



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 67

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council
Registered Charity No. 1056046
<http://www.cheltlocalhist.btik.com>

July 2010



Greetings from Cheltenham NSW

CONTENTS

Chairman's Message; Programme 2010-11	2-3
For Your Diary	3-4
Reviews	5-6
Features	6,9
AGM Report	7
Society News	8
Local News	10
New and Forthcoming Publications	10,11
Local News	10
Can You Help? Next Issue	11
Photographs and news of Awards	12

EDITORIAL

Our cover picture this time, looking a little like Lansdown Road on a very quiet day, is a view from the other side of the world. Nonetheless it has a definite link to Cheltenham here, or at least to a real Cheltonian—see page 9 for the full story! The smaller inset picture (no, it's not really a placard mounted on a pole) has even less to do with Gloucestershire. It is a design from a souvenir plate: the bird is a masked lovebird, native to Australia, and the Cheltenham it commemorates may or may not be the same as in the main picture. If it is not from the Sydney area, it could be from Melbourne or Adelaide. It must say something for the enduring charm of this town that people who left it remembered it fondly enough to give its name to new settlements so far away.

Meanwhile, back in the original Cheltenham, we're very pleased to report that this Society and its members have also won accolades in recent months. See the back cover ...

Kath Boothman

Chairman's Message

Recently a leading academic, Niall Ferguson, launched a campaign to tackle the crisis of children's ignorance of history. He is quoted as saying "If you are a teenager in this country, history is Henry VIII, Adolf Hitler and Martin Luther King. Sometimes pupils do not know the order in which they took to the world stage." Last year I asked you to be a missionary for history and I would like to repeat this. It's not just children. It's amazing how little people know about their own town, even when they have lived here for years. If you get the chance, why not mention when passing a point of interest in the town "Did you know that.....?". Encourage people to make use of Heritage Open Days Thursday 9th – Sunday 12th September (see www.heritageopendays.org.uk) to enter places of historical interest not usually open to the public. If you don't feel up to guiding people around town yourself, you could always tell them about the walking tours of Regency Cheltenham every Saturday until 30th October, departing from outside the Tourist Office at 11.30 am. They can book there in advance or pay the guide on the day.

Sue Newton

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2010-11

Meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, at 7.30 pm on the third Tuesday of each month from September to March, with a later Tuesday for the AGM in April. Visitors are most welcome to attend at a charge of £1.00 per person per meeting.

Tuesday 21st September 2010:

Dr Anthea Jones – Past into Present: Some Historic Influences on the Development of Cheltenham

The influences to be explored in this illustrated talk are very much to do with the structure of the extensive area called 'Cheltenham'. The word itself covers a variety of geographical areas, none of which precisely overlaps. They all have surprisingly ancient roots in the early medieval period: townships, hundred, manors, parishes and the borough. The focus will not be entirely on the medieval period. The efforts of entrepreneurs and landowners to alter or reform (the most apt description depends on one's point of view) the medieval inheritance, starting from 1806, and the considerable efforts of the Borough Council to alter the economic profile in the twentieth century, will also be covered, time permitting.

Tuesday 19th October 2010:

Sir Henry Elwes, HM Lord Lieutenant – The Lord Lieutenancy of Gloucestershire, Past and Present

Sir Henry Elwes will talk about the history of the office of Lord Lieutenant including its connection with the Military and its connection with the much older office of Custos Rotulorum (Keeper of the Rolls). The talk will bring the subject up to the present day, including the method of selection and appointment by The Queen and some current experiences in office.

Tuesday 16th November 2010:

Mr David Elder – Cheltenham on the page

At last year's Cheltenham Literature Festival David Elder presented *Down Cheltenham Way*, an anthology of writing about the town from the Domesday Book to the present day, which was published with a small print run by the Cyder Press at the University of Gloucestershire. In this illustrated talk he picks out some of the key themes and authors which have helped to shape Cheltenham's identity and image on the written page, as well as some material of particular interest to local historians.

Tuesday 21st December 2010:

Mrs Sue Rowbotham – Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham: Celebrating People, Places and Events

In 2009 CLHS member Sue Rowbotham published *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham*, co-written by herself and the late Peter Smith. She will describe the history of commemorative plaques and then go on to tell the stories behind some of the blue and green plaques affixed by the Civic Society since 1982 and a number of other earlier plaques. These plaques celebrate notable people and events associated with the town, and throw light on Cheltenham's broader history. It is hoped that both residents and visitors will find something to capture their interest and imagination, and will see the town in a fresh light, through the plaques and the stories that they tell.

Tuesday 18th January 2011:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 15th February 2011:

Mr Alec Hamilton - Samuel Daukes and Prince Albert – a Cheltenham Architect in Royal Trouble

Samuel Whitfield Daukes (1811-1880) started humbly as an architect in Gloucester, loomed large in Cheltenham, and finally over-reached himself in London. He ought to be a bit more famous than he is – after all, he built Lypiatt Terrace, Francis Close Hall, the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, and fashionable churches in Hampstead and London's West End. But he had a nose for trouble. He built one church for Francis Close – and another for Close's opponents. He fell out with the mighty Dean over drains. He built England's biggest asylum – but trouble with the foundations led to a court case. He upset the Freemasons, and insulted Prince Albert. Nonetheless, his buildings have energy, wit and appeal. Alec Hamilton, whose article on Daukes in CLHS Journal 25 won the Bryan Jerrard Local History Award in 2009, brings this intriguing scapegrace character to life.

Tuesday 15th March 2011:

Mr John Heathcott—Ancient Woodlands of Gloucestershire

The talk will give some background on the Woodland Trust and focus on Ancient Woodland. It will discuss the history of woodland in this country, how you can identify it as ancient and its importance as a wildlife habitat. The locations of Ancient Woodland sites in Gloucestershire and their particular attributes will be

identified. If there is time, the talk will also discuss veteran trees and how you can help in the nationwide effort to record them.

Tuesday 26th April 2011:

AGM followed by Mr Eric Miller - Serendipity

Over the years, Eric has been struck by the way in which his research has been helped by serendipity – happy accidental finds that provide leads and make connections, as if an ‘unseen hand’ had been at work. He will illustrate his point with examples resulting from chance meetings, casual remarks and things glimpsed out of the corner of the eye. Though centred on Cheltenham, the topics span the globe.

MORNING LECTURES 2010-2011

Morning lectures will take place at St. Luke's Hall, St. Luke's Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £1.00 from all attending these lectures is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no charge) from 10.00 am. Lectures start at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only – please contact Sue Newton (01242 243049) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

Wednesday 27th October 2010:

Dr Carrie Howse – Rural District Nursing in Gloucestershire 1880-1925



Few people have heard of Elizabeth Malleson (1828-1916), founder of the Rural Nursing Association, or realise the importance of Gloucestershire as the place where her national system of rural district nursing began. This talk describes the development of district nursing in rural Gloucestershire from the 1880s, when Elizabeth Malleson moved to the area from London. The establishment of her local charity and its expansion into a national scheme is traced to its affiliation and eventual amalgamation with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, the organisation from which today's system of district nursing has evolved. The subsequent progress of the work in Gloucestershire is then followed through the lives of and relationships between three tiers of local society: the middle and upper class ladies who devoted years of their lives to the administration and management of the rural district nursing system, entirely on a voluntary basis; the specially trained nurses who delivered the care; and the poor patients who benefited from it.

Tuesday 12th April 2011:

Dr Steven Blake – In the Footsteps of George Rowe: Travels in the Australian Goldfields 1852-9 and 2010

In 1852 the Cheltenham artist and topographical print-maker, George Rowe (1796-1864), having got into financial difficulties, ran away to the recently-discovered goldfields of Victoria. Failing as a ‘gold digger’, Rowe soon

turned back to ‘his own profession’, and made a living painting flags and shop signs, as well as portraits of the ‘diggers’ and views of the goldfields for them to send back home. After his return to England in 1859 Rowe painted a series of large watercolours of Australia, which won him a gold medal at the 1862 London International Exhibition. In May 2010 Steven Blake, who organised an exhibition of Rowe's work at Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum in 1982, travelled to Australia to follow in George Rowe's footsteps – seeing his original watercolours, most of which are now in Australian libraries and galleries, and visiting the places in which Rowe lived and worked. This talk will consider Rowe's Australian years, including his artistic output, and will investigate just what remains of the Australia that Rowe would have known.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

Meetings are held at St Philip's & St James' Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham at 8.00pm.

Thursday 16th September:

Jean Jefferies—Cheese Rolling in Gloucestershire

Thursday 18th November:

Christine Seal—Domestic Servants

Thursday 16th December:

John Peters—The Tetbury Boyhood of F Peters (1890-1940)

Charlton Kings Local History Society

Meetings take place in the Baptist Church, Church Street, Charlton Kings, starting at 7.30 pm. Guests welcome, £2.

Tuesday 28th September:

Mr Dave Walton—Gimson and the Barnsleys: the Arts and Crafts Movement in Gloucestershire

Tuesday 26th October:

Mr Geoff North—Cheltenham's Voluntary Aid Hospitals 1914-19

Tuesday 23rd November:

Mr John Greene, Gloucester Ciné and Video Club—Archived Gloucestershire

Swindon Village Local History Society

Talks start at 7.45 pm at Swindon Village Hall.

Non-members pay £1.00.

Wednesday 15th September:

Dr Nicholas Herbert—Medieval Towns in Gloucestershire

Wednesday 20th October:

David Cramp—The Wildlife in Your Garden

Wednesday 17th November:

Carolyn Greet—A Walk around Cheltenham 200 years Ago

Holst Birthplace Museum

www.holstmuseum.org.uk 4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham.

Friday 3rd September 1.00-2.00 pm at Pittville Campus, Albert Road:

Lunchtime Lecture by **Martin Myrone**, Curator of 18th & 19th Century British Art, Tate Britain—**Theodor von**

Holst, his Art and the Pre-Raphaelites

Tickets £5 from the Museum or on the door.

MORE FOR YOUR DIARY

Holst Birthplace Museum (continued)

Saturday 25th September 7.30 pm at All Saints' Church:

Holst Birthday Concert Recital by Dame Felicity Lott with short introductory talk by **Dr Steven Blake—All Saints Church and the Holst Family**

Tickets (including interval refreshments) available from Museum or on the door:

£25 reserved seat and post-concert reception

£18 unreserved seat, centre nave

£14 unreserved seat, side aisles

Friday 19th November 7.00 pm—9.00 pm:

An evening of Poetry and Prose with links to the Museum's Theodor von Holst exhibition, featuring Cheltenham poets from *Acumen* Literary Journal
Advance tickets only, £7 (including refreshments) from the Museum.

Gotherington Local History Society

Meetings are held at Gotherington Village Hall at 8 pm. Visitors £1.00.

Tuesday 28th September:

Alan Pilbeam—Old Paths of Gloucestershire

Tuesday 26th October:

Dr Simon Draper—Place Names and History and/or Archaeology

Tuesday 23rd November:

Ray Leigh—The Broadway Experience (Gordon Russell)

Wednesday 1st December:

Dr Steven Blake—Discovering the Dightons

Cheltenham Civic Society

Meetings are held at Parmoor House, Lypiatt Terrace, starting at 7.30 pm. Members £1, visitors £2.50 including refreshments.

Tuesday 12th October:

Rev Brian Torode—John Middleton, Cheltenham Architect

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

www.bgas.co.uk

Meetings are normally held at Gloucestershire Archives, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester at 7.30 pm

Wednesday 20th October at 2.30 pm in the Laud Room, Gloucester Cathedral:

Dr Steven Blake—Medieval Wall Paintings in Gloucestershire Churches

Wednesday 17th November:

Mr Mark Curthoys, Research Editor Oxford DNB and member of History Faculty, University of Oxford—County and Nation: Modern Gloucestershire Lives in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)

Exhibitions

Holst Birthplace Museum

To run until 21st August:

Celebrating 35 Years of the Holst Birthplace Museum

To run from 3rd September to 13th December:

Theodor von Holst: his Art and the pre-Raphaelites

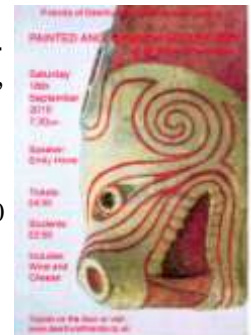
The 2010 Deerhurst Lecture

*Saturday 18th September at 7.30 pm
in St Mary's Church, Deerhurst*

Emily Howe—Painted Anglo-Saxon sculpture in St Mary's, Deerhurst: materials, techniques and context

Tickets on the door, price £4.50 (students £2.50).

Further details available at:
www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk



GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY AFTERNOON

Saturday 2nd October 2010 from 2.00 pm—5.00 pm (doors open at 1.15 pm)

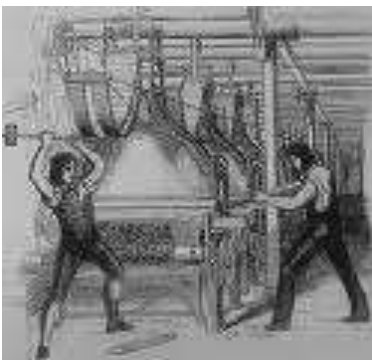
at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester. Entry including tea £5 payable on the door

'A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work: the Workers' Movements in Gloucestershire'

Speakers: Professor Adrian Randall of Birmingham University

Jill Chambers, author of books on the Captain Swing Riots of 1830/1

Rev Canon John Evans of Staunton on Chartists and the Chartist Land Company in Gloucestershire.



Cheltenham Local History Society will be participating as usual in this event. Anyone who would like to be involved is invited to contact **Elaine North** (01452 857803) who will be co-ordinating the Society's display. Following her request in the last Newsletter she is still looking for input to the display - either ideas or contributions of text or relevant articles or ephemera. Please get in touch if you think you can help in any way. It is also hoped to produce a *Chronology* on this theme. **Jill Waller** (01242 522485) is working on it, with help from Mike Grindley, and would be glad to hear from any members who may have contributions and/or suggestions to offer.

REVIEWS

Spring lectures February/April 2010

The first lecture of the year was **Steven Blake's** illustrated talk on February 16th on '**Dissenters' boxes', the Nonconformist chapels of Regency and Victorian Cheltenham**—of which, as he soon demonstrated, there were many more than we might have supposed! He began his survey in 1808, when Cheltenham had only five churches. The town had grown a lot in the 18th century, but religion was in a low state. (Charles Wesley, as a visiting preacher, had thought it a worldly place.) That was to change dramatically in the course of the 19th century. In 1808 the Revd Roland Hill, a friend of Jenner, began to found new chapels, nicknamed 'Dissenters' boxes' because they were plain square buildings. The first one had seats for 1000 and attracted a wide range of people. It closed in 1886, and its churchyard has now become the Jenner Gardens. By 1820 four more nonconformist chapels had been founded, all of which are still standing. The following decade saw several new Anglican churches, including Holy Trinity, St James' and St Paul's. (St Mary's had evidently become rather crowded by then.) The Methodists meanwhile began to establish outdoor preaching sites in working class districts, several of which became chapels. In some cases, such as the Swindon Road and Gloucester Road chapels, the first small building was later replaced by a larger one. Nor was provision made only for local people. After the *Chronicle* complained in 1837 that the Ebenezer chapel in King Street was not well situated for visitors to Cheltenham, chapels tended to relocate to 'better' areas near the town centre. Some changed hands more than once: the Congregationalists bought a Primitive Methodist chapel in Russell Street in 1847 and sold it on to the Baptists in 1864. Understandably, all these developments were influenced a good deal by competition between the various denominations. There was an interesting story behind each of the many chapels Steven had identified and researched (some now hard to recognise as former chapels) and with his usual skill he wove these stories into a talk that both entertained and informed his audience.

Next, on March 16th, **Eunice Powell** gave an illustrated talk on **The History of Bishop's Cleeve**, a long and complex story, as she remarked. Though now with a population of 9000 it still thinks of itself as a village. It was also an ecclesiastical parish embracing Southam, Woodmancote and other places round about. The church of St Michael and All Angels had its origins in early Norman times, but the village is older: evidence has been found of iron age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlements. The first mention of it comes in an 8th century charter of Offa, King of Mercia, but it acquired the name Bishop's Cleeve only later when it became part of the diocese of Worcester and acquired a resident bishop. A 13th century bishop's house still survives, though greatly altered. Eunice showed pictures of many interesting features of the church: the Jacobean west gallery, the vestiges of wall-paintings, the tombs of the Delaberes. She also told some 'human stories' such as that of Joan Stevens, who in 1545 left a will bequeathing money to provide lights in the church and asking that her body be buried in the north aisle 'at the stall's end', and that of Jane Taylor, who was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1840 at the age of 14. The voyage out, on HMS

Rajah, became famous because Elizabeth Fry and her Quaker ladies provided material for the women on the ship to make a quilt, and the 'Rajah quilt', as it is known, still exists. More is known of Jane Taylor's later life, and Eunice hopes to trace her descendants in Tasmania. In conclusion, she warmly recommended David Aldred's book on Bishop's Cleeve.

Brian Torode's talk on April 15th on the subject of **The Bouncer's Lane Cemetery** began, just to set the scene, with a poem about tombstones by John Betjeman. Bouncer's Lane cemetery was opened in 1864, when St Mary's churchyard and a 10-acre public cemetery at the lower end of the High Street were both full and a clear need had arisen for somewhere larger. Various sites were considered, including Hester's Way, Leckhampton and Hatherley, but preference was given to Bouncer's Lane because it could be reached by a circuitous route avoiding the town centre. (People didn't like seeing hearses going through the town centre.) The decision was taken, 15 acres were bought and a competition for chapel designs attracted 30 entries. The winner was William Hill Knight, whose work also includes the Cheltenham College Baths and the public library. The site provided 13,000 spaces, enough for 39,000 burials, divided equally between Anglicans and Catholics, for whom separate chapels were built. The cost, all inclusive, was £4300. One of the chapels is now the crematorium. The first cremation at Bouncer's Lane took place in 1885, but burial continued to be the norm.

After showing pictures of some of the more unusual monuments in the cemetery, featuring symbolic devices, plaques, urns, railings and Celtic crosses, Brian went on to talk about the graves. John Middleton the architect and many others well-known in their day are buried there. Andrew Hyacinth Kirwan, for example, was Cheltenham's Master of Ceremonies (responsible for organising public entertainments) from 1835 to 1872. James Brown the carver, who lived in Tivoli Street, created Montpellier's caryatids. William Skillicorne, great-great-grandson of the founder of the spa and the last of his line, died following a motor accident in 1915. Some people are more widely-known: the poet James Elroy Flecker was the son of the first head of Dean Close School, and George Stevens the jockey rode five Grand national winners. More modern celebrities include Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones and the art collector Ron Summerfield. There are clergymen, tradesmen, young children, even a few family servants—Brian's collection of images and stories already embraces a seemingly endless variety, all full of interest, but he hinted that he would still be grateful for more pictures and information to add to it. Perhaps members will oblige!

Kath Boothman

Lastly after the AGM on April 27th we had **Aylwin Sampson's** talk '**A Cheltenham Looker-On**'. Aylwin appealed to us to be more observant of our surroundings. He pointed out many ambiguities – Were we aware that the artist George Rowe apparently could not count? – or that he invented details? In Rowe's illustrations there are windows missing from the Belgrave Boarding House and from the Wesleyan Chapel, and St Mary's church has a doorway of which there is no concrete evidence! Other

examples included the unusual alignment of doorways and windows – were they positioned to take advantage of now long-gone views? There is the mystery of the ‘ever youthful’ Henry Skillicorne in portraits many years apart and his ‘missing’ tomb in the Parish Church; there are heraldic anomalies posed by coats-of-arms; sculptures with misplaced batons and defective anchors, and caryatids that have confused their left and right knees. He made us very aware that we go around with eyes half closed!

Sally Self

Summer Visits

Visit to Whittington Court, Andoversford

On Saturday 8th May members of CLHS visited Whittington Court, where we were made most welcome. Mr Stringer, the owner, gave us an interesting talk on the history of the house and the people who had lived there. We saw a display including photos of the excavation, in 1948, of a 2nd century Roman villa which had some lovely mosaic floors. The house itself is fascinating, and the visit ended with Mrs Stringer’s lovely home-made refreshments.

Gwyneth Rattle

FEATURE

WHAT HAPPENED TO CHILDREN DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR WHEN THEIR SCHOOLS WERE HOME TO WOUNDED SOLDIERS?



Naunton Park VAD Hospital

From *The History of Leckhampton School*

by D R Webber 1992

During the war (until apparently September 1917) the 200 children from **Naunton Park School** attended **Leckhampton School** on the ‘double shift plan’ i.e. one school used the premises 9 am – 12.30 pm and the other school 1.30-5 pm. The head teacher at Leckhampton School during this time was Mrs A B Fenning, who took the place of her husband (Mr G Wilson Fenning) in the school from the point when he was called to war in September 1916 until he returned in February 1919 to resume his duties as headmaster.

From *Cheltenham Technical High School – Origins and Development 1907-1972*

edited by P J Stanley, MA (Cantab)

Gloucester Road Elementary School opened in 1907 on the site in Gloucester Road. In May 1915 the Education Committee reluctantly agreed to hand over the school for use as a Military Hospital. The children were to continue their education using the ‘double shift system’ at the **Parish Church Boys’, Girls’ and Infants’ Schools in Devonshire Street** and **Knapp Road**, thus avoiding the expense of extra buildings and the splitting up of groups of pupils. There was strong criticism of this plan. Mr George Bradfield petitioned the government complaining of overcrowding in old buildings, increased danger of the prevalent scarlet fever and the threat to learning. But the reply came that there was a greater need – the mighty sacrifice of the Western Front demanded such sacrifices at home. By 1917, however, the Infants, Girls and the lower two standards of the Boys’ School were moved to **St Paul’s Mission Hall** where 427 pupils could be provided with playground facilities at the **Milsom Street** premises and the remaining boys switched to the **Baker Street Institute** where 190 could be absorbed. At the end of the summer term in 1919 the boys and girls left their premises in Milsom Street and Baker Street. The school in Gloucester Road re-opened as ‘**The Cheltenham Central School for Advanced Instruction**’ in December 1919.



Gloucester Road VAD Hospital

Geoff North

tel. 01452 857803, or email: geoffreynorth@blueyonder.co.uk

For those members unable to attend the AGM on 27 April 2010, summarised reports are printed below. Full Minutes of the Meeting will be circulated prior to next year's AGM. If you did not have a copy of the Accounts, and would like one posted to you, please telephone the Treasurer Sue Brown on 01242 231837 or email suebrown@waitrose.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH APRIL 2010

The President of CLHS, the Mayor Councillor Lloyd Surgenor, chaired the Meeting. Approximately 95 members attended.

Election of Officers and Committee

The following were elected:

Chairman: Susan Newton **Treasurer:** Sue Brown **Secretary:** Heather Atkinson

Committee: Jill Barlow, Steven Blake, Kath Boothman, Paul Burgess, Joyce Cummings, John Fisher, Gwyneth Rattle, David Scriven, Sally Self.

Chairman's Report (summarised)

The Chairman, Mrs Susan Newton, reported that membership stood at 338. Last summer's outings began with a guided walk around Prestbury with Roger Beacham, which was so oversubscribed that it will be repeated this July. Other outings included a small group to the Gloucestershire Archives, and a larger group to the gardens at Highgrove. In July, there was a visit to Cheltenham College, and in August to the Roman Villa at Witcombe with Steven Blake, on a fine summer evening. Lecture evenings have been very well attended and covered a wide range of topics. The Research and Display Evening attracted fewer members than usual due to bad weather, but was enjoyed by all present and the raffle raised £120 for the Mayor's charities. Morning meetings at St Luke's Hall in October and April were extremely well supported.

The Chairman thanked particularly Committee members leaving this time - Brian Torode and Dorothy Seton-Smith, who have both worked very hard for the Society over a number of years. She also thanked Jill Waller, Tom Maslin, Elaine and Geoff North, Mike Greet, Mike Rigby and Anne Dunn for their valuable services to the Society, and Peter Lewis, our new Independent Examiner for checking the Society's accounts in time for the AGM.

Mrs Newton said that at last October's History Afternoon, CLHS won the award for the best display. The prize was a year's subscription to the GRCC, worth £25, with a framed certificate. She presented this to Elaine and Geoff North as a permanent memento, as they created the display, which was also shown at the January meeting. Lastly, she presented a special new award to a Society member, in memory of the late Peter Smith from his wife Judy, in recognition of work done 'behind the scenes'. Mrs Newton described how the inaugural winner helps in so many ways, at library displays, special events, putting out seats at St Luke's, doing research, marketing the Society and its publications, and much more. The award was presented to a very surprised Vic Cole.

Treasurer's Report (summarised)

Miss Sue Brown presented her first report as Treasurer. She said that although the Society's Constitution does not require an independent examination of the accounts, it has been done historically. Peter Lewis, the new Independent Examiner, had examined the accounts and written his report. (*Copies of the Accounts had been previously circulated*) She provided further explanation on Gift Aid, which represented 4 years of claims (£1,692.74). The Treasurer then remarked that visitors to meetings had doubled in the last year, which brought in income. Sales of Journals have also gone up. The 2010 Journal was printed on higher quality paper, and colour used for the first time, which, although more expensive, has been very successful. Similarly, the Newsletter had also been printed with some colour, and won this year's BALH award for the best Society Newsletter. This year CLHS produced the Chronology on Housing the Poor, and also contributed half the cost of the Grovefield book by the late Phyllis White. These and existing publications continue to sell well. Miss Brown then went through the accounts.

Donations from sales raised just over £400. CLHS has benefited from donations of second-hand books to the Society as well as legacies of personal libraries from the late Peter Smith and Mary Paget. Percentages of sales have been given by authors, Elaine and Geoff North, and Mary Nelson. An Arts Council grant of £200 was used to purchase a digital photo frame, for use at displays and events. Displays form a very important part of CLHS activities, both in informing people about the history of Cheltenham and in encouraging people to join the Society.

Outgoings other than the Journal and Newsletters include payments to speakers, administration costs such as stationery and postage, BALH insurance for meetings and events, subscriptions to Cheltenham Arts Council and the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives. Other costs are associated with events such as refreshments for the January Research and Display evening. Last year the Independent Examiner could not finalise the accounts before the AGM. Miss Brown said that she had some copies of the final accounts if anyone would like one.

Finally, she thanked Geoff North for dealing with cash sales and petty cash throughout most of the year and for his help generally, and the other committee members, especially Sue Newton, for all their help and encouragement throughout the year.

Address by the President, the Mayor, Councillor Lloyd Surgenor (summarised)

The Mayor thanked the Society for inviting him to chair the AGM. He recalled being invited to our meetings and having a seat reserved for him, but his year of office had been such a busy one that he regretted he had been unable to come. He told the members that according to his parents a relative of his had been the Tramp Master at the Cheltenham Workhouse, and he wished he could remember more of the things he had been told about the past. He had been a pupil at Pate's Grammar School when it was in the High Street, and said how sad it was that the lovely old building had been demolished, only to be replaced by a hideous concrete shopping parade. He added that it would not have happened nowadays. He said he was very proud to be a Cheltonian, and to have been Mayor.

SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Shirley Watts
David & Susan Thompson
W P & M A Hastelow
Rene Stewart
Rosie Goring
Grace Pritchard-Woods
Mike Lewis
Claudia Georgiu

Membership e-mail database

To facilitate the dissemination of information to members, particularly when time is short, the Society has compiled a database of members' e-mail addresses. These will only ever be used for communication within the Society and will not be released to any external body. We already have e-mail addresses for about half of the membership but would like to make the list as comprehensive as possible. If you would like to receive information from the Society by e-mail but have not yet given us your e-mail address, or if you have recently changed it, please contact the new Membership Secretary David Scriven at membership@clhs.myzen.co.uk

Welcome to our new President, the Worshipful the Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Anne Regan.



On Monday 17th May Gwyneth Rattle represented the Society at the inauguration of the new Mayor in the Town Hall. The service for the Mayor and Community at St Mary's Parish Church on Sunday June 13th was attended by Joyce Cummings, Doreen Butler and Vic Cole.

Congratulations Richard!

Long-standing members of Cheltenham Local History Society will be pleased to learn that generations of schoolchildren in Churchdown will now have reason to remember Richard Lacock. On the 13th May Richard attended the official opening of 'The Richard Lacock Building' at Chosen Hill School in Brookfield Road where he was headmaster from 1977 until 1988. The new suite of 10 classrooms for students in languages and humanities was built using money from the Learning and Skills Council Capital Funding Grant. Richard said he was honoured to have the new building named after him. It is no more than you deserve Richard. Well done!

Elaine North



CLHS at BALH

On Saturday 5th June the British Association for Local History held its annual Local History Day in London, this time in the impressive surroundings of the Imperial War Museum. Members of CLHS had a special reason to go this year, because there were two awards to be collected. First, Carolyn Greet won a 2010 Publication Award for her article 'Every measure that may gratify the public': *Humphrey Ruff's contribution to Cheltenham*, published in the CLHS Journal 25 in 2009. She was one of four winners from a 'catchment' of 210. And secondly, our Newsletter won the 2010 award for the best Society Newsletter and we have a certificate to prove it! We also listened to some interesting talks, met many people from other societies and had a good lunch. As may be seen from the photographs on the back cover of the present issue, this happy and memorable occasion was much enjoyed by all who attended.

Kath Boothman

PHYLLIS WHITE'S BOOK PRESENTED AT MANOR BY THE LAKE

In March this year Brian White and I went on a special mission: to deliver a copy of *Grovefield House near Cheltenham and Captain James Pritchit of the Warwickshire Militia* by Phyllis White, Brian's late wife, to David Bill, proprietor of Manor by the Lake on the outskirts of Cheltenham. The Manor stands on the site previously occupied by Grovefield. Today it is a successful wedding and conference centre, set in 40 acres of stunning formal gardens, natural woodland and rolling lawns.

Phyllis's book, based on her many years of research into the Grovefield Estate, its houses and occupants, was originally submitted as an article for publication in the CLHS Journal. As Journal Editor at that time I felt that the fascinating story, which extends far beyond the boundaries of Cheltenham, was of broader interest. It was therefore agreed that the article should be produced as a separate publication. The 52-page book that resulted, edited by myself and copiously illustrated as Phyllis wished, was published in October 2009 with the generous support of the Society, David Bill and Brian, who had also overseen the project following the sad loss of his wife.

David Bill was delighted to receive a copy of the book, and has happy memories of Phyllis's and Brian's many visits to the Manor. It was a lovely day, and an opportunity to visit the beautiful Manor and gardens once again, and to celebrate Phyllis's achievement. It was very sad that she was unable to be with us, but she was certainly there in spirit.

Sue Rowbotham

Copies of Phyllis's book can be obtained from Brian White, 32 Turkdean Road, Cheltenham (tel. 01242 513845).



David Bill and Brian White
Photo: Sue Rowbotham

FEATURE

KEITH SMITH DISCOVERS CHELTENHAM 'DOWN UNDER'



Christmas 2009 was CLHS member Keith Smith's 5th visit to Australia. As on other visits, Keith and his wife planned to see family in Perth and spend time with friends living near Sydney. However, whilst travelling by train from Sydney to Lake Macquarie they were surprised to find themselves passing through 'Cheltenham' station. Not previously aware of the existence of this small town they took time out of their holiday to go and see what it was like and try to find out something of its history. Keith immediately noticed similarities between this Cheltenham and our own town. It is elegantly laid out with a tree-lined avenue called, not surprisingly, 'The Promenade'. The houses are mainly large and impressive, each in its own substantial plot of ground. There is a prestigious Cheltenham Girls' High School reminiscent of our Ladies' College and a Bowling Club. And, of course, a railway station. But he was surprised to find no shops or evidence of any commercial development.

Residents were happy to talk and welcome visitors from the original Cheltenham. Keith learned that one person had been responsible for the building of the town, namely William Chorley, a tailor by trade, who had emigrated to Australia from the UK. Chorley purchased land North East of Sydney between Epping and Beecroft (possibly between 1887 and 1888) which he subsequently divided into building plots (c1900) but he placed covenants on the land to prevent anything commercial from being built. The development became the town of Cheltenham, New South Wales. What struck Keith most about this town was its similarity with the Battledown area of our Cheltenham. Battledown is residential as is Cheltenham NSW, the land in both cases having been bought and subsequently divided and sold off as building plots over a period of time. The plots are large and the houses distinctive. The tree-lined streets and the complete lack of commercial development give both areas a uniquely pleasant atmosphere.



Since returning home, Keith has found additional information on the internet relating to the town but, as yet, has uncovered nothing of William Chorley prior to his emigration. It is said that Chorley named the town after his birthplace of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, England. Today it is a residential suburb of Sydney in the local government area of Hornsby Shire and because of the covenants placed on the land by Chorley there has been no commercial development. (Apparently, a service station was allowed to be built but closed down in 1975.) It has a population of 2,095 (2006) and shares a postcode of 2119 with neighbouring Beecroft where there are shops and employment. Chorley asked the government to build a railway station and to name it Cheltenham Station. This station opened in 1898 and is quite busy according to Keith, being on the main line from Sydney travelling northwards. Chorley's own house was called 'Mount Pleasant'*.



I have found another source on the internet describing William Chorley (1859-1935) as master tailor to the gentry of Sydney from his store at 313 George Street. Although the date of his purchase of the land is disputed, his total holding was said to be 225 acres. He is said to have negotiated the building of

Cheltenham Railway Station by agreeing to build a bridge to allow patrons to get to the eastern side of the platform. This site gives Chorley's place of birth as Somerset, England and states that he was working in Cheltenham as a tailor's cutter when he met his future wife, Lilly Virginia Alder, a tailoress, and that they married in Cheltenham in 1881 and emigrated to Australia soon afterwards.

As is always the case when researching on the internet, care needs to be taken to ensure the information found is correct, especially where there is conflicting information, as in this case with regard to William Chorley's birthplace. If anyone would like to continue this research or has additional knowledge of William Chorley, Keith would be very pleased to hear from them. *(Please contact the Editor in the first instance).*

Elaine North

*A Mountpleasant House, Winchcombe Street is listed in the Cheltenham & Gloucestershire Directory of 1863 – could this be a connection?

Internet sources: <http://wikipedia.org>
www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au
 Beecroft_Golf_Club_booklet.pdf

LOCAL NEWS

SAXON LIFE DISCOVERED ON THE NEW ALL SAINTS' ACADEMY SITE IN CHELTENHAM

Cotswold Archaeology has discovered a previously unknown Anglo-Saxon settlement in the Hesters Way district of Cheltenham. Monitoring of groundworks during the construction of the new All Saints' Academy (which encompasses Christ's College and the former Kingsmead School and is to open in September 2011), led to the discovery of a pit containing large pieces of Anglo-Saxon pottery. Further work in the area revealed further Saxon ditches, and most spectacularly a large timber hall built from substantial posts. The hall would have been about 11m long by 6m wide and have been used for communal events including feasts. Also found were two human



burials that may also be Saxon. Steve Sheldon of Cotswold Archaeology, who is directing the excavation, said it was one of the best finds of his career.

The settlement probably dates to the 6th to 8th century AD, and is of significance as it lies only a short distance from Gloucester. It is generally thought that the area around Gloucester did not succumb to Saxon control in this period, but remained a largely independent British kingdom. It now seems there were more pockets of Anglo-Saxon control in the Severn Valley than was previously thought. The site lies close to the river Chelt, which may have been called the Arle stream in Saxon times. Interestingly Arle is the earliest recorded place name in the Cheltenham area, being first recorded in a Saxon document of around AD 680. One possibility is that the new settlement

was the centre of an estate which took its name from the Arle stream. Until now it has always been assumed that the Saxon origins of Cheltenham would be found around the Lower High Street, 1.5 miles to east, as it is known that there was a church on the site of the present parish church in later Saxon times. The new discoveries therefore require a reassessment of previously held views and open up a new chapter in the history of Cheltenham.

Pupils at Christ's College were able to examine the site and look at the finds in situ before they were removed for dating and recording. All the finds are to be donated to Cheltenham Museum.

Neil Holbrook May 2010



NEW PUBLICATION

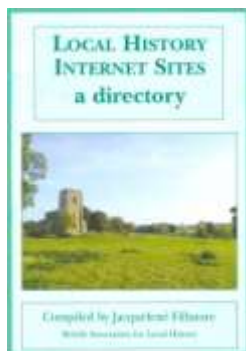
Local History Internet Sites—A Directory

Compiled by Jacquelené Fillmore

This new Directory, published by the British Association for Local History, is an up-to-date guide to 353 websites, some national and some local. It points you to sources for local history such as documents, maps, photos, artefacts and archives, museums and memorial inscriptions. It covers the major websites for historical material such as A2A as well as less well-known ones like the Seeley History Library, Cambridge, which includes a monthly online list of all articles in the journals it receives. Some of the websites enable you to trace individuals, some to find recent background information, others point you to research material. The Directory is indexed by subjects, people and places.

Priced at only £2 plus £1 p&p.
Copies can be ordered from Gill Draper at BALH.

Tel. 01732 452575 or e-mail
development.balh@btinternet.com



AND COMING SHORTLY...

Cheltenham—A New History

By Anthea Jones

This new history of Cheltenham builds on the work of many who have studied the town. Some aspects are well-known already, others less so. Cheltenham thinks of itself pre-eminently as a 'Regency' town, partly as a result of George III's famed visit, even though many of its best-known streets were actually built much later.



There is new material here on the king's visit, and several chapters on Cheltenham's earlier history as a medieval manor and market town and the influence this has had on subsequent development. The importance of the parish structure is also explored. Then there is the transformation of the town in the twentieth century and its gradual absorption of the surrounding villages—Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury, Swindon Village. All these places are included in the story of Cheltenham. The result is a big and beautifully illustrated book.

It is due to be published in September this year.

CAN YOU HELP?

Evacuees in Didbrook

An enquirer urgently needs photographs of child evacuees arriving at (or living in) Didbrook, Stanway or Hailes villages during the Second World War. This is to illustrate a book on the history of Didbrook School, where a large number of evacuees were enrolled. The evacuees started to arrive in September 1939, and others came at intervals until the last batch were received in December 1944. It is possible that some children travelled to Cheltenham by train and continued by train to Toddington Station before being taken to Didbrook, Stanway and Hailes villages. Alternatively they could have travelled from Cheltenham directly to the villages by bus. The evacuees from Birmingham could have travelled all the way by rail to Toddington Station.

The writer would be most grateful for the loan of any photos suitable for publication, the source of which would be fully acknowledged in the book. *Please contact the Editor if you think you can help.*

R.L.Boulton & Sons, Bath Road/Wellington St

Information wanted on the famous Cheltenham firm of stone masons and sculptors, responsible for the Neptune Fountain in the Promenade and for many fine pieces of work all over the country. A church owning a font and altar made in 1887 would like to add to their records a history of Boulton's and any pictures of the company they can find.

St Stephen's Infant School, Albany Road

This school, opened in October 1889, appears not to have been recognised by Cheltenham Education Board. This is probably because it was founded and run by the Cheltenham Ladies' College,

which used it as a practising school for trainee teachers. Any further information, pictures or photographs would be very welcome.

'Queen' performing in Cheltenham in 1973

A query from the fan club of the band 'Queen', based in Belgium:

'Queen' are said to have performed in their early days in Cheltenham, on December 6th and/or 7th 1973, possibly at Shaftesbury Hall (part of St Mary's Teacher Training College, as it then was) near the Library. Can anyone confirm dates and locations? or has anyone any photographs, advertisements, autographs, even just memories of the occasion? Anything that would help to prove they were here at that time would be welcome.

If you can help with any of the above queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail : joyce@cyberwebspacenet

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward items for inclusion in the NOVEMBER 2010 Newsletter by

Monday 11th October 2010

to the Editor: Kath Boothman
35 The Park
Cheltenham
GL50 2SD

Tel: 01242 230125
E-mail: kbooth@dircon.co.uk

CLHS DISPLAYS IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY

As most members will know, the Society is continuing to mount a display in the Local Studies Library for two weeks each month and we have a rota of members there 'in attendance' on one day a month. Anyone who would like to join this team for an hour or so each month would be most welcome—please contact Sally Self on 01242 243714 or e-mail russself@aol.com for further information or to volunteer.

The displays for the next few months are as follows:

July 5th-16th: Pubs

August 2nd-13th: Montpellier Gardens

September 6th-17th: Education

October 11th-22nd: The Working Class Movement

November 8th-19th: Cheltenham in The First World War

ALSO COMING SOON...

CHELTENHAM PAST AND PRESENT by David Hanks

This is Cheltenham's history over the past 150 years or so as seen through the camera lens. The old photos are wonderfully evocative, and further interest is added by matching each of them, as far as possible, with a new one taken in the same location. All have descriptive captions. Much more information is provided in the extended introduction.

It is to be published in August by The History Press. There will be a **book launch** at Waterstone's in the Promenade on **Saturday, September 25th** from 11 am to 12 noon, and the author hopes members will come along.



Cheltenham Local History Society IN THE SPOTLIGHT



BALH Awards at the Imperial War Museum, London, 5th June 2010. Professor David Hey presents certificates to Carolyn Greet and Kath Boothman (see page 8)



Two more awards were presented to Society members at the AGM on 27th April. Below left: Sue Newton presents Geoff and Elaine North with the framed certificate given by the GRCC for the best display at the Local History Afternoon last October.

Below right: Vic Cole receives the first annual Peter Smith Award for his outstanding 'behind the scenes' contribution to the Society from the Mayor, Cllr Lloyd Surgenor.

