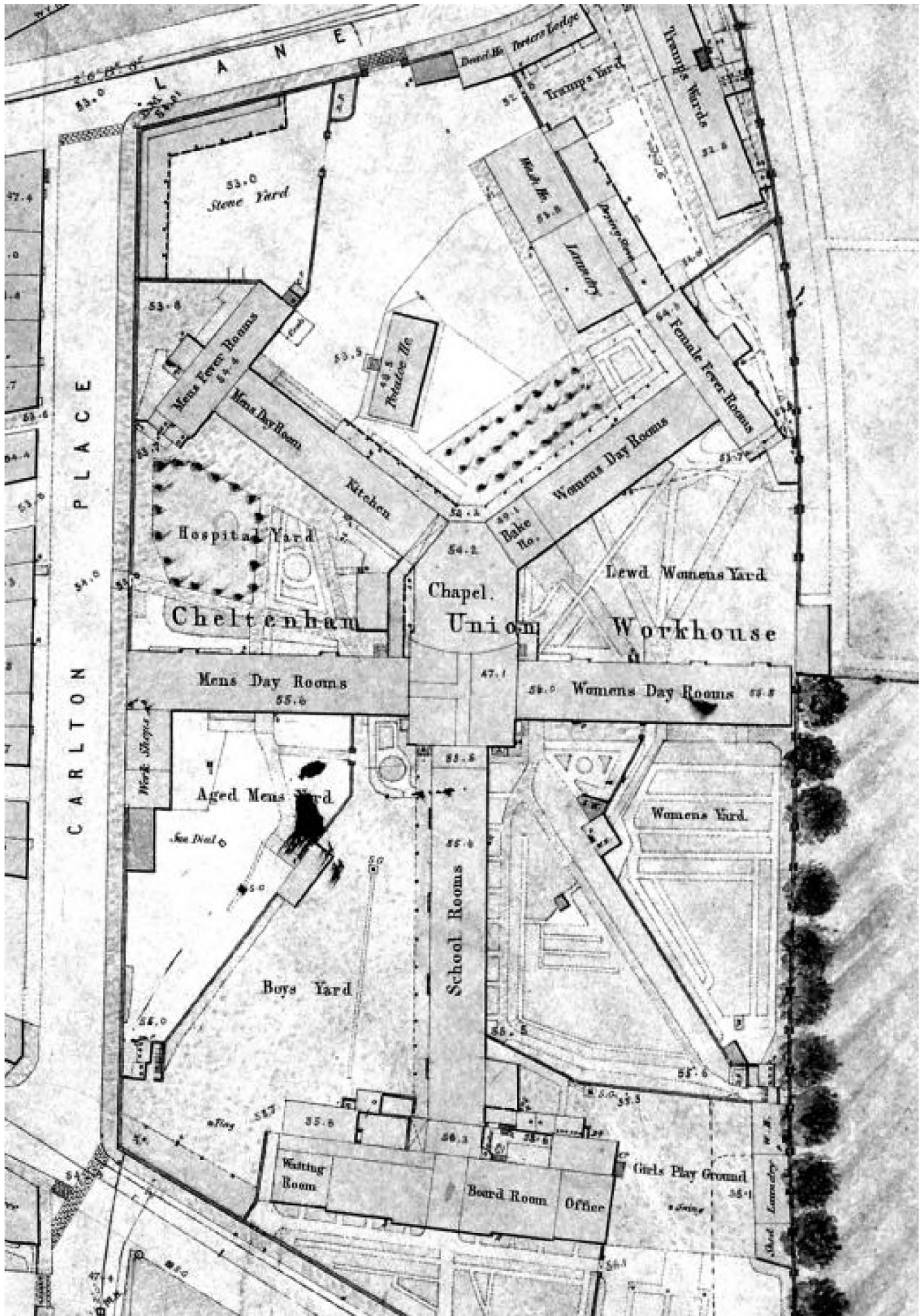
- 5 Dec 1888 The *Cheltenham Examiner* reported that over the previous year the **Female Refuge** had an average of 20 inmates. The girls were largely placed out in service, earning approximately £300 between them over the year.
- Jun 1889 **Mrs Baring Bingham** entertained the inmates of **Nazareth House** at a fête held at her home, **Cowley Manor**.
- 9 Jul 1890 The *Cheltenham Examiner* carried a response to the suggestion that the **Frances Owen Memorial Home** and the **Female Refuge** were competing for funds. This was denied with the explanation that the Frances Owen Memorial Home was a temporary or receiving home for all homeless or friendless children and girls who were in danger – an innocent children’s training home. The Female Refuge and Home, on the other hand, was a training home for girls willing to escape an evil life and to obtain the skills necessary for earning an honest living after redeeming their character.
- 1892 A list of prices of sewing work carried out at the **Female Orphan Asylum & School of Industry** included Gentlemen’s shirts 2s 6d – 3s 3d, ‘combinations’ 2s 4d – 3s, Ladies’ drawers 1s 3d – 2s, Ladies’ petticoats 2s – 4s, sheets per pair 1s – 2s, handkerchiefs per dozen 1s 6d – 2s, and marking ½ d per letter.
- The statement of accounts for the 37 orphans of the Asylum at this time showed that each girl cost 3s 8¾d per week to maintain, or £8 12s 3d per year.
- 1892 The rules of the **Female Orphan Asylum & School of Industry** stated that the girls were chosen at half-yearly elections, held on the last Friday in April and the last Friday in October. Each applicant had to be recommended by a Life Governor or an Annual Subscriber of 1 guinea or more. Orphans had to be aged between 7 and 11, and no girl was to be retained after the age of 18. To be admitted, each applicant had to produce certificates of the parents’ marriage, parents’ death, own birth, baptism, medical fitness, as well as a declaration from the Relieving Officer of the applicant’s home parish that she had not been an inmate of the **Union** or **Workhouse**.
- ‘Relatives and friends of the children may be admitted to see them on the first Thursday of each month between 10.00 and 4.00, but at no other time, excepting illness.’
- Sep 1892 The **Frances Owen Memorial Home**, ‘for rescued children’, moved once again, from **Hewlett Road** to **Cambay Villa**, but the Hewlett Road premises were retained as a **Little Girls’ Home**.
- 1895 A new chapel was blessed and opened at **Nazareth House** in **Bath Road**.
- Oct 1895 The staff at the **Cheltenham Ladies’ College** provided entertainment at a concert held to raise funds for the **Little Girls’ Home** in **Hewlett Road**, which was affiliated with the **Church of England Waifs & Strays Society**. The Home was well-supported by staff and pupils of the **Ladies’ College**, led by **Miss Sawyer**, who were frequently involved in fund-raising activities for the Diocesan refuge.
- Dec 1900 The running of the **Frances Owen Memorial Home** was transferred to the **Church Army**, which also came under the umbrella of the **Association for the Care of Friendless Girls**.
- Jul 1901 **Mrs Hay** generously assisted the committee of the **Home for Sick Children** to purchase a suitable plot of land at the foot of **Battledown Hill** on which to rebuild the Home.
- 10 Oct 1902 The **Battledown Home for Sick Children** was officially opened, part-financed by a generous bequest from the late **Mrs Hay**. It replaced the former **Home for Sick Children**. Many people today will recall the **Battledown Children’s Hospital**, as it later became.
- 1906 One of the houses adjacent to **Nazareth House**, **Bath Road**, was purchased and soon filled to capacity.
- Oct 1907 The **Home for Little Girls** moved from **Hewlett Road** to **Battledown** and was opened in **Battledown Approach** under a new name, **St Monica’s Home**, by the **Bishop of Gloucester**.
- Nov 1907 **Sir William Thiselton Dyer**, former head of **Kew Gardens**, opened a Grand Historical Bazaar at the **Town Hall** in aid of **St. Monica’s Home**.
- Dec 1907 **Mrs Baring Bingham** organised Christmas festivities at **Nazareth House**.
- Feb 1908 At the annual meeting of the **Female Refuge and Home** it was announced that it was largely self-supporting with girls employed on laundry and sewing work.
- Mar 1908 The **Association for the Care of Friendless Girls** continues its rescue work at a shelter in **St George’s Street**.
- Apr 1909 At the annual meeting of subscribers to the **Battledown Home for Sick Children** it was reported that 65 cases were treated during the year, about 26 at any one time.
- Mar 1910 The executors of the will of the late **Mr Leslie Young** allocated £2,000 to the **Home for Sick Children** for two free cots in his memory.
- Mar 1910 A new shelter **Friendless Girls** was opened by the **Bishop of Gloucester** at **Winchcombe House**, **Winchcombe Street**, replacing the one in **St George’s Street**.

- Nov 1910 The annual fundraising athletics display, in aid of the **Asylum for Orphan Boys**, by the girls of **Pengwern College** was given in the **Town Hall** instead of the **Winter Garden**.
- Mar 1911 The **shelter for Friendless Girls** moved to **Winslowe House** in **Hewlett Street**.
- Oct 1912 **Miss Eliza Sawyer** died, a former **Ladies' College** music teacher, and founder of **St Monica's Home for Little Girls**.
- 1916 A third adjoining house was purchased to expand **Nazareth House** in **Bath Road**. It was bought for boys from the **Rescue Society**.
- 1920 53 boys left **Nazareth House** for **Westbury-on-Trym**, where the **Sisters** had another **Nazareth House**.
- 1925 The first re-union of girls who had spent their childhood at **Nazareth House** was held. It was such a success that it became an annual event.
- 1937 The **Female Refuge** at **North Parade House** in **Winchcombe Street** closed.
- 1940 A fourth house, adjoining the others, was purchased in **Bath Road** enabling **Nazareth House** to take 34 babies from Southend and some of the elderly from Southampton. When these returned to their homes, 50 babies from Bristol were given accommodation, making a total of 130 children in **1942**.
- 1945 The **Nursery** at **Nazareth House** was affiliated to the **National Society of Children's Nurseries**. Some years later a few of the children emigrated to Australia.
- 1958 Following the closure of the **Female Orphan Asylum, Charlotte House** in **Winchcombe Street** was demolished.
- 1958 **Dowty House** in **St Margaret's Road**, formerly the **Asylum for Orphan Boys**, opened as a home for 37 elderly, largely thanks to **George Dowty**. He encouraged contributions from his workforce and he himself donated £2,000 instead of buying a new Rolls Royce.
- 1965 Following a decrease in numbers of children, the **Nursery Wing** at **Nazareth House** was closed and the infants taken to Bristol. A total of 3,099 children had been cared for in Nazareth House in Cheltenham.
- Aug 1968 The **Poor Sisters of Nazareth Home for the Elderly** opened in purpose-built premises at **Springfield House, London Road, Charlton Kings**. This site was previously the home of the actress **Damaris Hayman's** father. Work to convert the site had begun in **1966** and the elderly had gone to Cardiff for a short period while building work was completed and the move made from the old **Bath Road** home.
- 1969 **Nos. 1-4 Sandford Place**, on the west side of **Bath Road** opposite **Cheltenham College**, were demolished. They had been home to **Nazareth House orphanage** since **1887**.
- Oct 1978 The **Dr. Barnado's Home** at **Hatherley Brake**, in **Hatherley Road**, closed.
- Sep 2009 **Nazareth House** is now a voluntary long- stay **Care Home**, and provides accommodation for 63 elderly residents in single rooms. Some of the residents and staff are former orphans, who lived at **Sandford Road**.

COUNCIL HOUSING

- 1849 Report by **Edward Cresy** produced entitled *Report to the General Board of Health on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage, [etc] of Cheltenham*. This followed the passing of the **Public Health Act of 1848**.
- 1871 The **Streets & Highways Committee**, part of the **Town Commissioners** (forerunners to **Cheltenham Corporation**), identified **Rutland Street** as a slum area, poorly paved and drained. It had become notoriously crowded with no fewer than 7 courts running off it, varying from 18-35 yards long and 4-23 feet wide.
- 1876 The **Cheltenham Corporation**, later known as **Cheltenham Borough Council**, replaced the **Town Commissioners** in running the town.
- 1890 The **Housing of the Working Classes Act** was passed.
- 1891 The **1891 Census** was the first to report on housing, detailing the number of rooms and number of people per household.
- 1897 Property between **Knapp Street** and **New Street** – nine small houses forming **Barnard's Row** – were declared unfit for habitation. Demolition did not take place until **1922**.
- 1898 Insanitary conditions were reported at various properties around the town, including **Grafton Passage** (between **209-13 High Street**, opposite the former town clock), **Gunnell's Court** (5 cottages in **Fairview**), and **Wakefield Cottages** (two cottages off **Upper Bath Street**).

- 1900 **Savory's Court**, off **Duke Street**, was noted as insanitary and eventually demolished. A number of courts off Duke Street met the same fate over the coming years. For example four houses in **Teale's Court**, already identified in **1900**, were condemned as unfit for habitation in **1913**.
- 1901 The **Medical Officer of Health** reported adversely on a number of properties to the **Public Health Committee**. These included **Gardener's Court** (3 cottages off **Sherborne Street**), **Gunnell's Court** again (*see 1898*) and **Pantile Row** (12 houses between **New Street** and the **High Street**).
- 1902 **Major's Cottages**, between **Millbrook Street** and the **River Chelt**, were condemned as insanitary and ordered to be demolished.
- 1902 The pioneering social reformer **Josephine Butler**, who had lived in Cheltenham from **1857-66**, wrote of the town: 'There are low class brothels and slums which would be a disgrace to **London** or **New York**'.
- 1910 **Nos. 3-5 Lamb's Cottages**, off the east side of **Commercial Street**, were identified as a health nuisance.
- 1913 **Nos. 1 & 2 Fountain Passage** (behind **403-5 High Street**), and also **Nos. 1-4 Barnes Court** (off the west side of **Grove Street**), were declared unfit for habitation and due to be demolished.
- 1917 In Cheltenham 174 houses were placed in the slum category in a report by the Ministry of Housing, with demolition recommended. Many of these properties were in the courts and streets off **Swindon Road**, although some were small courts elsewhere near the centre of town (such as **2-6 Little's Court**, off **New Street**). Arrangements were made to demolish many of these properties in **1922**, but by **1925** about 60 of these properties still remained to be dealt with. The Council's **Public Health Committee** dealt with the slum areas within Cheltenham. A sub-committee of this, the **Housing Committee** was formed to consider and prepare plans for large-scale social housing provision. Until this time, only slum clearance had been carried out, with no provision available for re-housing the displaced families on any major scale.
- Jun 1919 Cheltenham Borough Council bought 115 acres at **St Mark's**, off **Gloucester Road**, from **Herbert Unwin** for £10,500 and the first houses in Cheltenham's new Garden Suburb were opened three years later. It was the first major Council development of housing, carried out under the **Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890** and the **Housing (Addison) Act 1919**. Under the latter Bill local authorities were required to survey housing need and provide housing based on the surveys. The first scheme in Cheltenham was driven by a national 'Homes Fit for Heroes' campaign following the First World War combined with a local shortage of homes. The lay-out and design for the proposed estate was a collaboration between the Borough Surveyor and the firm of architects **Messrs. Chatters, Smithson & Rainger**.
- Mar 1920 The first contracts were made with two builders to build 10 houses each at the **Libertus Road** end of the estate at **St Mark's**.
- 22 Apr 1920 The **Mayor, Alderman Bendall**, cut the first sod to the **St Mark's** estate. This was commemorated by the planting of an oak tree at the east junction of what is now **Byron Road** and **Milton Road**.
- 22 Nov 1920 It was agreed that the roads in the new suburb of **St Mark's** should be named after English poets, only some of whom had connections with the town.
- 18 Jan 1921 The first 10 houses on the **St Mark's** estate, situated in **Tennyson Road** and **Libertus Road**, were ready for occupation and the 'Garden Suburb' was officially opened.
- Sep 1922 Among the many properties declared insanitary this year were **2-3 Powell's Cottages** in **Grove Street**. The following year the list included a number in **King Street Gardens**, off **King Street**.
- Jan 1924 The Town Council set up a **Slum Areas Clearance Committee** to draw up an improvement scheme centred on **Stanhope Street**, now replaced by **Hope Street** signifying a new beginning after slum clearance. The Committee was able to use powers under the **Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890**. By **November 1925** arrangements had been made to buy up much of the property in the area. The scheme consisted of plans for 32 houses to be built in **Elm Street**, **Malvern Street** and **Swindon Road**, although a smaller number were actually built. Slum clearance continued in a number of schedules throughout the **1930s**.
- 1925-27 Properties in **St Peter's Place**, off **Swindon Road**, were bought by the Council for demolition as part of the **Stanhope Street** clearance scheme. Other condemned properties at that time included houses in **Sun Street Retreat** and in **Providence Place, Portland Street**. New housing appeared during **1926-7** in the newly laid out **Cobham Road, St Peter's**, off **Tewkesbury Road**, to replace some of the slum clearance in the **Stanhope Street** area.



16. The Union Workhouse, as shown on the Old Town Survey of 1855-1857.

- 1927 Council housing development was started in the **Folly Lane** area with the building of **Hudson** and **Manser Streets** on land previously known as '**Hanks's site**' [sic]. Building in **Folly Lane** began the following year on land formerly belonging to **Mr Davis**. The scheme included **Crabtree Place**, a new road on the west side of **Folly Lane** on the former **Plough Gardens**.
- Jul 1929 Plans for an initial 92 houses were presented for the first phase of the **Whaddon Farm** housing estate and building was begun in **October** the same year.
- Jul 1929 The Council bought land from **Norman, Hick** and **Barrett** off **Pilley Lane** and plans for 104 houses on the site were agreed. The new street was named **Pilley Crescent** in **October 1929**.
- 12 Jun 1930 The **Borough Council Housing Committee** resolved to ask the **Public Health Committee** to consider an improvement scheme for **Swindon Passage**, off the **Lower High Street**. The 38 tiny houses of **Swindon Place** in **Swindon Passage** had been built between **1811** and **1826** by the **Snelus** family, and 28 of the houses comprised the only back-to-back houses in the centre of Cheltenham. These back-to-back houses shared 3 earth closet privies between them and had already been identified as insanitary in the **1849 Cresy report** (*see 1849*). On **19 January 1933**, on the recommendation of the **Medical Officer of Health**, the Housing Committee resolved that **Swindon Passage** should be declared a slum clearance area and it should be demolished. The site is now the **Royal Mail Sorting Office, Poole Way**.
- Jan 1933 The Council's **Slum Clearance Scheme** of this year included **Bubb's Cottages** (at the rear of **423 High Street**) and **Swindon Place, Swindon Passage**.
- 1933 The **Pate's Avenue** development was begun, built to house displaced families affected by the slum clearance at streets and courts off the **Swindon Road**. **Pate's Avenue** is sited on the former **Alstone Lawn**, a large mansion with grounds, demolished in the early **1920s**.
- Jan 1934 **Slum Clearance Programme No. 1** was announced, which included property in some of the poorer streets off the **High Street** and **Tewkesbury Road – Grove Street, Hereford Place, Elm Street** and **Cleveland Street**. In **St Paul's** the property to be cleared included **Carlton Place West** and houses in **Rutland Street** (now **Brunswick Street**). About 290 new houses were to be built in **St Paul's**. In the south of the town property to be demolished included **1-6 Exmouth Terrace**, opposite the **Exmouth Arms**, and **1-7 Exmouth Court**, off **Exmouth Street**, one of the few examples of back-to-back housing in **Southtown**. **Exmouth Court** consisted of 26 houses crammed into a very small area. In **Alstone 4-9 New's Cottages** (off **Alstone Lane**) were listed and partly demolished in **1938**. Those that were still standing, were used as a Council store, in **1944**. The Borough Council bought some 12 acres of land at **The Moors**, in **St. Peter's** off **Tewkesbury Road**, from **A.W. Smith** for a development of about 132 houses. These were to replace slum clearance and the first houses were ready for occupation as early as **February 1935**.
- Feb 1935 The Council announced **Slum Clearance Programme No.2**. This included property in the **Fairview** area, such as **Angel Row** and **1-4 Fairview Terrace** (all in **Fairview Street**), **23-7 Columbia Street**, **Dovedale Court** in **York Street**, and **Zara Cottages** (two houses in **St Anne's Terrace**). Four houses in nearby **Duke Street**, **Cirencester Cottages**, were included in the programme. There were a number of properties listed for demolition in the centre of town, including **Butt's Cottages** in **Park Street**, **8-17 Grove Street**, **Crowther's Passage** in **Malvern Street**, and **St George's Avenue** (9 houses between **Nos. 286-288 High Street**). Property in the **Winchcombe Street** area, included **3-6 Berkeley Avenue** (a cul-de-sac off **Winchcombe Street**), **Hartley Place** (off **Albion Street/Witcombe Place**), **Llewellyn Cottages** in **Trinity School Lane**, **Warwick Buildings** (13 houses off the west side of **Winchcombe Street**), 3 houses in **Jersey Street** (off **Sherborne Street**). South of the town the properties listed included **1-9 Montpellier Retreat**, **1-5 Kew Place** (off the **Bath Road**), **1-5 Providence Cottages** (off **Great Norwood Street**, near **Casino Place**) and **1-5 Reform Place** (**Exmouth Street**). North of the town were **1-9 Cakebridge Terrace** on **Prestbury Road**, demolished by **1937**, and **Field View Cottages** (7 houses in **Whaddon Lane**).
- May 1936 CLHS member **John Hyett's** family were the first occupants of **Wyman's Road** (no. 13), having had their home, **Field Cottage** in **Whaddon Lane** (now **Whaddon Road**), compulsorily purchased (and subsequently demolished) to make room for further development.
- Oct 1936 A third major Council **Slum Clearance Schedule** was put forward. Central properties included **Bubb's Cottages** (at the rear of **423 High Street**), **Green's Place** (off **Tewkesbury Road** between **Russell Place** and **Queen Street**), **1-3 Buckle's Cottages** in **Milsom Street**, 10 houses in **Grove Street**, and **3-8 Hereford Place** (now a footpath). A number of properties were listed in the area of **Sherborne Street**, including **Hall's Court**, **Richmond Cottages** and **Wood Court**. In the area of **Winchcombe Street** and **Albion Street** properties identified included **2-6 Albion Square**, 2 houses in **Berkeley Avenue**, **St Margaret's Cottages** in **Warwick Place** (6 houses demolished in 1938), **Woodbine Cottages** (8 houses in **Fairview Road**), and 15 houses in

- Witcombe Place**, off the east end of **Albion Street**. Properties in the **Bath Road** area included 10 houses in **Casino Place** (behind the west side of **Great Norwood Street**), 3 cottages in **Clare Place**, 4 cottages in **Tivoli Lane**, **Daffodil Terrace** (4 houses in **Commercial Street**), **Eaton Place**, 8 properties in **Norwood Road**, **Hughes Passage** in **Exmouth Court** and other properties in **Exmouth Street**, **2-6 Oriol Walk** (off the east side of **Bath Road**). In the **Alstone** area **1-4 Derrett's Cottages** in **Alstone Croft** and **Higg's Cottages** in **Alstone Lane** were listed for demolition. In **St Paul's** 4 houses on the south side of **St Paul's Road** and 3 in **Rutland Street** were included. Elsewhere **St George's Retreat** (off **St George's Place** near **Bayshill**) and part of **Wellington Place** in **Wellington Street** were demolished under this **Schedule**.
- Jun 1937 The second phase of development on the **Whaddon** estate was begun, and the original **Whaddon Farm** was demolished at this time.
- Nov 1937 A new shop was opened on what was then Cheltenham's largest housing estate, the **Whaddon Farm Estate**.
- Sep 1942 Plans were drawn up for a post-war housing scheme for up to 2,000 homes. The following year the borough surveyor suggested this new development should be called the **Hester's Way Estate**. By **1948-9** compulsory purchase orders were being progressed and County Council approval sought for the layout of roads. Work began on preparing the site in **mid-1950** and construction of the first houses in **1951**.
- Nov 1943 The **Town Planning Committee** revealed plans for a 60-acre housing scheme, the **Lynworth Farm Estate**, with work beginning as soon as the war ended. The original **Lynworth** farmhouse was in **Bouncer's Lane**, diagonally opposite the school. The Council invited tenders to build 200 houses in **August 1945**, and the following year a tender of £68,717 was accepted for the first 62 houses to be built on the estate. **Lynworth Farm Estate** was completed in **1948**.
- Jun 1944 **Charlton Kings Urban District Council's** preliminary plan for the layout of **Ewen's Farm** as a post-war housing estate was approved. Approximately 56 houses were built by **1950**, and a total of 104 by **1952**.
- 1945 The report on Cheltenham by the **Georgian Group** (on post-war reconstruction of towns) advised building blocks of flats of single form, three or four storeys high.
- Feb 1945 Eight 'Experimental Houses' were opened in **Kipling Road** – four using traditional materials and four made of foam slag and installed with enhanced wiring and electrical appliances (including washing machines and water heaters), to promote the sale of electrical goods.
- Dec 1945 Construction of Cheltenham's first post-war temporary housing site had begun at **Prior's Farm**, off **Prior's Road**. 173 prefabs were erected on the site, replaced by the mid-1960s development of more permanent housing, known as the **Prior's Estate**.
- 1946 An 'AIROH' aluminium prefab was erected in 29 ½ mins and ready for occupation in 1hr 11 mins.
- Sep 1946 Post-war prefabricated housing, supposedly temporary, was put up (and is still extant) in **Cakebridge Place**. Others were placed in **Courtenay Street**, **Hales Close** (14 prefabs) and **Selkirk Gardens** (28 prefabs).
- Dec 1946 Initial layout of post war Council housing estate at **Rowanfield** approved. Site preparation began in **1948** and building started in **1949**. A southern counties theme was adopted for street names.
- Jun 1947 134 permanent houses had been built by the end of the war.
- Dec 1947 Plans by the Borough Council for 200 'aluminium permanent bungalows' on the **Alma Road** estate, between **Alma Road** and **Hatherley Road**, were completed, with work beginning the following year. The roads on the estate were named after the Lake District.
- 1948 Compulsory purchase orders on land at **Hester's Way** began.
- 1949 The **Cheltenham Council Tenants' Association** was formed.
- Feb 1949 The first batch of 100 homes on the **Alma Road** estate was ready for occupation.
- 1950 It was estimated that the **Hester's Way Estate** would house 10,000 in 2,150 houses.
- Jun 1950 A house off **Hearne Road** called **The Knapp** went on sale. The Borough Council bought the land to develop an estate of what were termed 'Foreign Office managerial houses' on what became **Ledmore Road**. The houses were to accommodate some of the senior staff of **GCHQ** when they moved to Cheltenham in **1953-4**. Another Council development of 10 houses was built for the same purpose in **Oldfield Crescent, St Mark's**.
- 1951 The **1951 Census** contained questions about housing amenities – whether specific facilities either possessed or shared, e.g. piped water, cooking stove, kitchen sink, flush toilet and fixed bath.
- 1951 **Princess Elizabeth** cut the first turf for one of Cheltenham's largest Council housing schemes, the **Hester's Way Estate**. The government approved a £1.5 million building plan for **Hester's Way** and **Arle** which would include 512 houses for **Foreign Office** staff. Construction began in **December 1951**.

- c1951/2 A Council development of prefabricated houses was built in **Firgrove Walk**, with a further four in **Butt's Walk**, between **Unwin Road** and **Reddings Road**. Prefabricated houses were also built in Unwin Road.
- 1952 There was ill feeling in Cheltenham as **Foreign Office** housing interfered with the town's own housing programme.
- Nov 1952 The new Mayor received the keys to Cheltenham's **2,000th post-war Council house**
- 1953 **Alstone Court**, a Council development of one-bedroom flats for the elderly, was built on the site of **Higg's Cottages** in **Alstone Lane**
- 1953 1,200 **Council house tenants** signed a 'No rent rise' plea.
- 1953 The Borough Council began a development of 129 flats off **Pitman Road**, called **Monkscroft**.
- Nov 1953 The Council reported that its tenancy 'swap' scheme was working well.
- Dec 1953 The contractors **George Wimpey & Co** officially handed over the **3,000th post-war Council house** to the Council at **Hester's Way**. Trees were planted in **Coronation Square** to commemorate the occasion.
- 1954 The Council's application to build at **Benhall Farm** was rejected as the land was needed for food production.
- Jan 1955 Cheltenham's building of 4,000 post-war houses was, according to the Housing Minister, 'an absolutely phenomenal achievement'.
- May 1955 The Council approved the first post-war **slum clearance** programme.
- Oct 1956 The Council purchased land at **Green Farm, Up Hatherley**, from the County Council, for housing development that was partly to replace the slums off the **Tewkesbury Road**, including property in **Waterloo Street**. In **June** the following year the Borough Surveyor submitted plans for approximately 280 houses and flats. The estate includes the present **Radnor Road** and **Caernarvon Road**, whilst the original farmhouse on which the estate is centred still stands on the east side of **Alma Road**, near the **Windermere Road** junction.
- 1957-8 The ***Cheltenham Tenants' Handbook***, issued by the Borough Council, contained advice on every aspect of living in a Cheltenham Council house. Included was advice on using electricity and gas, looking after the garden, interior decorating and general care of the property – 'A little oilcan and a rubber plunger may be obtained for about 2/-. For this small outlay you can avoid much greater expenditure falling on the Housing Revenue account.' (It did go on to explain how to use these items.) Available local education, health and welfare services were listed.
- Tenants were encouraged to be proud of their homes; on becoming a tenant 'tenancy conditions should be not only read, but also inwardly digested. They are designed to help procure the greatest good of the greatest number – and the Housing Committee do not expect them to be disregarded.' One's social conscience was appealed to on leaving a house – 'It should be clean and tidy as one would like to find it; if it is not so, new tenants can make very pointed remarks.'
- 29 Oct 1957 The newly completed **Princess Elizabeth Way** was officially opened.
- Nov 1958 Communal television aerials for tenants were erected on blocks of **Council flats**.
- 13 Jan 1959 It was announced that 122 properties were to be demolished in the **Tewkesbury Road** and **Swindon Road** area (**Maud's Elm** estate), and the district re-developed. Approximately 120 older properties were demolished and replaced with new housing in several streets. Two new residential streets also appeared – **Bridge Street** and **Richards Road**.
- Feb 1959 Plans were approved for two eight-storey blocks of flats to be built at **Hester's Way**.
- 1960 By this time 3,000 homes had been erected on the **Hester's Way Estate**.
- 1961 There were fears that corrosion in aluminium would cause some of the town's 430 **prefabs** to be demolished.
- Feb 1964 The Town Council reported that 17,000 of the town's 73,770 people lived in council-owned properties.
- May 1964 The Mayor called for an end to Cheltenham's description of being 'poor, proud and pretty'. He said Cheltenham was 'not poor, but pretty and proud of it'.
- Oct 1965 137 **prefabs** on the **Alma Road** estate were found to have severely deteriorated.
- 1969 The first phase of demolishing Council **prefabs** in **Alma Road** was completed.
- Oct 1969 The Minister of State declared that 1,500 Cheltenham families urgently needed accommodation.
- 1970 The Town Council owned 7235 houses and flats, 5,527 built since the Second World War.
- May 1971 **Council rent arrears** stood at £10,000.
- 1972 Cheltenham Borough Council agreed in principle for Council tenants to purchase their homes under the Government's '**Right to Buy**' scheme.
- Mar 1974 **Cheltenham Housing Campaign** held a weekend protest at lack of accommodation in town.
- 1976 The Borough Council approved a £7.5m housing programme over the following three years.



17-19. The Union Workhouse at Christmas, 1922. Women's Ward (*top right*), Men's Ward (*left*) and staff (*top left*). The evergreen decorations, made by the staff, appear much the same as those described in December 1892. Note the women's old-fashioned caps and the presence of several small children.



20. The whole site of the former Union Workhouse was converted into St Paul's Hospital in 1948, and became the St Paul's Maternity Hospital in 1954. This photograph, showing some of the original Workhouse buildings, was taken after St Paul's closed in June 1996.



21. (*above*) The Union Workhouse Chapel and St. Paul's Medical Centre, 2009. The Centre opened in April 1999

- Aug 1979 The Mayor warned of a Council house ‘famine’ due to Government spending cutbacks.
- 1980 More than 1,000 **Council tenants** voted ‘yes’ to home ownership.
- 1980 The number of homeless families in Cheltenham had risen from 10 to 29 in the previous year.
- Jan 1983 The sale of Council houses in Cheltenham was amongst the highest in the south west region.
- Jan 1984 The Council approved £0.62 million for improved housing in **St. Paul’s**.
- 1989 The Council ‘declared war’ on thousands of tenants who owed over £30,000 in unpaid rents.
- 1993 **Pakistan House**, a block of **Council flats** off **Coronation Square**, was branded a ‘death trap’ after a fire was started on the ground floor.
- Oct 1993 Cheltenham Borough Council was given the go-ahead to sell £2 million worth of Council land at **Arle Farm** for social housing development (150 plots).
- Sep 1995 Preparations were made to bulldoze **Council flats** in the **Hester’s Way** and **St Mark’s** areas and replace them with houses.
- 1996 The Council announced plans to give tenants at **Hester’s Way** a voice in the long-term planning of the estate.
- Apr 1998 The **Prince of Wales** caused indignation when he ranked **Hester’s Way** alongside Toxteth and Tower Hamlets on a list of Britain’s urban blackspots.
- 2000 The Council received a government grant of £40,000 to create **Neighbourhood Watch** schemes and to secure houses in order to combat crime on the **St Paul’s** estate.
- Aug 2000 The second phase of the Council’s scheme to regenerate **Hester’s Way** began with the demolition of four blocks of **Council flats** – **Novello, Holst, Britten** and **Sullivan**, known as **Musicians’ South**. Work began on replacing the flats with new homes three months later.
- 2001 The **2001 Census** included questions about facilities – central heating and sole use of a bath or shower.
- 2001 The Borough Council identified the **St Mark’s Estate** as being of architectural and social importance. After formal discussion with residents, the **Poets’ Estate Conservation Area** was formed.
- Jul 2001 It was announced that flats in **Hester’s Way** would be demolished under regeneration plans, including homes in **Bramley Road, Orchard Avenue**, and the blocks of flats **Canada House, Montreal House** and **Quebec House**. Three **Housing Associations**, all registered charities, would then develop the site – **Bromford Housing Group** (formerly **Cheltenham District Housing Authority**), **Gloucestershire Housing** and the **Guinness Trust**. The Council retained the right to allocate the new housing to its tenants.
- Aug 2001 The first residents moved into new homes that had replaced the old ‘**Musicians**’ blocks of flats in **Hester’s Way**. A total of 33 new two, three and four-bedroomed houses were being provided at the **Musicians South** site.
- Dec 2001 Demolition started of the 88 flats in the ‘**Canada**’ blocks, built in **1953** in **Hester’s Way**. They were to be replaced by about 70 two, three and four-bedroomed houses. This was the third phase of the Borough Council’s scheme to regenerate **Hester’s Way**.
- 2004 The **Regeneration Partnership** was set up to look at ways of improving **Cheltenham**.
- Apr 2005 Cheltenham Borough Council announced plans to demolish parts of **St Paul’s** and by **December** 312 homes were earmarked for demolition.
- Jan 2006 **St Paul’s** residents staged a protest outside the Municipal Offices. The following month **Aldridge Close** residents staged their own protest.
- Mar 2006 The residents of **St Paul’s** were offered six options for redevelopment of their estate.
- Apr 2006 The Council abandoned the idea of demolishing the entire **St Paul’s** estate.
- Apr 2006 A new report, based on government figures, revealed that thousands of people in Cheltenham were living in some of the poorest communities in the UK. It stated that **Hester’s Way, Oakley, Springbank** and **St Paul’s** suffered from deprivation – high unemployment meant people were living in poverty, and the streets were plagued by crime and disorder.
- Oct 2006 Work on 37 new homes to replace the dilapidated **India House** and **Pakistan House** neared completion. The 78 outdated flats (built **1960**) were being replaced with two four-bed, 10 two-bed and 13 three-bed houses. The remaining 12 homes were to be available for shared ownership from **Bromford Housing Group**. The new homes made up the final phase of the regeneration of the area.
- Dec 2006 Plans to demolish 80 homes in **Crabtree Place** and parts of **Manser Street** and **Hudson Street** were unveiled.
- Nov 2007 Public consultation started in the **St Paul’s** redevelopment scheme. Birmingham-based architects **BM3** were chosen to design the scheme. Apart from the rebuilding of 100 homes in **Crabtree Place, Hudson Street** and **Manser Place**, 212 homes in **Folly Lane, Hudson Street, Manser Street** and **Aldridge Close** are scheduled for improvement.

- Feb 2008 Demolition work began in **Crabtree Place**.
- Jan 2009 Demolition work began in **Hudson Street** and **Manser Street**.
- Apr 2009 A second architects' competition was held to design the redevelopment of **St Paul's** estate, won by **Edward Nash Architects**. A total of 67 houses had already been demolished and hundreds of families moved out of their homes. With demolition work already behind schedule, the building work is not expected to start before **April 2010**.
- Jul 2009 It was announced that more than £400,000 would be spent on sprucing up communal areas at **Scott House** and **Edward Wilson House** in **Princess Elizabeth Way**. This was to include putting in extra fencing, security lighting and greenery.
- Aug 2009 It was proposed to launch a new system for people seeking affordable houses in Gloucestershire. The six District Councils in the county would amalgamate their previously separate housing waiting lists, available properties would be advertised and homeseekers would then express their interest via the internet, automated phone service or text message. This new approach would mean that offers would only go to people who had expressed interest in a property. Also the points-based system of allocation would be replaced by four different priority bands – bronze, silver, gold and emergency.

EARLY PROVISION for the POOR

- Medieval The running of the town was managed by the Church and by the **Manor of Cheltenham**. The Church took the main responsibility for meeting the needs of the poor.
- 1441 An Act was passed releasing the inhabitants of Cheltenham from taxes 'on account of the poverty of the place'.
- 16th century The local influence of the manor declined from this time and gradually the **Parish Vestry** assumed more responsibility for running Cheltenham.
- 1601 The **Elizabethan Poor Law Act** stated that the relief of the poor should be provided for by their own parish, and funded by the collection of a **Poor Rate** from local property owners. Mainly '**Out Relief**' was given, which consisted of money, clothing, food or fuel. The Act proposed erecting houses for the 'impotent poor', the elderly and the chronic sick. It also enabled the purchase of materials to provide work for the unemployed able-bodied, with the threat of prison for those who refused.
- 1650 Workhouses were built to save money and deter the able-bodied from becoming a burden on the parish.
- 1667 Charities for the benefit of the poor and for putting out apprentices were consolidated in the purchase of lands called the **Poor's Grounds** – originally about 27 acres situated near **Shackle's Turnpike** in **Bouncer's Lane** (then known as the **Hewlett Road**). Well into the 19th century the rental from this land was distributed by the churchwardens on **St Thomas' Day**. They issued tickets for food or clothing to the value of half-a-crown (12 ½ p) or five shillings (25p), to be accepted by any rate-paying tradesman in the town. In the latter years of this charity (**1860s**) the aim was to give these tickets to any persons who had not already received parish relief from the **Poor Law Union**, who had been born in Cheltenham and who had attained the age of 60 years – about 300 old inhabitants were relieved annually.
- 1700 The **Charlton Vestry** had obtained quite a large amount of property holdings, the rents from which were used to assist the sick and poor, pay for funerals, apprentice children, and keep the houses in repair.
- 1723 The **Workhouse Test Act** gave parishes the option of denying **Out Relief** and offering the **Workhouse** as the only form of relief for paupers.
- 1769 Part of the **Royal Oak (public house)** in the **Lower High Street** in Cheltenham was used as a '**Workhouse** for the town's poor'.
- 1777 A Parliamentary Report listed Cheltenham as having a **Workhouse** for up to 36 inmates.
- 1782 **Gilbert's Act** set up procedures for parishes to set up and run workhouses. These were not for the able-bodied, who were subsidised by the **Poor Rate**.
- 1786 An Act of Parliament appointed a body of **Town Commissioners** to carry out improvements to the town. They were to raise a rate for paving, cleansing and lighting the town. The **Parish Vestry** retained responsibility for the poor.
- 1803 In **Prestbury**, 20 people regularly received **Poor Relief**, and another 20 received it on an occasional basis.

- 1808-9 A purpose-built **Parish Workhouse** was erected in **Workhouse Lane**, near the **Knapp** behind **St James' Square**, run by the **Parish Vestry**. The inmates earned their keep by making pins and mops. Prior to this the **Vestry** had leased various properties in and around the town to house the poor. One of these may have been **Alpha House** in what is now **St George's Road (Spirax Sarco site)**.
- 1817 The **Charity Trustees of Charlton Kings** exchanged a plot of their 'poor's lands' for a plot belonging to **James Cleevely**, anticipating the need to build a **workhouse** upon it. Unusually no conveyance was signed until 10 years after the **Charlton Kings Workhouse** had been erected there in **1826**. The site was in **Church Street**, set back from the street with a yard and gardens behind the **new Charlton Kings Almshouses**. (*see Almshouses, 1617*).
- 1823-4 A workhouse was opened in **Prestbury**, run by the **church vestry**, in a purpose built building at **Queenswood Grove**. The building still exists and has been divided into five dwellings – a stone plaque below the chimney of **1 Queenswood Grove** bears the date '**A.D. 1823**'. **Prestbury** parish employed women and children in the workhouse, providing them with yarn and spinning wheels. A committee was set up to visit the workhouse weekly. After the **Prestbury Workhouse** closed in **1835**, the **Prestbury Memorial Trust** was formed, which carried on looking after the poor of the parish. The Trust still exists, and still raises income on property in the village.
- 1826 The expenditure on **Poor Relief in Prestbury** had risen to £493. The **Vestry** complained that the parish was infested with vagrants, and asked the parishioners not to give them any help.
- 1827 **Charlton Kings Workhouse**, known as the **Poor House**, was opened and used to accommodate poor children from throughout the Cheltenham area.
- 1830 According to the **Rev. Lloyd**, writing in **1982**, 'hundreds of farm labourers and domestic servants from surrounding rural areas were drawn to Cheltenham because of its liberal **Poor Law System** and they stayed in the overcrowded Lodging Houses at the lower end of the **High Street**'.

UNION WORKHOUSE

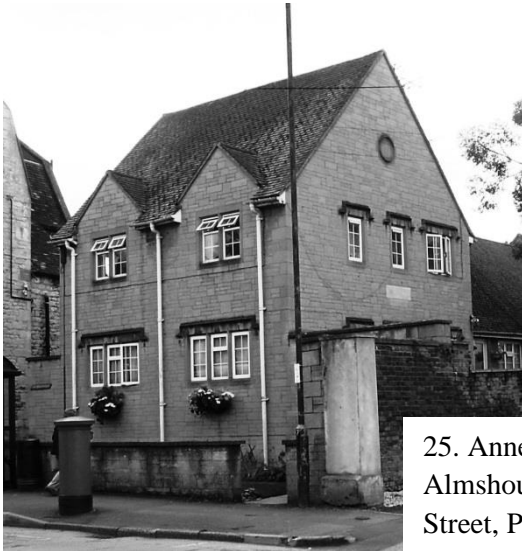
- 1834 Responsibility for caring for the poor and destitute, and for running the **Workhouse**, was transferred to a **Cheltenham Poor Law Union**, to be administered by a **Board of Guardians** and covering 12 parishes.
- 1834 The **Poor Law Amendment Act** came into effect. '**Outdoor relief**' could only be given to the 'deserving poor' – the elderly and sick. The unemployed, able-bodied, and single mothers could only be relieved in the **Parish Workhouse**.
- 1835 The **Prestbury Workhouse** was closed and **Prestbury** became part of the **Cheltenham Poor Law Union**.
- Nov 1835 The Commissioners under the new **Poor Law Amendment Act** formed the **Cheltenham Union**, which consisted of 12 parishes – **Cheltenham, Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Swindon, Prestbury, Uckington, Staverton, Badgeworth, Great Witcombe, Shurdington, Cowley and Coberley**.
- 16 Nov 1835 First election for 16 **Board of Guardians** members for the new **Cheltenham Union**.
- 1836 The last remaining inmates, including 'one idiot', were transferred from **Charlton Kings Workhouse** to the **Cheltenham Union Workhouse**.
- 1841 The Local Government Board at Whitehall, London, dictated every aspect of the **Poor Law**, including the **Workhouse diet**, calculated as the basic requirement for all groups of inmates. It was heavily dependent on bread, with a small amount of butter or cheese, potato and suet pudding. Meat or fish with fruit and vegetables were given twice a week, with porridge, gruel and tea. Only babies and children had milk.
- 10 Mar 1841 The annual tenders were invited for supplying the **Workhouse at The Knapp**. Items included: 'second flour'; meat – beef ('lift, shift, bed and sticking piece), mutton ('shoulders, breasts and necks'); 2-meal cheese; bacon; oatmeal; best Staffordshire block coal; Groceries listed were tea, moist sugar, coffee, ginger, pearl barley, scotch barley, arrow root, sago, butter, dips and rush candles, treacle, salt, soap, soda, vinegar, pepper, mustard, starch and blue. Drinks listed were beer draft, port wine, brandy and gin; Drapery specified included unbleached calico, blue checks, azure blue pocket and neckerchiefs, drab moleskin, three-fourths drab corduroy, sorted men's ribbed and women's black hose, Irish linen, strong Welch flannels, Scotch sheetings, Marshalls 25 and 40 thread, coloured counterpanes, women's and girl's coarse straw bonnets, men's and boy's Jim Crow hats with oil-cased caps, and women's and girl's stays. Also listed were wood faggots; hair brooms, mops, scrubbing, black lead and banister brushes.



22. Sunset House, 3 Monson Terrace. Purchased in August 1914 as a 'shelter and haven of rest for aged pensioners'. No longer extant.



23 & 24. Strickland Homes, Hales Road, 2009



25. Anne Goodrich Almshouses, High Street, Prestbury, 2009



26. Hay Memorial Cottage Homes, Naunton Park. These almshouses were built in 1899, and are still in use in 2009.



27. Rowton House, Grove Street, was established by 1910 to house homeless men. Renamed Grove House in 1987.



28. One of two Catharine Ball Almshouse cottages, Shurdington Road, 2009. Erected in 1858.

- 30 Oct 1841 A large **Union Workhouse** was opened in **Swindon Road**, replacing the old **Parish Workhouse** at **The Knapp**. It was built on part of a piece of land called **Maidenhorn**, land donated by **Admiral Sir Tristram Ricketts** who lived a neighbouring mansion, **The Elms**. With flies provided to convey the aged or infirm, the 133 inmates of the old workhouse were transferred to the new building, which was calculated to accommodate up to 220 inmates. The plan of the Workhouse had been approved by the **Poor Law Commissioners**, and instead of following the usual practice of laying the yards out with gravel, they were ‘tastefully arranged as gardens’. Able-bodied inmates had to break up stone for road building, and perform chores such as cleaning, laundry and food preparation under strict supervision. Husbands and wives were split up as men and women were kept in separate wings. Children were also separated from their parents. All wore pauper ‘uniform’.
- 31 Oct 1841 The **Rev. Francis Close** officially opened the chapel at the new **Union Workhouse**.
- 18 Jan 1842 An auction for the sale of the **old workhouse** at **The Knapp** was held – ‘all that large messuage or building’ comprising the old workhouse, together with outbuildings, half an acre of land attached and the use of the access road from **New Street**. The property did not sell and the **Vestry** rented it out to the **Cheltenham Union**, who used it to house and educate pauper children.
- 11 Feb 1842 The removal of the ‘juvenile paupers’ from the **Charlton Kings Workhouse** took place. They were transferred to the **old workhouse**, which had undergone a course of repairs to make it suitable for their reception. This particular week there were 112 children at the old workhouse and 229 adults at the **Union Workhouse**, a total of 341 inmates.
- Jan 1844 The Master and Mistress of the **Union Workhouse**, **Mr and Mrs Porter** gave a treat to 130 **workhouse** children, of whom 60 were ‘whole’ orphans. They were given tea and cake, which included a ‘twelfth’ cake a yard and a half (132cm) in diameter.
- 24 Jan 1844 Statistics showed that the new **Union Workhouse** was almost full with 220 out of a possible 236 inmates.
- 17 Jul 1844 There were health risks associated with over-crowding at the **Union Workhouse**. In the previous winter 70-80 inmates had caught a fever, with seven deaths. It was impossible to isolate cases of contagious illness in the existing accommodation and a new hospital ward for the workhouse was proposed. The **Board of Guardians** met to consider this but the idea was not adopted for several years as the ‘country’ Guardians repeatedly voted against it – they did not want to have to pay to benefit Cheltenham ‘at the expense of the outparishes’. Of the 12 parishes in the **Cheltenham Union**, Cheltenham would have to pay $\frac{3}{4}$ of the £300 needed to build the ward, but this did not sway the ‘country’ Guardians (*see 14 Jan 1852*). The motion to build a hospital ward, to cost £115, was finally carried in **October 1844**, following public pressure and a press campaign.
- Sep 1844 It was proposed that a building in **Fountain Passage**, (off the north side of the **High Street** between **nos 403-5**) should be rented to house the poor who were passing through Cheltenham. Seven or eight beds in lodgings in Fountain Passage were already being used for this purpose and the **Board of Guardians** voted against the proposal to increase provision. During the previous quarter 480 persons had claimed relief in the form of bread and bedding at the expense of the parish.
- Feb 1845 A dispute arose between the parish **Vestry**, as landlords, and the **Board of Guardians/Poor Law Union**, as tenants of the **old workhouse**. Since the opening of the new **Workhouse**, the **Union** had rented the old Workhouse as a school for pauper children. In 1844-5 a portion of the premises – the children’s playground and workshops and ‘offices’ (toilets) – had been required for use by the new railway. The railway company paid compensation of £835 to the parish and £125 to the Union. The Board of Guardians demanded that the **Overseers** of the parish compensate them further for the loss of the children’s facilities, either by replacing them or allowing a reduction in rent. The Overseers felt that the Union should use up the £125 compensation before approaching the parish should further funds be necessary.
- Dec 1845 On **Christmas Day** the inmates of the **Union Workhouse** were supplied with roast beef and plum pudding, besides the adults being allowed one pint of ale, and the children half a pint.
- Aug 1846 The Master and Mistress of the **old workhouse** resigned, claiming that ever since the railway company had taken the boys’ playground it had been impossible to stop children trespassing and ‘doing mischief’ to neighbouring property. With nowhere to play they were constantly in trouble.
- Aug 1847 When a planned celebration had to be cancelled, **Charles Hale** donated a large round of beef to the **Union Workhouse**. It was returned with a note from the clerk of the Workhouse stating that the paupers already had meat three days per week and did not require any more.

- Oct 1847 **Mr Wilkinson** of **Christ Church** wrote to the **Board of Guardians** complaining of the conduct of **Workhouse** children during public services. Despite the Workhouse Master's claims that they were as well behaved as the **Cheltenham College** boys, it was decided the boys should attend **St Paul's Church** in future. The churchwardens had no objection to Workhouse girls continuing to attend Christ Church provided those with good voices were allowed to join the choir.
- Sep 1848 The **Board of Guardians** voted to enlarge the Cheltenham **Union Workhouse** to accommodate 50 more paupers. The motion was passed despite the usual objections from the 'country' guardians who objected to their parish rates supporting the Workhouse.
- 6 Sep 1848 Tenders invited for the **Union Workhouse extension** included best Bristol Black rock stone, to be broken down into gravel in the stone yard by the able-bodied male inmates. This thirsty work was possibly rewarded with the beer, draught port wine, brandy and gin (per gallon) that were included in the list for tender. Sadly many paupers ended their days in the Workhouse and tenders for ironmongery included 'best black coffin handles per doz. pair, large black coffin letters & figures per gross, small white ditto, 1½ in screws for screwing down coffins, per gross, ¾ in elm coffin board at per 1,000 ft'.
- Jan 1849 The week's statistics showed that a total of 'indoor' paupers chargeable throughout the whole **Union** totalled 422 – 341 in Cheltenham and 81 in the outlying parishes. The 'outdoor' paupers totalled 1,549 – 1,332 in Cheltenham, with 217 in the other parishes. This outdoor relief cost £181 16s. These statistics showed a considerable increase when compared with the same period in the previous two years, perhaps a reflection of a more severe winter in 1848/9.
- Apr 1850 A survey carried out by **Andrew Paul** revealed that the new **Union Workhouse extension** had not been completed according to the specification. Many of the materials used were inferior to those specified, buildings were smaller than on plan and some had even been omitted, doors and windows were smaller or omitted, and some fireplaces and chimneys had been omitted. The builder, **John Blizzard**, had issued a certificate claiming that he had followed the specification. In his defence he claimed that he had substituted other work over and above the original contract. The **Board of Guardians** attempted to claim compensation as they felt the work was worth at least £200 less than that contracted for. They lost their case and costs amounting to £1,400 were thrown upon the Union.
- May 1850 The **Board of Guardians** suffered further concerns when **Lady Ricketts** of **The Elms** threatened action after her boundary wall was damaged by the **new Workhouse extension** being built against it.
- May 1850 A pauper named **Witts**, with three children, applied for £20 to assist his emigration to **Australia**. The **Board of Guardians** voted in favour when it was pointed out that the cost of maintaining him and his family here in Cheltenham was £36 per year.
- Jul 1850 During the history of poor relief in Cheltenham there were many instances where people committed suicide rather than be sent to the **Workhouse**. Not everybody was afraid of becoming resident there however. An inmate named **George Witts** was found to be a man of property and therefore not entitled to his Workhouse place. He regularly left the Workhouse every two weeks to collect rents on various properties he owned, although he claimed that these were all heavily mortgaged. He also smuggled contraband tea, sugar and tobacco into the Workhouse.
- 1851 The **Poor Law Commissioners** abolished the old **tythings** and divided Cheltenham into 5 Wards.
- Jun 1851 The **1851 Census** revealed that the total population in the 13 parishes that made up the **Cheltenham Poor Law Union** amounted to 44,226 (*see 14 Jan 1852*).
- 17 Dec 1851 Statistics for the half-year ending 24 September 1851 were published in the *Cheltenham Examiner*:
Total number of paupers who were relieved in the **Union Workhouse** =728 (193 males, 253 females and 282 children). Relief was given outside the Workhouse on 5,200 separate occasions. This relief was given to 359 males, 1,304 females and 1,757 children.
- 14 Jan 1852 The *Cheltenham Examiner* listed the 13 parishes that by then made up the **Cheltenham Union** – **Cheltenham, Badgeworth, Charlton Kings, Cowley, Coberley, Leckhampton, Prestbury, Shurdington, Staverton, Swindon, Uckington, Up Hatherley** and **Great Witcombe**.
- Jul 1852 The conduct of the **Workhouse** Master and Mistress was investigated after it was discovered that 100 more inmates than actually existed had been charged for in the weekly returns.
- 17 Aug 1853 The *Cheltenham Examiner* published a summary of the typical **Union Workhouse diet**, giving the provisions for inmates (i.e. 150 adults and 130 children) for one week as follows: 406 loaves of bread, 100 lbs flour, 335 lbs beef, 112 lbs mutton, 20 lbs suet, 14 lbs bacon, 98 lbs cheese, 53 lbs 3 oz butter, 11 lbs 15 oz tea, 90 lbs 8 oz sugar, 3 lbs arrow root, 7 lbs rice, 60 quarts peas, 98 quarts oatmeal, 56 gallons milk, 7 glasses gin, 78 gallons ale, 21 pints porter. The gin and porter were given to the sick, as indicated in the medical relief book.

- May 1855 Having been empty and profitless for five years, it was proposed that the **old workhouse** be devoted to the use of education in perpetuity under the direction of the **Committee of Education**. The **Rev. Francis Close** addressed the **Board of Guardians** on the subject. He informed them that, having found a great desire by tradespeople to secure a good education for their daughters, who could not afford to pay the terms for 'the excellent school in St. Margaret's Terrace', and who yet 'did not like to send their children with the working classes', he had removed the latter children from the school room in **St. James' Square** and had opened a school there for the daughters of parents who paid £10 rent and upwards. It had proved so popular that after a few months he had 160 pupils there and was obliged to seek accommodation for the former, non-paying children elsewhere. For a while they had been accommodated in a very small room in **Manchester Walk** but were now using the old workhouse. These premises were in a very dilapidated state and, in order to maintain them, the **Vestry** had passed a resolution to convey the premises to the use of education, without charge.
- 30 May 1855 An advertisement inviting tenders for providing steam-cooking apparatus at the **Union Workhouse** announced that although the Workhouse could accommodate 561 paupers, the average number of inmates did not exceed 350.
- 18 Jul 1855 The **old workhouse** was advertised for sale as the **Board of Guardians** had not been in favour of using it for the parish schools. It failed to sell and appeal was set up by the **Cheltenham parochial schools** for funds to purchase the premises for educational use. Subscribers included the circus proprietor **Charles Hengler**.
- 17 Sep 1856 Statistics were published showing the total number of paupers receiving relief in the **Cheltenham Union** over the previous year: Indoor relief = 1,114. Outdoor relief = 9,867.
- 1860 A plan of the **Union Workhouse** at this time clearly shows the men's and boys' areas on one side of the building, and women's and girls' on the other. Men's and women's fever rooms existed before the **Workhouse Infirmary** was built. At the rear of the site were the **Tramp Wards**.
- 1861 The population of the **Cheltenham Union** paying the **Poor Rate** grew to 49,688.
- Jun 1861 Four boys were taken to **Portsmouth** by the **Union Workhouse** Master to be apprenticed to a Man o' War. Only one of the boys was accepted as the other three were considered unfit for service (one had had a fit in the previous three years, and the other two boys were 'weakly'). The **Board of Guardians** felt that the employment of a drillmaster at the Workhouse would be a cost effective measure, and fortunately a volunteer was found who would drill the boys for free.
- Jul 1861 The **Union Workhouse** received a favourable report from the **Commissioners in Lunacy**. The 10 inmates in the Workhouse who were 'of unsound mind' were found to be clean and tidily dressed, their beds were clean and their rooms well ventilated. It was noted that all except one walked out beyond the premises and all but two were employed in some kind of work.
- Aug 1864 A report from **H.M. Inspector of Schools** declared that the state of the **Workhouse** girls was very unsatisfactory. He found them to be deficient in religious knowledge, in spelling and in arithmetic, and he felt they were in 'an imperfect state of discipline'.
- 3 Aug 1864 The **Cheltenham Examiner** announced that nearly 200 **Union Workhouse** children were to have a summer treat, and an appeal was launched for subscriptions. Various local tradesmen offered to convey the children including **Mr Garratt** of the **Plough** hotel and **Mr Haines**, coal merchant. The confectioner, **Mr George**, offered 1 cwt of plum cake, **Mr Snowsell** offered 80 small loaves and the butcher, **Mr Page**, offered 16 lbs of veal. **S.W. Fisher** offered 12 lbs of loaf sugar and several grocers contributed loose tea to the picnic. Birdlip was a popular venue for treats.
- Jul 1868 It was proposed that new schools should be built for the **Union Workhouse** children, to accommodate 150 pupils. Four sites were considered for the project – 6 acres at **Pilley**, **Leckhampton**, eventually rejected as being too small and too far away; **Isaac Daft's** ground on the **Gloucester Road**, rejected as being too near **Hatherley Brook**, which contained untreated sewage; a site on the **Hester's Way** estate, where building plots and roads had been marked out, rejected as too far and also as it was not known who the school's future neighbours would be, and finally the 17.5 acre **Poor's Grounds** on the east side of **Cemetery Road** (now **Bouncer's Lane**). The provision of the Workhouse schools was endlessly debated at **Vestry** and **Board of Guardians** meetings over the following two years. The idea was eventually abandoned in **November 1870** when it was accepted that there were fewer children resident in the Workhouse than when the proposal was originally put forward.
- Jul 1869 **Sir Cornwallis Ricketts** of **The Elms** complained that some of the **Workhouse** inmates had climbed over his wall, dislodging some of the coping stones. They had then stripped his currant trees and torn up shallots and potatoes 'for mischief'. The inmates had knotted bed sheets together to enable them to scale the 12 foot wall. To prevent further such incidents, it was suggested that the wall be topped with cement and broken glass.



29. The Bucklehaven Almshouses, Charlton Kings, here newly built in 1911, were provided for deserving, aged and infirm men and women in reduced circumstances.

The "Jesse Mary Chambers" Almshouses
 WERE ERECTED BY
Messrs. A. C. Billings & Sons, Ltd., *Builders, Decorators and*
:: Sanitary Engineers, ::
 54 WINCHCOMBE STREET, CHELTENHAM,
 WHO WERE ALSO THE BUILDERS OF
 The "Buckle" Haven Homes; the "Strickland" Homes, Hale's Road; the Cottage Homes ("Hay" Trust), Naunton Park.

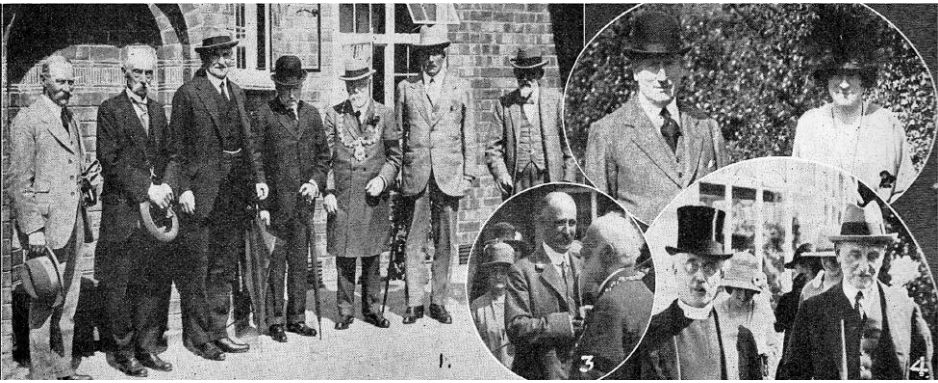
30. This advertisement for A.C. Billings in the *Chronicle & Graphic*, 18 July 1925, was printed on the same page as the full report of the opening. A shrewd piece of publicity.



31 & 32. The Jesse Chambers Almshouses, Tennyson Road, (*above*) were built in 1924-25 and were officially opened (*below*) by The Right Honorable Sir James T. Agg Gardner, MP for Cheltenham, on 10 July 1925. Still in use in 2014.



33. Commemorative plaque over the central doorway, 2009



- 1870 Two **Workhouse** inmates, **Hannah Spencer** and **Elizabeth Merriman**, were brought before the magistrates, having been found with pieces of soap and other items concealed on their persons.
- 11 May 1870 Seven **Workhouse** orphan boys, seen off by two or three members of the **Board of Guardians**, set off for **Canada**. They travelled by train to Liverpool where they were placed aboard the Allan steamer *Peruvian* under the care of **Miss MacPherson**, who was taking some London boys to **Toronto**. The **Guardians** had formed an **Emigration & Boarding-Out Committee**, chaired by **Baron de Ferrières**, to negotiate the emigration of paupers to Canada. It was felt that the Workhouse boys would have a good opportunity in Canada ‘of earning a living and becoming active and useful members of society’, while saving the Union the cost of their upkeep.
- 6 Jun 1870 One of the pauper emigrants, **W. Westcote**, wrote to the **Union Workhouse** Master with news of his arrival in **Canada**. He reported that the boys had arrived in **Quebec** on **24 May**. He described the sea crossing, during which they were well fed. Classes and Sunday services were held during the voyage and the boys saw sights they would never have dreamt of in the **Workhouse** – porpoises, whales and flying fish, and a large iceberg off **Cape Race**. After their arrival at Quebec the boys were taken by train to **Montreal** where they were sent to their new homes. ‘**George Roberts** and **George Bate** and **Thomas Bate** are at Montreal, as they had places to go to, and **John Keefe** is at **Belleville**, and I and **Alfred** and **Charles Rawlings** are at **Toronto**.’ The writer of the letter was earning 30s per month with free board and washing.
- 2 Nov 1870 It was announced that oakum-picking for able-bodied, lazy women should be introduced at the **Workhouse**. This arduous task involved shredding old pieces of tarred rope so the fibres could be used to caulk gaps in ship’s timbers. It was an occupation frequently set in prisons at this time.
- 25 Dec 1870 **Christmas Day** in the **Workhouse**. A laden Christmas tree appeared a few days before Christmas from which toys and sweets were distributed to the children, articles of warm clothing to the aged poor and work-cases and ‘wraps’ to the staff. To celebrate New Year the Christmas tree was again lit up and ‘a sumptuous tea’ provided. Fruit was also distributed amongst the 100 or so women, children and aged poor.
- 1871 The **Poor Law Board** was replaced by the **Local Government Board**.
- 1871 A weekly **shopping list** for the **Union Workhouse** at this time included: bread at 5d per 4 lb loaf, flour 37s per sack, beef and mutton at 60s per cwt, cheese at 49s per cwt, tea at 2s per lb, butter 13 lbs at 1s per lb, starch, laundry blue, soda, arrowroot, pepper, mustard, candles, treacle, oatmeal, vinegar, sugar, rice, soap, port wine, gin, brandy, sherry, beer, milk, and salt. Brushes, leather, coal, barley meal, elm board, twill calico, cords, bone buttons, moleskins, blue check, grey calico, Welsh flannel and handkerchiefs. [d = old pence. s = shilling. 2s = 10p; 20s = £1: 1cwt = 112 lbs in weight] The cost was around £50 per week for approximately 300 inmates. Wages for the Workhouse Master and Mistress were £90 and £40 per year respectively, inclusive of board and lodging.
- Jan 1871 As was often the case during severe winter weather, 200-300 unemployed men would arrive at the **Workhouse** stone yard every morning to work for some poor relief, usually in the form of tickets for soup or bread, but occasionally for money. Often they would arrive uninvited and the **Guardians** were obliged to open up the stone yard to avoid a riot.
- Feb 1871 The **Poor Law Board** urged strict adherence to the **Workhouse Test** during this period of very severe weather, and deny ‘**Out relief**’ to men prevented from working at their usual occupations because of the weather.
- Apr 1871 The **1871 Census** shows 3 ‘**Union Boarders**’ aged 4, 5 and 8 years, lodging with different families in **White Hart Street**. For providing this ‘boarding out’ service the family received 10s a quarter for clothing, and 3s weekly.
- Jun 1871 Arrangements were made to send five orphan girls from the **Union Workhouse** to **Canada**. The lads who had previously emigrated were reported to be doing well – several had been ‘adopted as sons by well-to-do men’ and others were engaged in farm work in the **Belleville** area.
- Apr 1872 Twelve boys and one girl from the **Workhouse** left the **St James’ Square** station *en route* for **Canada**. The Master of the Workhouse, **Mr Welch**, accompanied the children to Hampton, near London, where they were to spend a few days at the Home, provided by **Miss MacPherson**, before joining their ship at Liverpool. **Baron de Ferrières** and members of the **Board of Guardians** had effected quite a change in the emigrants over the previous weeks, so that they ‘presented none of the appearance one has been wont to associate with Workhouse children’. This was achieved by sending them to school away from the Workhouse and giving them clothing similar to that of their schoolfellows (rather than Workhouse livery). It was found that ‘this association with children of their own age and of the non-pauper classes had manifestly improved them both physically and mentally’. The boys were all under 12 years and the girl was aged 16 and on her second attempt at settlement in Canada.

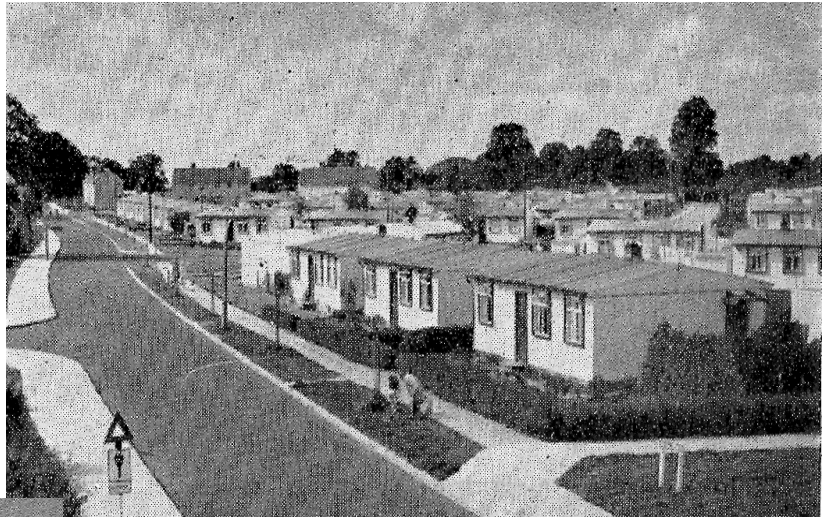
- 17 Apr 1872 The *Cheltenham Examiner* commented on the emigration of **Workhouse** children to **Canada**, saying that 'so complete a clearance of willing and able children has been made that the **Workhouse School** now exists in little more than name'.
- Jul 1872 The **Board of Guardians** discussed, for the first time, the possible purchase of **The Elms**, the next-door mansion, for an extension to the **Workhouse**. The setting of the building in the **Swindon Road** 'has long since ceased to be fashionable, and can evidently never hope to recover its former status in social estimation'. The Elms, standing in 7 acres of grounds, had been unoccupied for the previous 12 or 13 years, but it was to be many more years before purchase and conversion to workhouse use began, in **1886**.
- Jul 1872 **Mr James Lillywhite** invited the **Workhouse** boys to attend the county cricket on the **Cheltenham College** ground.
- 22 Jan 1873 The **Board of Guardians** expressed their satisfaction at the **emigration to Canada scheme**. So far seven boys had been sent in **Spring 1870**, 12 in **Spring 1871** and a further 12 in **April 1872** – 31 in all. Of these 24 had been heard of and only two had turned out badly – one was a lad who worked his way back to England and the second was 'idle and would not hold a situation for long'. It was claimed that, of the 31 boys, some 20 would probably still be in the **Workhouse** and so the ratepayers had been saved some £150 by the emigration scheme.
- Oct 1873 A **Workhouse** girl who had been given a second trial at emigration to Canada was once again returned to the **Cheltenham Union**. She had initially emigrated in **Jun 1872**, after being kept for several weeks at the Home in London until it was felt she was ready. She was sent back to England for the second time as her behaviour was found to be 'still incorrigible'. Her behaviour was so bad that it was felt she should be returned to the **Board of Guardians** rather than be allowed to go her own way. It was the first case of failure in the emigration scheme for the Union.
- Jan 1874 The rules for granting '**Out Relief**' were amended so that 'persons of bad character shall be relieved only in the **House**'. This also applied to habitual beggars, and those resident for less than three years in the **Union**.
- 1875 The **Board of Guardians** arranged **Indentures of Apprenticeship** for pauper children. For example, **Charles Didcote**, aged 10 years, was apprenticed for 7 years to **Frederick Pritchard**, a tailor.
- May 1875 The **Board of Guardians** agreed to the erection of five earth closets at the **Union Workhouse**, to improve 'morality and health'.
- Jun 1875 The **Workhouse** master was instructed to inflict strict task-work on paupers who were considered able enough to earn their living outside the Workhouse.
- Dec 1875 The **Workhouse** children were invited to attend a pantomime in town, and entertainment was laid on for the other inmates. **Mr Neal**, (one of the **Board of Guardians**) said that 'a great many happy faces could be seen, and he hoped there were also some thankful hearts' (*see Jan 1877*)
- 1876 A pauper at the **Union Workhouse** complained that the men's beds were too close together, with 16 beds in a room 44 feet by 16 feet. No action was taken. In another instance the same year, a complaint signed by 17 pauper men, with marks by a further 24, was sent to the London Board complaining of short food rations. The Master argued that one pauper, a ringleader, had coerced the others into signing; that the 5 oz butter had been made up to 7 oz with dripping; and the other complaints had been exaggerated. It was announced that the cost per head in the workhouse had dropped from 4s 1d to 3s 9 ½ d per week.
- 1876 **Baron de Ferrières** told the **Board of Guardians** that the **Union children** who went to outside schools did not have any playthings, and he wanted some money allocated to buy suitable playthings to be awarded for good conduct marks on their school cards. However, 'owing to red-tapism, the **Guardians** had no power to purchase playthings for the children'.
- Jan 1876 **Baron de Ferrières** suggested that it would be advantageous to send **Union** children out to neighbouring schools rather than teaching them within the **Workhouse**.
- 6 Feb 1876 Statistics reported in the *Cheltenham Examiner* for the week included: **Workhouse** – 347 inmates, 7 admitted that week; **Vagrants** relieved – male 69, female 3; children in **Outdoor schools** – boys 30, girls 23, of whom 10 boys and 6 girls were in receipt of industrial training.
- Mar 1876 The cost of shrouds to the **Union** was stated to be 2s 6d and the cost for the quarter ending **Jun 1875** was nearly £45. The **Guardians** welcomed the suggestion by the Matron of the **Workhouse** that she buy the material and make shrouds for 1s each, lessening the cost to the Union by £14.
- Jul 1876 A newly-appointed **Workhouse tramp-master** asked that the 'dead house' be removed from next to his bedroom. The smell during the summer was proving to be unbearable, especially if bodies were kept in for several days during inquests.



34. St Mark's Estate, 1957



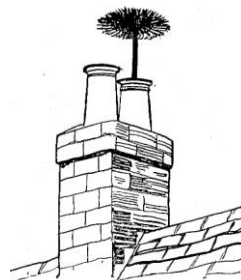
35. Princess Elizabeth Way completion, 29 October 1957



36. Prefabs in Alma Road, 1957



37. Council flats, Grevil Road, 1957



38-41. Cartoons taken from the *Cheltenham Tenant's Handbook*, dated 1957 or 1958

- Jan 1877 The **Board of Guardians** expressed some doubts over allowing **Workhouse** children to attend the pantomime – ‘it might excite in their minds a craving for such amusement that did not always prove beneficial’. After some discussion they voted in favour of the outing.
- Feb 1877 The boarding-out of old men to **Workhouses** in neighbouring **Poor Law Unions** was suggested to relieve winter overcrowding. A total of 80 men were being accommodated in a room that was only built to house 60.
- Dec 1877 Approximately 100 **Workhouse** inmates, including children, attended a free performance of **Ginett’s Circus**.
- Apr 1878 **Workhouse** children suffering from a fever epidemic were temporarily housed at **The Elms** next door (which had still not been purchased by the **Union** – *see Jul 1872*). When the owner, **Mr Chesshyre** wanted to regain possession of the house, it was suggested that the **Board of Guardians** rent a farmhouse at **Birdlip** for the remaining convalescents.
- Apr 1881 **Mr Poole** opened his **Diorama** entertainment free to **Workhouse** children. (*see 29 Jun 1881*)
- 29 Jun 1881 Ironically **Mr Poole’s** aunt, **Ellen Josephine Poole**, the now destitute widow of the successful showman **George Walter Poole**, was admitted to the **Cheltenham Workhouse** with her young son **Walter**. On entry she handed the keys to her house in **Albert Place** to **William Pearce**, the Master of the Workhouse. **Ellen** and **Walter Poole** were eventually discharged on **13 March 1885**.
- 1886-9 A scheme for drastically remodelling and enlarging the **Union Workhouse** was commenced, to involve an outlay of not less than £15,000 (although the actual cost was £24,000). The work was completed by the summer of **1889** and under the improved conditions 558 inmates could be accommodated, exclusive of **The Elms** and casual wards. The Elms, which originally held 80 children, was enlarged to receive about 100 children over the age of two years. Included in the new works were a chapel, an administrative block, a master’s house, a kitchen, a laundry, and two hospitals (for males and females). The hospitals provided an **Infirmery** for the sick and poor, not only for Workhouse residents.
- A piece of land (where **Hardwick Campus** is now) was used by the Workhouse to grow fruit and vegetables. Pigs were also kept on the site and this whole outdoor area was tended by Workhouse inmates.
- 1887 A contract was made with the Town Council to supply water to the **Workhouse** at a cost of £12 10s per quarter, for 200,000 gallons, allowing 8-10 gallons per head per day.
- Jan 1889 **Mr W.D. Slade** provided a lantern slide show for inmates, just one of the many occasions on which he treated the occupants of the **Workhouse**.
- Dec 1892 **Christmas** at the **Union Workhouse**. A special communion service was held in the Workhouse chapel on Christmas morning, the walls being decorated with scriptural texts by the organist. Later in the day the children received oranges, sweets and toys. On Boxing Day the ‘customary’ Christmas dinner of roast beef and plum pudding was provided. The dining hall was decorated for the occasion with evergreens and mottoes. Inmates were allowed to enjoy themselves in their own way and tea, oranges, tobacco and snuff were distributed amongst them. The Workhouse held 422 inmates on Christmas Day, including 100 children and 82 in the hospital wards.
- 1895 The **Royal Commission on the Aged Poor** condemned the treatment of the elderly poor under the Poor Law.
- Dec 1898 The **Board of Guardians** agreed to build a **Workhouse** bakery.
- Apr 1899 Farm labourer, **James Potter**, aged 84, committed suicide rather than go into the **Workhouse**.
- 1900 A directive recommended ‘certain privileges’ for inmates of 65 years and upwards in the **Workhouse**. They would be allowed separate sleeping cubicles, with more flexible times for going to bed and getting up. They would also be kept apart from disreputable inmates. They could have their meals separately, receive more visitors, and have their own locker, implying that they would be allowed a few personal possessions.
- Jul 1901 **William Hart**, aged 79, committed suicide on the railway after being asked to move into the **Workhouse**.
- Aug 1902 An oak tree was planted at the **Workhouse** as part of the celebrations for the **coronation of Edward VII**.
- Dec 1902 It was regretted that too many tramps were leaving the **Workhouse** without having performed any work during their stay there. In the previous week 30 out of 40 tramps had left without carrying out any tasks.
- May 1903 It was proposed that, in order to earn their keep, tramps should break up 5 cwt of stone into gravel per overnight stay at the **Workhouse**.
- Jun 1903 **Workhouse** inmates were granted one day’s leave per fortnight.

- May 1904 The **Board of Guardians** decided that WCs were to be more frequently flushed at the **Workhouse**, and that the hot water was to be turned off in summer.
- Jun 1904 **George Nordan** was sent to gaol for 21 days' hard labour for refusing to work in the **Workhouse**.
- Nov 1904 The *Cheltenham Examiner* commented that the straw mattresses at the **Workhouse** might make the vagrants there more comfortable than many Cheltenham residents.
- 1918 The **Treasurer's Book 1918-1920** indicates that the **Board of Guardians** paid for a number of former inmates to be cared for at other establishments, such as the **Lunatic Asylum at Gloucester, St Lucy's Children's Hospital**, and a **Home for Epileptics**. (The costs were refunded by the government).
- 1929 The **Local Government Act** abolished the **Poor Law**. In Cheltenham the **Workhouse** and its **Infirmiry** were transferred to the **Public Assistance Committee** and renamed the **Cheltenham Public Assistance Institution**.
- 1930 The **Chairman** of the new **Public Assistance Committee**, expressed the hope that 'the new authorities would maintain the same personal touch with the staff and inmates which had always been such a feature of the Cheltenham **Board of Guardians**'.
- 1930 The Christmas Day menu at the renamed **Public Assistance Institution** included beef, pork, sausages, jam, ale and siphons of mineral water.
- 1934 The **Public Assistance Institution and Infirmiry** underwent a programme of extension, modernisation and redecoration. Families were no longer split up and were given more freedom and improved facilities, such as a public telephone.
- 1936 Children from the **Public Infirmiry** were sent for convalescence at the seaside.
- 1939 Children from **The Elms** were boarded out and the home closed for alterations.
- 1939 The basement of **The Elms** was used as a respirator store for the **ARP**. A **First Aid Post** was also set up there, and the rest of the building was adapted for **Infirmiry** patients.
- 1940 Cheltenham's **Public Infirmiry** was taken over by the **Emergency Hospital Service** for the treatment of military personnel during the Second World War. **Public Assistance** cases and elderly inmates were transferred to other institutions.
- 1942 The **Beveridge Report** was published, outlining a new scheme for social welfare based on insurance, to cover unemployment, pensions, and a national health service.
- 1944 The **Public Assistance Institution** was visited by the Inspecting Officers for the **Hospital Survey** in preparation for post-war reconstruction of hospitals.
- Feb 1945 **Family Allowance** was introduced – 5 shillings (25p) per week for every child after the firstborn.
- 1946 The **National Health Service Act** and the **National Insurance Act** were passed, more or less enacting the **Beveridge Report**. A system of pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits, and allowances, as well as a health service that was free at the point of delivery, was intended to free people from the main causes of poverty.
- 5 Jul 1948 The **National Health Service** officially came into operation. This marked the end of the **Public Assistance Institution**, whose residents had been re-housed by Cheltenham Borough Council. The **Infirmiry** was nationalised along with **Cheltenham General Hospital, the Delancey Hospital** and the **Battledown Children's Hospital**.

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