

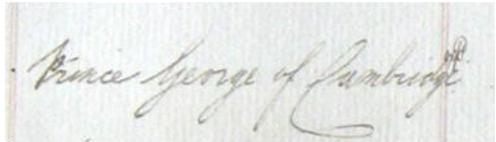


Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 77

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council
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<http://www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk>

November 2013



EDITORIAL

Here's a name we all know! This namesake of the latest addition to the royal family was a grandson of George III who, not being in direct line to the throne, pursued a military career. Earlier in life, like his grandfather, he had been to Cheltenham. As the *Looker-On* reported excitedly in early September 1835, 'On Monday evening his Royal Highness, attended by his preceptor [ie tutor—he was only 16] arrived at the Plough Hotel, where they rested for the night, and early next morning, accompanied by the Hon. W. Bathurst, they visited the Montpellier Spa'. They also went to Pittville, where Prince George signed his name in the subscription book and paid £1.1s. For this fee he could have taken the waters for a whole season, but alas! it was only a flying visit and he shortly departed for Malvern. The *Looker-On* consoled its readers with the thought that even brief visits from royalty 'serve to prove the estimation in which the place is held.'

Kath Boothman

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*LECTURE PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2013– MAY 2014**Tuesday 10th December:***Professor Gareth Williams—From Gloucestershire to the World: the Legacy of Edward Jenner**

Vaccination is one of the greatest success stories in the history of medicine, and one that has its roots deep in Gloucestershire. The tale begins in 1798 with Edward Jenner, his gardener's son and a brown-and-white cow called Blossom, and ends in 1980 with the complete eradication of smallpox – so far the only human infection to be wiped out by mankind. Along the way, the plot has many unexpected twists and turns, and the characters reveal themselves to be more complicated than they appear at first sight. In particular, Jenner is far from perfect, with faults and prejudices that make him all the more human and fascinating.

*Tuesday 21st January 2014:***Research and Display Evening**

Our annual social evening gives members an opportunity to meet informally and to show the results of their researches. As usual refreshments will be served and there will be a raffle. David Scriven would like to hear as soon as possible from any member who is willing to provide a display, large or small, of their research findings or source materials. Please contact David on 01242 524593 or e-mail david.scriven@hotmail.com

*Tuesday 18th February 2014:***Amber Patrick—A Malting Industry in Cheltenham?**

In the 1960s the only working malthouse in Cheltenham, on Henrietta Street, closed. As a county Gloucestershire has more listed malthouses than some of the traditional malting counties of East Anglia. Was Henrietta Street just an exception, or the last of a long line of malthouses and maltsters in Cheltenham? Using published historical sources such as wills and probate inventories and the court books of the manor of Cheltenham, this talk will look at the evidence for maltsters, malthouses and maltkilns in the town from the later 17th century onwards.

Tuesday 18th March 2014:

Neil Holbrook—Death and Burial in Roman Gloucestershire

The talk will focus on recent work at Cirencester and Gloucester, and in particular on the new light that has been shed by the recent excavations at the Bridges Motors site in Cirencester. Cirencester has some of the best cemeteries in Roman Britain, and analysis of the finds and skeletons provides vivid insights into the lives and beliefs of people living in the town almost 2,000 years ago. It is becoming clear that innovative scientific techniques can reveal aspects of past lives that were simply unthinkable a couple of decades ago. The talk will be a lively investigation into the former inhabitants of Gloucestershire.

Tuesday 15th April 2014:

Roger Turner—The Victorian Architecture of Gloucestershire

No further information available at time of going to press.

Tuesday 29th April 2014 at 10.00 am for 10.30 am:

(Note venue: St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place)

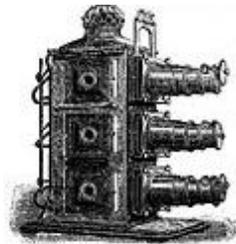
Geoff North—Gloucestershire's VAD Hospitals 1914-1919

In 2014 there will be numerous events commemorating the centenary of the start of World War 1. This talk will focus on the special contribution made by the Voluntary Aid Hospitals in Gloucestershire between 1914 and 1919. By early October 1914 large numbers of casualties were being transported back to England and it became all too obvious that the military and civilian hospitals did not have the resources needed to cope. Frantic preparations to turn private houses and schools into VAD hospitals began. Gloucestershire was ideally situated, being served by both GWR and Midland railways, and the Cheltenham hospitals in particular played a key role. The transportation and treatment of patients will be covered and the talk will be illustrated with photographs, many of which are from private collections, not previously shown.

Tuesday 20th May 2014:

AGM followed by Patrick Furley—The History of the Magic Lantern, with a show using original equipment and slides

Before the arrival of the cinema in the 1890s the 'magic lantern show' was a popular public and private entertainment. Pictures on hand-painted glass slides on a variety of subjects and events were projected through a lantern, no doubt powered by paraffin, on to a screen. After 1850 photography played a great part in the increasing popularity of the lantern. Audiences were able to view scenes of places they would never visit and see topical pictures of recent events. Original slides will be shown, chosen from a collection of many thousands of plates. The selection will include the first moving slides and pictures that pre-dated the advent of film.



TRIPLE LANTERNS.
Prices from £25 to £100.

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 21st November:

Ian Hollingsbee—PoW Camps and Hostels 1939-1948

Thursday 19th December:

Dr Anthea Jones—Individuality and Integration: Leckhampton and Cheltenham

Thursday 16th January 2014:

Aylwin Sampson—Cheltenham Worthies

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 25th November:

Tony Noel—Christmas in Prestbury 1289

Monday 27th January 2014:

AGM followed by Norman Baker—Prestbury in maps

Monday 24th February 2014:

Kevin George—Fred Archer

Swindon Village Society

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

Wednesday 20th November:

Barry Simon will introduce a showing of the silent black and white film **Cheltenham and the Glorious Cotswolds: the Carlsbad of England**, commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce in the 1920s.

Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th December, 11.00 am—5.00 pm:

Christmas Tree Festival in St Lawrence's church.

The Swindon Village Society will be decorating a tree in the church along with other societies and groups in the area. All entries are welcome (for information contact Eileen Allen at emallen@blueyonder.co.uk). The theme this year is the 12 days of Christmas. Refreshments will be available and there will be a raffle and Christmas items for sale. Visitors welcome.



Churchdown Local History Society

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

Thursday 12th December:

Virginia Adsett and Gillian Morse—Those were the Days: the Swinging Sixties

Thursday 9th January 2014:

Know Your Churchdown—A picture quiz presented by Mike Wake

Thursday 13th February 2014:

Nicholas Herbert—Medieval Towns in Gloucestershire

Charlton Kings Local History Society

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

Tuesday 26th November:

John Bromley—An Introduction to Heraldry

Tuesday 28th January 2014:

David Elder—Edward A Wilson: His Life in Cheltenham

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

www.bgas.org.uk

Talks will be held in the Frith Building at Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors pay £1.

Wednesday 20th November:

Dr John Chandler—John Taylor: Gloucestershire Boatman, Pioneer and Poet

Wednesday 15th January 2014:

Dr Anthea Jones—People, Places and Property in Gloucestershire in 1909: The Lloyd George Survey of Land Values nears its End

Wednesday 19th February 2014:

Michael Hare—Liturgical Alterations at St Mary's Church, Deerhurst from 1540 to 2012

Friends of Gloucestershire Archives

www.foga.org.uk

Meetings are held in the Frith Room at the Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester. Members pay £1, non-members £2.

Thursday 28th November at 2.00 pm:

Martin Davis— 'They played for Gloucester and fought for their country': Gloucester, the Gloucester Rugby Club and its players in the Great War 1914-18

Summer events and visits July– October 2013

Visit to Frocester Court, Thursday 17th July

Twenty-one members assembled on a sunny evening at Frocester Court to meet the owner of this ancient property, Mr Price, who had kindly agreed to show us round. He explained that the name was of Roman origin and that there had been at least one Roman villa on the site, but the land, which was ideal for arable use, had been farmed since the Bronze Age. Gloucestershire's oldest road, a Neolithic track, ran nearby. The present buildings occupied the site of the demesne farm of a manor granted in 873AD to the monks of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, who held it until the Dissolution. He took us into the famous barn, which is one of the longest in the country and was built in the late 13th century to hold the produce of 1500 acres. Though the farm is now reduced to 303 acres, the barn still fulfils its original function after 700 years. We admired the vast timbered roof, which was replaced (probably to the original medieval pattern) after a fire in 1525. Parts of



both the east and west ends had at one time been converted into dwellings, but a Victorian owner had removed the extra floors and partitions. Externally the barn has a magnificent Cotswold stone roof of carefully graduated tiles. Mr Price said that since his grandfather bought the estate in 1970 (after being a tenant since 1935), his father had little by little re-roofed most of the buildings on the site, eleven of which were listed. Moving on,

we came to the picturesque 16th century Gatehouse with its half-timbered extension, supposedly built to commemorate a royal visit in the early 1600s, and looked at the outside of the main house. At one time, Mr Price said, it had a long gallery, and the outbuildings behind it included stables, a bakehouse and a building devoted to cheese-making. Our visit ended with 'al fresco' tea on the lawn in front of the house, a pleasantly relaxing end to a very enjoyable tour.

Kath Boothman

Visit to Birmingham, Saturday 10th August

Leaving Cheltenham in the morning by coach we headed for Birmingham and, once there, divided into two groups to go around the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the National Trust Back to Backs.

At the Museum several of us headed for the new 'Birmingham: Its People, Its History' gallery opened last October by Benjamin Zephaniah. The exhibition deals with the city's history in five sections: 'Origins' up to 1700, 'A Stranger's Guide' 1700-1830, 'Forward' 1830-1909, 'An Expanding City' 1909-1945 and lastly 'Your Birmingham' 1945 to the present day. We were taken on a journey

through time from a hand-axe dating back 250,000 years to the present day. The settlement's value at Domesday was a mere £1 with about 50 inhabitants. The farsightedness of the Lord of the Manor Peter de Birmingham in purchasing a market charter in 1166 was the start of its fortunes. Without the restrictions of being a Royal Borough Birmingham was free to develop into 'a town of a thousand trades' whose goods were exported all over the world. It was also a place with a social conscience. Although many of its products such as shackles and knives contributed towards the slave trade, and its inhabitants were happy to consume tobacco and other products produced by the slaves, the people also played a prominent role in the anti-slavery movement. Indeed, the women of Birmingham formed the Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves in 1825 which resulted in a nationwide campaign to boycott cotton and sugar. Nearer to home, Joseph Chamberlain took the gas and water supplies into public ownership and in an early slum clearance scheme cleared much of the worst housing to make way for Corporation Street. Later, between the World Wars, over 50,000 council houses were built. The exhibition is extremely well put together, telling the fascinating story of a place that between 1086 and 2011 grew from a tiny settlement to a major city with a population of 1,074,300.

One tiny corner of Birmingham that escaped the slum clearance, despite being condemned for domestic use in 1966, was Court 15 on the corner of Hurst and Inge Streets. The court was saved mainly because of the shops on the ground floor, such as the sweet shop and George Saunders' tailor's workshop. George was the last person to work in Court 15 before it was closed in 2002 and his workshops have been preserved just



as he left them. The three houses are presented as representing the 1840s, 1870s and 1930s. The 1840s house was the home of the Jewish Levy family who had moved from Clerkenwell to Birmingham and were present on Court 15 on the night of the 1851 census. The Oldfield family occupied the 1870s house, having moved in during the 1860s to work in his rather unusual trade of glass eye manufacturer, of which we were shown ghoulish examples. The last house, being of the 1930s, brought forth many reminiscences from the group. This house held a family called Mitchell, who lived in the Court from 1840 until 1935 spanning the whole of the time represented in this reconstruction. At the end several of us went into the 1930s sweet shop to buy such treats as sherbet dips - sadly they cost a little more than 1d.

Thanks are due to David Johnson for all his hard work in organising this visit.

Sue Brown

‘Gloucestershire’s Special Houses’ GLHA Local History Day

*Saturday October 12th 2013
at Pate’s Grammar School, Cheltenham*

The Association’s first Local History Day was held in the spacious hall of Pate’s Grammar School, starting at 10.30 am and finishing at 4.30 pm. Like its predecessor, the annual local history afternoon run by the GRCC at Sir Thomas Rich’s School in Gloucester, it was attended by a large number of local history societies from all over Gloucestershire, and each society had prepared a display relating to



‘special houses’ in its own particular area. Everyone present was invited to cast a vote for the best of these. Our Society’s display, one of the largest and most wide-ranging, was the work of Geoff and Elaine North.

The programme for the day began with a welcome by Dr Steven Blake, who then introduced the first of the four speakers . The

first illustrated talk, by Stephen Hague, focused on the building of Frampton Court at Frampton-on-Severn and Cote House at Westbury-on-Trym and the interactions of their respective owners William Clutterbuck and John Elbridge. The second talk, by Chris Hobson, was entitled ‘Fairford Park—a lost treasure: the rise and fall of the Raymond Barker family home at Fairford’. There was then a break of an hour and a half to allow time for lunch and for people to view the displays. After the break the 2013 Bryan Jerrard Award, for which two CLHS members, Sally Self and Sue Rowbotham, were finalists, was presented to Diane Charlesworth for an article on ‘Medieval Tibberton’ published in *Glevensis* 44. Two more talks then followed, one by Steve Hill on Stratford House and Park, Stroud, and the other by Averil Kear on two Forest of Dean houses, Nass House near Lydney and Highmeadow near Colesford.

At the end of the afternoon, the votes having been counted, the award for the best display went to Chipping Campden. Dr Steven Blake then closed the meeting and thanked everyone involved for their support.

Kath Boothman



Photos: Geoff North

Autumn lectures September-October 2013

At the first autumn meeting on 17th September our speaker, **Malcolm Watkins**, took as his subject the **Birdlip Grave Group**, a small but important collection of grave goods found near the Air Balloon public house by workmen in the late 19th century. The items included bowls, handles, various pieces of jewellery and a bronze mirror. There had been three graves, lying end to end, each composed of stone slabs and containing a skeleton. The exact location had unfortunately not been recorded, but it was known that all the objects (and possibly some others) had been found in the middle grave. John Bellows, a Quaker antiquarian, had arranged for the goods to go to the Gloucester Museum, and the skeletons had been given to a Cheltenham doctor to be studied. The speaker presented each object in turn, showing very clear close-up photographs. There was, for example, a parcel-gilt silver brooch 2 ½” long with a pierced catchplate at one end and a coiled spring at the other, rather Celtic in style with what appeared to be the heads of birds as part of its design. Silver rivets formed the ‘eyes’, which might have been jewelled originally. It was very fine work and dated probably to the first half of the first century AD. There was a pair of tweezers of about the same size, five bronze rings, a bracelet and a necklace of beads, mostly amber but also including shale and pyrophyllite, which may have had ‘magical’ properties. The larger of two bowls, 10” in diameter, had been found lying across the face of the skeleton. Like the smaller bowl, it had a finely decorated rim and had evidently been turned and polished on a lathe. The finest of the objects in the grave was the bronze mirror, which was 15” in length and considered to be one of the two or three best preserved Iron Age mirrors in the country. It was a plate of cast and polished bronze decorated in Celtic style with a red inlay of enamel or coral; close examination revealed the marking-out lines where the artist had traced the main outlines of his intricate pattern. It had originally had a frame of bronze, part of which was missing. The speaker thought that the mirror had been deliberately broken (or ritually ‘killed’) before it was buried, which was a common practice with grave goods belonging to important individuals. Whose grave this was could only be a matter for speculation, not least because the three skeletons originally found had all been lost except for one skull, and even that might not have belonged to this burial. It had been dubbed ‘The Birdlip Princess’ but he thought that it was the wrong skull and that the grave was most likely to be that of a male ‘shaman’ or soothsayer. The jewellery was not gender-specific, and it was known that mirrors were sometimes used, like a crystal ball, for foretelling the future. This group of objects was among the best found from pre-Roman Britain, and there were many theories about it. In response to a question he said the two other graves, which contained no goods, might have been those of sacrificial victims sent as servants into the afterworld. As to why they had been laid end to end rather than side by side, nobody knew. These beautiful but mysterious relics from 2,000 years ago gave the audience much to wonder about.

The next meeting, on October 15th, marked the launch of the CD of St Mary's Parish Records, 1558-1804, recently produced by a group of Society members under the leadership of Sally Self. There was a display about the project on the Council Chamber screen. Sally thanked the volunteers who had taken part, noting that the CD, now on sale at £10, would not only be invaluable to family historians but would also be a contribution to the VCH volume on Cheltenham.

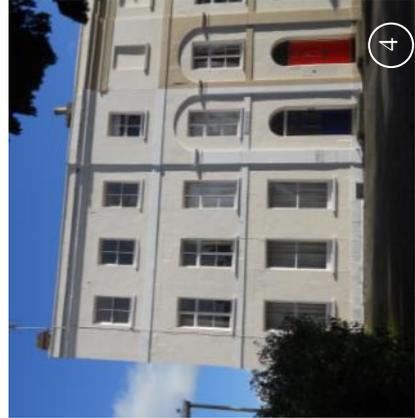
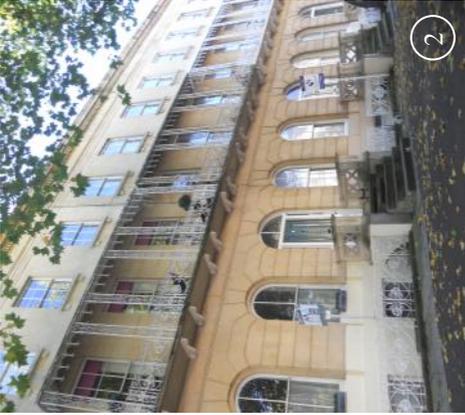
The speaker for the evening was **Lucienne Boyce**, who had brought along copies of her recent book *Bristol Suffragettes* and took as her theme **Bristol Suffragettes and Cheltenham Ladies**. She said that there were both suffragettes and suffragists (the militant and non-militant arms of the movement) in both Bristol and Cheltenham. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), of which Millicent Fawcett was president for 20 years, aimed to achieve women's suffrage by peaceful means; these were the suffragists. Theodora Mills was president of the Cheltenham branch from 1902 to 1913. (One prominent member, Mrs Swiney, found Cheltenham unrewarding: it was 'a town of no ideas'!) In 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst, frustrated by the anti-feminist attitude of the Liberal government, founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU, the suffragettes), which adopted more militant tactics—demonstrations, heckling of speakers at political meetings and later wilful damage including arson. The movement spread, and in 1906 a branch opened in Cheltenham with Miss Andrews of Vittoria Walk as its secretary. Cheltenham also had an active branch of the Women's Freedom League, another militant organisation. These movements faced organised opposition. In 1908 the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League was established in London. There were strenuous protests in the press too, and one Sir Almroth Wright wrote a particularly misogynistic diatribe claiming that women who involved themselves in politics would be unfit as wives and mothers. Many teachers supported the suffrage movement and people worried about their influence on schoolgirls. Miss Faithfull of the Ladies' College had to write to the Times refuting a rumour that 300 of her girls had taken part in a procession! It was true, though, that many former CLC pupils were suffragists. In time militant suffragism affected both Bristol and Cheltenham. The speaker showed numerous photos and cartoons of women engaged in demonstrations and confronting the police, who often treated them very roughly. Their meetings were also regularly disrupted by mobs: an outdoor meeting in Cheltenham in 1908 was attacked while police looked on, afterwards blaming the women for the disturbance. Women who were jailed and went on hunger strike suffered greatly but showed great fortitude, even when they were let out to recover only to be re-arrested. Militancy escalated and met with increasingly violent reprisals until the outbreak of war in 1914, when Mrs Pankhurst called off her campaign and encouraged her followers to throw their weight behind the war effort. Most of them did so, recognising that they had a new set of challenges to face. In reply to a question the speaker said it was hard to say whether votes for women would have come earlier if there had been no war: the women, though exhausted, were not ready to give

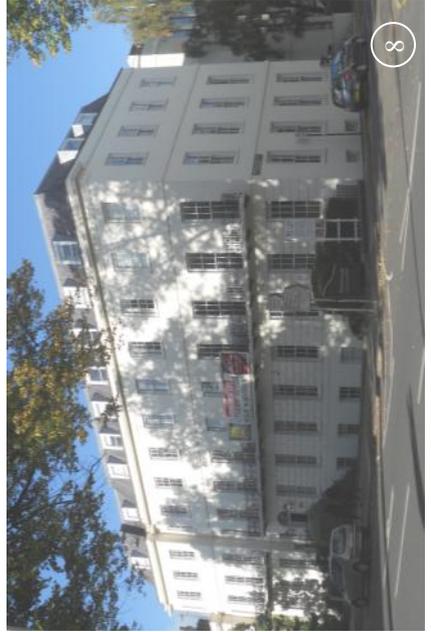
up, but nor was the government ready to give in. Another listener asked how the Pankhursts' involvement in the war effort had been received, and she said that Lloyd George, who had been implacably anti-suffragist, later changed his views and supported women's wish to take on men's work. Individuals in all political parties, including James Agg Gardner, MP for Cheltenham, had some sympathy with suffragism, but the parties feared what it might do to their future prospects.

On October 22nd at St Luke's **Mick Kippin** gave a talk with the intriguing title **Naval 'Schoolie' to Vicar of Winchcombe**. His subject was the Revd Robert Noble Jackson, RN, whom he had first come across, when working at Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, in a photograph supposedly of the Gloucestershire Hussars (actually the Engineers) at a training camp at Winchcombe in 1890. Jackson, in the uniform of a volunteer army chaplain, was in the front row. Born at Rugby in 1828, the son of an Indian Army officer, he had been educated at Oakham School in Rutland and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. After his ordination in 1855 he was trained as a teacher on *HMS Excellent*, a hulk being used as a training school, with a view to taking up the well-paid dual role of chaplain and schoolmaster to the young midshipmen on board a navy ship. Appointed to *HMS Hastings*, he saw action in the Baltic that year and received the Baltic service medal. In July 1856 he joined *HMS Amethyst*, which took him via Rio, Cape Town and Christmas island (where a stamp was issued to commemorate the ship's visit in 1857) to the Far East. Britain was at war with China, and *HMS Amethyst* was involved in coastal fighting near Canton. Again Jackson qualified for a campaign medal, this time with two clasps. In February 1859 *Amethyst* was in Valparaiso, helping to fight an insurrection there. Going ashore to help with the wounded, Jackson was taken prisoner but released in recognition of his good work. The ship returned to Plymouth, and 1861 found Jackson living in Ryde on the Isle of Wight with his wife and her aunt, as a 'chaplain, unemployed'. In 1863 he was at sea again in *HMS Warrior*, one of the first iron-clad warships, and in 1864 he sailed as chaplain and instructor in *HMS Challenger* to the West Indies, where he helped the surgeons in the military hospitals. Back in England on half-pay, he found a similar post on *HMS Impregnable*, but in October 1865 for some reason he decided to give it up. Probably thanks to Charles Hanbury-Tracy, 4th Baron Sudeley of Toddington, whom he had known on board the *Amethyst*, he first obtained the living of Gretton then served as vicar of Winchcombe from 1871 to 1888. In both places he did much work on the church. He was friendly with the Dents of Sudeley Castle, and even travelled abroad with them as their private chaplain, but later there was a falling-out. In 1874 he remarried, his first wife having died in 1864. After he retired in 1888 he remained vicar of Sudeley until 1917 and built himself a large house called Rathmore, which he sold after his wife died in 1914. Jackson lived to be 92, dying in 1920. He was buried in Winchcombe and there is a portrait of him in the church, but his grave has not so far been found. After this well-illustrated and thoroughly researched biographical sketch the audience felt there were almost no questions left to be asked!

PUZZLE

All the buildings pictured on these two pages have one thing in common.
Can you say what it is?
See page 19 for the answer.





FEATURE

HEROISM AT NAZARETH

Gloucestershire Boy Awarded the Military Medal in 1918

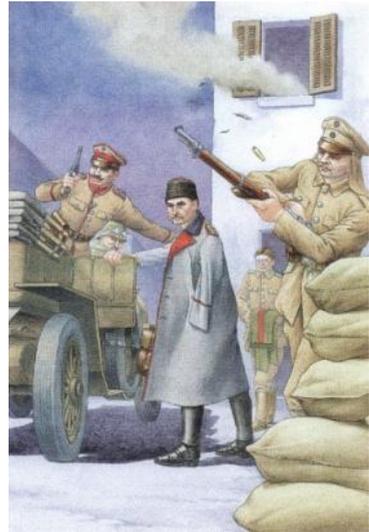
It was 4.30 am on Friday 20th September 1918 and 24-year-old Sergeant William Mervin Ratcliffe of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars drew his sword and waited for the command to charge into the town centre of Nazareth whilst the enemy was still asleep and capture the German General Otto von Sanders, commander of the Turkish armies in Palestine. By the end of the day Mervin, the name he preferred, was to be cited as a hero.

The RGH traces its antecedence to 1795 and was a Territorial yeomanry regiment during the Allied offensive against the Turkish Army in the Holy Land during the Great War. After mobilisation in August 1914 the RGH found itself in Egypt as part of the Allied forces under General Sir Edmund Allenby, who by December 1917 had captured Jerusalem and was poised to push the Ottoman Empire out of Palestine and end the war in the East.

Mervin and his cousin, Theo Lewis, decided to become part time soldiers when they enlisted together in the RGH on the same day in July 1911. The boys were like brothers, having been brought up together on Mervin's family farm at Preston near Stroud. By September 1918 the pair had fought at Gallipoli as infantry and throughout Egypt as cavalry, but they were now facing a new challenge.

Allenby opened his offensive, which became known as the Battle of Megiddo, on 19th September 1918, but Allied intelligence had discovered that von Sanders' Army Group HQ was at Nazareth and hatched a plan to capture him. This task was given to the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, which set off on a night march skirting around the Turkish front line under cover of the opening artillery bombardment and going 'Hell for leather' for 50 miles ahead of the main Allied forces in a daring surprise cavalry raid. The strength of the regiment that day was 17 officers and 283 other ranks.

The War Diary of the RGH tells how the attack was made 'with swords drawn' into the centre of Nazareth causing the most indescribable confusion. The enemy, mostly unarmed, surrendered as they awoke having been taken completely by



Artist's impression of General von Sanders escaping from his HQ under cover of the Turkish counter attack

surprise. Von Sanders' HQ was in the Hotel Germania where several of his senior German staff officers and their documents were captured, but there was no sign of their General; nevertheless 1,500 prisoners were taken and escorted back behind the lines. By 8.00 am Mervin's squadron, now dismounted and taking stock, suddenly received an unexpected enemy counter attack supported by machine gun fire from elevated positions.

Mervin's citation explains that he rallied his men during the street fighting and showed great coolness and initiative under fire, enabling the RGH machine guns to get into position and silence the incoming fire. When the Turks repositioned their guns they enfiladed the unmounted RGH horses, the only means for the Squadron to escape. Mervin at once led the horses away into cover, then went back twice more to rescue wounded soldiers. These actions were witnessed by his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel A C Watson, and written up in his after-action report that night. By 6.00 pm the Turks had given up their counter attack and Nazareth was occupied the next day; the RGH casualties were two troopers and 28 horses killed, plus one officer and 10 other ranks wounded.

Mervin's Military Medal for gallantry was gazetted on the 20th August 1919. General von Sanders, who had hidden that day, had slipped out under cover of the counter attack without being seen. Six weeks later he agreed to an Armistice on 31st October 1918.

Mervin died in Cirencester in 1964 and his medals passed to his nephew, John Barton of Rugby K, but due to the close bond between the two families John generously gifted the medals to Theo Lewis's son, Tom Lewis of New Zealand, who wears them with pride each year at his local ANZAC Day Parade.

Graham Caldwell

(CLHS member living in Melbourne, Australia)



CLHS DISPLAYS

IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY

1. Tues 3rd December 2013 to Tues 14th January 2014 - **Christmas in the Workhouse.**
2. Tuesday 4th February to Tuesday 18th March - **Cheltenham's Special Houses** (*part of a larger display produced for the GLHA History Day on 12th October 2013*)
3. Tuesday 1st April to Tuesday 13th May - **Cheltenham Women**

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

*SOCIETY NEWS***New Members**

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Mrs Marjorie O'Neill

Mr Graham Caldwell (Australia)

Mr & Mrs K West

David & Marian Carroll

John & Margaret Brown

Nick & Serena Gay

Ms Anne Bateman

Mr M Mudway

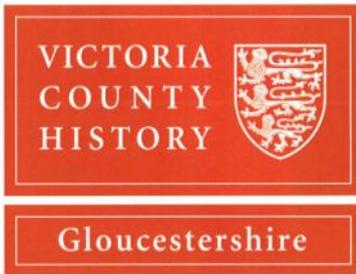
Mr Richard Thomas

Mrs Valerie McCoy

Mrs Irene Finlayson

Professor Kenneth Davey

And a warm welcome back to *Mrs Jill Julier*

**VCH Cheltenham – making a start!**

Good news! - work has now started on the Cheltenham volume of the VCH. Dr Beth Hartland, an experienced medievalist who has worked extensively with National Archives material, has now been appointed, to research and draft the medieval sections of both Cheltenham and Cirencester, taking about a year over the task. Although based in Ely, she has

already visited us twice, getting oriented, and photographing a vast amount of source material to work on at home. There has been good take-up for John Chandler's VCH volunteer 'taster' sessions. And thanks to a bequest, the Trust has enough money in hand to think about starting soon on another section of Cheltenham. But additional regular supporters are always welcome!

James Hodsdon jj49@btinternet.com

The next Journal: Number 30—A Volunteer Wanted

The next Journal will be the 30th the Society has produced. Amazingly, it is already the eighth with which I have been involved, having first been 'inveigled' into helping by Sue Rowbotham in 2007. In fairness to Sue I should say that I did volunteer and a very enjoyable experience it has been, learning new skills, getting to know the authors and learning a great deal about the history of the town.

Now in my turn I am appealing for a volunteer, or perhaps I should say an apprentice! Someone to work with me on the next issue, so as to 'learn the ropes' and eventually to take over the running of the Journal for a few years. The skills needed are not complicated, and even after next year's issue I will still be around to give support if needed, so if you are interested, don't be daunted. To find out more, please get in touch by e-mailing me at journal.clhs@btinternet.com

Sally Self

Visitors from Göttingen

Cheltenham has international links with no fewer than seven partner towns abroad. These cultural links have led to hugely successful co-operation between choirs, orchestras, bridge clubs, art clubs, church groups and so forth.

The first of Cheltenham's twin town links was forged in 1951 with Göttingen, Lower Saxony: in those post-WWII days the hope was that twinning would help to bring about reconciliation. Over the years Cheltenham's relations with our German Partnerstadt (twin town) have flourished and a highlight is the biennial Festival, which alternates between the two towns. This year it was Göttingen's turn to come to Cheltenham.

So, in July a party of some 120 Göttingen visitors arrived, and this included the new Deputy Chair of the Geschichtsverein für Göttingen und Umgebung, (Göttingen and District History Society) Dr Jessika Wichner. (CLHS links with local history societies in the twin towns were initiated by Dr Anne Dunn while she was chairman, 1998 – 2000).

A Local History Tea was attended by Jessika, Anne Dunn, Kath Boothman, Eric Miller and Alastair Graham and hosted by me. Jessika was keen to animate the Partnerstadt link and suggested the following possibilities:

(a) Visits between the towns' history societies might be conducted as part of the biennial Twinning Association visits, or independently.

(b) Joint research projects might be carried out. An opportunity presented itself with the study Eric had made of the statues of William IV in Montpellier Gardens and in Wilhelmsplatz, Göttingen. Jessika promised to supply a good photograph of the latter.

(c) Jessika wished to move research on from Germany's 'castles and cloisters' themes and to encourage research on the history of scientific topics. Aeronautics seemed a very promising area for joint research.

(d) The websites of the two societies might be linked.

The date of the next Festival Visit is 25–31 July 2015 in Göttingen.

Jo Dean (CLHS and Cheltenham German Club)



The 'tea party' group with Jessika

And another volunteer please!

...to look after the Society's library, which has been in the care of Jill Waller for more years than she cares to remember. Jill now no longer has room to store it and would be grateful if someone else would take it on. It is not an onerous or time-consuming job. If you think you could help, please ring Jill to find out more on 01242 522485 or e-mail jill.waller@virginmedia.com

*FEATURE***An 18th Century Traveller
in Gloucestershire**

Thanks to a tip-off from a friend, I recently discovered some writings by a certain Arthur Young, an 18th century agriculturalist and traveller. In the course of his extensive travels around Britain, he produced copious notes of his observations of the farming and other conditions prevailing in those areas through which he passed.

There is no manufacture nearer than Gloucester; the staple of which city is pins, which employs near 400 hands, of whom a great number are women and children: good hands at pointing and sticking earn from 10s. to 12s. and 15s. a week: children of 8, 10 and 11 years old earn 2d. and 3d. a day; but some journeymen do not get more than 7s., 8s. and 9s. a week: the wages in general are good. There are some glass-houses in this city; and a pretty brisk trade carried on by means of the Severne, with Shrewsbury, &c. and Bristol.....

I was infinitely surprised to find the same stony, hard, rough and cursed roads, miscalled turnpikes, all the way from Gloucester to Newnham: it is the same stone as the other side of the Severne but much harder, and consequently more jolting and cutting to the horses feet; nor is it so much as level, but rutts all the way; and what is remarkable, I found by them, that they build their waggons with their wheels full three inches nearer to each other than in the eastern counties, which is surprizing: a Norfolk or Suffolk waggon could not stir even in this turnpike road.

This line of country is very hilly and picturesque; for the road runs all the way by the Severne, which has a bold shore, finely wooded; and breaks upon the view in a very pleasing manner. The land is good and well cultivated; all inclosed, and letts, the arable for 10s. and the meadow for 20s. I was amazed to find that day-labour was much higher in this country than on the other side of Gloucester:

In winter, 10d. and oftener 1s.

In hay-time, 1s. 6d.

In harvest, 1s. and board and beer

Young's description of the so-called turnpike to Newnham is interesting. The turnpike trust, which was created in 1726, led to the development of what more or less today we know of as the Main Road. When Young passed through in 1767 however, as well as the 'new' main road, the 'old' road (passing though Murcot, Highcross and Calcotts Green) was also probably available for use. Given what he wrote about the new turnpike road, one can only imagine what the old road must have been like!

Terry Moore-Scott

Answer to puzzle on page 12-13

They were all schools at one time or another, as follows:

1. Glyngarth in Douro Road, a boys' prep school founded in the 1870s, closed in 1949 and is now a Ladies' College boarding house (Farnley Lodge).
2. No 6, Queen's Parade was a Public Day School for Girls in the 1890s.
3. The old St James Primary School in Great Norwood Street was converted to residential use in the 1980s.
4. Belmore House School, Bath Road, opened in 1878 as a school for middle class boys from the age of seven. It survived until the First World War.
5. Hampstead House, as it was then called, in The Park was a boys' school from about 1840 to 1860. The 1851 census shows 24 boarders aged 8-14 in residence.
6. Brandon House in Painswick Road was a prep school 'for the sons of gentlemen' from about 1900 to 1920. It offered special terms for the sons of officers.
7. Glendale House, Montpellier, was a girls' school run by Miss Procter, first Principal of the Ladies' College, after she resigned from the College in 1858.
8. Ellenborough House Academy in Oriell Terrace was a girls' school from 1867 to about 1900, after which it became a hotel.

NEW PUBLICATION

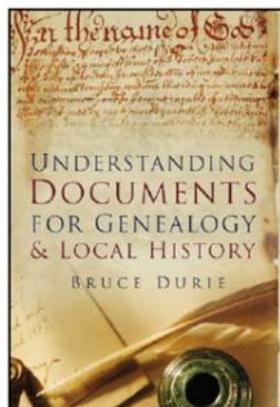
Understanding Documents for Genealogy & Local History by Dr Bruce Durie

The ultimate guide to reading and understanding the old documents necessary for researching family or local history

Genealogists and local historians have probably seen every birth, marriage, death and census record available, many of them now being available on the internet. Once everything accessible online has been used, however, the next step is reading older documents. These can be hard to find and even harder to understand, given that they are written in challenging handwriting and use unfamiliar terms. This new book is the complete handbook to understanding old documents. Discussing testaments, contracts, charters, land records, official records, calendars, abbreviations, transcription conventions and much more, and with 22 chapters covering resources from England, Scotland and Wales, this exceptionally detailed volume fills an important gap in genealogy publishing.

Dr Bruce Durie, a former neuroscientist, is Course Director for Genealogical Studies at the University of Strathclyde, Archivist and Historian to the Chief of the Durie Family and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Published in paperback in February 2013 by The History Press, price £20.



*LOCAL NEWS***Pittville Gates Restoration**

Recent progress with the restoration project has included the installation of the adjoining railings. The cast iron railings replace those that were there originally and which appear in the George Rowe 1845 engraving of the gateway. They edged what was then the garden of 1 Pittville Lawn, which was bought by the Borough Council in the early 1960s for £100.

There was enough remaining evidence to determine the design of the railings. They are identical to those fronting various 1830s properties in Pittville Lawn including the terrace at the southern end, where they are Grade 2-listed.

A garden has been created on the triangle in front of the railings to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Samaritans' presence in Cheltenham.

Judie Hodsdon

*OBITUARY***RICHARD SMITH (1952-2013)**

A large gathering, many more than could be seated, assembled at the South Chapel of the Crematorium on October 17th for the funeral of Richard Smith, who died suddenly at home on October 5th just after his 61st birthday. Music by Gustav Holst was played at intervals during the service in memory of his many years of involvement with the Holst Birthplace Museum, where he had recently become a trustee. This was only one of Richard's manifold contributions to the cultural life of the town. After early retirement from GCHQ he had devoted much of his time to volunteer work with various local organisations, notably the Cheltenham Arts Council, Cheltenham Music Festival Society and The Friends of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, whose secretary he had been for some years. Always generous with his time and energy, he was warmly appreciated wherever he worked, and many tributes have been paid to his zeal and commitment. In 2012 he and his wife Catriona received a CAC Award for their service to the Holst Museum and other organisations. Last but not least, Richard was of course a long-standing member of our Society, and he will be very much missed by all who knew him. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Catriona.





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— new, special price £8.50 (several copies, some signed and kindly donated by the author)

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

Also (Vols 17 & 18) A Catalogue of the Medieval Muniments at Berkeley Castle - set of 2 books, 2 volume set £8

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

FEATURE

Decorative Stones in Cheltenham Part 2: Town Centre

Shop fronts in the High Street, The Promenade and Clarence Street exhibit about thirty different kinds of decorative stone. Pre-World War 1 monuments and shop fronts used marbles from Britain but when shipping costs became cheaper after World War 2, stone flooded into Britain from the world over. Cheltenham's history of the use of decorative stone on shop fronts, monuments and inside public buildings is poorly known and there are long periods in which there are no records of such activity.

The timeline begins with the Imperial Spa built in 1821 on the present site of Royscot House, 95 The Promenade. This was designed by George Underwood who also designed the Masonic Hall (1823), Holy Trinity Church (1824) and Queen's Hotel (1835). The Spa with its six marble columns was demolished in 1937. A gap of fifty years separates this record and the erection of the Gordon Lamp (1887) with its pink Peterhead Granite and grey Rubislaw Granite from Scotland. Columns of Peterhead were also incorporated into the shops along The Colonnade between HSBC and Costa. These granite columns were installed before 1911 (see Beacham & Cleaver p.59).

In 1902-03 the Town Hall was built by Collins & Godfrey for a cost of £45,000 and the Drawing Room décor included columns of pale reddish-brown English alabaster from Derbyshire. This stone, composed of gypsum (calcium sulphate), was formed by the evaporation of sea water 240 million years ago. It does not withstand acid rain and is only used for internal decoration. Another stone seen in this building is *Gris Sainte-Anne* on the countertop of the Central Spa and plinths in the Main Hall. This black, coral-rich limestone of Devonian age came from near Charleroi in Belgium. In the Main Hall and Pillar Room there are pillars of imitation marble or *scagliola*. This is made of plaster of Paris, pigment and glue probably trowelled around a wooden cylinder and then polished with pumice and beeswax. The next building on our timeline is Madame Wright's old shop in Ormond Place, (now occupied by Monty Smith), and designed by the London firm Frederick Sage in 1925. The exterior walls are clad with dark red *rosso Levanto* marble, grey *Portoro* limestone and white Carrara marble from Italy and the doorway has a X design using *rouge Languedoc* limestone from France, grey *bardiglio* and Carrara marbles from Italy.

In 1926 the Gas, Light and Coke Company (1812-1949) built a showroom and decorated the exterior with black and white marble cladding, but this disappeared

when taken over by Prezzo a decade ago. Also in 1926, Boots in the High Street was completely remodelled by the Nottingham architects Bromley and Watkins. I have not been able to date the granite cladding but according to Judith Wright, the Boots archivist in Nottingham, it might date from the 1960s. Also dating from 1926 is the greyish-white King Edward VII monument in Italian Carrara marble on a plinth of grey Cornish granite with large white crystals of orthoclase feldspar. There follows an hiatus of thirty years until 1964-66 when Cavendish House was modernised for a cost of £800,000 to the design of London architects Downton and Hurst. The front was refitted using bluish-grey igneous stone called *larvikite* from Larvik, Norway - the birthplace of the explorer Thor Heyerdal - and white Carrara from Italy. The Norwegian stone has become very common on shop fronts in the Town.

It was during the 1960s and 1970s that many shops in the town centre were given face-lifts using foreign stones as shipping costs became cheaper. Two examples are Cheltenham House built in 1975 and clad with bluish-grey *larvikite* from Norway and Primark with its cladding of *gabbro* of unknown provenance. The Regent Arcade, built for the sum of £23 million in 1984, is surprisingly devoid of decorative stone at the time of writing, but up until early 2012 there was a nice run of pink marble cladding up the escalator near the front entrance off the High Street. The salmon pink marble is called *rojo Alicante* from Spain. This cladding disappeared in the remodelling of 2013 but is still seen as floor tiles together with pale buff coloured *Botticino* marble from Italy in the rear entrance from Ormond Place.

Finally, the £35 million Beechwood Shopping Centre, built in 1990 to the design of Fitch Benoy and Associates of London, gave us floor designs using an exotic mix of igneous stone from Norway, North America and South Africa, and green Lakeland slate from Cumbria. The compass design in the floor at the entrance contains the red granite called St John's red from Mokopane in South Africa, a green granite called *verde fioriti* also from South Africa and both around 2000 million years old, *larvikite*, from Norway, grey granite from Mount Ayre in the USA, and a yellow granite of unknown origin. (See the illustration on the back cover.) Descriptions and photographs of these polished stones can be seen in Jackson & Price.

Dennis Jackson

References

Beacham, R. and Cleaver, L. (2011) Cheltenham through Time. *Amberley Publishing, Stroud.*

Jackson, D. E. and Price, M. T. Decorative stones in Cheltenham. Part 2: Shops and public buildings. *Proceedings of Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club.*



NEXT ISSUE

Please forward articles for inclusion in the March 2014 Newsletter by

Monday 24th February 2014

To the Editor:

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Compass design in the floor of the Beechwood Shopping Centre. The decorative stones from centre outwards are white granite, black gabbro, pale yellow granite, St John's red granite and *verde fioriti* granite.

(See Dennis Jackson's article on the previous page.)

CAN YOU HELP?

The Thirsty Three

An enquirer asks whether anyone remembers a street band calling itself 'The Thirsty Three', of which his grandfather Charles Philip Furley was a member. The band played outside picture houses and in other places around Cheltenham in the 1940s and '50s.

Dunalley Street School

An enquirer is looking for school photographs or registration lists for the years between 1953 and 1960 in order to revive memories of pupils and teachers who were there at the time. Has anyone a photo they could lend?

Emma Louisa Moody Bell (1854-1931)

An enquirer is researching the life of the above, who was born and died in Cheltenham but spent 17 years in New Zealand working with the YMCA, the Methodist Church and the temperance movement. Her father was an optician with an address in Clarence St. The researcher seeks more information on her background and would particularly like a photograph of her.

If you can help with any of these queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail joyce@cyberwebspace.net