



# Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 78

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## *EDITORIAL*

I was going to feature a document from the archives on the front cover this time, but then I thought that after such a gloomy wet winter something a little more suggestive of spring might be welcome. This is Pittville Circus, which with its drifts of snow-drops, daffodils and especially crocuses seems to have one of the best informal displays of spring flowers in town at the moment. Cheltenham's well-tended public parks and gardens, regularly stocked as they are with colourful plants, are nearly always a pleasure to see, but flowers that appear spontaneously are perhaps even more cheering at this time of year. (The archive document now appears on p19.)

*Kath Boothman*

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## *ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING*

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 27th May (NB NOT 20th May as stated in the Programme) 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, as President of the Society, will chair the meeting and give a short address.

### *Election of Officers and Committee 2014-15*

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2013 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they so wish. 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 Chris Conoley (e-mail [chris.conoley@btpopenworld.com](mailto:chris.conoley@btpopenworld.com) or tel. 01452 700428) for a nomination form.

After the AGM business is concluded there will be an illustrated talk by **Patrick Furley** entitled **The Magic Lantern: A History and Show** using original equipment and slides.

## *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 12th April and, as places are limited on these visits, 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 12th 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.

*Wednesday 11th June at 6.30 pm from St Michael's Tower, The Cross, Gloucester*

**A walking tour of the City of Gloucester with Gloucester Civic Trust guides.**

This tour will cover the city's 2,000 years of history from Roman times to the present, including references to the Kings and Queens who have visited the City. There will be a chance to view the finest galleried inn in Great Britain and to admire the best timber framed merchant house in the country. The Gloucester connections of Charles Dickens, Beatrix Potter, Robert Raikes, and George Whitefield will be explored and the tour will include a walk around the cathedral grounds. Afterwards there will be an opportunity for refreshment at an historic hostelry. Cost: £4.

*Wednesday 2nd July at 6.00 pm and Wednesday 16th July at 6.00 pm*

**A walk around the Lower High Street**

Beginning outside The Wilson Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, and armed with a photocopy of the relevant section of Henry Merrett's 1834 map of the town and some extracts from George Rowe's 1845 *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* (copies of both of which will be provided to the participants) we will explore the Lower High Street and its adjacent streets, lanes and alleyways, as far west as the Honeybourne Line railway bridge. The focus of the walk will be on both what remains, and what has been lost – and in particular how much of the area depicted by Merrett and Rowe may still be traced in the present-day townscape. At the end of the walk, those who wish to may repair to a local hostelry – historic or otherwise! Our guide for the tour will be Dr Steven Blake. Cost: £4.

*Wednesday 6th August leaving at 9.30 am from Royal Well, returning at 5.15 pm*

**Visit to Hellens and Ledbury**

Hellens in Much Marcle near Ledbury is a Tudor/Jacobean house that contains a wealth of period furnishings, paintings and decorations. Among its attractions are the haunted rooms prepared for Mary Tudor and her tutor Fetherstone, the Stone Hall and its great fireplace bearing the Black Prince's crest and the Minstrels' Gallery. The Music Room has a fine frieze and panelling. The gardens are being redeveloped to reflect the house's history. They incorporate a rare 17th century octagonal dovecote, a walled knot garden, a yew labyrinth and a short woodland and pond walk. There are also the Derby Coach and family carriages to be seen, as well as the Old Cider Mill house.

**Ledbury**

Ledbury was developed in the 12th century as a market town and has a wealth of medieval and Tudor buildings. The visit will provide an opportunity to visit three of the most spectacular buildings and to appreciate the townscape and its history by taking a heritage walk led by a member of the Ledbury Civic Society.

Total cost of visit: £20.

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*EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2014-15**Tuesday 16th September:***Tony Conder—Gloucester Docks, Then and Now***Tuesday 21st October:***David Elder—Cheltenham: a Sense of Place as revealed through its Literary Heritage***Tuesday 18th November:***Rose Hewlett—Village Life in Mid-Victorian Times***Tuesday 9th December:***David Smith—The Origins of Gloucestershire***Tuesday 20th January 2015:***Research and Display Evening***Tuesday 17th February 2015:***Adrian Barlow—Cheltenham: the Architecture of a Victorian Town***Tuesday 17th March 2015:***Tony Roberts—New Archaeological Discoveries in Gloucestershire***Tuesday 21st April 2015:***John Paddock—The Civil War in the Cotswolds***Tuesday 19th May 2015:***AGM followed by John Putley—  
Blood, Guts and a Little off the Top!***MORNING LECTURES 2014-15*

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £1.00 from all those attending these lectures is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no charge) from 10.00 am. Lectures start at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only—please contact Chris Conoley (01452 700428) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

*Tuesday 7th October:***Angela Panrucker—The Story of Pub Signs***Tuesday 14th April 2015:***Joanna Vials—The Indefatigable Mr Cotham: a Pioneering Priest who built St Gregory's***Reminder...***MORNING LECTURE**

*Tuesday 29th April, 10.00 am for 10.30 am  
at St Luke's Church Hall,  
St Luke's Place, Cheltenham*

**Geoff North—Gloucestershire's  
Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospitals  
1914-1919**

*The 2014 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 and St James' Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham at 8.00 pm. Admission £1 for visitors.

*Thursday 20th March :*

**Eric Miller—St Peter's Church, Leckhampton**

*Thursday 17th April:*

**Angela Panrucker—Pub Signs: Roman Origins to Present Day**

*Thursday 15th May:*

**AGM followed by Dr Nicholas Herbert—North Cotswold Villages in the Landscape**

**Prestbury Local History Society**

www.prestburyhistory.btck.co.uk

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

*Monday 24th March:*

**Michael Cole—Prehistoric Prestbury**

*Monday 28th April:*

**Lynda Hodges—How the Trams came to Prestbury**

**Swindon Village Society**

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.45 pm. Non-members pay £1.

*Wednesday 19th March :*

**Jackie Perry—Women at Work 1850-1950**

*Saturday 12th April:*

**Meet at Swindon Village Hall car park (to share cars) at 9.30 am to go for a walk around Coombe Hill Nature Reserve and inspect the new hide there.**

Non-members welcome free of charge.

*Saturday 10th May at 4.00 pm in Swindon Village church:*

**Barry Simon—A History of Church Architecture (illustrated talk)**

Refreshments will be available afterwards.

**Churchdown Local History Society**

Meetings are held at the Community Centre, Parton Road, Churchdown, starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.

*Thursday 10th April:*

**David Aldred—Lost Railway Journeys in Gloucestershire**

**Gotherington and Area Local History Society**

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

*Tuesday 25th March:*

**Dr Anthea Jones—Deer Parks**

*Tuesday 22nd April:*

**AGM followed by Eunice Powell—The Account Book of William Delabere**

**Charlton Kings Local History Society**

www.charltonkings.org.uk

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

*Tuesday 25th March:*

**Mrs Laura Kinnear—Holst and the Planets**

*Tuesday 22nd April:*

**Mr Peter Petrie—Edward the Second**


*Tuesday 27th May:*

**Mr John Loosley—Gloucestershire Almshouses**




**Cotswold Archaeology Annual Lecture 2014**  
**Free entry**  
 19th March 2014 7:30pm  
 Bingham Hall, King Street, Cirencester

Professor Robert Van de Noort (University of Exeter)  
*presents*



*Building a Bronze Age-type sewn-plank boat  
 and exploring prehistoric seafaring through  
 experimental archaeology*



Contact Cotswold Archaeology for more information about this event on 01285 771022  
 or email [info@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

For more information about the Cotswold Archaeology event e-mail [enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk) or phone 01285 771022.

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
 FAMILY HISTORY FAIR**

*Saturday 31st May,  
 10.00 am - 4.00 pm*  
 at the  
 Gloucester Rugby Club,  
 Kingsholm Road,  
 GL1 3AU

*Entrance £1.00  
 (at the door only)*

To be opened by Dame Janet  
 Trotter, Lord Lieutenant of  
 Gloucestershire

## 15th ANNUAL DE FERRIERES LECTURE

Wednesday 19th March at 7.15 pm  
in the Bacon Theatre, Dean Close School



### Kevin Brownlow NOT QUITE WHAT I HAD IN MIND

Kevin Brownlow is a film editor, director, preserver, historian and biographer with an unrivalled knowledge of cinema history. In this lecture, illustrated with clips from the films he loves, he looks back on the strange trajectory of his career, which began in the 1950s with a liking for silent films and led to meetings with many stars of the screen.

Admission £12 (FCAGM members £10). Tickets available from the Bacon Theatre box office and Cheltenham Tourist Office, or on the door.

## THE CHELTENHAM CIVIC AWARDS LECTURE 2014

Wednesday 16th April at 7.30 pm  
at St Andrew's Church, Montpellier Street, Cheltenham

### Tom Dyckhoff, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects

#### THE RIGHT TO BUILD

Tom Dyckhoff, who is Guest Presenter of the 2014 Cheltenham Civic Awards, was for eight years architectural critic for The Times. He has been a visiting tutor at various universities and has written and presented numerous television documentary series, including *The Secret Life of Buildings* and *Saving Britain's Past*. Tom has been Exhibitions Curator at the RIBA and is now working on his first book on contemporary architecture and the city. In this lecture he takes a quizzical look at 'architecture without architects', and the growing trend around the world towards 'doing it yourself' and its philosophical roots.

**Tickets £7.50 (to include a glass of wine) on the door  
or from the Tourist Office**

Lecture sponsored and organised by the Cheltenham Civic Society

*REVIEWS*

Our speaker on November 19th was **Nicholas Herbert**, former editor of the VCH for Gloucestershire, who took the theme **Turnpikes and the Improvement of the Roads**. He said that the evolution of a good road network was an important part of the improvement in communications during the industrial revolution. It began with the creation of turnpike trusts from the late 17th century onwards, which were slow to deliver benefits to the travelling public and were so unpopular that when charges were imposed on existing roads the turnpike gates were often pulled down by angry mobs. From the 1780s however more new roads were built, helping to develop a network that could take wheeled transport. With the aid of old maps he demonstrated how the old roads, some of them used by cattle drovers, did not always go into market towns but were served by isolated inns at significant crossroads, such as the inn at Piff's Elm on the Cheltenham to Tewkesbury road. (In a landscape with few signposts or milestones a large tree was a useful landmark.) No proper system of main roads yet existed and travellers would choose their route according to the season, the weather and how well maintained the roads were by the parishes responsible for them. A list of routes between market towns in Gloucestershire, drawn up around 1750, offered various choices. The Cheltenham to Oxford road mostly followed the line of the A40, but at Northleach people could either go through the town or bypass it by using the ridgeway. Eventually, to stop people avoiding the tolls by taking the high roads, the turnpike trusts put tolls on them as well.

The fluidity of the road system reflected the variety of traffic: horse riders and pack-horses could make do with narrow tracks and farm accommodation, coach travellers could not. The turnpike trusts improved the old roads by widening them, making easier gradients over hills and building proper bridges. Later, more new roads were built linking major towns more directly, with staging posts every 10-12 miles. By the 1820s a man leaving Cheltenham for Evesham, Andoversford or Bath could use roads that did not exist in his grandfather's day. Acts of Parliament for new roads and bridges always prompted much lobbying, particularly where there were perceived threats or gains to a local economy. Mail coach services run by the Post Office gave a boost to the prestige of a town as well as bringing business. By the early 19th century passenger coach services had become fiercely competitive, and the fastest journey time from Gloucester to London was down to 14 hours, with innkeepers along the way organising horse relays. He told stories of several inns, some, such as The George at Frocester, losing trade when alternative routes developed, and others, such as The Frogmill, flourishing while they had strategic positions on a coaching route. The Frogmill lost its advantage when a new road took the coaches to Andoversford, where the inn survived to become a railway hotel in the 1880s. By then, he concluded, the coaching era was over, killed by the railways. The audience had obviously enjoyed this hugely informative talk very much but still wanted to know more, and there were several questions at the end.



In December the speaker was Professor **Gareth Williams** of Bristol University with a talk entitled **From Gloucestershire to the World: the Legacy of Edward Jenner**. He said that he himself was a doctor but had never seen a case of smallpox, which was on the way out when he qualified in 1972. It was a dreadful disease that killed 20-50% of its victims and left a third of survivors badly scarred and often blind. Treatment had always consisted of purges, emetics and leeches, which were all useless. He showed pictures of sufferers, once used for recognition purposes during the eradication campaign.



Edward Jenner

Edward Jenner was first apprenticed to a doctor in Chipping Sodbury, then went to London and became the star pupil of the celebrated physician John Hunter before settling at Berkeley. Hunter, who had many interests, encouraged him to undertake experiments involving animals and birds, and Jenner was elected a fellow of the Royal Society for his ornithological work. In 1768 he met a milkmaid called Sarah Nelmes who claimed that she would never catch smallpox because she had had cowpox, a mild illness that left no scars. This was true, and farming people knew it—the two viruses are similar, and acquired resistance works for both—but medical science had not heard of it. Jenner set out to test the hypothesis. On May 14th 1796 he scratched cowpox pus into the arm of his gardener's boy. A few days later he did the same with smallpox pus and waited for the reaction. There was none: he had made the boy immune. The practice of variolation, which meant giving healthy people a minimal dose of smallpox in the hope of inducing a very light case of the disease, had been brought back from the Middle East in the 17th century, but because the patients were unprotected it was very risky. Jenner realised this new approach was much safer, and wrote a paper for the Royal Society explaining how vaccination, as he called it, was done. The Society rejected the paper so he had it printed privately, calling it *An Enquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Cow Pox*. It caused a sensation. The Medical Society of London took it up, influencing doctors in other countries. In 1806 President Jefferson wrote to Jenner, congratulating him. There was opposition too, and much counter-propaganda, notably from the church and from doctors who made money out of variolation.

Vaccination did indeed carry risks which Jenner himself, not the most rigorous of scientists, preferred to gloss over. It has saved millions of lives, but may also have cause thousands of deaths. In the 19th century it was widely practised in Britain, where outbreaks of smallpox still frequently occurred. The speaker showed a world map of 1960 with large areas marked in black where smallpox

was endemic. In 1967 the WHO set out to eradicate it, using a simple bifurcated needle that held a drop of fluid between its prongs and easily scratched the skin. On May 8th 1980 'Target Zero' was achieved when the last naturally occurring case (in Somalia) was found and treated. He urged everyone to visit Jenner's house and museum at Berkeley and mentioned his own book *Angel of Death: the Story of Smallpox*, the proceeds from which went to the museum. At the end Professor Williams answered numerous questions ranging from Jenner's work on cuckoos to why there is no vaccine against the common cold. He had obviously set his listeners thinking about many things besides the history of smallpox!

### *Research and Display Evening*

Our annual social evening was held this year on 21st January. There were numerous displays in the Council Chamber and the Pittville Room on themes such as the Cheltenham Union Workhouse, the 'Thankful Villages' of Gloucestershire, the Beehive Inn (Prestbury) and the Rowland family, the evacuation and billeting of children in the Second World War, stained glass at Leckhampton church and Literary Cheltenham. As usual, refreshments were on offer in the Cambray Room and there was a raffle in aid of the Mayor's charities, which this year are the Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project, Victim Support and the Cheltenham Animal Shelter. The sum of £128 was raised.

The Society's History Day (successor to our biennial History Afternoons at St Andrew's church), which is to be held this year at St Matthew's church on Saturday 19th July, was publicised in the foyer. The theme of the event, chosen for its topical link with the anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, will be 'Cheltenham Life 1914-19'. To help attract interest Neela Mann had devised a quiz about life in Cheltenham in the war years, the prize for which was a copy of Kate Adie's recent book *Fighting on the Home Front*. The History Day will also include two talks on relevant subjects and various other attractions. As at St Andrew's, the event will be open to the public as well as to Society members.

On 18th February **Amber Patrick** posed the question as to whether there was **A malting industry in Cheltenham**. Having first explained the process of malting, she set out the evidence for such an 'industry' using the Probate Records 1660 – 1740 ( Sale, T, BGAS Vol 12) and the Manor Court Records 1692 - 1803 (Hodsdon, J, BGAS Vol 24). Thus the talk centred on the period from around 1650 to the beginning of the 19th century. She pointed out that such evidence was often open to interpretation and that different conclusions could be drawn from the records.

Malting is a process involving the artificial germination of grain, usually barley, and then the termination of this procedure by killing the growth at a crucial point. The grain was first cleaned of debris, a process which at that date would have taken place on the farm. Then it was taken to the malt house where it was steeped in shallow, stone cisterns to encourage sprouting – this took place on the ground

floor to enable easy access to water. The water having been drained off, it was rested or 'couched'. At this point it was measured to assess the amount of tax to be paid. The next stage, taking place on the floor above, involved spreading the grain to a depth of between 5cm and 10 cm; careful surveillance and turning was needed to prevent 'bundling' (where the grains adhered to each other). After several days it was kilned, a process that dried the grain and killed off the germination. It was a skilled trade which took place at certain seasons of the year.

No evidence of malt house buildings remain in Cheltenham, but Amber showed images of malt houses, (long, fairly narrow buildings, set back from the road, behind the dwelling houses fronting the burgage plots) and their interiors, using examples from Chipping Campden and Brockhampton. Little contemporary internal evidence remains, but she showed cisterns, the perforated, ceramic floor tiles positioned over the wooden joists and the remains of kilns. The fuel could be coke, wood, furze or sea coal.

In Cheltenham, the probate wills and inventories showed that the industry was in the hands of a few families – Cox, Hyett, Chestroe (Chester), White, Wood and Mason – and that there were apparently 21 malt houses; however some of these records referred to the same building as it passed through the generations. The term malting chamber, which occurs several times, might be a storage area or for drying the grain. Many of these maltsters had as their primary occupations other trades (yeoman, husbandman, haberdasher, carpenter, etc.). Evidence for the fixed malting equipment was often difficult to interpret: cisterns can have a number of uses, as can furnaces. Malt mills, which grind the prepared grain, are frequently mentioned but are more likely to be evidence of brewing rather than of malting. There is also evidence of quantities of 'green' (sprouting) and dried malt in the inventories: these amounts varied considerably from small – probably for home brewing — to large, which may have indicated trading, possibly with Bristol, via Tewkesbury and the Severn, as there is little evidence of any malting in that city. The Manor Court Rolls offer further evidence. Thirty eight maltsters are named, with the names of 13 appearing in both sets of records. The malt house transactions are mentioned in association with a dwelling that abutted the Street, mainly on the north side and, not surprisingly, with The Bull, The New Inn and The Talbot. There was also mention of the right to access a pump.

Her conclusions were that a malt house may have been used by several people who were termed maltsters in their probate documents but who had other main occupations, as malting was a seasonal activity. It was an industry in its own right that brought revenue into the town, but it was a dying industry by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As a postscript, Amber added that on the Brockhampton malt house there was a stone with the inscription 'J Wood 1763' and that he was in all likelihood a relation of the James Wood who featured in several Cheltenham records.

*Sally Self*

## FEATURE

## Decorative stones in Cheltenham

### Part 3: Fake marbles

Marble can be imitated by painting wood, stone or plaster using brushes, combs or feathers and is called *faux marble*. A more realistic product comes from the *scagliola* technique perfected by Guido Fassi of Carpi near Modena, Italy in the mid -17<sup>th</sup> Century and imported to Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.



Fig.1 Pilaster in Lloyds Bank, High Street composed of *scagliola*.

*Scagliola* is a cheap substitute for marble and is formed from a paste made of Plaster of Paris, pigments and glue and applied to walls, wooden columns or table tops. When it has set hard, it is rubbed with pumice and polished with wax. The technique has enjoyed a revival during the last three decades in the conservation and restoration industry as for example, the Music Room in Buckingham Palace, the Brompton Oratory, and Tusmore House.

Superb examples of the technique in Cheltenham can be seen in the Main Hall and the Pillar Room of the Town Hall, built by Collins & Godfrey in 1902-03 to a design by F W Waller (1848-1933). These pillars have considerable artistic merit although one writer thought they reminded him of “corned beef and mustard”. Their artificiality can be

recognised by looking at damaged edges. For example, the third column from the organ in the Main Hall has recently been

damaged near the base revealing a thin skin of red *scagliola* covering white plaster with hemp fibres. Other criteria that distinguish fake from real marble are that it is not cold to the touch, it is softer, and lacks the lustre of the real thing. Other examples of fake marble can be found in Lloyds Bank (1902) in the High Street where ceiling-high pilasters are composed of pink, pale green and dark green *scagliola* on black painted plinths (Fig.1); Matcham’s Everyman Theatre (1891) has recently undergone restoration and the proscenium arch of *scagliola* has been restored to its original colours. And lastly, the water fountain in the Pittville Pump Room has been renovated showing off red and yellow *scagliola* (Fig.2).

*Dennis Jackson*



Fig.2 Red and brown *scagliola* on a plinth of white Carrara marble in the water fountain in Pittville Pump Room.

*FEATURE***WORLD WAR I MUSEUM**

Mere words are inadequate to describe the wonder of Melissa Webb's newly opened World War I Museum. Melissa has created a virtual shrine to all those who served, fought, were wounded or died during the First World War. It would have been a cause for admiration if a whole team of professional curators had assembled or fabricated the thousands of photographs, paintings, and objects large and small that are skilfully presented in two large rooms, but it is just one young woman's achievement in the space of a few months.

She has been inspired to portray every aspect of life before and during the war, military and civilian, for example: portraits (painted by herself) of the European leaders in 1914, surrounded by photographs of men who later lost their lives; a recruiting centre; a mock-up of a trench with duck-board floor and periscope, black rats prowling in the background; a hospital bed and attendant paraphernalia, including a bath chair; a table where the 'Wypers Times' was being prepared; and a corner furnished with bookshelves and a harmonium, representing Talbot House ('Toc H'), where the Reverend Tubby Clayton provided spiritual solace to the war-weary troops.

By a providential stroke of luck, the premises Melissa eventually found to house



Wounded soldier's bed in the Museum. On the wall behind is a painting of Mrs Grace Ward, Commandant of the Leckhampton Court Hospital 1915 - 1919.

the museum are in a building in Lansdown Place, formerly known as New Court, which was one of the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Hospitals throughout the war. What could be more fitting? The museum is intended primarily as a teaching resource for schoolchildren during the WWI centenary year, but people of all ages will be fascinated by it and will need to go more than once, to take everything in. Whether or not you had relatives who fought in the war, do go and see it, and take your children and grandchildren too.

Museum opening hours: Monday to Friday 2– 5 pm; Saturday 9 am – 5 pm.  
Admission charges: Adults £3.50, children £2 and families £10.

*Eric Miller*

## *SOCIETY NEWS*

### New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

*Sue Jones*

*Christopher Kavanagh*

*Anne Strathie*

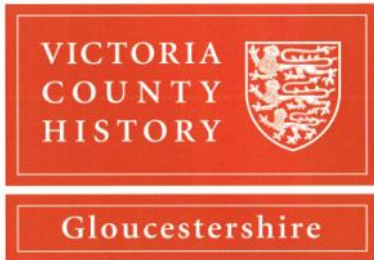
*Mrs Julie Burden*

*Mrs Michelle Rees*

*Mrs Hilary Moody*

*Robert Dixon*

*John and Hilary Simpson.*



### Victoria County History – Signs of Spring!

It's good to report that work is now getting properly under way on the planned Cheltenham volume. The Gloucestershire County History Trust has appointed Alex Craven, previously with VCH Wiltshire, to prepare the Early Modern section of Cheltenham (post-Reformation, up to the discovery of the waters). Beth Hartland, who started last October, is steadily working through the medieval source material, and has passed images of several documents to the Latin Group for transcription. Some of the transcripts have been uploaded to the VCH Explore website. Beth has also been able to photograph for the first time several very old documents held by the Duchy of Cornwall, which we hope will shed fresh light on the town. Meanwhile John Chandler, the County Editor, has set up the 'VCH Glos. Academy', a monthly forum for volunteers – mostly but not all from Cheltenham and Cirencester – who are supporting the paid editors in a variety of ways. At the February session (pictured), Jan Broadway showed us how to use the software she has set up for volunteers and editors to keep track of the sources they have looked at, and share the notes they have made. It wasn't all hard work – there was a lot of friendly chat and biscuits too! If you're interested in volunteering or supporting the project with a donation, please get in touch. [jj49@btinternet.com](mailto:jj49@btinternet.com)



*James Hodsdon*

## Projects

Apart from copious individual research which results in interesting and enlightening articles for the Society Journal and Newsletter, many of our members have also been busy with various local history projects.

The cataloguing of the **Winterbotham and Gurney Archive** is progressing well as we approach the first anniversary of our initial training. Of the 58 boxes of title deeds 24 have been completed and passed on to Kate Maisey and Karen Cooke, who are our supervisors at Gloucestershire Archives. It is most interesting to find references to people, businesses, streets, areas and buildings which we know and sometimes there is new information to be gleaned from the documents. The maps on some of the deeds are fascinating as they clarify the history of the same property over a period of years. Even when dealing with land and properties out of county there is usually a local link somewhere; via the boxes we have travelled to Essex, Wiltshire, London, Wales, Scotland, France and the USA.

The transcription of the first **Pittville Subscription Book** is nearly complete and Jill Waller and Kath Boothman hope to launch a CD of their efforts at the start of our 2014 lecture season in September. The Book records those who patronised the Spa and paid to use its facilities between 1830 and 1853 - a great variety of clients, from foreigners and English aristocracy to the great and good of Cheltenham and local people of more modest standing. The addresses given, very many of which are lodging houses, tell us a lot about the accommodation available in the town at that time. The intention is to issue a CD similar to the **Old Town Survey 1855—57** and the **St Mary's Parish Records 1558—1803**. These two discs continue to sell to local researchers and to some overseas enquirers.

The **Lloyd George Land Survey 1909** transcription is nearly complete and more and more information is going online at <http://www.glos1909survey.org.uk> It has been a labour of love for many members led by Anthea Jones and the site is well worth investigating for those who are interested in the more recent developments of Cheltenham.

Some of us have become 'inventory addicts' – mostly because we can work at home using digital images while having a cuppa and a biscuit - and having completed those for Minsterworth, Chipping Sodbury and a few for Cheltenham, the **Inventory Group** has moved on to Bishops Cleeve and Gotherington. (See example on p19.) There is also the **Latin Group** whose members have been working on Cheltenham Manor Court records and material from Berkeley Castle archives.

The latest project is in support of the 'Big Red Book' for Cheltenham and several of us are working at the Archives on previously unsourced and sometimes uncatalogued material. We are also attending working sessions once a month at the Archives, where we receive training and have a chance to 'network' with each other. For more information on **Cheltenham's Victoria County History project** see James Hodsdon's report on the previous page.

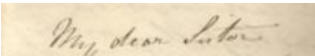
*Sally Self*

## FEATURE

## A Journey from London to Cheltenham in 1816

Clement James, formerly of The Africa Company, lost his wife in 1815 following the birth of his fourth child, but remarried a year later. He was 53. In September 1816 he travelled to Cheltenham with his new wife Hannah (b1795) and his eldest daughter, 15-year-old Elizabeth, to visit his late wife's sister Miss Hayward, who was taking the waters there. Hannah's folded, sealed letter to her eldest sister Miss Hervé in London describes the journey. We thank Tom Beaumont James for lending this remarkable document from his family archive.

*Cheltenham, 17 September 1816*



*Thinking you would all be glad to hear how we got down, have embraced the first moment. On Saturday you recollect we had a Chaise about one from King Street to Uxbridge which is 15 miles from Town, we did not stay then to take any refreshment but changed Chaises and went on to High Wycombe. Stopt at the Red Lion and took tea for the benefit of my Head which, though much better, was at times so bad as hardly to be borne, from Uxbridge to High Wycombe 14 miles, after tea we set off from High Wycombe to Tetsworth which is 13 miles farther, we arrived there at ten, and being all of us much fatigued had some veal cutlets and ham and went to bed. Rose early took Breakfast and proceeded 11 miles farther to Oxford, got there about ten, had morning [coffee?] tidied ourselves and went to Christ Church. We heard a few sentences of the sermon, it was then over and our guide (for you must know it is customary for strangers to have one, indeed he lived in the Inn we were at) took us to St Mary's Church, from there to the Carfax and from there to the different Colleges and Radcliffe Library, in short we saw almost everything, as much as time would permit. Returned about 5 to dinner and before tea took a walk on the fashionable Promenade and then returned to tea. We were much tired so were glad to rest. The next morning after breakfast went on to Burford 17 miles, took morning [coffee?] and went to Frogmill 16 miles and from there to Cheltenham 6 miles and drove to St James Street, found Miss*



Hannah's letter. The imprint on the seal, which is upside down in this picture, is not a family crest but a classical device, Hebe and the eagle.



*Hayward in much better health than we could have supposed. She has so far recovered as to go out, she was very glad to see us and we are here till we get lodgings which will not be long I hope. Cheltenham is so full that last night we despaired of getting a Bed for some hours. Miss Hayward sent the servant about and at last got one, there is everything here that can be named, the waters have been of essential service to Miss H. and tomorrow morning I am going to take some of the Magnesia Water, for ever since I left Drywoods I have not known how to endure the heat. I think it never was more unpleasant to me than at this time. I should have written as soon as we arrived here but the Mail passed us on the road so it was too late. I shall rejoice when we return for it is by far too gay a place for me, you are acquainted how much I mix in company, therefore can easily imagine how unpleasant it is to me, if there should be a letter from Dry Woods and anything particular the matter pray send to me immediately. I feel very anxious about home, should wish to hear from some of you before we leave which may probably be in a week, though I do not think I shall let my dear James stay so long. If you write it must be very soon or it will not be received while we are here and I should not choose it to be opened by strangers, hope you are pretty well, they think there is no occasion for me to write so much to you so you must excuse this miserable scrawl and believe me*

*Your very affectionate Sister  
Hannah James*

*This goes by the mail this afternoon, if I do not pay the post before it goes I will when I return to Town, so Adieu.*

*PS Mr James begs kind remembrances, and Elizabeth and myself particularly desire our love to yourselves as well as the rest.*



St James Street as it is today. Hannah was writing from no.24, which was a lodging house on the side that now lies under the car park. Several of the old houses on the surviving side were also lodging houses in 1816, and Miss Hayward may have been staying at one of these.

## A mystery solved?

Readers may remember seeing the photograph on the right in the November 2012 issue of the Newsletter, when we asked whether anyone could suggest who (or what) these girls might be. No-one could, apparently. Now, having looked at some of the newspapers published in Cheltenham during the First World War, we



Leckhampton Girls' Drill Club, 1917

have an idea. It seems there were at that time numerous parish-based Drill Clubs for girls, senior and junior. In the war years many of the teams gave public displays to raise funds for the war effort. Judging by the tunics they wore, we think our three girls could well have been members of one of these clubs. The 'S' on their badges remains unexplained: St Stephen's? Swindon Village? We can only guess.




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## NEW PUBLICATION

### Gloucestershire Airport Through Time by Geoffrey Ellis

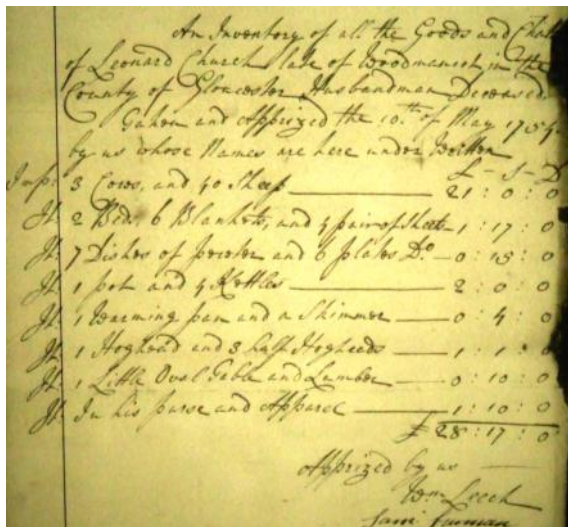
Gloucestershire Airport is at the heart of an important British aviation community where legendary aircraft such as the Gladiator, the E28/39, the first British jet fighter, the Meteor and the delta-wing Javelin all-weather fighter were created by the Gloster Aircraft Company. The airport was and still is the site of many innovations that include Rotol's variable pitch propeller, Smith's automatic landing system and Sir Alan Cobham's in-flight refuelling system.

Today, around 180 aircraft are permanently based at the airport, ranging from single-seat microlights to multi-million-dollar executive jets. It is also a base for air ambulance and police helicopters, medical flights and pilot training facilities, flying schools and, last but not least, a new volunteer-run Jet Age Museum. All royalties from the sale of this book will go to help support the Museum.

Published in paperback in November 2013 by Amberley Publishing, price £14.99



## From the Archives



Here, just for interest, is an example of the material one of our project groups has been working on (see Sally Self's report on p15). It's an inventory of the worldly goods of Leonard Church, husbandman, of Woodmancote, who died in 1754. The total of £28 17s looks modest enough, but it is noticeable that his few beasts (3 cows and 40 sheep) account for £21 of that. Many people who owned no livestock were very much poorer. Joseph Trapp, labourer, for example, died in 1768 leaving household goods and 'wearing

apparell' valued at £4 10s. That was all he had: not much to show for a lifetime of toil. On the other hand Isaac Haynes, a yeoman farmer, was worth nearly £1000 when he died in 1773. Then as now, society was very unequal. One of the challenges of this work, apart from interpreting the handwriting and the sometimes eccentric spelling, is to learn the meanings of obsolete terms. A 'cofor' might be recognisable as a coffer, but what was a 'cowle', for instance, or a 'possenete'? They were a bowl for cooling new milk and a three-legged cooking pot, everyday items at the time. These inventories give us an intriguing insight into how people lived just outside Cheltenham 250 years ago.

*Kath Boothman*

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### CLHS DISPLAYS IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY

*Tues 1st April to Tues 13th May—Cheltenham's Famous or Infamous Women*

With all the attention currently being given to events connected with the start of WWI in 1914 it would be easy to overlook other significant happenings in that year. On July 9th 1914 the memorial statue to Dr Edward Wilson was unveiled in the Promenade. Later that year on October 10th the Drew Fountain with Edward VII was unveiled in Montpellier. These events will be included in the following display:

*Thurs 12th June to Tues 15th July—Fountains, Statues, Monuments & Memorials.*

Any contributions to these displays will be welcome. Please contact Elaine North, tel. 01452 857803 or e-mail [elaine-north@hotmail.com](mailto:elaine-north@hotmail.com)

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## FEATURE

## CHARLES STURT (1795-1869)

### Explorer of Australia



We have Society member Peter Jones to thank for this photograph of the statue of Captain Charles Napier Sturt in Adelaide, South Australia. Though he lived for much of his life in Australia and is not well known here, Sturt had a strong link with Cheltenham in his later years. There is a blue plaque with his name on to prove it (see *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham* by Sue Rowbotham and Peter Smith, p104).

Born the eldest son of a judge in Bengal in British India, Sturt was sent to England at the age of five to be educated. After prep school and Harrow he obtained a commission in the 39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment of Foot, which took him to fight in the Peninsular War with the Duke of Wellington, then to Canada and back again to Europe. He was promoted captain in 1825 and the following year set off with a detachment from his regiment on quite a different mission, escorting a consignment of convicts to New South Wales.

Sturt was evidently a capable and confident young man and soon found favour with the state Governor, Sir Ralph Darling, who appointed him Military Secretary. He soon developed an interest in the country, and after meeting a number of explorers he became keen to explore Australia's interior, especially its rivers. In November 1828 with the Governor's blessing he set out with a party on his first expedition to trace the courses of the various rivers in New South Wales. This was shortly followed by a much longer and more adventurous journey, mainly by boat, which served to prove that all the westward-flowing rivers flowed into the Murray. By the time they arrived back in Sydney Sturt and his party had rowed and sailed nearly 1,800 miles. The trip was fraught with dangers and nearly cost the travellers their lives towards the end when they ran out of provisions. Sturt went blind for some months and his health never fully recovered. In 1832 he had to go to England on sick leave, and while there he published a book about his expeditions that helped to bring him some recognition for his achievements.

He applied successfully for a grant of land in Australia on which to settle, and returned to New South Wales in 1835 taking with him his new wife, Charlotte

Greene. He farmed near Canberra for a while and undertook further exploratory journeys, then settled close to Adelaide in South Australia. Driven by a conviction that it was his destiny to discover a great inland sea in the centre of Australia he set off in 1844 on another ambitious expedition, which took him across what is now Sturt's Stony Desert and into the Simpson Desert. Unable to go further in the extreme conditions he retreated, then made a second attempt only to become very ill with scurvy. At this point he had to hand over his leadership to the expedition's surgeon, who brought the party back to safety. In 1847 Sturt again went on leave



Sturt's second house in Cheltenham, at  
19 Clarence Square

to England, where he was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's gold medal. Returning to Adelaide he served as colonial secretary until 1851. On his resignation he was granted a pension of £600 a year, but unfortunately the gold rush had dramatically increased living costs in South Australia, and two years later Sturt found himself with no option but to take his family back to England.

They settled in Cheltenham, living in a house called St Edmund's Lodge in Tivoli Road (now replaced by a block of flats). There he devoted himself to the education of his four children. Hoping to return to Australia one day he applied for the governorships of Victoria and Queensland, but his age and uncertain health were against him. When his three sons

joined the army the family went to live for a while in Dinan in Brittany to save money. The climate there did not suit Sturt, however, and they came back to Cheltenham in 1863 and took the house in Clarence Square that now bears a plaque with his name. He died quite suddenly in 1869 at the age of 74, and was buried in Cheltenham Cemetery.

In Australia Sturt is still seen as something of a hero. There is a Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, and in addition to the Stony Desert there are at least two native plants, a highway and a suburb of Adelaide named after him. His home in Adelaide, The Grange, is preserved as a museum.



*Kath Boothman*

## Volunteer Researchers Wanted!

As part of the First World War Centenary commemorations at Cheltenham College, it is hoped to mount an Exhibition each November from 2014 to 2018 detailing the lives of some of the former pupils and staff who served. Over 3,540 former pupils (plus 17 members of staff) served, and at least 675 former pupils (and 3 staff members) died in that War. Each one has a story to tell and those stories will be intriguing, inspirational and poignant. But before all those young men died – they lived. Many were day boys who can also be found on local war memorials. The College Archive Department is looking for **volunteers** who would like to help research and discover the stories of those men.

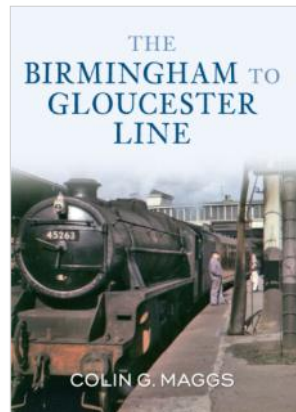
We would also like to appeal for any material relating to Old Cheltonians who served in the First World War – whether they died or survived. Diaries, notebooks, photographs, medals, newspaper cuttings specific to OCs, or any other First World War memorabilia and ephemera. We understand that you may not want to part with such items but would you consider lending them to us to copy, or allow us to borrow them to display in one of the Exhibitions?

To volunteer, or find out more, please contact Mrs Christine Leighton, College Archivist, at: [c.leighton@cheltenhamcollege.org](mailto:c.leighton@cheltenhamcollege.org)

### *NEW PUBLICATION*

#### **The Birmingham to Gloucester Line by Colin G Maggs**

The first general meeting of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Company was held in September 1836. As the main purpose of the new line was simply to provide a link between the manufacturing area of Birmingham and the docks at Gloucester, Cheltenham was not on the route. Such was the public outcry, however, that the line was diverted, thus ensuring Cheltenham's future as a major junction on the rail network. The railway brought visitors (including Queen Victoria on one occasion) and was very popular with local people too. The development of the rest of the line is well described and illustrated with entertaining extracts and advertisements from contemporary newspapers, and there is a wealth of evocative photographs. Locomotives, rolling stock and special features of the line such as the famous Lickey Incline are also covered in this authoritative book by one of the country's foremost railway historians.



Published in paperback by Amberley Publishing, price £16.99.



## BOOKS FOR SALE



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

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

A Grand City: Bristol in the 18th & 19th Centuries, ed. M J Crossley Evans—£7.50

History of Cirencester by Beecham— £25

Miniatures by Dudley Heath (1905)—£20

Mee—The King's England series: Monmouthshire (1st edition, 1951)—£15;

Worcestershire—£8.50; Warwickshire—£4; Somerset—£4

Pevsner County Series: Wiltshire (revised Cherry)— £12; Oxfordshire (with Sherwood)—£10; Suffolk (revised Radcliffe)— £10; NE Norfolk & Norwich—

£10; Herefordshire—£10; N Somerset & Bristol—£10; Worcestershire—£8.50;

Cumberland & Westmorland (some loose pages)— £5; S & SW Somerset—£8.50

Stow on the Wold: A History of a Cotswold Town by Johnson—£10

Medieval and Post-Medieval Development within Bristol's Inner Suburbs, ed. Watts—£10

Held in Honour: Cheltenham and the Second World War by Graham Sacker, new condition—£30.

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

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

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

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

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

**MAKING  
MUCH OF  
WHAT  
REMAINS**

**Richard Bryant**

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Lecture 2014

**13th September**  
at 7.30

**St Mary's Church**  
**Deerhurst**

Admission at the door from 7pm

**Tickets £5 Students £3**  
(including glass of wine and cheese)

Visit [www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk](http://www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk)

AGM of the Friends in the church at 6pm



**NEXT ISSUE**

Please forward articles for  
inclusion in the July 2014  
Newsletter by

**Monday 9th June**

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

Tel: 01242 230125  
e-mail: [kbooth@dircon.co.uk](mailto:kbooth@dircon.co.uk)

*CAN YOU HELP?*

**Arthur Whitcombe Fine Art Galleries**

The minister of a church in Suffolk is trying to trace the provenance of a large oil painting (a copy of a Guido Reni) that was given to the church by a Mr Churchman in 1909. On the back of the picture is a label which says 'Arthur Whitcombe Fine Art Galleries, 11-12 Clarence Street, Cheltenham. Est.1848.' Does anyone know anything about this gallery, or whether any of its records survive?



**Lex Mead Motors**

An enquirer asks whether anyone remembers this garage in Tewkesbury Road. A Range Rover purchased from Lex Mead on 25th April 1977 and registered on 6th May 1977 is being carefully restored by the current owner who is looking for any information, advertisements, photographs etc of the garage in order to write up the car's history.

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