



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 69

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

March 2011



CONTENTS

AGM; Summer Visits; Journal	2
Lecture Programme 2011-12	3
For Your Diary	3-5
Reviews	6
Features	7, 9
Society News	8
New Publications	5, 8
Member's Request	9
Local News; Help and Volunteers Wanted	10
Books for Sale; Obituary	11
Can You Help? Next issue	12

EDITORIAL

The hand-tinted print above may be familiar to members, if only because a monochrome version of it was used in Geoff North's article on the Cheltenham Horticultural Society in Journal 26. There we learned that the image first appeared in the *Illustrated London News* in June 1850, marking the Grand Horticultural Exhibition held at the 'Old Wells' that year to inaugurate the Royal Wells Music Hall and Pump Room. This sufficiently explains the festive air of the whole scene and the size of the crowd. If one examines the picture more closely, though, two questions come to mind. First, what is the significance of the flags, including the one apparently strung halfway up St Mary's steeple? And what became of the pump room's pillared portico? David Hanks in *Cheltenham Past & Present* (p103) shows a photo dated 1870 in which it is no longer there. Someone among our ever-growing membership (350 at the last count) probably knows the answers!

Kath Boothman

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 26th April in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham, at 7.30 pm prompt. (SEE AGENDA AND PREVIOUS AGM MINUTES ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER—**please bring these papers with you to the meeting**). The Mayor, Councillor Anne Regan, as President of the Society, will chair the meeting and give a short address.

Election of Officers and Committee 2011-12

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2010 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they so wish. Gwyneth Rattle, John Fisher and Paul Burgess have decided not to stand for re-election, and we thank them for the work they have done as committee members. Nominations are invited for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and for committee members. If you would like to nominate someone or be nominated yourself, either for one of these posts or as a committee member, please contact the Secretary Heather Atkinson (tel. 01242 232740, e-mail heatherbell71@hotmail.com) for a nomination form.

After the AGM business has been completed there will be a talk by **Eric Miller** with the title 'Serendipity'.

SUMMER VISITS

You are invited to take part in the following visits with the Society. **IN ALL CASES PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE SLIP ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR PAYMENT AND A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. There will be a priority booking period for members only until 16th 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 16th 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 Sue Brown (01242 231837) or another committee member of your cancellation, so that someone else may have the opportunity to take your place.** If you don't let us know that you cannot attend, we shall expect you to pay the cost.

Tuesday 31st May at 2.30 pm

and Tuesday 12th July at 2.30 pm

Two visits to The Cheltenham Ladies' College guided by Kath Boothman

Cheltenham's second-oldest public school has been at the heart of the town since it was founded nearly 160 years ago. It has occupied its present site since 1873, and much of its growth and development can be traced through the changing style of the buildings, from John Middleton's Victorian Gothic to the glass-walled art and technology block of the 1990s. As these visits will be taking place

during the half-term and summer holidays, it should be possible to see some rooms not normally open to visitors. Meet at the St George's Road entrance (*not* the main entrance on Bayshill Road). There is no car parking available at the College, but it is conveniently located for bus routes and public car parks. The size of the group for each visit is limited to 20, and there will be a charge of £3 per head to be donated to the College's Bursaries Fund.

Tuesday 26th July at 2.00 pm

Visit to Charlton Park (St Edward's School)

This visit was so popular last year that we were unable to accommodate all those who wished to go. We are now offering another opportunity to take a guided tour of the school's grounds and buildings and to learn something of the history of the Charlton Park estate.

Directions: Take the A435 (Cirencester Road) out of Cheltenham. The school entrance is on the right before the traffic lights at the Church of the Sacred Heart. The B bus stops in Moored Road, beyond the lights. There will be a charge of £1 per head for the visit.

Tuesday 23rd August 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm

Visit to Francis Close Hall and the University Archives

An opportunity to tour the early buildings of the former St Paul's Training College and visit the University Archives and Special Collections, in the company of Lorna Scott and Louise Clough, two members of the archive staff.

The tour will include visits to Samuel Daukes's original College buildings of 1849-50, G.F. Bodley's Practising Schools of 1852-54, and the Chapel of 1908-10. The visit to the Archives offers an opportunity to see some original material relating to St Paul's College and selected items from the University's Gloucestershire Poets, Writers and Artists Collection and from the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society's Library, including rare volumes from the 16th century onwards. To find out more about the Archive collection, visit www.glos.ac.uk/archives.

Meet at 2pm in the Campus Refectory, where members will be able to buy refreshments during a break between the two tours. A charge of £3 per person (cheques payable to Cheltenham Local History Society) will be made for the visit, as a donation to the University's Archives Development Fund. Numbers will be limited to 30, so please book early. Parking at the site is very limited, and members are advised to make their way there on foot or by bus; anyone who needs on-site parking due to a disability should make that clear on their booking form, so that a special arrangement may be made.

The Cheltenham LHS Journal

The Journal for 2011 is now nearly complete and will be distributed at the St Luke's morning meeting on 12th April and at the evening AGM on 26th April. There are many varied and appealing articles and illustrations that we hope will entertain and enlighten. New articles for the 2012 issue can be submitted at any time up to 8th January 2012, and we welcome any requests for assistance with research or writing in the correct format. We have recently been congratulated by a professional historian on the high standard of the articles in our Journal.

Sally Self

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2011-12

Tuesday 20th September 2011:

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

Tuesday 18th October 2011:

Mr Mark Curtoys—Town and Nation: Cheltenham in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Tuesday 15th November 2011:

Mr John Thompson—North Cotswold Churches

Tuesday 20th December 2011:

Mr David Aldred—Echoes of the GWR 1962-64

Tuesday 17th January 2012:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 21st February 2012:

Mr David Elder—‘He went about doing good’: the life of Dr. Edward Thomas Wilson

Tuesday 20th March 2012:

Dr James Hodsdon—Cheltenham Manor Court records 1692-1803

Tuesday 24th April 2012:

AGM followed by Ms Caroline Adams—Food from the Past

MORNING LECTURES 2011-12

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 10.00am. Lectures start at 10.30am. All welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only—please contact Heather Atkinson (01242 232740) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

Tuesday 25th October 2011:

Mr Eric Williams—Lost Villages - Gloucestershire and Beyond

Tuesday 10th April 2012:

Ms Christina Beardsley—Unutterable Love: the Passionate Life and Preaching of F W Robertson

Reminder...

MORNING LECTURE

*Tuesday 12th April at 10.00 am for 10.30 am
at St Luke's Church Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham:*

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



*The 2011 CLHS Journal will be
available for collection at this meeting*

FOR YOUR DIARY

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

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

Thursday 17th March:

Phil Moss—Priories and Friaries of Gloucester

Thursday 21st April:

Peter Ralph—Charcoal Burning, the Hard Way

Charlton Kings Local History Society

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

Tuesday 22nd March:

Mr Barry Simon—St Kenelm and St Kenelm Way

Tuesday 26th April:

Mr Jeremy Bourne—1200 Years in 60 Minutes: a Brief Introduction to a Cotswold Village

Tuesday 24th May:

Dr Nicholas Herbert—Interpreting the Gloucestershire Landscape

Friends of Gloucestershire Archives

All meetings are held at Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester.

Thursday 24th March at 7.30 pm:

David Aldred—Winchcombe and its lost Abbey: Where was it?

Talk complemented by display of records including rarely-seen archive material from 811-1368.

Visitors welcome, £2.

Gotherington Local History Society

Meetings are held at Gotherington Village Hall at 8.00 pm. Visitors £1.00.

Tuesday 22nd March;

Ian Mackintosh—400 Years of Stroudwater Textiles

Tuesday 26th April 2011:

Christine Seal—Occupations in the Village Communities round Bredon Hill 1851-1901

Historical Association, Cheltenham and Gloucester Branch

All meetings start at 7.30 pm unless otherwise stated. Gloucester meetings are held at The Friends' Meeting House, Greyfriars (off Southgate Street).

Non-members pay £3 per meeting, students £1.

Monday 28th March 2011 in Gloucester:

Dr T Heathcote—Afghanistan and the Great Game

Friends of All Saints' Church

Meetings are held in the church, All Saints' Road, Cheltenham. Guests welcome, £3 to include refreshments.

Friday 8th April at 2.30 pm:

Dr James Prendegrass—Reading Christian Symbols in Church Buildings

Thursday 9th June at 7.30 pm:

Jonathan Mackechnie-Jarvis—the Artistic Heritage of the Victorian Church in the 21st Century

MORE FOR YOUR DIARY

Holst Birthplace Museum

www.holstmuseum.org.uk

4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham

Friday 15th April at 7.30 pm in the Thirlestaine Gallery, Cheltenham College:

Concert by Peter Wilman (tenor) and Philip Collin (piano) with music by Holst, Vaughan Williams, Finzi and Gurney.

Tickets £12 (including refreshments) on the door, or £10 in advance from the Museum.

Saturday 14th May, 6.00-8.00 pm:

Opening of new exhibition 'Scores Revealed: Sheet Music from the Archives'. Twilight free admission as part of Museums at Night 2011.

Friday 20th May at 7.00 pm at the Bacon Theatre, Dean Close School:

Tony Palmer on Holst

In this special event for the Museum, the internationally acclaimed film director will talk about the making of his new music documentary for BBC4 and the insights he gained into the composer's life and music. The talk is followed by the first large-screen showing of the film. Tickets (to include a pre-event drink in the foyer from 6.15 pm) £10 on the door or £9 in advance from the Museum. Unreserved seating.

Sunday 5th June at 3.00 pm, St James the Great Church, Cranham:

Concert for a Summer Afternoon by the Parry Ensemble with mezzo-soprano Frances Kopp. To include Holst's Songs for voice and violin Opus 35 and music by Frank Bridge. Tickets £8 from the Museum or on the door.

Prestbury Local History Society

This recently formed Society will be holding the first of four open meetings at The Library, Burgage, Prestbury on *Monday 28th March at 7.30 pm:*

Beryl Elliott - an illustrated talk on Prestbury Park

The major part of the Park is now occupied by the Racecourse. In the past, however, it has been at various times a state-of-the-art farm; the prestigious country estate of a retired ambassador; and long ago, a deer park where a bishop would treat his guests to a day's hunting. Beryl's talk aims to unravel some of this complex history, and to situate the park in the familiar landscape.

Visitors welcome, £2.50. New members may also enrol at this meeting.

Current projects under way include the collection of data relating to the village, especially any old documents or photographs in private hands that may be digitally copied for research purposes. Of special interest for projects already in progress are: Prestbury Court (formerly Prestbury Lodge) and its occupants; Upper and Lower Mills; and Prestbury's 'lost buildings' which have left visible traces in the local environment.

Further details can be had from Michael Cole (Chairman) on 01242 517192.

Swindon Village Local History Society

Talks start at 7.45 pm at Swindon Village Hall.

Non-members pay £1.00.

Wednesday 17th March:

Peter Petrie—The Life and Death of Edward II

Saturday 16th April at 9.30am:

Annual bird walk, leaving from Village Hall car park.

This year, as well as bird spotting, the group will be guided round the playing field by John Heathcott, who will talk about the trees growing there.

Wednesday 18th May:

Barry Simon—Local Aviation: all about Gloucestershire Airport

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral is hosting a number of its popular study days in 2011. These are designed primarily for group bookings, but you can buy an individual ticket for the following:

Tuesday 19th April:

Cherubs and Chancies— the Story of English Church Monuments

Thursday 5th May:

Gloucester Cathedral Stained Glass

Thursday 12th May:

The Medieval Monks of Gloucester— how they Lived, Worked and Worshipped

Each event runs from 10.00 am-3.45 pm. Tickets £20 (to include morning coffee and lunch) from Christine Turton in the Cathedral Office, 2 College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LR. Tel. 01242 508210 or e-mail: christine@gloucestercathedral.org.uk

Exhibitions

Holst Birthplace Museum

To run from 8th February to 10th May:

New Acquisitions

To run from 14th May to 29th August:

Scores Revealed: Sheet Music from the Archives

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY ANNUAL LECTURE

Wednesday 30th March at 7.30 pm

Boutflour Hall, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

Dr Kevin Leahy (Portable Antiquities Scheme) - Gold, God and Battle: The Staffordshire Hoard

Tickets £2 from Cirencester Visitor Information Centre. Entry free to U16s, Unwaged, Senior Citizens, Affiliated Groups and Societies and Students

A parking permit for this event can be downloaded from www.cotswoldarch.org.uk

**British Association for Local History (BALH)
LOCAL HISTORY DAY
Saturday 4th June 2011**

*10.30.am—4.30 pm at the Friends' House, Euston Road, London (opposite Euston Station)
Tickets £15 (CLHS members £12.50) to include coffee, packed lunch and tea after the lecture*

Programme includes:

Morning discussion on 'Saving local history in an age of austerity'

AGM of the Association

Presentation of 2011 BALH Awards for local historians

Annual Lecture given by Dr Rowena Archer: 'Eviscerating, Embalming and Boiling: Medieval Funeral Practices'

As CLHS is an affiliated member of BALH, Society members are welcome to join in any of BALH's activities. For booking form and further information, see the Association's website, www.balh.co.uk

The 2011 Deerhurst Lecture

*Saturday 17th September at 7.30 pm
in St Mary's Church, Deerhurst*

**Dr Martin Heale—
Deerhurst Priory in the
Later Middle Ages**

Tickets at the door, price
£4.50 (students £2.50)

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



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY OPEN DAY

Saturday 16th April 2011 from 10.00 am—4.00 pm

At the Crypt School, Podsmead Road, Tuffley, Gloucester
Entrance and parking free. All welcome.

Attractions include:

Help desk for your research problems
Products for sale, including books, maps, CDs, fiches,
photographs etc
Other societies and commercial organisations
Light refreshments (courtesy of Highnam WI)

Enquiries to: help@gfhs.org.uk

Fairford History Society

GRCC LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE SUMMER MEETING

Saturday, 2nd July 2011 at the Fairford Community Centre, High Street

1.30 pm Doors open, exhibition on show. There will be an introductory talk at 2.00 pm.
2.30-3.30 pm Guided tours of church and town. Talk on Farmor's School (founded 1738) and tour of new buildings.
From 4.00 pm Tea and refreshments served in the Community Centre with the help of Fairford WI.

Tickets £6. For full details and to book tickets go to enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk or telephone Alison Hobson on 01285 711768. Please book by 17th June.

NEW PUBLICATION

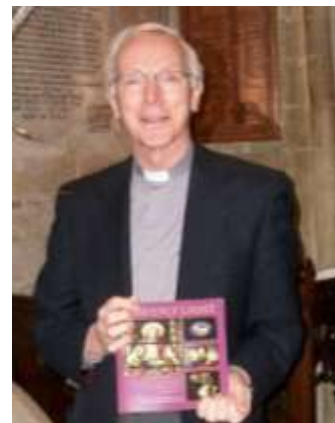
Heavenly Light: A Guided Tour of the Stained Glass Windows of St Mary's Church, Cheltenham

by the Revd Canon Andrew Dow, MA

Visitors to Cheltenham Parish Church, St Mary's, always remark on the wonderful stained glass windows. Several years ago we had a visit from The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass and they were all thrilled with the quality of the windows. A previous book on the windows by the late Revd Guy Fothergill, with photos by the late David Walker, sold out several years ago. The present trustees of the Friends of St Mary's asked the recently outgoing Rector and Area Dean of Cheltenham, the Revd Canon Andrew Dow, whether he would write a new book, and also, knowing that he was a gifted photographer, take new photos. We were most fortunate that Mrs Mavis Fitz and family decided to pay the printing costs in memory of her late husband the Revd Lionel Fitz, who had been attached to the church since he was a small choirboy. The result of all this is *Heavenly Light*, which is on sale at Waterstones, Oasis, and St Mary's and St Matthew's churches, price £3. It can also be ordered from me by post for £4 to include postage.

Christine Ormerod

tel. 01242 513896, e-mail secretary@stmaryscheltfriends.org.uk



Revd Canon Dow with his book

REVIEWS

Winter lectures

The past winter has been so unusually severe that it actually cost us one of our planned events: Sue Rowbotham's talk on Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham, billed for December 21st, had to be cancelled at short notice because of the snow. It is now rescheduled for September this year.

Carrie Howse's talk on the origins of **Rural District Nursing in Gloucestershire** at St Luke's on October 27th did not attract quite such a large audience as might have been expected. However, those who attended were rewarded by a very interesting talk. Dr Howse first gave an account of the health care available in country districts in the 1880s, then described the pioneering work of Elizabeth Malleon, who came to Gloucestershire from London and founded the Rural Nursing Association. This began as a charity and developed into a national scheme, eventually amalgamating with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, the forerunner of the modern district nursing system. She then talked about the people involved in rural district nursing in its early days: the ladies from the higher ranks of society who worked unpaid to organise and manage it, the trained nurses who travelled around the countryside visiting patients in their homes, and the patients themselves. It was clear that the introduction of this service made an immense difference in the lives of the rural poor, and that Elizabeth Malleon has hardly been given the credit she deserves.

The next speaker was **David Elder**, who on November 16th gave an illustrated talk entitled **Cheltenham on the Page**, surveying the wide variety of references to Cheltenham to be found in literature and elsewhere. He quoted many well-known writers, from the 16th century antiquary John Leland who described it as 'a long town having a market' to John Betjeman who wrote a poem about it. Many others had satirised the town. Garrett wrote of Cheltenham's population in 1801 as 'nothing but retired generals', Thackeray referred to Cheltenham stereotypes in his 'Book of Snobs', and Trollope gave it the name 'Littlebath' and made it the setting for *Miss Mackenzie*, a novel of life in a narrow-minded spa town. Trollope, who was a Post Office official, had been in dispute with the Reverend Francis Close over Sunday postal deliveries, and got his own back by putting Close in this novel, thinly disguised as the bigoted cleric Mr Stumfold.

Mrs Craik in *John Halifax*, Gentleman called Cheltenham 'Coltham' and referred to the 'simpling belles' to be found there. Many lesser-known writers also mocked the town in similar terms. As may be imagined, this treatment was not well received by local readers. Some later writers were more complimentary: Tennyson saw Cheltenham as a refuge, while Agatha Christie appreciated the 'good conversation' she found here. Virginia Woolf, on the other hand, complained that pedestrians were apt to be run over



Cartoon illustration from David Elder's talk

by cyclists! Finally, Cheltenham has also appeared in cookery books—David had found a Cheltenham cake of 1786 and a pudding of 1889, and offered copies of both recipes for members to try at home. As the pudding involved a full half-pound of suet, we wonder how many people took up the offer!

Research and Display Evening

The annual members' evening, held this year on January 18th, was as usual a lively social occasion. Jill Barlow, opening the proceedings on behalf of Sue Newton, announced that David Johnson was to be the new Programme Secretary, and thanked him for volunteering to take on this role.



In the Council Chamber there was a demonstration of the new 'Cheltenham Connect' website, and photos taken at Society events were projected on a wall-mounted screen. The various displays prepared by members covered themes such as statues of William IV, the history of the Restoration Pub and war medals. Vic Cole and his helpers served refreshments in the Cambay Room. In the Montpellier Room Geoff and Elaine North had a book stall and a display of plans and other documents relating to the Plough Hotel. As on previous occasions the *Examiner* index and the Millennium Map were available to be consulted on laptops. A well-supported raffle raised £135 for the Mayor's charities.

Kath Boothman

Geoff North writes:

I know that many of you like to see the photos on screen (as above) but if these slide shows are to become part of the Society's archives it is a shame that they are incomplete in that some events do not feature because I have no photographs to include. Elaine and I cannot attend every event, so I am reliant on you as members to send me your pictures. They don't need to be brilliant photographs, and I am happy to have hard copies, negatives or emailed images. The file for 2011 is already open, so please take your camera (or mobile phone) to Society events, start snapping and let me have those photos! Thanking you all in anticipation

Geoff North

e-mail : geoffreynorth@blueyonder.co.uk

FEATURE



'Amyddst ye fflowres I tell ye Houres'

In the garden of the Cheltenham Ladies' College, visible in the distance through the railings on Bayshill Road, stands a sundial. It has stood there for 90 years and, at first sight, nothing about it suggests that it was not made for that particular location. It is mounted on a simple square limestone plinth and is functional and unpretentious, altogether suitable for the grounds of a school. Long ago, though, it was somewhere quite different. Close inspection reveals hints as to its origins.

Around the copper dial, now green with age and much-weathered, are inscriptions in English and Latin. In two corners we have an indication of its date—Eviir, 1905—and the initials LWD, which may be those of its maker. On the rim of the dial itself is the legend 'Greenwich Solar Time 8 Minutes Faster'. Two opposite sides of the plate are decorated with lines of verse in a curly script, a little poem quite commonly found inscribed on old sundials:

Amyddst ye fflowres I tell ye Houres
Tyme wanes away As fflowres decaye
Beyond ye tombe ffreshe fflowres bloome
Soe man shall ryse Above ye skyes

The date 'AD1665' is appended to this verse, but no indication of authorship. It does not seem to appear in any dictionary of quotations, and the author may well be unknown. On the other two sides, in Roman capitals, is a Latin inscription:

Hoc solarium cursum horarum quas ipsa beaverit indicaturum ponitur
Florae quae per horas propriis opibus ditavit Gloucestienses

This defies exact translation, but the general sense is that the sundial is placed here to mark the passing of the hours while the flowers of Gloucestershire bloom and give pleasure.

Why this emphasis on flowers? The sundial stands today in a small bed of heathers, planted a few years ago as a gift from former pupils and staff of the College. There are no other flowers of any significance anywhere near it.

To find the answer we have to go back first to 1920. Principal of the College at that time was Miss Lilian Faithfull, who later founded the Lilian Faithfull Homes. One of her duties was to write an annual report to the College's governing Council giving an account of events and developments in the preceding academic year. The report dated October 1920 contains the following note:

'The gift of a Gloucestershire wild flower garden by Mr W L Mellersh, who has had considerable experience in growing wild plants, is a real acquisition; and Mr Mellersh has not only given the plants and a beautiful sundial, but has taken infinite trouble to arrange the garden and plant it himself. The children in Division III are already taking the greatest interest in the care of the beds.'

William Lock Mellersh was a solicitor, a junior partner in the local firm of Brydges, Mellersh and Mellersh. Educated at



Photo courtesy of CLC Archives

Cheltenham College and Exeter College, Oxford, he had followed his father into the law, but his real interest evidently lay elsewhere: he was a keen naturalist. In 1896 he founded a 'Living Herbarium' of Gloucestershire wild flowers in the Marle Hill Annexe, the name given to the area west of Evesham Road purchased by the Council for recreational use in the late 19th century. In 1905 his collection was transferred from Marle Hill to a larger site in the Pittville Long Garden, probably near the north end of Pittville Lawn. To mark the founding of this new public garden Mellersh presented a sundial, which remained a feature of the garden for the next 15 years. By 1919, however, the garden was in 'an unsatisfactory condition' (as recorded in the minutes of the Council's Parks and Recreation Grounds Committee meeting of 17th December that year), and the decision was taken to do away with it. A further note said that 'a sundial, presented by Mr Mellersh for the wild flower garden, [is] to be removed to the Cheltenham Ladies' College'.

It might be supposed that William Mellersh had either died or lost interest, but he was in fact still very much involved and had probably already been in touch with Miss Faithfull about the proposed move. Clearly the garden he was to create, rather than the sundial, was his real gift to the College. Early photographs of the Cotswold Garden, as it was known, show it as quite an elaborate layout of small beds and rockeries. The College had had a wild flower garden before, in the grounds of one of the boarding houses, and it is easy to imagine that Mellersh's gift was indeed well received and an object of great interest in its early days. Botany was taught to a high standard at that time and many of the girls were expert botanists.

In the longer term the Cotswold garden did not survive, probably because it needed too much care and maintenance. The sundial, however, remains. These days it attracts little attention, but it still looks very much at home in its surroundings.

Kath Boothman (with thanks to Steven Blake for information from Council records)



SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

- Mary Moxham
- Derek Ryland
- Malcolm and Margaret Scott
- Pamela Bret  ch  
- Michael Meredith
- Jon Dyer
- Nick Lazarus
- Bruce Pudner

And apologies to Neela Mann, whose name should have been included in the list of new members in the November issue.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
 ☆ **A lucky prize-winner writes:** ☆
 ☆ Thank you very much to the person who ☆
 ☆ gave the lovely basket of fruit as a raffle ☆
 ☆ prize at the recent Research and Display ☆
 ☆ Evening. We really enjoyed it. ☆
 ☆ Gwyneth Rattle ☆
 ☆★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Change of website address

www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk



As many of you may have noticed, we have recently made several changes to the content and layout of the pages on our website. We are especially pleased to have received permission from the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum to use some of the images of 19th century Cheltenham from their collection. We are also making a slight change to the address at which the website can be found. From 1st May 2011 the address will be www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk. For a few months thereafter, until December 2011, it may be possible to access the website via either the old or the new address until the site has fully migrated. Those of you who use the web browser to find the website will still be able to find it by typing in Cheltenham Local History Society.

New Publication

Launch of *The Court Books of the Manor of Cheltenham 1692-1803* edited by James Hodsdon



James Hodsdon with the Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Anne Regan and Martin Crossley Evans, president of BGAS

The launch, held on Thursday 28th October 2010 in the Pittville Room, Cheltenham Municipal Offices, was hosted jointly by the President of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (BGAS) and the Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Anne Regan, who is president of our Society for this year. An invited audience, which included representatives from Cheltenham Local History Society and BGAS, heard Dr James Hodsdon, a former editor of our Society's *Journal*, introduce this long-awaited book, Volume 24 in the Gloucestershire Record Series published by BGAS, which has taken ten years of research and is the first to record Cheltenham's manorial history. The book will be an invaluable tool to both local and family historians charting the town's glory years of the 18th century and its transition from one-street market town to a place renowned for its spa water and royal visits. Five comprehensive indexes enable the researcher to locate entries by persons, properties and boundary features, places of origin, occupations, offices, professions and qualities and also selected subjects.

Following the launch, Cheltenham Local Studies Library was presented with a copy of the book and decided to make Cheltenham Manor Courts one of its selected themes for 2011. In February I prepared a display for the Society (with much appreciated help from James) on the Manor Courts featuring *The Court Books of the Manor of Cheltenham 1692-1803* * and incorporating examples of Court Rolls from earlier times and also later in the 19th century following Inclosure. This display, which was in the Local Studies Library from February 7th-18th, will also be available to view at the BGAS Annual General Meeting to be held at 2.15 pm on Saturday 2nd April in the Apostle Room of Clifton Cathedral, Bristol.

Elaine North

*Copies of the book can be obtained from the author, Dr James Hodsdon (tel. 01242 233045) at the special price of £15 + postage if required.

PS Dr Hodsdon's work continues—see his appeal for volunteer help on p10



Dr James Hodsdon with the Society's display on Cheltenham Manor Courts in Cheltenham Local Studies Library

FEATURE

CENTRAL SCHOOL MAGAZINES

I recently came by some copies of the Cheltenham Central School Magazine, including the very first one, brought out in 1925. They had been left by the late George Lewis, a former pupil at the school.

One is struck by the high standard of composition and the earnestness of the contributions, no doubt encouraged by the new Headmaster, Mr F H Lister, formerly of Maidstone Grammar School, who was said to be 'endeavouring in every way to lift [the school's] tone and standard'.

The titles of some of the articles written by the boys and girls give the flavour: 'The Tongue that would not Lie' (inspired by Thomas the Rhymer), 'An Original Fable,' 'The Meditations of Ohmed,' 'Winter in Canada,' 'A Very Little Man but a Giant' (about Franz Schubert), 'A Conversation among the Books in my Desk,' 'The Mother City of the Empire' and 'Some Central School Pets'. 'The Noble Tournament of the Oval Ball' was a report on an England v Wales rugby match, written in Middle English. There were poems that scanned and rhymed. Many of the articles were illustrated with woodcuts produced by the pupils, George Lewis supplying several of them. Several articles in French were no doubt spurred by the thriving Cercle Français. Some Old Boys also contributed, one describing a night on a herring drifter and another his first flight. A third reminisced about the impression made on him throughout his school career by a picture of a man ploughing, which had hung behind the Head's desk and which the boy had stolen back to see one more time after he had left, 'to receive [the ploughman's] good wishes'.

Outside school, pupils went to see 'As You Like It', performed by Sir Frank Benson's company, and Sir Frank himself came to give an 'inspiring address' at the school. Twenty boys and girls attended a chamber music concert at The Ladies' College where, after a Beethoven string quartet they heard 'a quieter piece by Ravel, the modern French composer'.



A woodcut illustration by George Lewis

A visit to Bristol included the zoo but only after making a tour of St Mary Redcliffe, the cathedral and the university library. Visits were also made to the Cheltenham Gas Works and to the GWR Works at Swindon.

George Lewis's name was among those who had passed the Oxford School Certificate examination in 1930. He later qualified as a quantity surveyor with the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. The issue of July 1930 contained an article by him, entitled 'Reading'. He clearly had a catholic taste in books and recommended a library to which he belonged – at a subscription of 'only one penny per annum'! Fittingly, the school magazines have been offered to Cheltenham Public Library's Local Studies Centre where they will be available to a wider readership. Also, a photocopy of the first issue has been presented to Bournside School, the Central School's heir.

Eric Miller

MEMBER'S REQUEST

TWO UNUSUAL MINERAL WATER SYPHONS

Society members might be interested to see these unusual syphons, photographs of which were recently sent to Cheltenham Museum. One was produced by the Cheltenham Spa Mineral Water Company and is etched with an image showing both the Devil's Chimney on Leckhampton Hill and 'pigeons picking up calcareous matters out of the original Cheltenham Spring'.



It has a Registered Trademark No. 203446. The earliest directory reference to the Company appears to be in 1900, when the Cheltenham Spa Mineral & Aerated Water Factory was listed in Albion Street - although in 1910 it was listed at 160 High Street, which seems to have been the Original Brewery address, so perhaps it was run by the brewery at that time? The other syphon was produced by the Lansdown Table Water Works, for which no directory references have yet been found. Intriguingly, the cap bears the name of another Cheltenham manufacturer, Niblett & Co, who are recorded in Albion Street in 1891 and in Sherborne Place in 1900. Museum staff had never seen examples of these before and would very much like to know more about them, including their likely date and the histories of the companies that produced them. All information and ideas to the Editor please!

Steven Blake



LOCAL NEWS

What's going on, and how you can get involved: help and volunteers wanted

CHELTENHAM MANOR COURT RECORDS: THE NEXT STAGE

Following the recent publication of the BGAS volume on Cheltenham Manor Court records 1692-1803, I am keen to find **volunteers** to help extend the coverage, both forwards into the Regency years and backwards to earlier centuries. The 1800s material is in English and easy to read, and (you've guessed) the earlier material mostly isn't, but can be mastered with practice, as the Latin group has already established. This could be a CLHS project, potentially leading to a further BGAS volume in due course. It would also be a great building block for the future VCH volume covering Cheltenham. The exact approach would depend on who and how many wish to take part, but would be likely to be a combination of work done at home on digital images and work using original material at Gloucestershire Archives. If you are interested, please get in touch.

James Hodsdon

Tel 01242 233045 or e-mail jj49@btinternet.com

ST MARY'S CHELTENHAM PARISH RECORDS PROJECT

We now have a Working Group of six members, which is at present sufficient to cope with the task. We have four microfiche readers, but could really do with two more, as this would save moving them from house to house and causing damage to the machines and the bulbs. I would like to make a plea that you ask around for **two more fiche readers**: do you have any connections to Archives or Universities? They may have one collecting dust on a shelf, and be glad to be rid of it! My thanks to all those who have contributed so far – it is a long term project, but the results will be worthwhile and add to the understanding of the early history of Cheltenham.

Sally Self

A PLEA FROM THE LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

Do you have any images of Cheltenham, from early etchings to current photographs?

Cheltenham Local and Family History Library are busy compiling a comprehensive collection of images from various sources and also making a contemporary record of Schools, Public Houses, Shop Frontages, Artisan Dwellings etc.

If you can assist with providing any images, please contact Cheltenham Local & Family History Library by emailing:

cheltenhamlocalstudies@gloucestershire.gov.uk

'LLOYD GEORGE' SURVEY OF LAND VALUES

Great progress has been made in transcribing the 1909 survey of land values, not least in the organisers' understanding. For example, a form sent to owners in the early stages of the survey states that 'so far as possible' information should relate to the situation on 30 April 1909, that is, the day after the People's Budget was presented. But the budget was not passed until late in 1910, after which the Inland Revenue had to organise the paper work and appoint the surveyors, so that the valuation was often not done for some years - the latest date noted so far is 1915. By that time many owners had died, sold their property, or in other ways reorganised their lives. For these reasons amongst others, entries were later made at the bottom of form 37, giving details of estate duty valuations, sales, transfers and prices into the 1940s, and these have proved of enormous interest; a study of a few of the plots in Charlton Kings will be published in their Local History Society's Bulletin for 2011.

Half the Cheltenham forms have been transcribed, and Jill Waller and I are both acting as coordinators. All sorts of interesting details emerge: some suggest marital (or non-marital) situations; a low valuation of one house in a row of similar properties was explained by it being next to the tannery; have you heard of the Ideal Hat Shop? In 1934 'Northwold', Queens Road, was sold to Ideal Hats Ltd; the house is on the Lansdown end of Queens Road.

Volunteers continue to be warmly welcomed. The survey sends us out to explore and discover unknown aspects of the town, and spring and summer walks may well follow!

Anthea Jones

REMI NDER!

CLHS DISPLAYS IN CHELTENHAM LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY April and May 2011

Mon. 4th - Fri. 15th April: **THE CENSUS**
CLHS members in attendance Wed. 6th am.
Mon 9th - Fri. 20th May: **FRANCIS CLOSE**
CLHS members in attendance Wed. 11th am.

I should be very grateful for any **input from members** to these displays. If you have used census records for your research and are happy to let me have copies of extracts etc. which I could use, please contact me.

Elaine North

tel. 01452 857803 or email: elaine-north@hotmail.com



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. They include the following:

The Golden Minster (St Oswald, Gloucester) Highway and Bryant - £20
 Crickley Hill : The Hillfort Defences, P Dixon - £25
 Withington : A Cotswold Village History, Withington WI - £20
 Naunton 2000, D Hanks (inscribed and signed by the author) - £25

There are various volumes of the **BGAS Record Series**, as follows:

(Vol 6) The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522 - £25 (2 copies)
 (Vol 15) A calendar of the Registers of the priory of Llanthony by Gloucester 1457-1466, 1501-1525 - £25
 (Vols 17 & 18) A Catalogue of the Medieval Muniments at Berkeley Castle - 2 volume set £25

Further volumes of the **BGAS Record Series** are for sale at **only £10 each**:

(Vol 7) Tewkesbury Churchwardens' Accounts 1563-1624
 (Vol 11) Original Acta of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester c 1122-1263
 (Vol 13) The Bishop Benson's Survey of the Diocese of Gloucester 1735-1750
 (Vol 14) A Calendar of the Registers of Apprentices of the City of Gloucester 1595-1700
 (Vol 16) Abstract of feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire 1199-1299
 (Vol 19) Notes on the Diocese of Gloucester by Chancellor Richard Parsons c1700
 (Vol 20) Abstract of feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire 1300-1359
 (Vol 21) Gloucester Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1616-1687)

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 230740 or e-mail heatherbell71@hotmail.com

OBITUARY

PATRICK CONOLEY, 1924-2011 sculptor of Pittville Pump Room figures

The Pump Room figures of Aesculapius, Hippocrates and Hygeia are among Cheltenham's best known sculptures. Standing at 7 feet 6 inches high, they are an impressive sight, gazing out over Pittville Park. They were re-created by Patrick Conoley in 1965, in the style of the original sculptures carved by Lucius Gahagen in 1827. To say they are copies is a misnomer, as the old statues were in pieces, with large parts so badly weather-damaged as to be unrecognisable. Patrick, who died on 21st January 2011 aged 86, used his great skill to sculpt these impressive statues while working for R L Boulton & Sons, where he had begun his apprenticeship exactly 70 years before his death. He has many sculptures in and around Cheltenham, as well as hundreds nationally and internationally, and so leaves a wonderful legacy to be appreciated for generations to come.

Together with his wife Vera, Patrick was a long-standing member of CLHS and will be remembered by many. His distinguished career as a local sculptor is perhaps not so well known and may come as a surprise to some members. It is to be hoped this may be rectified in a future edition of the Society's *Journal*. His son Chris is working to complete the biography of his father which is already in preparation and we wish him well with this task, sadly interrupted by Patrick's sudden death. Our sympathies go to Vera and Chris and other members of the family at this difficult time.

Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery are to stage an exhibition in his honour in November 2011. Any Society member who would like to share information about R L Boulton & Sons should contact Patrick's son: chris.conoley@btpenworld.com

Geoff North



Patrick Conoley carving Hippocrates in 1965
 (PNC Archive, used with permission)

CAN YOU HELP?

Cox and Toomey families

An enquirer is anxious to get in touch with descendants of the Cox family, who lived at Thirlestaine Hall from 1884 to 1909, and particularly with one James Toomey, who contributed an article to CLHS Journal 9 about his Cox ancestors which the enquirer has read. She herself is a descendant of the Coxes, and she would like to exchange information with him about the family. James formerly lived at 4 Verney Close in Charlton Kings, but contact with him has been lost. Does anyone know where he or any of his family may be found? The enquirer also asks whether Cox's Meadow takes its name from the Cox family.

John Blizard, builder

An enquirer seeks information about a builder called John Blizard who is said to have been active in the Cheltenham area in the mid -1850s.

If you can help with the above queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail : joyce@cyberwebospace.net



Here's an interesting object from Cheltenham's spa days. There's another one too, slightly different. See page 9.

CHEL TENHAM FILM FESTIVAL 25TH - 27TH NOVEMBER 2011

Cheltenham Film Festival is back later this year, and it's going to be bigger and better. This year's event will be celebrating "A History of Film" with a variety of exclusive events. As part of the festival programme we aim to host a local history event, focusing upon celebrating Cheltenham itself as it has been captured on film throughout the ages, and we need your help. We are trying to source footage of Cheltenham that we can include in our film reel. If you have any footage you think we could include, please get in touch - whether it's old cine-film or an extract from a home movie on VHS, we would like to hear from you.

To assist Cheltenham Film Festival please contact the festival's Creative Director, Adam Clarke
E-mail: adam.cheltenhamfilmfestival@live.co.uk
Tel: 07825 141 645

LOST FILM?

Sometime in the 1920s the Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce commissioned a film, possibly from the Gaumont company, entitled *Cheltenham: the Carlsbad of England*. An original copy turned up around 25 years ago and was shown at the Art Gallery & Museum and perhaps copied, but its present whereabouts is unknown. It would be ideal for showing at the Festival above. If anyone can help to track it down, please contact Adam Clarke (see above).

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward items for inclusion in the
JULY 2011 Newsletter by

Monday 13th June 2011

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.