



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 63

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

March 2009



PRIV^T JOHN MEALY SCOTCH FUSILIERS
PRIV^T HENRY TURNER 8TH HUSSARS
PRIV^T JAMES TOWNSEND 18TH LIGHT DRAG^{ONS}
PRIV^T ALGER^{IC} HOLLIDAY 18TH LIGHT DRAG^{ONS}
PRIV^T ROBERT JACKSON 17TH LANCERS
CORP^S F. BALDWIN 89TH REG^T
PRIV^T JOHN STEPHENS 21ST FOOT.

TO THE MEMORY
OF THE MEN
CONNECTED WITH
CHELTENHAM
WHO FELL IN THE
CRIMEA.

PRIV^T WILLIAM PHILLIPS 19TH FOOT
PRIV^T JN^O GEORGE DIDCOTT 23RD FOOT
PRIV^T EDWARD HERITAGE 23RD FOOT
PRIV^T DANIEL MILLS 44TH FOOT
PRIV^T WILLIAM COX 46TH REG^T
PRIV^T JAMES LODGE 61ST FOOT
PRIV^T ROBERT PITT 68TH REG^T
PRIV^T EDWARD EVANS 89TH FOOT.

EDITORIAL

It is always pleasing to see lost or damaged features of the urban landscape that are worth preserving being restored and refurbished. Various recent and current examples come to mind, notably the work on the Jenner Gardens and Neptune's fountain, the new railings around Montpellier Gardens and the hoped-for major improvements to Pittville Park. The latest beneficiary of this process is the surviving Crimean War Memorial, still bereft of the cannon that once stood on top of it, alas, but otherwise restored to something like its original condition and once more worthy of its setting in front of Cheltenham's principal hotel. (See Sue Newton's account of the memorial's history on p10.) The value of such projects lies not only in the immediate visual improvement they deliver, but also in that they encourage further efforts of a similar kind. People who involve themselves in such schemes for the good of us all, often with little public recognition, deserve every credit.

Kath Boothman

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
AGM; Summer Visits and Trips	2
Lecture Programme 2009-10	3
For Your Diary	3-5
Reviews	6
Society News; Congratulations; New Book	7
Features	8, 11
Obituary; Members' Requests	9
Local News	10
Can You Help? Next Issue	12

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

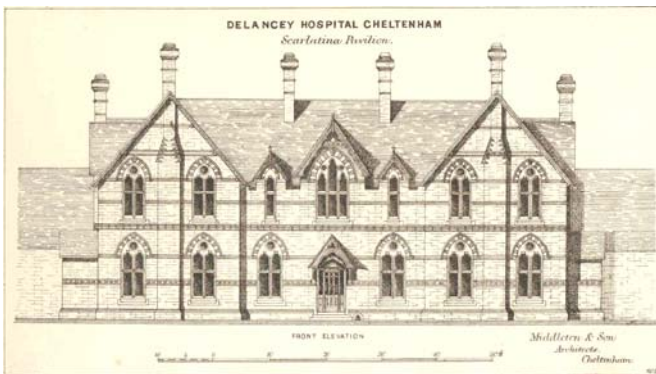
The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 28th April in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham at 7.30pm prompt. (SEE AGENDA AND PREVIOUS AGM MINUTES ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER – **Please bring these papers with you to the meeting.**)

Councillor Robin MacDonald, as President of the Society 2008-2009, will chair the Meeting and give a short address.

Election of Officers and Committee 2009-10

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2008 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they wish. (Mary Nelson resigned last summer). Geoff North and Jill Waller have decided not to stand for re-election. We thank them for the time and energy they have devoted to the Society as committee members, especially for their long service, Geoff as Treasurer and Jill as Librarian. Nominations are therefore invited for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and for committee members. If you would like to nominate someone or be nominated yourself, for one of these posts or as a committee member, please contact Secretary Heather Atkinson (tel. 01242 232740) for a nomination form.

After the A.G.M. business has been completed, there will be an illustrated talk by the **Rev. Brian Torode and Mrs Heather Atkinson** entitled "Delancey Hospital: The end of an era."



SUMMER VISITS

You are invited to join the following events/visits with the Society. **IN ALL CASES PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE SLIP ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR PAYMENT. There will be a priority booking period for members only until 17th April and, as places are limited on these trips, you are advised to book early to be sure of getting a place.** If you wish to bring a non-member as a guest, please indicate this on the slip when booking your own place. If there is any availability after 17th April, places will be offered to non-members in order of application. **If you find that you cannot attend a visit for which you have booked, please inform Steven Blake or another committee member of**

your cancellation. It could mean that someone else could have the opportunity to take your place. If you don't let us know you can't attend, we shall ask you to pay the cost.

Tuesday 19th May at 6.30pm

Walking tour of Prestbury guided by Roger Beacham
Meet at 6.30pm at Library Car Park, The Burgage, for a guided tour of Prestbury with Roger Beacham.

Approximate duration 90 minutes. Parking in the Library Car Park or along the Burgage.

Bus 94 stops at Seven Posts in Prestbury Road. Cross road and walk down Seven Posts Alley. Cross New Barn Lane to the Burgage.

Afterwards you may like to eat at The Royal Oak, The Burgage or the Kings Arms, Deep Street. (Reservations advised at both). If you simply prefer a drink, you could go to The Plough, Church Street, which is small but has a large garden. Tour price £1.00.

Friday 5th June at 2.00pm

Visit to Gloucestershire Archives

Meet at the Archives for a talk and tour of the Archives, including the Conservation workshop, and a small document display. The Archives are in central Gloucester in Clarence Row, off Alvin Street, off London Road (just before the railway bridge). Local buses 10 and 94 stop in London Road. On site parking is available at a rate of £1.95 per vehicle per day (no charge for Blue Badge holders). There will be a charge of £3.00 for the visit.

Thursday 9th July at 2.00pm

Visit to Cheltenham College guided by Deputy Bursar Stephen Friling

Meet near main entrance in Bath Road, to start visit at 2.00pm. Car parking either around the chapel area (accessed via Sandford Rd) or at the South end of College main building (GL53 7LD), accessed via Thirlestaine Road, and failing that the Junior School Car Park (GL53 7AB) just a bit further along Thirlestaine Road on the South Side. There will be an opportunity for a few people to visit the college archive after the visit but space is very limited. Please indicate if you would like to do this too.

(If you only wish to visit the College Archive at 2.00pm, please note this on the booking form. There is no charge for the archive only.) There will be a charge of £1.00 for the college tour.

Tuesday 18th August at 6.30pm

Visit to Witcombe Roman Villa with Dr. Steven Blake

Meet Dr. Steven Blake at the Villa at 6.30pm for a general introduction to the site and then divide into smaller groups, in order to see the fine Roman mosaics, showing geometrical and fish designs. These are protected by modern huts and are not usually accessible to visitors. Duration of visit: about 90 minutes.

Directions: Take A46 towards Stroud over A417 interchange to Brockworth Roundabout. Turn left onto Cirencester Road. Turn right onto Droys Court and as signed to the villa. There will be a charge of £1.00 for the visit.

SUE NEWTON'S TRIPS

Sue Newton is planning trips to the following places of interest (dates to be confirmed):-

Thursday 30th April	Madresfield Court and Kempley church
Thursday 7th May	Syon Park & Hogarth's House (West London) Kew for National Archive or Royal Botanic Gardens
Thursday 25th June	Powis Castle
Tuesday 14th July	Glastonbury, Wells & Street
August	Bath & Avon Valley by steam train & Kennet river boat
August	Kenilworth Castle & Compton Verney (Constable Portraits Exhibition)
Late September	Soho House & Matthew Boulton Exhibition, Birmingham
Early October	Bletchley Park

Booking will be on a first come, first served basis. The trips are open to all, not just members of the Society. Please contact Sue at meetings or telephone her on 243049 for more information.

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2009-10

Tuesday 15 September 2009:

Mr. David O'Connor – A Victorian Legacy: The Battledown Estate

Tuesday 20 October 2009:

Mr. John Loosley – Almshouses in Gloucestershire

Tuesday 17 November 2009:

Mr. Henry Elwes, H.M. Lord Lieutenant – The Lord Lieutenancy of Gloucestershire, Past and Present

Tuesday 15 December 2009:

Mr Eric Williams – Up Hatherley Past 2010

Tuesday 19 January 2010:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 16 February 2010:

Dr. Steven Blake - Cheltenham's Nonconformist Chapels

Tuesday 16 March 2010:

Miss Eunice Powell – The History of Bishops Cleeve

Tuesday 27 April 2010:

A.G.M. followed by Mr. Aylwin Sampson – A Cheltenham Looker On

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY OPEN DAY
On Saturday 18th April
At the Crypt School, Podsmead Road, Gloucester
From 10.00am—4.00pm**

Entry and parking free. All welcome.

MORNING LECTURES 2009-10

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £1 from all attending these lectures is appreciated. Tea/coffee & biscuits are served [no charge] from 10.00am. Lectures start at 10.30am. All welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only—please contact Elaine North (01452 857803) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

Thursday 29th October 2009:

Neil Holbrook— 'Where'er You Walk...'

Thursday 15th April 2010:

Brian Torode—The Bouncer's Lane Cemetery

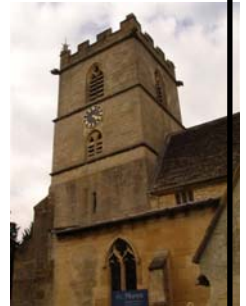
*REMINDER.....***MORNING LECTURE**

Thursday 9th April 2009 at 10.00 am for 10.30 am at St Luke's Church Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham

Linda Hodges from the Prestbury Local History Group will introduce and show a DVD produced by members of the Group in 2007 entitled:

'Travelling through Time - A History of Prestbury'

The 2009 Society Journal will be available for collection at this meeting.

*FORTHCOMING EVENTS**FOR YOUR DIARY***Gotherington Area Local History Society**

Meetings are held at Gotherington Village Hall at 8pm. Visitors £1.

Thursday 16th April:

Tim Porter—Simon de Montfort

Saturday 25th April:

Visit to Evesham with Tim Porter (following his talk on Simon de Montfort)

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 April:

Averil Kear—Learning the Trade: Apprenticeship in Gloucestershire

Thursday 21st May: AGM followed by

Brian Torode—Wells and Holy Wells of Gloucestershire

Charlton Kings Local History Society

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

Students free.

Tuesday 24th March:

GCHQ Historian—British SIGINT before the Second World War

Tuesday 28th April:

Michael Boyes—The Adventurous Lives of Five Cotswold Brothers

Tuesday 26th May:

Brian Edwards -The Quedgeley Shell Filling Factory

Holst Birthplace Museum

www.holstmuseum.org.uk

Saturday 21st March at Pate's Grammar School:

Workshop at 2.30 pm; **concert** at 7.00 pm

Free—all welcome—no ticket necessary.

Please pre-book for the workshop.

Friday 27th March at 6.00 pm in the Museum:

New exhibition opening and booklet launch

£2 to include refreshments.

Please send cheque and SAE to HBM for tickets.

Tickets may also be available on the door, subject to availability.

Sunday 19th April at 7.00 pm in the Museum:

William Howard plays Holst's piano

£15 (Friends £12)

Sunday 24th May in Imperial Gardens:

In Memoriam Gustav Holst

To mark the 75th anniversary of Holst's death.

Details to be announced.

Sunday 14th June at 11.30 am at the Barn, Siddington, by kind invitation of Paul and Ana Gifford-Nash:

51 Strings: David Powell, cello, and Katherine

Thomas, harp

£25 to include concert and lunch with wine. Please

send cheque and SAE to HBM for tickets

Tewkesbury Historical Society

Thursday 21st May at 7.45pm in the Methodist Church Hall, Barton Street:

Memories of Tewkesbury—Historical Chat, hosted by Cliff Burd

Swindon Village Society

Talks start at 7.45pm at Swindon Village Hall.

Non-members pay £1.

Wednesday March 18th:

Barry Simon— The History of Local Church Architecture

Saturday April 18th:

Bird and nature walk: meet in village hall car park at 9.30 am

Wednesday May 20th:

Brian Torode—The Jewish People of Cheltenham

Wednesday July 15th:

Roger Tolman—The Work of the Woodland Trust

Gloucester City Museum

Free lunchtime lectures 1.10pm—1.50pm

Wednesday 1st April:

Barbara Blatchley—Furniture Makers and Wood

Wednesday 6th May:

Professor Robert Tittler—Gloucester Civic Portraits

Cheltenham Italian Society

Parmoor House, Lypiatt Road. Visitors pay £2.

Monday 6th April at 7.30pm:

Aylwin Sampson—The Roman Cotswolds

Museum in the Park, Stroud

Sunday 17th May, 2.00pm—4.30pm:

'Cotswold Wool and Cloth: the Italian Connection'

Russell Howes will describe the early Gloucestershire cloth and wool trade and its links to Italian city states, and **Dr Alan Ford** will give an illustrated account of the life of Francesco Marco Datini, a wealthy Prato merchant. £6.00. Call 01453 763394.

Exhibitions

Holst Birthplace Museum

The Lediards and Whatleys of Gloucestershire: a Holst Family History

To run from 21st February to 16th May

Commemorating Holst: 75 years since the death of the composer

To run from 23rd May to 19th September

Exhibitions are open during Museum opening hours: 10.00 am – 4.00 pm Tuesday through Saturday

Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester

The Gloucestershire Floods display mounted for the Society by Mary Nelson and funded by monies awarded to the Society from the Severn Trent Water Community Fund will be on show at Gloucestershire Archives from 1st –30th May. A further exhibition on the same theme will be shown from 1st—31st July.

NB: the Society's 2009 Journal is to have four pages of colour featuring some of the photographs from the Gloucestershire Floods display . The cost of these colour pages will also be funded from the above award from Severn Trent.

MONTPELLIER SUMMER FUN DAY

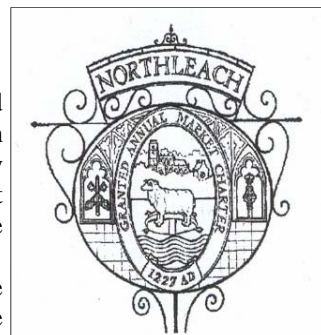
**Saturday 18th July
2.00-5.00pm and
6.00-9.00pm**



CLHS has been offered its usual site and marquee, so the Committee will be looking for volunteers to help with setting up and/or taking spells on the sales tables during the afternoon. Offers of help to Sue Newton please. Elaine would welcome suggestions (and new images) for the photographic display to be mounted inside the marquee, which always attracts a lot of interest.

*MORE FORTHCOMING EVENTS***British Association for Local History (BALH)**
*www.balh.co.uk***LOCAL HISTORY DAY****Saturday 6th June 2009 10.30am—4.30pm***at the Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road, London**Tickets £15 (CLHS members £12.50) to include
packed lunch/coffee/tea*

Programme includes

Open forum discussion: Local History & the Media,
the presentation of Local History Awards
and a lecture by**Professor Nigel Goose**, Director of the Centre for
Regional & Local History, University of Hertfordshire:
**'The English Almshouse and the mixed economy of
welfare, mediaeval to modern'**As CLHS is an affiliated member of BALH, Society
members are welcome to join in any of BALH's activities.
We are assured that this event is always a 'good day out'.**GRCC LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE
SUMMER MEETING****Sunday 14th June 2009
WESTWOODS HALL,
NORTHLEACH**Doors open at 1.30pm, and
at 2.00pm there will be an
illustrated talk on the history
of Northleach followed at
2.30pm by a choice of three
guided walks.Tea and refreshments will be
served from 4.00pm at the
Westwoods Hall, where
there will be an opportunity to view various displays and
talk to members of the Northleach Local History Society.
Cost: £6 per person inclusive.More details will be found on the sheet enclosed with this
Newsletter. **Please note that the reply slip must be
returned by Tuesday 26th May if you wish to attend.****Invitation to The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Annual General Meeting
and President's Address**The Society is holding its AGM at the University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall Campus, Swindon Road,
Cheltenham on **Saturday 28th March 2009**. The society's library, which is housed at this site, will be open with many
of the rare books in its possession on display.Members of the Cheltenham Local History Society are cordially invited to the AGM and Presidential Address entitled
'Arthur's Acre: the Anglo-Saxon Bridgehead at Bristol.'The Annual General Meeting and address, which will be held in the tiered lecture theatre FCTC001, commences at
2.15 pm and after the meeting tea will be available at £1.50, payable on the day.

Further details from John Loosley, BGAS Hon General Secretary, Tel 01285 760460

Email john@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk**GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY AFTERNOON****Saturday 3rd October 2009 from 2.00pm—5.00pm (doors open at 1.15pm)***At Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester. Cost including tea £6.00 payable on door***'Housing the Poor in Gloucestershire'**Speakers: Professor Stephen King of Oxford Brookes University
Cecile Hunt, Judith Ellis and Christine SealCheltenham Local History Society will be participating as usual in this event. Elaine North will be co-ordinating a display
for the Society and is hoping to cover the following topics:

- * Tracing Cheltenham's development and economic growth
- * Legislation - poor laws etc
- * Almshouses and workhouses
- * Housing - demolition of 'slum' areas and building of housing estates (where applicable)
- * Poverty in today's Cheltenham

This is a big subject and an interesting one. If one or more of the above topics appeal to you and you would like to help by
providing text and/or photographs, please contact Elaine on 01452 857803.

REVIEWS

Winter lectures

The winter season began on November 18th with Barry Simon's talk on the History of Swindon Village. Despite saying apologetically at the outset that the village today consists mostly of retail outlets, he went on to prove that it does indeed have a long and interesting history. Beginning as a Saxon settlement, it became a medieval manor, allegedly more valuable than Birmingham in the 11th century(!) A mill and the 6-sided tower of St Lawrence's church survive from that period. The 'big house' of the village is Swindon Hall, originally a Tudor manor house but latterly much developed. The very active and vigilant Swindon Village Society, which has produced no fewer than seven publications about the village, saved its grounds from being built over. Today, sad to say, this still essentially rural community is threatened with 5000 new houses.

Robert Wilson's talk on December 16th was focussed on Cheltenham itself and specifically on the remarkable number and variety of sculptures to be found around the town. From the classic caryatids of Montpellier to the controversial Hare and Minotaur on the Promenade, there is probably something for nearly every taste. Most of it was home-grown - Neptune's Fountain, the best-known piece of all, was designed by the borough engineer Joseph Hall, and much of the rest was the work of sculptors and stonemasons employed by local firms Martyn's and Boulton's. Despite some puzzling omissions—why are there no statues of George III or Wellington, for instance? - there is more to see in our streets, parks and churches than most of us have probably noticed. The erection of Anthony Stones' fine statue of Gustav Holst last year focussed our attention on one piece of sculpture: perhaps after this we'll all pay a bit more attention to the rest of them!

Finally on February 17th John Elliott, exploring the theme 'Picture Palaces of Cheltenham' entertained a large audience with a nostalgic tour of Cheltenham's many lost cinemas, from the long-forgotten Palace in the High Street to the only recently defunct Odeon. In the early years of the 20th century, we learned, when films were quite short and projection equipment not always reliable, they were hybrid places of entertainment only one step removed from music hall, offering variety acts on stage as part of the programme. Newsreels of recent events would draw as big a crowd as the latest star-studded release, especially in wartime. Running a cinema was apparently a rather insecure way of making a living, even after the 'talkies' arrived in the early 1930s and cinemas were becoming increasingly luxurious, often with lounges and restaurants attached. Most of them met a sad fate sooner or later, as John's pictures of decayed and disfigured frontages all too clearly showed. Of the old cinemas only the Daffodil has found a sustainable new lease of life—as a restaurant. Some members of the audience were prompted to share their own memories of cinema-going in Cheltenham, and we all gained an insight into what was once an important aspect of the recreational life of the town.

Research and Display Evening



This informal annual event, held on January 20th, was as usual well-attended and evidently enjoyed by all. There is a natural camaraderie among people who share a common interest, and it is particularly noticeable when, as on this occasion, members are able to move about and talk freely. Much as we all enjoy the formal meetings, they obviously don't offer quite the same scope for getting to know people and finding out what their interests are. The use of the Sherborne Room as well as the Council chamber made it possible to put up several displays, among which was the Society's display on the theme of Cheltenham's Poets and Writers, shown at St Thomas Rich's in October, and a display on the Gloucestershire Pageant of 1908. The Examiner Index and the Millennium Map were shown on laptops and attracted a good many enquiries. Vic Cole and his helpers served refreshments, and there was a well-stocked raffle, the proceeds of which (£114) will be given to the Mayor's charities.



New book from Annecy

In response to my sending our Newsletters to our twin towns in France, Germany and the USA I have received from Annecy Volume 2 of *Les Rues d'Annecy*, which will be put in our library where we already have Volume 1. The book is illustrated with photographs and a plan of the area covered in this volume, and has interesting and informative descriptions of each street with appropriate historical background. M. Chandchamp of the Société des Amis du Vieil Annecy has put much detailed work into these books and we are grateful for his contribution.

Anne Dunn

SOCIETY NEWS

Money Matters

Renewal of Membership

I am pleased that so many of you are happy to renew your membership by standing order through your bank. If you have completed a form you need take no action. Payment for the membership year 2009-10 will be made automatically from your bank account on or around 1st May 2009. Subscriptions will remain at the present levels for the coming year, ie £8.50 for single membership and £12.00 for a couple living at the same address.

If you prefer to pay by cheque or cash you will find a renewal notice enclosed with this Newsletter to be returned to the Membership Secretary, Dorothy Seton-Smith, with payment. New members should also find a standing order form enclosed to be completed and returned so that future payments (wef 1st May 2010) can be made automatically.

Gift Aid benefits the Society enormously. If you have not already signed a form I hope you will consider doing so.

Geoffrey North (Treasurer)

Tel. 01452 857803

A message from Brian White:

Through the CLHS Newsletter I wish to thank all those Members who sent me Christmas cards and more recently 'Get Well' cards, and all those who telephoned and visited me for their kind thoughts and best wishes following my rapid entry into hospital. It would appear that this was initially due to that 'Winter bug'.

With over 300 Members in the Society I like to think of you all as friends ... and that's a comforting thought at a time like this.

However, I hope to be back soon standing in that doorway on a Tuesday evening!

Brian White

CLHS Meeter and Greeter

History Online

CLHS member **David Hanks** has recently put what may be Cheltenham's first local-history project online at: www.charlton-park-cheltenham.co.uk. Although entitled '**A History of Charlton Park**' its scope is much wider. Not only is it illustrated with many historic images of Charlton Park and other parts of town, including some from David's own extensive collection, but a major part of it is a vast and fascinating 'Timeline' of recorded events in and around Cheltenham from the very earliest times to the present day. It contains an astonishing amount of information.

The project is still at a relatively early stage, and David invites fellow members to run their expert eyes over it to identify any corrections or suggest any additional material that they think may be worth including.

New Publication

'Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham: Celebrating People, Places and Events'

by Peter Smith and Sue Rowbotham. Maps by Brian White.

Paperback: 128 pages, 140 illustrations, 8 maps

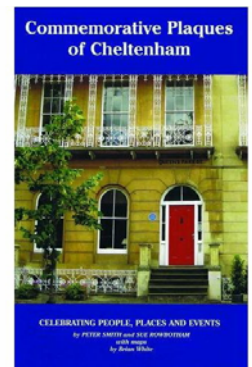
Publisher: Reardon Publishing

RRP: £7.99

Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham tells the stories behind the blue and green plaques affixed by Cheltenham Civic Society since 1982 and a number of other earlier plaques, all of which celebrate notable people and events associated with the town. Cheltenham Local History Society member Sue Rowbotham and the late Peter Smith, who was a member of both the Civic Society and CLHS, throw light on the broader history of the town through the plaques, from George III's historic visit in 1788 to the present day. Eight carefully-drawn maps by Brian White, also a member of CLHS, detail the individual areas of Cheltenham where groups of plaques can be found, encouraging the reader to learn more about the person or event in the specific context of the plaque's location.

It is hoped that both residents and visitors to Cheltenham will find something to capture their interest and imagination in this book, and will see the town in a fresh light, through the plaques and the stories they tell.

The book, due to be launched in April 2009, can be ordered direct from Sue Rowbotham (telephone: 01242 580035 email: sue.rowbos@tesco.net). CLHS members will be entitled to a discount. Please quote 'CLHS' when you request a copy.



Congratulations Peter!

The Society now has its very own MBE, since member **Peter Barlow** (otherwise Major Peter Barlow, Adjutant General's Corps, Educational and Training Services, Territorial Army) was awarded this high honour for services in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia last year. His wife Jill, a Society committee member, and son and daughter, Nick and Alex, all attended the investiture at



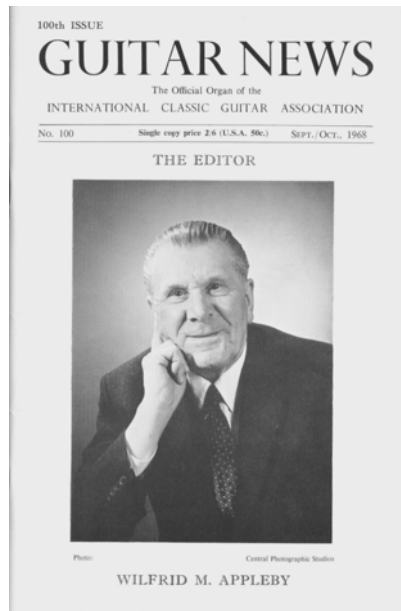
Buckingham Palace on 26th November 2008. Jill reports that the ceremony was most impressive, meticulously organised and truly memorable. Moreover, despite being the last of 96 recipients, Peter managed to have a longer conversation with the Queen than anyone else!

FEATURES

The following reminiscences were prompted by an entry in Jill Waller's Chronology of Cheltenham's Literary Connections, which mentions the founding of the Poetry Society of Cheltenham by Wilfrid Appleby in January 1967.

WILFRID M APPLEBY

Older residents of the town may remember Wilfrid Appleby, who died in 1987 aged 95. He had a lively mind and wide interests. An enthusiastic member of Cheltenham Art Club, he took up painting at the age of 84 and enrolled for a correspondence course, saying he would be 'rising ninety' by the time he had completed it! He was probably best known for his stamp business, which he ran from an upstairs flat at 47, Clarence Street. He was also a leading exponent of Esperanto, published several books of poetry, and was knowledgeable about rocks and minerals, gemstones and sea-shells, and natural history. Above all, he was passionate about the classical guitar. He and his wife Kay formed the International Classical Guitar Association and for over 20 years edited its journal, *Guitar News*. Locally, they ran the Cheltenham Guitar Circle, which is where I first met him. He prided himself in having organised the very first recital by the young Julian Bream, before he had made his name, in the Porcelain Room of Cheltenham Museum.



Wilfrid M Appleby was particularly fond of etchings and engravings, an interest which was awakened in a most singular way. He told me how, when he was once looking in the window of the second-hand bookshop below his flat, his eye was drawn to a book propped open to show an etching of a Scottish bridge. On closer inspection it turned out to have been the work of one **Wilfred C Applebey** - near enough his own name. The coincidence seemed to have been planned by fate. He felt he had to buy the book, and it inspired him to start what would eventually become a monumental collection of prints - around 2000 in all. One hundred of these were by J M W Turner, a selection of which was exhibited in Gloucester Museum. But the story does not end there. Some years ago, and after Wilfrid's death, my wife on a rare visit to Gloucester saw a book of etchings in a second-hand bookshop and on

returning home suggested I might be interested. The following week I went over and bought it - *66 Etchings by Members of the Print Society*. It was only when I opened the book at home to look at it more carefully that I realised that plate No. 2 was none other than "Old Stirling Bridge" by Wilfred C Applebey. What is more, a brief pencilled note on the inside cover of the book was unmistakably in Wilfrid's hand. It had to be the self-same book that had inspired Wilfrid all those years earlier. Another stroke of serendipity!

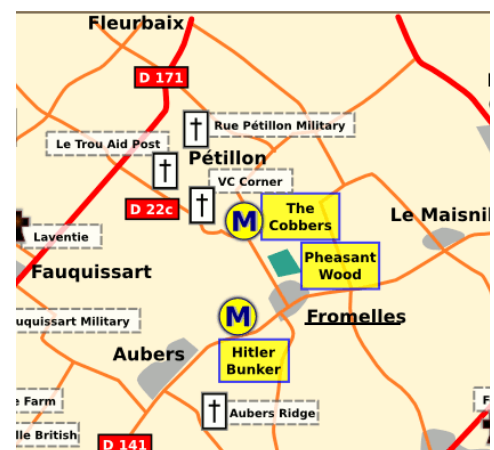
Eric Miller

REBURIAL IN FRANCE FOR WORLD WAR I SOLDIERS

In May 2009 Oxford Archaeology is to start the archaeological excavation of six mass WWI graves at Pheasant Wood, near Fromelles, France. The 1916 Battle of Fromelles, 19 days after the opening of the Somme campaign, involved the 61st British Division and the 5th Australian Division and the existence of the mass graves was confirmed last year. By the end of the project in 2010 all the bodies will be permanently laid to rest in individual graves at a new Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Fromelles. Wherever it is possible to identify the remains, named graves will be provided.

The destruction of the majority of British WWI Service records during the Blitz in 1940 has made it difficult to establish who may be buried at Fromelles. The main British regiments involved in the battle, and therefore the most likely to have men buried at Fromelles, were the **Gloucestershire Regiment** (now The Rifles), the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (Ox & Bucks) (now The Rifles), the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (now The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers), the Worcestershire Regiment (now The Mercian Regiment), and the Machine Gun Corps (disbanded and no modern equivalent). Anyone believing they may be related to British soldiers buried at Fromelles should contact the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, Historic Casualty & Deceased Estates Casework, Services Personnel and Veterans Agency, Building 182, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester GL3 1HW, jccc@spva.mod.uk, 01452 519951.

Susan Newton



Map of the area around Fromelles, showing the site of the excavation close to Pheasant Wood

OBITUARY

JOHN BRASHER 1940-2008

The following is a condensed version of the tribute given to John by his daughter at the service of thanksgiving for his life:

John Edwin Brasher was born in Cheltenham on 25th November 1940. On leaving school at 16 he joined the family firm, Tivoli Box and Printing Company (started by his grandfather in 1923), and worked his way through every department. When he was only 25 his father died suddenly, leaving him to run the business. This he did very successfully for many years. Always committed to the highest standards, and much admired and respected by his staff, he designed and made everything from packaging for aeroplane parts for the Dowty Group to shirt boxes for Jermyn Street. In 1998 he closed the business and converted the factory to office space to let out to local firms, further demonstrating his versatility by doing much of the conversion work with his own hands. In all this he had the unfailing love and support of his wife Sue, to whom he was very happily married for 43 years.

Friends and family, when asked for their memories of John, often referred to his great sense of fun and propensity for practical jokes, which ranged from fake fingers in punch bowls to water bomb fights at Tivoli Box on April Fools' Day. He loved gadgets and seemed to have a natural affinity with anything technical, buying a computer (ostensibly for his daughters) as soon as they became available and delighting in computer games. He had a photographic memory and an unerring sense of direction, which always impressed anyone who travelled with him. His natural flair for design and construction was accompanied by a remarkable ability to see plans in his head, so that he needed only to scribble his ideas down to know exactly how to put them into effect. He also took a keen interest in pop music and had a knack of predicting correctly which rising stars would make it to the top.

What people remembered most about him, though, was his generosity, kindness and complete honesty. Not only did he help his neighbours when they were trapped by snow or floods, but he once tried to insist on refunding money overpaid to him by the Inland Revenue! His immediate family have innumerable memories of his acts of kindness, both large and small, and it was obvious to everyone who knew them how devoted he was to them all and especially to his wife. He was a perfect gentleman, a gentle giant, private and unassuming. Maybe he was like the boxes he made: often people pay little attention to packaging, but not only is it essential, just like John it is very difficult to live without.

Elaine North writes:

John and his wife Sue have been members of Cheltenham Local History Society for some considerable time and John will be sadly missed. We did not see John very often at lectures but he was a familiar figure, with Sue, at summer events - especially the organised visits and walks which he enjoyed. He was a local man, and loved Cheltenham. He did stand out in a crowd because of his height but first impressions of John would have been of a quiet, unassuming man. However, once you got into conversation with him it soon became evident that he had a wicked sense of humour and that he was passionate about everything he cared for in life. He and Sue shared a love of photography and the Society is indebted to both John and Sue for the tremendous photographs they produced for the Society's contribution to the Gloucestershire 2000 Photographic Archive. He loved his computer and with Sue produced a CD of photographs from the year 2000, copies of which still continue to sell on a regular basis, helping to raise funds for the Society. I remember John with much fondness and would describe him very much as his family did at the Service of Thanksgiving for his life held on 27th November, 2008 at St. Peter's Church, Leckhampton, attended by so many friends and former colleagues that service leaflets had to be shared. He was indeed a much-loved 'gentle giant'.



John Brasher on a CLHS visit to the old County Court in August 2000, sitting in the magistrate's seat

MEMBERS' REQUESTS

From **James Hodsdon:**

English Heritage at Swindon is trying to identify a number of photos taken by John Gay probably in the 1960s. Two of them, shown below, are strongly suspected to be Cheltenham. Can anyone name the exact locations?



If you can provide a solid identification, please tell Kate Bevan [email kate.bevan@english-heritage.org.uk or write: Kate Bevan, Archives Cataloguing Team Leader, English Heritage, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ], quoting the number by the picture - and please let James know too. By the way, the notices by the petrol pumps are just the usual No Smoking signs - there are no name clues.

(Images © English Heritage.NMR)

AA092037

AA092098-100



LOCAL NEWS

Jenner Gardens

The Friends of Jenner Gardens group last met on the 28th January and were shown samples of the artworks for the information panels. The group thought the designs were excellent and thanked FOJG member Jonathan Chapman for his design work. The final proofs are expected shortly. The railings and gates are now in place, and the group discussed the matter of how the gates to the garden might be locked and unlocked on a daily basis, now that there was no longer any Council funding to carry out this task. The group was informed that all of Cheltenham's parks and gardens that used to be locked were now left open day and night. Various options were considered, including asking PCSOs if they might open the gates at 8.00 am and close them at 5.00 pm, or possibly making arrangements with nearby businesses. Outside of these hours access could be limited to key-holders. The security of the gardens remains an issue still to be resolved, as unfortunately when the Jenner Gardens project started the Council was still locking and unlocking a number of parks and gardens in the town, and this had been the basis upon which the Jenner Gardens plans were developed.



Further fundraising is envisaged to achieve the group's aim of installing a statue of Edward Jenner. A bronze statue has been quoted as costing £18,000, but a jesmonite bronze cast, which is a modern resin with bronze content and finished in a bronzed patina, would cost £8,500, plus approximately £1,500 for the stone plinth. The latter jesmonite bronze cast will be aimed for, so a further £10,000 will need to be raised for this. It is also thought that some further fundraising might be needed to repair railings around some of the graves, as these have deteriorated recently and were not included as part of the original project. The aim is to open the gardens officially on the 17th May 2009, which is the 260th anniversary of Jenner's birth on 17th May 1749.

Please check the website www.friends-of-jenner-gardens.org.uk for further information and pictures, and in a few weeks' time for confirmation and further details of the planned official opening.

Mary Nelson

The Crimean War Memorial

On Wednesday 21st January the Mayor, Councillor Robin MacDonald, officially "unveiled" the restored Crimean War Memorial in front of the Queen's Hotel. The unveiling marked the final stage of a two-year project begun in 2006 by Cheltenham in Bloom and the Borough Council's property services team. The numbers at the ceremony would have been very low indeed without the attendance of members of the CLHS. I am grateful to Mr Alan Gill for telling me at the Research Evening that the unveiling was to take place the following day.

The memorial commemorates soldiers from Cheltenham who lost their lives during the Crimean war, which took place from March 1854 to February 1856. In May 1856 two Russian cannon, taken at Sebastopol, were presented to the town by the Minister of War, Lord Panmure "in compliance with the request of certain of the inhabitants". A committee was formed to undertake the charge of mounting the guns and it agreed that the site should be in front of the Queen's Hotel. As there was no fund to defray the expenses of mounting, approaches were made to the proprietor of the hotel, Mr. Davis, who generously offered to foot the bill.

On 5th July 1858 a procession of dignitaries, troops, bands and townsfolk made its way through town to Prestbury Park (now Pittville Park) where crowds witnessed the firing of one of the guns. The procession then returned to the Queen's Hotel where several speeches were made before the crowd dispersed, leaving the guns to be lifted off their drays and hauled onto their plinths. By October the plinths had been decorated with ornamental ironwork and globular lamps, and side plates carried the names of the officers and men connected with the town who had died during the Crimean War.

For nearly a century this part of town provided a kind of unofficial focal point for celebrating. During and after the Great War, before the erection of the town's war memorial, recruiting, parades and services of remembrance started from here. In the spring of 1942 the cannons and one of the plinths went for scrap metal for the war effort. As the two bases were identical and the same names appeared on both, only one of the plinths was retained as a lasting memorial.

References : Peter Smith's article "Cannon to the right of them" CLHS Journal 10 and Graham Sacker's notes dated 1991 held in Gloucestershire Archives.

Susan Newton

(See also Sue's article about World War I soldiers on page 7)





The Providence Chapel

SOME MISSING CHAPELS....

Building on the sterling work undertaken by Jill Waller and other members of the Society in producing the 2007 *Chronology of Nonconformity and Dissent in Cheltenham*, I have been attempting to compile a list of all the Nonconformist chapels that have existed in Cheltenham since the 17th century, and in particular to confirm their dates of establishment and/or building, and their dates of closure and (where appropriate) demolition. I am including both purpose-built chapels and existing buildings that were converted for use as chapels, but not private houses that were used for worship.

There are a number of chapels, particularly in the Bath Road area, that are currently eluding (or confusing!) me, and I wonder if any other member of the Society might be able to throw any light on them. They are as follows –

1. Jerusalem Chapel, Upper Bath Street. Merrett's 1834 map of the town shows a chapel of this name on the south side of Upper Bath Street (named as Union Street on the map), close to its junction with Bath Road, although no denomination is given. I suspect that this may have been one of the two chapels in Upper Bath Street that were included in the 1851 Religious Census returns for Cheltenham (for more details of which, see Alan Munden's article in our Society's 2005 *Journal*). One of these is listed as an Independent chapel, and is stated as having been opened c.1822, while the other, which is listed as a 'Gospel Towns and Village Missionary Brethren' chapel, is stated as having originally been opened c.1827, and to have been re-opened in March 1851 by 'a few working men' after a period of closure. As the returns give different numbers of worshippers at each chapel on the same day, they are presumably two different buildings, although it is rather puzzling that the return for both chapels appears to have been submitted by the same person, namely one Caleb Parker of Suffolk Road. Early 19th-century records for the registration of places of worship in Cheltenham do in fact record the registration of a 'Union Chapel' in Upper Bath Street in 1828 and an unnamed chapel in Union Street, Bath Road in 1833. Are these the same two chapels? Maps as late as 1938 continue to show a chapel on the same site as Merrett's map, although the 1884 O.S. map marks a building there as a forge, and the 1958 O.S. map marks it as 'carpet works'. The site is certainly now occupied by a plain rectangular building of indeterminate date, forming two houses, one of which has a plaque naming it as 'The Old Mission Hall'. There are, indeed, newspaper references to Bible classes being held at 'the Upper Bath Street Mission' in 1895, and to the Salvation Army opening a hall there in 1905. Confusion reigns!!

2. New Wesleyan Connection Methodist Chapel, Bath Street. This otherwise unrecorded chapel is mentioned in guide books of 1846 and 1850, the latter describing it as 'at the corner by Bath Road'. Could they possibly mean *Upper* Bath Street?!

3. Bethany Branch Chapel, Bath Road. A branch of the Bethany Wesleyan Methodist Association Chapel in Regent Street. The 1851 Census states that it had 60 sittings and that it was opened in 1850. Where in Bath Road was it?

4. Providence Room, Bath Terrace/Commercial Street. The congregation that built the present Providence Independent Baptist Chapel in Naunton Parade in 1870 is said to have seceded from Bethel Baptist Chapel in c.1836-7, and to have met in a room which they called 'the Providence Room', in Bath Terrace. This is very close to Commercial Street, where a room was registered for worship in September 1837, so they may be one and the same. Interestingly, above the entrance to the present Providence Chapel is a stone inscribed 'Providence Room 1836' – could this have been moved from the congregation's previous home when it built its new chapel? But where exactly was the original 'Providence Room'?

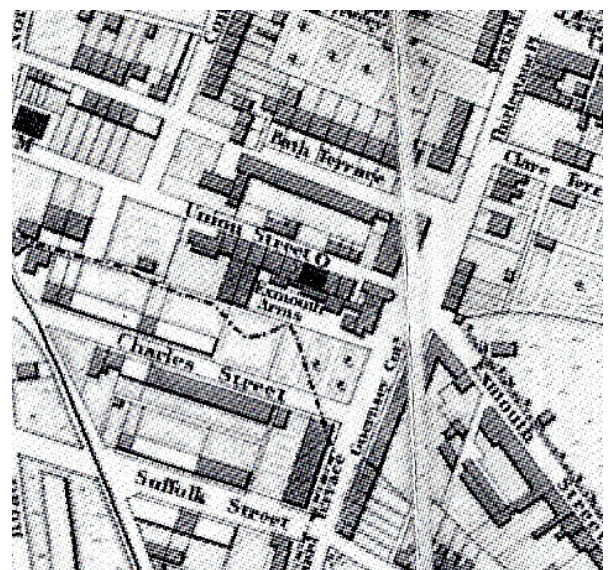
5. Rehoboth Baptist Chapel. A second religious census of Cheltenham, undertaken by the *Cheltenham Examiner* in 1882, lists a chapel of this name, with just 50 sittings, but does not say where it was. There was a Rehoboth (or Rehobeth) Place at the corner of Waterloo Street and Swindon Road, so perhaps it was there? Could it simply have been a converted cottage?

6. Chapel, Wellington Street. A note in the *Examiner* in December 1869 states that a Revd McCarthy had opened a Free Church in "the building formerly occupied as a chapel in Wellington Street". This is presumably the present Wellington Street, off Bath Road – but where (and what) was the chapel before 1869?

All information will be gratefully received!

Steve Blake

Tel: 01242 510926. E-mail steven.blake@deltonglos.plus.com

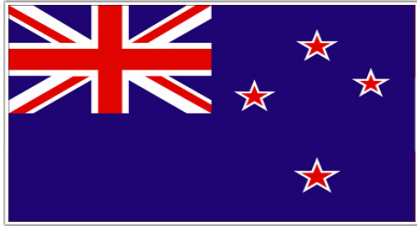


Part of Merrett's map of 1834. The key to the map identifies the 'O' marked next to a black square in Union Street (now called Upper Bath Street) as the Jerusalem Chapel.

CAN YOU HELP?

New Zealand connections

In return for help and information we have given her, a lady living in New Zealand is willing to do a 'look up' for any member of Cheltenham Local History Society with a family interest in New Zealand. Please forward any queries to Joyce Cummings, with e-mail address if possible, or telephone 01242 527299.



Bay Tree Cottage

This house, also known as **Baytree**, used to stand in High Street, Prestbury. When was it demolished? Has anyone a photo of it? Any information regarding past and present buildings on the same site would be welcome.

Mrs Page and Mrs Pike

In the 1940s/50s Mrs Page lived at 27 Marle Hill Road and Mrs Pike at 15 Milton Road. Both were probably members of the Gough family. Has anyone any information about these two ladies?

George James Cox

An enquirer is researching the life and work of the artist George James Cox, son of William Augustus Cox, a stonemason and builder, and Mary Jane Cox née Harris. He was born on January 11th 1884 at 4, Avenell's parade, Charlton Kings. George's elder brother Frank, born in 1865, was also a stonemason, and there were 7 sisters. The family subsequently moved to 41, Fairview Place (1891 census) and then to Priory Terrace, (1901 census). In 1901 George Cox is described as an art and architectural student. He went to London in 1904 to study at the Royal College of Art and was awarded the ARCA Diploma in Sculpture in 1908. After graduation he set up a pottery in Mortlake, Surrey. He married Nora Ethel Boyes in Barnes, Surrey in December 1912. They emigrated to the USA in 1913, where George took a post as an art teacher at the Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York. In 1932 he was appointed Professor of Art at the University of California at Los Angeles. He died in 1946. The researcher wishes to know of any sources that might shed further light on George's early life and education, and on William Cox's business. She has already contacted Charlton Kings Local History Society.

Town Crier

A researcher into the history of the roles of town crier and bellman understands that in the 1930s the office of town crier in Cheltenham was carried out by a woman. Can anyone confirm this?

Pillar boxes

An enquirer has read on the internet of a walk around Cheltenham to take in the 8 working Penfold pillar boxes, but has not been able to find out exactly where they all are. Can anyone supply a full list, or information about the walk?

If you can help with any of the above please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail: joyce.cummings@tesco.net

David Smith writes:

As a tribute to **Brian Frith** I am compiling a list of the books and articles he wrote, edited or helped with, for publication in the *Transactions* due in March 2010. Here is a short list of authors who acknowledged his help (excluding VCH and Gloucestershire Record Series which I have trawled) with date of publication; can anyone add to this for me? I need author, title and date and place published. For reasons of space, newspaper articles and unpublished typescripts will not be covered.

Adlard 1949; Barnes 2000; Boden 1988 and 1992; Booth 1980; Chatwin 1975; Dowler 1984; Gray 1981; Heighway 1985; Hurd 1978; Jurica 1994; Parker 1998; Popplewell 1993; Richards 1983; Spurling 1986; Townsend 1988; Voyce 1985; Welandler 1985 and 1991.

If you can help please e-mail: david_j_h.smith@virgin.net

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward items for inclusion in the JULY 2009 Newsletter by

MONDAY 8TH JUNE 2009

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

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

The Committee is happy to consider requests to place advertisements in the Newsletter and/or include flyers for circulation to members.