



# Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 79

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Registered Charity No. 1056046  
<http://www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk>

July 2014



## EDITORIAL

Saturday 19th July is a very important day for the Society: the date of our biennial Local History Day, this time held at St Matthew's church. The theme will be 'Cheltenham Life 1914-19' - hence the 'munitionette' on the left. About 1,000 Cheltenham women and girls did this dangerous but vital work during World War I, and their story, along with many others, will be told in fascinating displays covering many aspects of day-to-day life for local people. There will also be two speakers, Eric Miller on 'Leckhampton Court VAD Hospital' and Robert Opie on 'The Home Front Consumer'. Tickets (£5) are available from the Tourist Information Office and on the door.

Don't miss it!

*Kath Boothman*

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## *EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2014-15*

Meetings start at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade

*Tuesday 16th September:*

### **Tony Conder—Gloucester Docks, Then and Now**

Gloucester Docks are probably Britain's best preserved Victorian port. Most of the original buildings remain in good condition. They survived the threat of demolition in the 1970s and over the last thirty years have developed a new persona. This talk covers the development and use of the docks from 1793 onwards. It is richly illustrated with old photographs of the docks at work; Victorian views are contrasted with the modern. When you have a project to build a transport link a mere 16 miles long that takes 34 years and goes four times over budget you might be forgiven for thinking of a modern development. With a start like that the history of Gloucester Docks was always going to be interesting.

*Tuesday 21st October:*

### **David Elder—Cheltenham: a Sense of Place as revealed through its Literary Heritage**

David gave a talk to the society four years ago which focused on those authors (eg Cobbett, Bulwer-Lytton, Thackeray and Trollope) who helped put Cheltenham on the literary map through often satirical perceptions and portrayals of the town. This was based on his first anthology, *Down Cheltenham Way*, published by The Cyder Press in 2009. Since then he has produced a second anthology, *Literary Cheltenham*, as well as a book of walks (entitled *Cheltenham Heritage Walks*), which includes two based on literary themes. Both of these titles are published by Amberley Press. In this talk David will cover a different selection of authors who form a significant part of the town's literary heritage, from well-known figures such as Tennyson, Byron, and C Day-Lewis to lesser known writers such as James Payn, Seaton Peacey and Lady Margaret Sackville.

*Tuesday 18th November:*

### **Rose Hewlett—Village Life in Mid-Victorian Times**

Frampton on Severn, with reputedly the longest village green in England, still maintains an air of timelessness, and it is not difficult to wind back the clock and imagine what life was like in the village during mid-Victorian times. Although the talk will focus on life in Frampton during the 1860s, the inhabitants of most Gloucestershire villages will have shared similar experiences. Extensive records, including sketches of almost every dwelling in Frampton, help to tell the story of its inhabitants, where they fitted into the social hierarchy and how they went about their daily lives. The talk will recount ordinary and extraordinary events

during a decade of relative prosperity and highlight the influence that the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal had on the village.

*Tuesday 9th December:*

**David Smith—The Origins of Gloucestershire**

Gloucestershire as an entity came into existence in the summer of 1007. This talk will discuss how and why this happened and the pattern of local administration which it replaced. It will also consider the role of the hundred, a smaller but older unit of local control. Finally changes to the original shire over the last millennium will be briefly summarised. (The speaker does not use visual aids as he wishes to be able to see if members of the audience remain awake.)

*Tuesday 20th January 2015:*

**Research and Display Evening**

*Tuesday 17th February 2015:*

**Adrian Barlow—Cheltenham: the Architecture of a Victorian Town**

Much of what is assumed to be Regency Cheltenham belongs actually to later in the 19th and even 20th centuries. This illustrated lecture will focus on the architecture of Cheltenham as a Victorian town, although one very conscious of its Regency legacy. It will explore the different types of both public and domestic building, as well as street furniture such as pillar boxes and park pavilions. Colleges and churches are among the most prominent components of the Victorian scene, but often the smaller schools and chapels will tell one more about the neighbourhoods to which they belong. The lecture will conclude with a revaluation of John Betjeman's estimate of the town he thought 'better than Bath'.

*Tuesday 17th March 2015:*

**Tony Roberts—New Archaeological Discoveries in Gloucestershire**

Archeoscan is a small company that specialises in running archaeological digs and community geophysical surveys in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire that are open to members of the public. The talk will cover the sites that Archeoscan have excavated over the summer of 2014 and other significant discoveries made through the use of geophysics. These have included continued work at Doynton Villa in South Gloucestershire and two Romano-British sites in the centre of the Cotswolds, at Guiting Power and Miserden, which, at the time of writing, have yet to be explored and could prove archaeologically significant. The illustrated talk will show the results of some geophysical surveys and the major findings from the excavations. There will also be an opportunity to handle some of the Roman material finds from the excavations.

*Tuesday 21st April 2015:*

**John Paddock— The Civil War in the Cotswolds**

No further information available at time of going to press.

*Tuesday 19th May 2015:*

**AGM followed by John Putley—Blood, Guts and a Little off the Top!**

This presentation provides an entertaining look at medicine and surgery from medieval through to Tudor times, but takes little forays back and forth to Roman times and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The speaker, wearing authentic reproduction costume, first looks at ‘medical theory’ and the ‘scientific’ diagnosis of illness, then introduces potential treatments, starting with the varied medicines and medical recipes - many of which are from Gloucestershire and held in local collections (i.e. Gloucestershire Archives and Museum in the Park) - before moving on into the realm of surgery. Here he starts at the top and works down, using authentic props and demonstrating the various techniques for treating such things as diverse as headaches, toothworm, tonsillitis, battlefield injuries and lastly amputations.

*MORNING LECTURES 2014-15*

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke’s Hall, St Luke’s Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £1.00 from all those 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 Chris Conoley (01452 700428) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

*Tuesday 7th October:*

**Angela Panrucker—The Story of Pub Signs**

The talk is an introduction to the history behind some of our pub signs from Roman times to the present day, showing as much diversity as possible in the time available. Many very commonly found signs have meanings which date back centuries, meanings which today are largely unknown. Trade signs such as the barber's pole for the barber-surgeon are still recognisable and understandable - pub signs are a lot more complicated! The illiteracy of the middle ages meant that people literally used 'sign language' - decoding this language can give a fascinating inn-sight (pun intended!) into our heritage, both local and national. The speaker is a member of the Inn Sign Society which is concerned with researching and preserving our heritage through pub signs, and if possible saving the signs themselves. <http://www.innsignsociety.co.uk/> .

*Tuesday 14th April 2015:*

**Joanna Vials—The Indefatigable Mr Cotham: Pioneering Priest who built St Gregory’s**

When the spire of St Gregory’s church was topped out in December 1864 much was made of its superior height, at 212ft surpassing that of St Mary’s. The re-emergence of a Catholic presence in Cheltenham permitted by the reversal of penal legislation was given greater momentum from developments



such as the Oxford Movement, the influx of Irish immigrants in the 1840s and the establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850. Arriving in 1852 Revd James Ambrose Cotham OSB brought together disparate enthusiasms, needs and opportunities which found expression in the ambitious building of St Gregory the Great church. This ebullient Lancastrian used his experience as a pioneer missionary and convict chaplain in Tasmania (then called Van Diemen's land) to cajole and inspire his parishioners to move onwards and upwards.

*FOR YOUR DIARY*

**Leckhampton Local History Society**

[www.llhs.org.uk](http://www.llhs.org.uk)

Meetings are held at St Philip's and St James' Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham at 8.00 pm. Admission £1 for visitors.

*Thursday 18th September:*

**Graham Gordon—Gloucestershire Soldiers and World War I**

*Thursday 16th October:*

**Dr Jennifer Tan—Wool and Water: Gloucestershire Woollen Industry and its Mills**

**Prestbury Local History Society**

[www.prestburyhistory.btck.co.uk](http://www.prestburyhistory.btck.co.uk)

Meetings are held at Prestbury Women's Institute Hall (corner of Bouncer's Lane/Prestbury Road), starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.

*Monday 22nd September:*

**Michelle Rees—The Delabere Estate in Prestbury**

*Monday 27th October:*

**David Jones—The Village War Memorial**

*Monday 24th November:*

**John White—Tudor Cottage**

**Gotherington and Area Local History Society**

Meetings are held on Tuesdays in Gotherington Village Hall, starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors are welcome, £2 per meeting.

*Tuesday 23rd September:*

**Chaz Harvard—Excavation of a Medieval Farm and Sheepphouse**

*Tuesday 28th October:*

**Paul Barnett—The Severn Bridge Disaster**

*Tuesday 25th November:*

**Simon Draper—The Victoria County History of Gloucestershire and Writing a Parish History**

**Swindon Village Society**

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £1.

*Wednesday 17th September :*

**Eileen Allen—The Swindon Village War Memorial**

*Wednesday 15th October:*

**Alan Pilbeam—Along the Banks of the Severn**

*Wednesday 19th November:*

**Angela Panrucker—Just Hanging Around ( an illustrated talk on pub signs)**

**Charlton Kings Local History Society**

[www.charltonkings.org.uk](http://www.charltonkings.org.uk)

All meetings are held at the Baptist Church, Church Street, starting at 7.30 pm.

*Tuesday 23rd September:*

**Mr Michael Cuttell—Ullenwood: US Military Hospital**

*Tuesday 28th October:*

**Mr Eric Williams—Edith Picton-Turberville: An Eagle Displayed**

*Tuesday 25th November:*

**Mr David Morgan—Trams, Trains and Steam through Charlton Kings**

*Exhibition***Holst Birthplace Museum**

[www.holstmuseum.org.uk](http://www.holstmuseum.org.uk)

4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham

*13th May to 19th October:*

**Paintings by P J Crook**

To celebrate 100 Years of The Planets, Cheltenham-born artist P J Crook has created individual paintings representing each of the seven planets in Holst's Suite. The public will have the opportunity to bid for the paintings with all proceeds going to the Holst Birthplace Museum.

**The Deerhurst Lecture 2014**

*Saturday 13th September at 7.30 pm  
in St Mary's Church, Deerhurst*

**Richard Bryant - Making Much  
of What Remains**

Admission at the door from 7.00 pm

Tickets £5 (students £3) to include a glass of wine  
and cheese.

Further details available at [www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk](http://www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk)



## REVIEWS

Our speaker on March 19th was **Neil Holbrook**, who took as his subject **Death and Burial in Roman Cirencester**. The study of burials is interesting, he said, because it gives an insight into the minds of the people doing the burying, who cared as much about it as we do nowadays. Cirencester was the largest Roman town in Gloucestershire. Only 10 Roman tombstones have been found (he showed pictures of two of them), probably because even for the upper echelon of society tombstones were not always affordable. He showed a reconstruction of Roman Cirencester in about 40BC and a modern map. As burial within the city walls was not allowed, tombs were usually located along the main exit roads, if the ground was suitable. There were two big graveyards near the Bath Gate dating mostly from the 3rd and 4th centuries AD (in earlier times cremation had been more popular) which had been excavated before the ring road was built. When the railway line from Kemble, closed in 1969, was adapted to make a road, the works had exposed as many as 450 skeletons. Strangely, this cemetery seemed to have been developed in late Roman times over a former rubbish dump, and judging from the erratic distribution of the bodies it had not been highly organised. There were many more men than women in it, suggesting that men were given priority for burial. The same applied all over Roman Britain. Children were also under-represented. It was clear from the condition of the skeletons and the scarcity of grave goods that these were poor people who had led lives of hard physical toil. A kink in the Fosse Way where it might have been expected to run straight gave a clue to the location of another burial ground. Remains had been found in 1867 when the cattle market was being built, and in 1973 the site of a new garage had yielded cremation pots. The demolition of Bridge's Motors to make way for an office block in 2011 had led to a large excavation project when bodies began to emerge just under the garage forecourt. A decontamination team had to be called in because petrol had leaked into the limestone bedrock, and the archaeologists had to work wearing face masks. It had been hard work, but exciting. Three cremations and 71 burials were found. There probably would have been more cremations, but for the damage done by the digging of the garage's underground petrol tanks. He showed a picture of a cremation pot containing ashes and bone fragments. These were early inhabitants. The eastern grave group included a stone enclosure, possibly a family mausoleum, and inside it fragments of wine amphorae had been found, suggesting that wine had been poured into the graves as an offering. This was often done. Nearby were two interesting child burials, one mysteriously contained in a narrow-necked jar and the other accompanied by an infant's feeding bottle and a rare and beautiful Roman figurine of a cockerel, enamelled in blue and yellow. Conservation revealed that it had been made in three pieces, fitted together, and probably originated on the continent. An inscription showed that it had belonged to a legionary and had been an offering to a local goddess. Cockerels were associated with the god Mercury, who was a

messenger of the dawn and accompanied the souls of the dead to the Underworld. The cockerel would have been placed in the child's grave to help it across the Styx. Many graves on the Bridge's site were deep and well preserved, and some contained grave goods such as jet beads and copper alloy bracelets. These must have been relatively prosperous people. Some of the richest burials were young females, who may have died in childbirth. One skeleton had its head placed at the foot end, a practice not uncommon in Roman Britain and possibly based on a Celtic belief that it helped to free the spirit. There is much still to learn about ritual and belief in the Roman world, though analysis of bones has already taught us a lot about diet, disease, heredity and so forth. Cirencester, with its great variety of burials, is a microcosm of Gloucestershire.



The audience had obviously listened with great interest and asked numerous questions, from the average height of the people (5ft 6ins for men and 5ft 1in for women in the case of the poor) to the ethics and legalities of digging up bodies—some are allowed to be kept for study rather than reburied—and the possibility that some burials were Christian, which the speaker conceded.

On April 15th **Roger Turner** spoke about **The Victorian Architecture of Gloucestershire**. He said that the Victorians do not always get a good press, partly due to Charles Dickens' work. They did, however, have many great achievements, one of which was the architectural legacy they left us. He took us through the many and varied styles of Victorian architecture, providing examples throughout Gloucestershire. A commission established in 1818 had found that existing churches offered inadequate accommodation for the population. This led to a great building and in some cases rebuilding of churches and chapels. The enthusiasm for new architectural styles was also taken up in secular society and for functional structures such as bridges. Starting with Regency inspired buildings we looked at Fauconberg House, Bayshill Road, built in 1847 by Samuel Onley, moving on to Bayshill Terrace, St. George's Road which was possibly designed by Baker and Shelland in 1838. Other examples included Thirlestaine House (1832) and Lansdown Station designed by Samuel Whitfield Daukes in 1862. We looked at the picturesque style and Italianate such as Gloucester Savings Bank. Moving on to Gothic Revival, our attention was drawn to Holy Trinity, Stroud by Thomas Foster, 1837-9 and the 1842 Cheltenham College by James Wilson. Augustus Pugin had a presence in the county, being asked to design the Catholic Church at Woodchester and Woodchester Park itself. His design for the Woodchester church did not find favour, however, and it was eventually redesigned by Charles Hanson and opened in 1849. Hanson and his assistant Benjamin Joseph Bucknall also designed Woodchester Park after Pugin had asked to be excused. Another Catholic church examined was St Peter's, Gloucester, designed by



Gilbert Robert Blunt, 1860-68. Moving closer to home, the speaker described John Middleton's All Saints Church, Cheltenham of 1868 as being his finest church and Middleton himself 'as good as any architect in the Victorian period'. Other Gothic styles included 'Inventive Gothic' as shown in All Saints, Selsley Church by G F Bodley (1858) and Holy Innocents, Highnam by Henry Woodyer, 1847-51. Turning to secular buildings we looked at Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, by Daukes, opened in 1849, and Highnam Lodge House by Woodyer. Brick Gothic was a style more favoured on the Continent than in England, though Middleton did use it for the Tewkesbury Hospital opened 31 July 1872. Tudor Gothic examples came from Tortworth Court by S S Teulon, 1849-52 and Arle Court by Thomas Pearson, 1856. The neo-Classical was represented by E J Reynold's Baptist Church at Cinderford, and Neo-Elizabethan by Westonbirt House. Abbotswood near Stow-on-the-Wold as originally designed by Ewan Christian in 1867 was described as New Vernacular. Finally, we turned to working-class housing such as in Charles Street, Cheltenham and functional buildings. An example of the latter included the Severn Railway Bridge of 1875 which carried the rails for one and a quarter miles, 70 feet above the water over 22 spans, only to be damaged beyond repair by an accident in October 1960. Other examples included Cinderford Ironworks and Victoria Warehouse in Gloucester Docks.

By the end of the evening, we had been not only entertained, but also informed about the magnificent architectural legacy that the Victorians had left us in the county. Many went away determined to seek out the gems that had been highlighted during the talk.

*Sue Brown*

Our morning talk at St Luke's on April 29th was by **Geoff North**. His theme was **Gloucestershire's Voluntary Aid Hospitals 1914-19**. He said there are 110 official war graves in the Bouncers Lane cemetery, some of which are graves of people who died in the VAD hospitals. Cheltenham itself had eight hospitals, all 'Class A' (which meant they could take wounded men straight from the Front). The town played an important role in the voluntary hospital system chiefly because of its position on the railway network, but there were many more hospitals in the county. Fourteen of them, including places such as Staverton and Winchcombe, were included in the Cheltenham Group. Plans had been drawn up before the war to supplement the existing military hospitals, but even so emergency measures were necessary because large numbers of casualties started to arrive very soon. He showed a picture of an open-air field hospital and a tented base hospital, and a film of patients on stretchers being moved from an ambulance train into a ship to be brought home. The nursing staff was largely drawn from Voluntary Aid Detachments, 2500 of which had been created by the end of 1914. Gloucester Red Cross Hospital, the first in the county, was set up partly in the newly-built workhouse infirmary, where elderly patients soon had to be moved out to make room for more soldiers. The hospital had an annexe for

officer patients at Boddington. Gloucester treated over 4000 patients in the course of the war, with only 39 deaths. The first VAD hospital in Cheltenham was New Court in London Road, which took 55 Belgians as its first patients in October 1914. Miss King of Lypiatt House was Commandant. The hospital had 77 beds and treated 1697 patients of whom only 8 died. Cheltenham Racecourse hospital, also opened in 1914, soon had 200 beds. It treated over 3000 patients of various nationalities, each staying 60 days on average. Only 18 died, a remarkable record particularly considering that in its early days the hospital had no heating or electricity. Three new hospitals opened in 1915 when a telegram came asking for 500 more beds. Naunton Park and Gloucester Road Schools were commandeered and quickly converted into a 300-bed hospital, while the children were moved to other schools on a double-shift system. The Ladies' College opened its own hospital, the 40-bed St Martin's in Parabola Road. All were staffed by a few trained staff with numerous volunteers, who tended to need less supervision as time passed and they became more experienced.



The staff of Naunton Park Hospital, 1917. Between June 1915 and December 1918 2751 cases were treated here.

With so many hospitals, and patients arriving via Southampton straight from the Front with little pre-screening, there was much administrative work to do, but the system was very efficient. Each hospital in the Cheltenham Group sent a weekly report to a central office in Ormond Place, which registered patients and kept a record of bed availability. The military authorities had only to notify the office when new arrivals were expected, and distribution was soon organised. The process of unloading patients from trains also became very efficient: on one occasion in 1918 170 patients including 70 stretcher cases were all unloaded in 61 minutes. He showed a photo of motor ambulances and staff, noting that horse-drawn vans were used too. Provisioning the hospitals with food and other necessities as well as medical requisites was a challenge. The public contributed generously—records show that Naunton Park Hospital received hundreds of pounds' worth of useful gifts and luxuries such as tobacco every year. Facilities improved over time. Good use was made of X-ray equipment; the Racecourse hospital acquired a proper operating theatre; Naunton Park gave electrical treatments and had a pathology lab. Patients' welfare benefited from sports, outings and entertainments. The aim was to make the men fit for service again, and when they left hospital they often went to convalescent homes or army-run convalescent camps. After all hospitals closed in 1919 each received a commemorative plaque, one of which can still be seen in the entrance to New Court. In response to a question at the end Geoff added that not all hospitals had a doctor, though some doctors who had joined up were brought back to serve here instead.

After the AGM on May 27th we were entertained by **Patrick Furley**, who had brought along part of his collection of **magic lanterns**, associated equipment and original Victorian and Edwardian glass slides. He said that the first primitive magic lantern had been patented in 1650, but the need for a light source stronger than candlelight had delayed its development. By 1860 paraffin lamps were in use, then calcium carbide, which gave off a flammable gas when water was added. Next came limelight (created by directing an oxyhydrogen flame at a cylinder of quicklime) which was even brighter but could be dangerous. Electric light bulbs proved a safer alternative. In the late 19th century many wealthy people had their own magic lanterns, while for the poor there were public shows. It became a very popular form of entertainment, and glass slides were rented out like library books. Before 1840 each slide, which consisted of two thin sheets of glass sandwiched together, was hand-painted. Later ones used photographs and lithographs, often tinted. He then gave us a slide show, accompanied by a lively commentary, starting with advertisements and pictures of Edward VII's coronation, moving on to many images of Gloucestershire and some sets of slides that ingeniously gave the illusion of movement, and finishing with messages to the audience such as 'Please be quiet' or 'Come to the next show on Saturday'. The audience thoroughly enjoyed it all, and one member (Aylwin Sampson) said he could remember helping with slide shows where carbide lamps were used.

### *Summer Visit*

#### **Guided walk around Gloucester, 11th June**

For a Cheltonian who seldom finds reason to go to Gloucester, much less explore it, this walk was an eye-opener. We were divided into three groups, ours being led by Civic Trust guide Roger Curzon, who, as an added bonus, had keys to interesting places we could not otherwise have entered. Our starting point was the crossroads by St Michael's church, once the home of the nightly curfew bell. One highlight of the walk was the New Inn, (pictured), built around 1450, the best example of a galleried inn in the country. Another was the



At the New Inn

huge half-timbered 'Old Judge's House' of 1560 which, like the Fleece Inn (1497), lies concealed behind a much later frontage. We saw its jettied side wall from an alley and learned that it opens on Heritage Weekend (memo: go back in September!). Famous names cropped up: Robert Raikes, who founded Sunday Schools for the child workers in Gloucester's pin factories, Dick Whittington, Beatrix Potter with her 'Tailor of Gloucester' story—based, we were told, on a real event. We went into St Mary de Crypt church and the original schoolroom of the Crypt School, and heard something of the history attached to the many lovely old buildings in the cathedral close. Spending a sunny evening in these evocative surroundings in the company of such an excellent guide was a treat indeed.

*Kath Boothman*

## SOCIETY NEWS

### New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

*Dr John Chandler*

*Robert Buckle*

*Shaun and Janie Gath*

*Mr L J Kilford*

*Mrs Broad*

*Mark Penfold*

*Peter Fitchett*

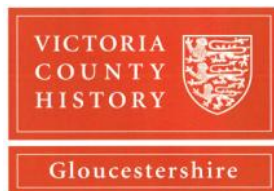
*Fr Richard Barton*

*David and Sylvia Williams*

### VCH News

The two editors, Beth Hartland (medieval) and Alex Craven (early modern), are hard at it, working systematically through all the source material. Volunteers are meeting regularly at the 'VCH Glos Academy' days at Gloucestershire Archives. These are proving – as was intended – to be good networking sessions. Sally Self has been busy getting people lined up with tasks appropriate to their interests and experience, and it now feels as if the show is really 'on the road'. Beth has identified the oldest surviving Cheltenham manuscript, a manorial roll from the 1200s. Because of its age and condition, it needs specialist conservation before it can be examined, and Cheltenham Arts Council has very kindly provided a cheque to help pay for this. Meanwhile Alex has found a fascinating account of an armed stand-off in Charlton Kings, a great to-do among neighbours about a disputed tree. Apart from the weaponry, it's just the sort of thing we might read in the Echo today! We look forward to the stage when the research is complete, and the writing-up can begin. Further support always welcome – contact Sally or me.

*James Hodsdon*



### Projects

The cataloguing of the **Winterbotham and Gurney Archive** continues to make good progress, with only 13 of the 58 boxes still to do. The CD of the **Pittville Subscription Book** will not be ready by September as stated in the last issue of the Newsletter (these things can't be rushed!) but should be out by Christmas. The **Lloyd George Land Survey** team, having completed that particular task, has now started compiling a list of all non-conformist chapels in Gloucestershire. Meanwhile recruitment continues for the multifarious work involved in the VCH project. One new undertaking that may appeal to some members is the transcribing of **old court records (1540-1750) written in English**. The challenge lies chiefly in the archaic styles of handwriting used, but anyone with experience of reading other old documents should find it possible. If you are interested please contact Sally Self: [journal.clhs@btinternet.com](mailto:journal.clhs@btinternet.com) or 01242 243714.

*Welcome* to our new President the Worshipful the Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Simon Wheeler.

Jill Barlow represented the Society at the inauguration ceremony, which took place at Pittville Pump Room on Wednesday 4th June.



A group photo taken at the Gloucester Family History Fair, held on Saturday 31st May at the Gloucester Rugby Club. Pictured are Vic Cole, Neela Mann, Dame Janet Trotter (who opened the Fair) and Colin Chapman of GFHS.

## NEW PUBLICATION

### **The Cotswold House**

by **Tim Jordan and Lionel Walrond**

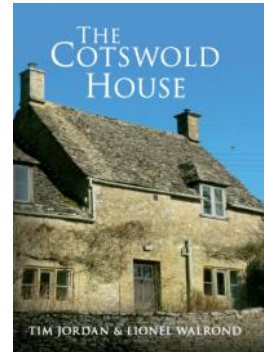
From humble cottages and quintessential village houses to elegant manor houses, *The Cotswold House* is the first book to give a complete overview of the history, social and architectural, of the Cotswold home.

Characteristic features tie all these buildings together. Limestone, whether grey or cream, appears throughout Cotswold homes, its workability apparent in the numerous mullioned windows, solid chimney stacks and fine doorways and porch heads. This book considers the differing periods and styles and the characteristic features, illustrated throughout with examples from across the region and with a focus on individual details, from exterior features such as stone roofing, gables and chimneys, to interior features of timber work, fireplaces and furniture.

Dr Tim Jordan, a retired university lecturer at Oxford Brookes University, is the author of *Cotswold Stone Barns* and *Cotswold Barns*. Lionel Walrond, former curator of Stroud Museum, is well known as a lecturer and writer on customs, industrial archaeology and architectural history.

192 pages, 150 colour illustrations

Published in hardback by Amberley Publishing in April 2014, price £18.



*For those members who were unable to attend the AGM on 27th May, summary 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 on 01242 231827 or else e-mail suebrown@waitrose.com*

## *ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH MAY 2014*

*The Chairman, David Scriven, welcomed the Deputy Mayor and Mayor-elect Cllr Simon Wheeler, who had agreed to be President of the Society for his term of office and to chair the meeting.*

### **Election of Officers and Committee**

*The following were elected:*

**Chairman:** David Scriven **Treasurer:** Sue Brown **Secretary:** Chris Conoley

**Committee:** Jill Barlow, Kath Boothman, Neela Mann, Gwyneth Rattle, Sue Robbins, Sally Self

**Chairman's Report** (*summarised*): David Scriven pointed to the continued growth of the Society in terms of support and interest. We were increasing the awareness of the history of the town amongst the general public and cutting new ground in making this history more accessible. The growth in membership to a record high of 371 at the end of the year was a reflection of this. However, we had also lost good friends, some of them longstanding members, most notably Richard Smith and Brian Torode. They would be greatly missed.

Eleven meetings had been held during the year. They had been well-attended meetings, with high quality speakers on a wide variety of interesting topics. The Summer Visits too had proved popular, with visits to Birmingham Museum and Frocester Court and a guided walk around Swindon Village. David Johnson, the Programme Secretary, was particularly thanked for all his work in organising both the visits and the meetings. The Society had partnered the British Association for Local History in hosting a local history conference in Cheltenham at the beginning of the year, which included a programme of talks and walks together with an exhibition of local history activities in Gloucestershire and beyond. It had also been active at the Montpellier Fiesta in July, helped organise the Heritage Open Days weekend in Cheltenham in September and played a key role in the organisation of the Gloucestershire Local History Day at Pate's Grammar School in October. As before, the Society had been involved in various projects during the year. The transcription of St Mary's Parish Records had culminated in a CD; the first Pittville Subscription book, covering the period 1830-53, was expected to be published as a CD by the end of 2014; the Latin Group was still working on Cheltenham Manor Court records and the Berkeley Castle Archives; the Probate Records transcription group had been assisting Gloucestershire County History Trust and the VCH Gloucestershire Project by transcribing probate records, the

results of which could be seen on the website; the cataloguing of the extensive Winterbotham and Gurney Archive at Gloucestershire Archives was continuing and finally, the Lloyd George Land Valuation Survey in Gloucestershire project had completed its transcription work. The Chairman thanked everyone who had contributed to the Society's success this year, notably Geoff and Elaine North for their excellent local history displays at the Local Studies Library and at various events, and Kath Boothman and Sally Self for their respective roles as Editors of the Newsletter and the Journal. Last but not least, he expressed the Society's gratitude to Joyce Cummings and Heather Atkinson for their many years of valuable service on the Committee. He noted that though they had both now stepped down, Joyce would continue to deal with local history enquiries and Heather would still be responsible for sales of books.

**Presentation of the Peter Smith Award:** The award was given to the late Brian Torode in recognition of his exceptional contribution to local history research in Cheltenham and his longstanding support for the Society. It was received on his behalf by Richard Barton, who said that Brian would have been delighted. The cheque would go to Brian's favoured charity Water Aid, for which £1300 had been collected at his funeral.

**Treasurer's Report** (*summarised*): Sue Brown said that the Society's finances were sound following a successful year. Although the constitution does not require an independent examination to be carried out the committee decided that this should be done and we are grateful to Alison Milford who performed this task. There was an excess of income over expenditure for 2013/4 of £1,632. There has been a steady increase in income reflecting the increasing membership. There was also a Gift Aid receipt of £954.88 for a two year claim. The Society's publications are steadily selling with the St Mary's Parish Registers, the 1855-7 Cheltenham Old Town Survey Map and the Cheltenham Town & Tithing Plan selling well. Donations from sales such as books donated to the Society and percentage sales from authors continue to be a good source of revenue, this year amounting to £332.85. Postage remains our biggest administration charge and reducing the size of the Newsletter has been a significant cost saving. However, to reduce the cost still further the Treasurer urged everyone at the meeting to hand-deliver as many Newsletters and Journals as possible.

**Address by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Simon Wheeler** (*summarised*): Cllr Wheeler said that at school he had thought history a boring subject, but later he had come to realise that it was not only the distant past but actually ongoing, which made it fascinating: everyday objects such as the Rolls razor he used to use were 'historic' now. He had seen a DVD about the building of St Marks which, though quite recent, was part of the history of Cheltenham, and it had made him realise how valuable it was for councillors to know about local history. Groups such as CLHS helped to preserve and enhance the quality of the town. He urged the Society to let the Council know if they were doing things wrong!

*FEATURE***Snippets, Skippets and a Big Red Book**

Volunteering to help with the research for Cheltenham's Big Red Book (the VCH) can be many things – fascinating, intriguing, mind stretching, enlightening and yes, also frustrating, back aching, eye straining and let's face it, even dirty!

Dirty because many of the documents, singly and in red taped bundles, have been stored for many years on open shelves in attics, cellars and corridors, unlike their present conditions, where they are carefully packed into boxes, in Dexion racks in a temperature controlled environment. So beware - do not wear your best party attire for this task.

Back aching and eye straining? Many of the documents are large, often consisting of several skins, which far exceed the stretch of one's arms and have an innate desire to re-fold themselves instantaneously. The eyes strain to follow the lines of the script – some with Tudor and Stuart palaeography, others originating in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when penmanship had deteriorated and the ink faded. However, the Archives staff provide those essential document weights and Perspex yard-long rulers to aid one's efforts and expert advice to help one get to grips with the trickier aspects.

And occasionally frustrating it is too, as the most promising documents can turn out to be very disappointing. A ledger, part of the Dutton Archive, (GA ref. D678/1/E1/1), the Duttons being lords of the manor of Sherborne, Northleach, Eastington, Aldsworth, Turkdean and the 'Mannor, Hundred and Borough of Cheltenham' is a good example. The book, with entries from the 1680s to 1715, has 204 closely written pages of tenants' names, their messuages, farms and parcels of land with the acreage and rents. Starting with Sherborne and continuing through the other manors it comes to Cheltenham. Cheltenham appears on page 202 and the bald entry reads: 'Manor of Cheltenham Mich. 88 To be looked into William Roberts Attorney Keeps the count £15 0s 0d P[er] an[num] £30'. So much for the expected wealth of detail. This raises an intriguing question - had much of the land of the Manor been sold by this date, 1688? Certainly one finds in an earlier deed, the will of John 'Crump' Dutton, 14 January 1655, that after leaving his estate to his nephews, William and Ralph, and arranging affairs for his wife's future comfort, he turned to his servants. One of whom was Thomas Bell; '... to my servant Thomas Bell ... a tenement and lands in Coberlie ... and a Meadow in Cheltenham called the Lords Laves, ... and all that Wood and Woodground there called Oakley Wood.' So these two areas passed out of Dutton control and others may well have done so. Following the Civil War, John Dutton had been obliged to compound for his offence of supporting the King – did he at this time sell the majority of his Cheltenham land? He also left £500 to the poor of Northleach and £5 each to the poor in Sherborne, Aldsworth and Windridge, but none to the poor of our town – a further instance of his lack of commitment to





A skippet

the Manor? Or were our poor already well endowed from other charitable acts? However, the Duttons made considerable use of the services the town offered. Records show that legal services were provided by the Prinns, John and William, Thomas Roberts and later by Thomas Markham over a period of 150 years; there was electoral support for and from Mr Stephens and William Robins, respectively, during the 1740 election.

And there are also those snippets of information that light up the task. There is a bill from Newman and Hartwright's, drapers and mercers, for supplying material for

funeral clothes for all the servants, hats, scarves and gloves for the upper servants and relations and 'a best velvet pall, 1 glory and urn, and 12 cherubs' for the coffin to a total value of £203 15s 2½d on the death of James Dutton in 1820. There is even a sketch of the coffin and the positions of the pall bearers and mourners – it was a stupendous funeral!

The fascination comes from opening up a document and finding the unexpected – a portrait of one of our rulers, or beautiful decorations sporting peacocks and animals or, firmly attached to the bottom, a seal in its tin box, known as a skippet. Or indeed something such as this well delineated portrait of Ollie ....

And mind stretching? One learns some new skills—palaeography to read the documents prior to 1700, a quick smattering of Latin to aid one in recording Court Rolls, an understanding of legal terms and processes—how far you go is up to you, but I find it all, as I said at the beginning, fascinating, intriguing, enlightening and mind-stretching.

Why don't you join us? We are a friendly group who share knowledge and who aim to help create a 'big red book' which provides a solid 'dates and places' framework, accessible to all. If you would like further information please contact one of the following:

Sally Self 01242 243714, e-mail [journal.clhs@btinternet.com](mailto:journal.clhs@btinternet.com)

James Hodsdon 01242 233045, e-mail [jj49@btinternet.com](mailto:jj49@btinternet.com)

John Chandler 0771 562 0790, e-mail [jh.chandler@hotmail.com](mailto:jh.chandler@hotmail.com)

Or go to [www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk](http://www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk) and navigate to the Big Red Book page.

*Sally Self*



Documents involving important settlements sometimes have a portrait of the reigning monarch: this one of 1657 has Cromwell.

**An Apology:** As Journal Editor Sally wishes to apologise to Sue Jones, author of the article *Apathetic Women? Who supported the Women's Suffrage Movement in Cheltenham?* in Journal 30 for the mis-spelling of the word 'suffrage' as 'sufferage' on the cover and in the headers to the article. The fault was not the author's, but the Editor's.

## LOCAL NEWS

### Heritage Open Days

The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society library will be open as part of Heritage Open Days from 10.30 to 12.30 on Friday 12th September. Housed in the University of Gloucestershire Archives Room in Francis Close Hall, it has an extensive collection of antiquarian books and of periodicals and books on local history, (including many on the history of Cheltenham), genealogy, archaeology, architecture and much more.

For more details contact Jill Barlow: 01242 233421, [jillbarlow@virginmedia.com](mailto:jillbarlow@virginmedia.com)

### The Bath Road Mural

Described in the Echo as 'eye-catching', this 7 ft long mural on the wall surrounding the garden of the Exmouth Arms in Bath Road was unveiled by Martin Horwood MP on 18th March. Local artist Sue Brown was commissioned in 2013 by the Cheltenham Connect 'Connect My Street' working party, in partnership with other local groups, to produce a piece of art to celebrate 200 years of trading in Bath Road. The work, consisting of three painted vitreous enamel panels and costing £3,500, was funded by a CBC grant for public art. Sue approached me in the early stages when she was looking for old photographs of former traders and residents. Imagine my surprise when she later invited Geoff and me to her home to view the finished work and there I was pictured with my aunt and uncle outside The Corner Shop. And now I'm on a wall, vandal-proof we hope, for all to see. Not quite the memorial I had envisaged!!



Artist Sue Brown with Elaine

*Elaine North (née Worsfold)*

### A Tribute to Brian Torode

Brian was our very own chaplain, always there for every one of us. We remember his humour, his teasing and above all his smile. Brian was a long-standing member of Cheltenham Local History Society and was a valued member of the Committee for several years, during which time he was the Society's representative on the Arts Council and did much to raise the profile of the Society in the community. The Schools project was Brian's 'baby' and he was always ready to offer advice or his help in any way to schools and students. He did so much to promote local history. It is difficult to believe he is no longer with us - we have all lost a good friend. Rest in peace Brian and thank you for being you.

*Elaine North*

A display on Brian Torode's life and work prepared by Geoff and Elaine North was shown at St Luke's and at the AGM, raising further funds for Water Aid.

*OBITUARY***BRIAN TORODE, 1941 - 2014**

No-one who squeezed into St Stephen's church for Brian Torode's funeral mass on March 19th and heard Richard Barton's account of his life and work could fail to realise what an exceptional individual he was. As parish priest, former headmaster, enterprising local historian and active member of our Society he was already familiar to most people present, but many would not have known his background story, and the congregation listened with rapt attention as Richard told it. Born in German-occupied Guernsey into an old island family, Brian was educated initially as a Catholic. His Methodist grandmother, however, sent him to the chapel Sunday School to give him a broader outlook. When he moved on to Elizabeth College in St Peter Port he was drawn to Anglicanism and considered training as an Anglican priest, but opted instead for teaching and came to train at St Paul's College in Cheltenham. There he thrived, gaining a scholarship after his second year to spend a year studying French at the University of Poitiers and emerging at the end of his training with a distinction. He taught first in Sutton Coldfield, then came back here, to Christchurch Junior School. In 1970 he became deputy head at Gloucester Road Primary School, and in 1982 he was appointed head of Elmfield County Junior School. He was a wonderful head, nurturing the gifts of pupils and staff alike and immensely popular with everyone. His school plays and the many festive occasions over which he presided are particularly fondly remembered. After he retired in 1996 he tutored trainee teachers at the university and served on many education-related committees and other bodies. Meanwhile he had already been involved with St Stephen's for many years, and while still a headmaster had decided to follow his inner prompting and undertake part-time training for the ministry. Three years later, in 1993, he was made a Deacon, and in October 1994 he was ordained Priest at Gloucester Cathedral. After some experience at other churches he was appointed non-stipendiary associate priest in the South Cheltenham Team with special responsibility for St Stephen's. Generous, conscientious and multi-talented, he was much loved as a priest. At the same time he pursued his wide-ranging interest in local history, researching and writing on topics as varied as the history of the Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation and the life of the architect John Middleton. Passionate about building conservation, he also supported charities in the wider world, notably Water Aid, which was to receive part of the collection at his funeral. Towards the end Brian had said he had lots of plans unrealised but prayed that the work he had done would bear fruit. That much is certain. Richard said he was proud to have been his friend, and many of us could say the same.



## FEATURE

## Looking back on the first Cheltenham Music Festival

There was an air of optimism and excitement in the summer of 1945. Peace had just broken out in Europe: on May 8<sup>th</sup> the Allies celebrated Victory in Europe Day. Troops were returning home to much rejoicing, and campaigning had started in the first General Election to be held since 1935. Over in Gloucester on June 12<sup>th</sup> Deaconess Carol Graham made history by becoming the first woman to preach from the pulpit in Gloucester Cathedral.

Things were also buzzing in Cheltenham despite rationing and a potato shortage which was causing problems for fish and chip shops in the borough. The London Philharmonic arrived to perform at the first concert of the new Cheltenham Music Festival – also on that fateful Wednesday June 12<sup>th</sup>. ‘Cheltenham is right at the forefront in organising the first music Festival since the War,’ proclaimed the eminent music critic Ralph Hill in the first of three lectures held in connection with the Festival in the Town Hall Drawing Room chaired by the Mayor, Clara Winterbotham.

Not that the town could be described as a cultural desert in 1945. Every Sunday evening you could attend concerts by the Spa Orchestra conducted by Arthur Cole, one of the instigators of the new Festival, for which admission charges ranged from two shillings and sixpence (12½ pence) to sixpence (2½ pence). In the week of the Festival *Lilac Time* was playing at the Opera House and at the Civic Playhouse (the recently converted Montpellier Baths) you could see Diana Morgan's play *The House on the Square*. The local cinemas were drawing large crowds to see Alice Fay and Carmen Miranda in *The Ghost Ship* (Daffodil), Dick Powell in *Farewell My Lovely* (Regal), John Wayne in *Tall in the Saddle* (Gaumont) and crooner Bing Crosby in *Going My Way* (Coliseum).

Apart from Beethoven's *Leonore 3* Overture, the music in the first concert was exclusively English, and included *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* (Delius), Vaughan Williams' *Overture: The Wasps* and Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, all conducted by Basil Cameron. The critic from the Gloucestershire Echo was complimentary, noting that the Delius piece ‘was impeccably played, though its performance hardly achieved the air of ecstatic reverie with which the work is conceived’. However, what made the concert so noteworthy was the presence of Benjamin Britten, who conducted the first performance of his *Sea*



The programme for the first Music Festival, 1945

*Interludes* from *Peter Grimes* – the first of countless premières which would take place in Cheltenham over seven decades. He also directed his *Kermesse Canadienne*, a rhapsody of French-Canadian folk tunes. Present in the audience were such luminaries as J B Priestley and Sir Kenneth Clark.



Benjamin Britten in Pittville Park

The following day in the Drawing Room the conductor and musicologist Mosco Carner urged people to try to understand modern music. In the evening the audience was treated to Arnold Bax's *Overture to a Picaresque Comedy* and two works by Walton, his *Sinfonia Concertante* and *Façade*, conducted by the composer himself. The Echo critic noted somewhat sniffily that these pieces were 18 and 22 years old respectively. 'We must hope that for the next Festival this master of

orchestral writing will have something new and stimulating to offer,' he remarked. I wonder if Walton read this review!

Arthur Bliss (then just plain Mr) breezed into town on the Friday to perform two roles. His teatime talk was entitled 'Musical Audiences' in which he described four categories of music-lover: the primitive listener who tapped out the rhythm with his foot, the listener who saw pictures in the music, the listener who studied what the music was about, and the really important listener 'who got an emotion that was called aesthetic.' Bliss conducted six excerpts from his ballet *Miracle in the Gorbals* and his stirring march *The Phoenix* 'written as a tribute to the risen France', and proved to be impressive and energetic on the conductor's rostrum. Basil Cameron did the honours in Holst's *The Perfect Fool*, Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*, Mozart's *Symphony No 25* and Tchaikovsky's *Symphonic Fantasia Francesca da Rimini*.

In an interview with the Echo the future Master of the Queen's Musick insisted: 'Your Festival has been a great success and as an annual event it should have a great future.' He also spoke highly of the audience and drew special attention to the fact that it contained a high proportion of young people, which was a most encouraging sign. Looking back, his words were remarkably prescient, though one does wonder what became of the young people who turned out in such great numbers in 1945.

After the Festival was over, election fever intensified in Cheltenham with Alderman Lipson (Independent), Major Hicks Beach (Conservative) and Phyllis Warner (Labour) busy wooing local voters. But local residents also had plenty of music on offer: the Sunday evening concerts continued and the end of June saw a piano recital at the Town Hall by rising star Moura Lympany.

*Roger Jones*

*This article first appeared in the Cheltenham Music Festival Newsletter.*

## CLHS DISPLAYS IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY

*Wed 30th July to Wed 10th September - Cheltenham Life: 1914-1919*

This display will feature a selection of material from the exhibition at the CLHS History Day held on Saturday 19th July.

*Wed 15th October to Wed 26th November - Cheltenham's War Memorials*

In this display we shall look at memorials to be found in and around Cheltenham honouring the dead of WWI.

*Elaine North*

Tel. 01452 857803 or e-mail [elaine-north@hotmail.com](mailto:elaine-north@hotmail.com)

### Correction—and a Story\*

In the article about the explorer Charles Sturt in the last issue it was stated that St Edmund's Lodge, Tivoli Road, where he once lived, has been replaced by a block of flats. Not so—the present building on the site is a terrace of three neo-Georgian houses. The **story** comes from next door, no.35. On the night of October 1st 1959 two men who had lodgings there broke into Cavendish House. One of them, having put his socks on his hands to avoid leaving fingerprints, trod on broken window glass with his bare foot. When the police raided no.35 they not only discovered the stolen goods but were able to match the toeprints found in the shop: conclusive evidence! It was the first time that footprints led to a conviction.

\* *Told by Aylwin Sampson in his book 'Scene Again'.*

## NEW PUBLICATION

### Cheltenham Heritage Walks

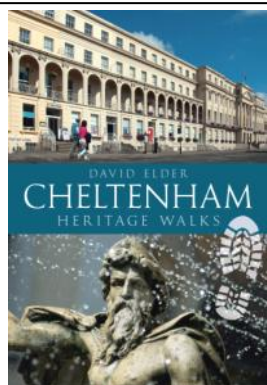
by David Elder

The best way to explore a town is on foot accompanied by an expert guide. In this comprehensive set of illustrated walks catering for all abilities, the different strands of Cheltenham's heritage are woven together to create a rich tapestry with unique and fascinating insights which will surprise locals and inspire visitors.

Cheltenham has never been stuck in the past. It goes back a long way, well before George III's visit made it a fashionable place for the *beau monde* to visit. In more recent times it has reinvented itself as a place of learning, music, sport, tourism and leisure, not to mention its attraction as a place for business and work.

David Elder has lived in Cheltenham for 24 years and has written several articles and books on local history. He is also the Archivist of Cheltenham Camera Club.

Published in paperback in June 2014 by Amberley Publishing, price £14.99







## BOOKS FOR SALE



As members will know, good quality local history books priced between £2 and £10 are regularly offered for sale at meetings. In addition the Society has a quantity of more valuable and/or less easily obtainable books, surplus to the needs of the library, and the Committee has decided that these too should be offered for sale to members. Most of these books are in new or 'as new' condition, and others are priced accordingly. They include the following:

The New Club by Neil Parrack— only a few copies now remain at the special price of £8.50

A Grand City: Bristol in the 18th & 19th Centuries, ed. M J Crossley Evans—£6.50

History of Cirencester by Beecham— £20

Miniatures by Dudley Heath (1905)—£15

Mee—The King's England series: Monmouthshire (1st edition, 1951)—£10;

Worcestershire—£7.50; Warwickshire—£3; Somerset—£3

Pevsner County Series: Wiltshire (revised Cherry)— £10; Oxfordshire (with

Sherwood)—£8; Suffolk (revised Radcliffe)— £8; NE Norfolk & Norwich—£8;

Herefordshire—£8; N Somerset & Bristol—£8; Worcestershire—£7.50;

Cumberland & Westmorland (some loose pages)— £3; S & SW Somerset—£7.50

Stow on the Wold: A History of a Cotswold Town by Johnson—£8

Medieval and Post-Medieval Development within Bristol's Inner Suburbs, ed.

Watts—£8

John Middleton, Victorian Provincial Architect by Brian Torode—£10

Volumes of the **BGAS Record Series**, now for sale at **only £5 each**, as follows:

(Vol 7) Tewkesbury Churchwardens' Accounts 1563-1624 (2 copies)

(Vol 15) A Calendar of the Registers of the Priory of Llanthony by Gloucester 1457-1466, 1501-1525

(Vol 20) Abstract of Feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire 1300-1359

The Society is always grateful for donations of suitable books in either the lower or the higher price range. If you have anything to donate, or if you are interested in buying any of the books listed above, please contact Heather Atkinson on 01242 232740 or e-mail [heatherbell71@hotmail.com](mailto:heatherbell71@hotmail.com)

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***CAN YOU HELP?*****R L Boulton**

The archivist of the Landmark Trust in Teddington, Greater London, is researching a war memorial made by Boulton's in 1919 for the former St Alban's church there. After the church was deconsecrated it was vandalised and the memorial was badly damaged, but the building has since been restored and is now leased as the Landmark Arts Centre. The enquirer had hoped to track down the records of R L Boulton & Co, but unfortunately it seems no such records exist, unless possibly in private hands. Can anyone, perhaps with a family link to the company, shed any light on this?

**Iris Origo née Cutting**

Iris Cutting was born in Birdlip in 1902. Her mother was formerly Lady Sybil Cuffe, daughter of Lord Desart, an Irish peer. Her father William Cutting, from a wealthy New York family, was secretary to the American Ambassador. The family seems to have settled in Birdlip for the sake of his health—he had TB and died from it in 1910, by which time they had moved to Italy. An enquirer would like to know where in Birdlip they lived, and whether any records survive of the few years they spent there.

*If you can help with either of these queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail [joyce@cyberwebspace.net](mailto:joyce@cyberwebspace.net)*

**NEXT ISSUE**

Please forward articles for inclusion in the November 2014 issue by  
**Monday 13th October 2014**  
to the Editor : Kath Boothman, 35 The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2SD  
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