



# Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 64

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council  
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<http://www.cheltlocalhist.btik.com>

July 2009



## SUMMER EVENT!

**Saturday 18th July 2009  
in Montpellier Gardens  
Noon - 9.00 pm**

**Daytime entertainments (noon - 6.00 pm)** include live music, local produce and craft stalls, classic cars, a Children's Village and Danter's Old-time Fun Fair.

**Evening entertainment (6 - 9.00 pm)** features the Jazz Badgers playing jazz and blues.

The Garden Café will be open from noon till 9.00 pm

CLHS will be setting up its stall in the morning and will be there from noon till 5.00 pm with sales tables (offering new and second-hand items to raise funds for the Society) and displays for the public to look at. Do come along and bring the family! Any members who would like to help will be very welcome and are asked to contact Sue Newton beforehand.

### EDITORIAL

Although it was taken a hundred years ago, the picture above still helps to convey the message of the advertisement: that Montpellier Gardens is a place for recreation and fun. There is a bandstand, space for children to play, and notice the archery butts on the right! Some things change, but not everything. And much that has gone is worth remembering. The plaques listed in Sue Rowbotham's book *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham* (see page 9) not only serve to mark some of the changes that have taken place but also pay tribute to the work and achievements of Cheltonians of the past, many of whom helped to make the town what it is today. It will be interesting to see how readers react to the book - will they all find what they expect to find in it? Or are there notable individuals and significant places that have not yet been recorded in this way, and should be? The Society would like to hear from anyone who has a suggestion to make....

*Kath Boothman*

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### Chairman's Message

Looking back over last year's programme, the talk on cheese rolling reminded me of other ancient customs. Many centuries ago most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, to make sure, brides carried a bouquet of sweet smelling herbs to hide any unpleasantness and to ward off evil spirits. The customs of wedding in June and carrying a bridal bouquet came about in this way. These snippets of information relate to social history, not local history, and yet by telling non-historians and, especially, younger people about them, we can hope to kindle an interest in times gone by and a curiosity about what remains of it in our town. Be a "missionary" for history. We can all do our bit.

Let me know if you would like to read some more of this kind of "trivia" or if you find something of interest that could be inserted in a future newsletter.

*Sue Newton*

## *EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2009-10*

*Tuesday 15th September 2009:*

### **Mr David O'Connor -150 Years of the Battledown Estate.**

Few people can be unaware of the historical heritage left to us by our Regency and Victorian predecessors which has made Cheltenham such a pleasant place to live in, though many take it for granted. One such legacy from the Victorian period is the Battledown Estate, which this year celebrates its sesquicentenary. The idea of establishing a private residential estate of detached villas on what was then farmland on Battledown Hill belonged to one man, George Ridge, a young solicitor newly arrived in Cheltenham in 1855 from his home in Grantham. It was not without precedent, since such speculative ventures had already been tried in Bayshill, Lansdowne, Marle Hill and, of course, Pittville, though with varying success. Ridge was not to be put off by these setbacks and his plan to create a pastoral town, in Charlton Kings but part of Cheltenham, had some novel aspects. Unlike the others, Battledown has survived as a residential estate, but its success did not come quickly enough for Ridge, for whom it was a disastrous speculation. In this talk, David O'Connor considers the past, present and future of what is now one of the few surviving such Victorian estates in Great Britain.

*Tuesday 20th October 2009:*

### **Mr. John Loosley – Almshouses in Gloucestershire**

Almshouses in the medieval period developed from the early monastic hospitals and leper colonies. Until the Reformation they were administered by the church but following the dissolution of the monasteries, when many disappeared, the remaining almshouses were transferred to civil authorities. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century wealthy merchants, guilds, clergy and landed gentry increasingly founded new almshouses and provided endowments to cover their costs. The talk will explore the rich variety of almshouses in

Gloucestershire dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century through to the 20<sup>th</sup> including the Pate Almshouses in Cheltenham.

*Tuesday 17th November 2009:*

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

Henry Elwes will talk about the history of the office of Lord Lieutenant including its connection with the Military and its connection with the much older office of Custos Rotulorum (Keeper of the Rolls). The talk will bring the subject up to the present day including the method of selection and appointment by H M the Queen and some current experiences in office.

*Tuesday 15th December 2009:*

### **Mr Eric Williams - Up Hatherley Past 2010**

The last half of the 20th century transformed the village of Up Hatherley into a suburban adjunct of Cheltenham. There had been a settlement in the area in Romano-British times. The Saxons gave it its name and the Normans presented it to the Church. Later it fell into lay hands following the dissolution of the monasteries. It remained as a hamlet of no more than fifty souls until the late nineteenth century when several large rural villas were built by gentlemen who desired the peace of the countryside and the proximity of urbane Cheltenham. In such a tranquil setting it would seem hard to find events that would be of much interest to the local historian. But within the county and national archives there is evidence of stirring events and records that enrich our understanding of Up Hatherley. A plea for justice to the King in Parliament in 1330 and a proposed railway scheme by I K Brunel 500 years later are just two of the incidents that involved Up Hatherley.

*Tuesday 19th January 2010:*

### **Research and Display Evening**

*Tuesday 16th February 2010:*

### **Dr. Steven Blake - "Dissenters' Boxes": the Nonconformist chapels of Regency and Victorian Cheltenham**

Cheltenham has a large number of historic Nonconformist churches and chapels, most of which were built during the town's 19th-century heyday as a fashionable spa, residential and educational centre. This talk explores the wealth of surviving chapel buildings (including some that are now in secular use) and identifies others that have been demolished. In so doing, it also traces the history of Nonconformity in the town since the 17th century.

*Tuesday 16th March 2010:*

### **Miss Eunice Powell – The history of Bishop's Cleeve**

For most of its history Bishop's Cleeve has remained a small agricultural community, the population differing very little from century to century; the opposite of the oversized village of today, though one feature is common to both, the large Norman church of St Michael. At first glance it is a rural community like many others, but its history is worth a second glance. It would be impossible to do justice to all that history in one talk, so after a brief background we shall take a journey back in time to visit events and individuals from the 12th to the 19th century and times when national events affected the village or some of its inhabitants.

*Tuesday 27th April 2010:*

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

Many of you will remember Aylwin's talk entitled 'Cheltenham for the Curious' that he gave at the Regional History Afternoon at St. Andrew's Church in 2003. This evening he will continue in the same vein, describing oddities around the town.

**Sue Newton** still has some seats available on **coach trips** to the following places of interest:-

*Tuesday 4th August:* Kenilworth Castle and Compton Verney (Constable Portraits Exhibition)

*Tuesday 25th August:* Bath and Avon Valley by steam train and Kennet river boat

*Thursday 24th September:* Soho House and Matthew Boulton Exhibition, Birmingham

*Tuesday 6th October:* Bletchley Park

The trips are open to all, not just members of the Society. Please contact Sue at meetings or telephone her on 243049 for more information.

### **MORNING LECTURES 2009-10**

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

*Further message from Elaine:*

*In the past I have brought along a microfiche viewer and microfiche for members and visitors to use for their own interest/research before or after the lecture. So far as I am aware the equipment has not been widely used on these occasions. I am very happy to bring the viewer and various fiches to a morning meeting on request, so please contact me if you would like to make use of this facility.*

*Thursday 29th October 2009:*

**Neil Holbrook - 'Where'er You Walk...'**

Neil Holbrook, Chief Executive of Cotswold Archaeology, will talk about the fascinating archaeological sites which lie buried under some familiar places in and around Cheltenham. Did you know that when you shop at Waitrose in Cheltenham you are standing on top of a Roman farm? Or that Gloucester rugby ground lies just outside a Roman legionary fortress? And what is the link between one of Gloucester's leading players and a Roman legionary? Neil will explore these sites and others in an illustrated talk for which no prior archaeological knowledge is necessary.



The old St James' station site looking towards Waitrose  
(photo: Sue Rowbotham)

*Thursday 15th April 2010:*

**Brian Torode - The Bouncer's Lane Cemetery**

What happened to Charles Sturt, the Marshall family, the jockey George Stevens, William Nash Skillicorne, Admiral Henry Christian, the Brown family of Caryatides fame, and many other well known sons of Cheltenham? The illustrated talk will include a short history of the formation of the Bouncer's Lane Cemetery and its opening, followed by a look at the monuments and memorials of some of Cheltenham's illustrious inhabitants and benefactors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## **FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **Gotherington Local History Society**

Meetings are held at Gotherington Village Hall at 8.00pm. Visitors £1.

*Thursday 17th September:*

**Ian Bartlett - Tewkesbury Mop Fair**

*Thursday 15th October:*

**Carrie Howse - Mrs Malleon and the Rural District Nursing Service**

*Thursday 19th November:*

**Brigadier Johnny Rickett - The Battle of Edgehill**

*Thursday 3rd December:*

**Gordon Ottewell - Evolution of the Village School**

### **Leckhampton Local History Society**

www.llhs.org.uk

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

*Thursday September 17th:*

**Michael Boyes - A Victorian Rector and Nine Old Maids [The Reverend Robert LeMarchant]**

*Thursday November 19th:*

**Rosemary Westgate - Wildflowers of Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds**

*Thursday December 17th;*

**Aylwin Sampson - The Queen's Hotel**

### **Charlton Kings Local History Society**

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

*Tuesday September 22nd:*

**Paul Barnett - The Purton Hulks** ⚓

*Tuesday October 27th:*

**Aylwin Sampson - Literary Cheltenham**

*Tuesday November 24th:*

**Dr A Jones - Contexts for some Charlton Kings History**

### **Holst Birthplace Museum**

www.holstmuseum.org.uk

*Thursday August 13th at 7.00pm in the Museum:*

Talk by **David Kaye - Brass Bands**

*Sat. and Sun. September 12th & 13th, 10.00am -4.00pm:*

**Heritage Open Days and Music Sale**

*Thursday 22nd October at 7.00pm in the Museum:*

**'Holst and Hardy' - Words and Music with Gordon Pullen and David Barlow**

**Swindon Village Society**

Talks start at 7.45pm at Swindon Village Hall.

Non-members pay £1.

*Wednesday September 16th:*

**Harry Hopkins—Aviation**

*Wednesday October 21st:*

**Barry Simon—Local Church Architecture**

*Wednesday November 18th:*

**Carolyn Greet—Jessops Gardens**

**Friends of All Saints Church**

*Thursday 15th October at 2.30pm in the church, All Saints Road, Cheltenham:*

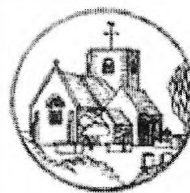
**Hugh Greenhalf—The Influence of the Oxford Movement on Gloucestershire Church Buildings**

**Friends of Deerhurst Church**

*Saturday September 12th at 7.30pm:*

**Professor Malcolm Thurlby of York University, Toronto—Deerhurst Priory Architectural Developments in the later 11th & 12th centuries**

Tickets £4.50 (students £2.50) on the door, to include wine and cheese.



## St Lawrence's Church Swindon Village

### Restoration Appeal

On **Saturday 19th September** the Swindon Village Society History Project is organising an event to raise funds for the third phase of the church roof repairs. The church will be open from 5.30 pm. Barry Simon will be on hand there to answer questions and will give a short talk at about 6.00pm.

The Village Hall will be open from 6.00 pm.

*HISTORY DISPLAY - RAFFLE  
REFRESHMENTS - SALES TABLES*

At 7.30 pm there will be a talk by **Steven Blake** on **Gloucestershire's Norman Churches**.

Tickets £2.50 if booked beforehand, £3.00 on the day

Contact numbers for pre-booking:

Karen Evans 01242 241678 Eileen Allen 01242 692933

Hazel Luxton 01242 232114

## NEW PUBLICATION

### The Lediards and Whatleys of Gloucestershire: A Holst Family History

Do you know that Gustav Holst's mother was from Cirencester? And did you also know that her family can be traced back in Gloucestershire to at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century? A brand new booklet written and published by the Holst Birthplace Museum aims to tell the story of Holst's often overlooked Gloucestershire heritage. It is an ancestry rich in colourful characters: his grandmother Henrietta Whatley was the illegitimate daughter of a Dublin actress and an Irish politician; she later smoothed over her scandalous past and became an upstanding member of the Cirencester Quakers. Many of Holst's mother's family were lawyers; his grandfather Samuel Lediard was a Cirencester solicitor, as was his great-uncle Thomas Denman Whatley who also stood as the prospective Liberal M.P. for the town - unfortunately he came last. Arthur Lediard, Holst's uncle was a particularly wayward character: born in Cirencester he decided to become a farmer on Vancouver Island, Canada, although later gave this up to work for a flax merchant in Belgium, eventually settling down to become a curate in the Forest of Dean.

The booklet draws upon documents held at Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum and Gloucestershire Record Office. Many of these documents have not been studied in detail before, and many new discoveries have been made about the family. The booklet is fully illustrated, including three images of Mary Whatley, later Lediard, who was known as 'pretty Mary Whatley' in her youth. Mary was Holst's grandmother and the images show her in youth, middle and old age. It also contains the only known image of Clara Lediard, Holst's mother, who married Adolph von Holst in Cheltenham in 1871.

Laura Kinnear, Curator of the Holst Birthplace Museum and co-author of the booklet, says: 'This is the first in-depth publication about Holst's mother's family, and the first publication produced by the Holst Museum for many years. We hope the book-

let will show that Holst's Gloucestershire ancestry is as important as his Eastern European roots, which have often overshadowed his local origins.'

**Editor's Note:**

The booklet *The Lediards and Whatleys of Gloucestershire: A Holst Family History* by Laura Kinnear, Curator, and Christopher Fletcher, Volunteer, Holst Birthplace Museum is on sale at £4.95. It can also be obtained from Geoff North for £5.50, plus £1 for p&p if required—this price includes a donation to CLHS. (Contact Geoff on 01452 857803)

**Contact Details:** Laura Kinnear, Curator Holst Birthplace Museum, 4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2AY. Tel: 01242 524846. [www.holstmuseum.org.uk](http://www.holstmuseum.org.uk). E-mail: [holstmuseum@btconnect.com](mailto:holstmuseum@btconnect.com)  
The Holst Birthplace Museum is open Tue-Sat 10.00am – 4.00pm. Adults: £3.50; Concessions: £3.00; Family Ticket: £8.00



Laura Kinnear

## REVIEWS

### *Spring Lectures March/April 2009*

The spring lecture series began on March 17th with **Alan Pilbeam's** illustrated talk on **Old Paths of Gloucestershire**. Footpaths, Alan explained, are man's oldest imprint on the landscape, and are of many kinds. Village paths typically lead to the mill, the fields and the woods, while long-distance routes may be old drove roads or pilgrim ways: St James' church in Stoke Orchard was on the pilgrim route to Compostela. Welsh black cattle took two weeks to reach London, staying overnight in fields rented from farmers along the route. The Greenway was once a drove road used for sheep. Some paths linked people's homes with their workplaces—St Mary's mill in Chalford, for instance, gave out work to cottage weavers living nearby. In the Forest of Dean paths led from cottages to the collieries. There are paths for recreational purposes too, such as the winding paths used by garden designers and the walks — Well Walk, for example — enjoyed by early visitors to Cheltenham Spa. It was a most interesting and unexpectedly wide-ranging survey.

At St Luke's on April 9th **Lynda Hodges** of the Prestbury local history group introduced and showed a DVD made by the group in 2007 entitled '**Travelling through Time - a History of Prestbury**'. After mounting a historical display for a Heritage Open Day a few years ago the group had decided to produce something more fully researched for the next occasion, and the DVD was the result. Quantities of historical documentation and reminiscences had been compiled and used to create the soundtrack, read by authentic voices from the village. The visual element was supplied by photographs and other images illustrating the readings, which ranged from the appointment of a 16th century bailiff through wills, letters and a churchwarden's accounts (read by one of his descendants) to memories of the village school in the 1920s. It was altogether fascinating, and we were not surprised to learn that sales of the DVD at the last Heritage Open Day had raised £1000 for the church fabric fund!

Finally on April 28th after the AGM **Revd Brian Torode and Mrs Heather Atkinson** gave an illustrated talk on the theme '**Delancey Hospital - The End of an Era**'. It was a long story and full of intriguing detail. Now closing to inpatients after 150 years, the Delancey was built in the 1870s as a fever hospital. Brian told how Miss Susan Delancey had left £5000 for the purpose when she died in 1866, but it was some years before a 6-acre site was purchased and affordable plans drawn up. The Middletons, father and son, were the architects, and the buildings were completed by the time J H Middleton died in 1885. Heather then described the internal layout of the hospital and how it was run. Originally there were separate buildings for different diseases (smallpox being the worst), with private rooms for paying patients and public wards for the rest. In 1890 Cheltenham College funded a new block purely for its own people. In World War Two it took army patients and evacuees, and in 1948 it became one of the first geriatric hospitals. She described the further changes that followed, but said she was still researching and would like to hear from anyone, whether patient or visitor, with memories or information to offer.

### *Summer Visits May/June 2009*

#### **Walking tour of Prestbury guided by Roger Beacham, Tuesday 19th May**

Roger's tour was most enjoyable, giving a fascinating insight and much new information about a village I thought I knew fairly well. Starting from the Prestbury House Hotel we walked down the Burgage to The Lindens, a beautiful house which has been many things from an exclusive establishment for young ladies to a boarding house for patients at the Hydro including the poet Tennyson. Life sounded pretty grim for the patients and I have a mental picture of them walking through Prestbury to the baths pursued by mocking urchins. Our next stop was Tatchley Villas where we were given copies of an 1848 illustration to compare with the present. The artist Dora Carrington is also associated with 2, Tatchley Villas. We continued along the High Street learning about Prestbury's connections to the Oxford Movement through the vicar John Baghot de la Bere in 1860 and viewing the chapel built opposite to oppose his teachings. Then down a tiny lane through the churchyard from where we could see the Priory and into Mill Street where we learned of the Grotto Tea Garden visited by George III and Queen Charlotte in 1788. We saw Vine Tree Cottage, once home of Fred Archer, and West Wold House where he went to school. Roger included anecdotes and stories as well as handouts which really brought Prestbury's past to life and made me want to go back and do the walk again!

#### *Janet Hextall*

#### **Visit to Gloucestershire Archives, Friday 5th June**

On 5th June a group of members and friends spent an interesting afternoon at the Archives in the company of Vicky Thorpe, the Customer Services Manager. She explained how the Gloucestershire Archives and Record Office had merged with the Local Studies Collection to form the present archives, then we were given a guided tour of the premises. Being a small group we were able to ask lots of questions. We visited the Search Room and learned how to go about doing research, with particular reference to family history, and how to order documents in advance so as to save time and enable staff to plan ahead. Finally we were shown some fascinating original documents including books giving details of workhouse inmates and the plans of the Gaumont Cinema. Everyone agreed it had been a most interesting and informative visit.

#### *Gwyneth Rattle*

#### **Visit to Highgrove, Thursday 4th June**

A cheerful party of 25 boarded the coach on a fine morning looking forward to good day out, and we were not disappointed. The visit began with a viewing of a video in which HRH Prince Charles explained the history of Highgrove, the development of the garden and the thinking behind it. A 90-minute tour in the company of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide then showed us something of its amazing variety, from woodlands, water features and topiary to a flower-filled cottage garden designed by Rosemary Verey - all beautiful, and seen to advantage in the warm sunshine. Tea (in fine china!) was served in the Orchard Room, and after a browse in the Highgrove shop and a leisurely lunch in Tetbury we were on our way home, well content with a very enjoyable excursion.

#### *Kath Boothman*



### Gloucestershire Rural Community Council Local History Committee Summer Meeting held at Northleach, Sunday 14th June

Northleach History Society hosted this year's meeting which was well attended by CLHS members. This is always a friendly event and provides the opportunity to meet up with members of other local history societies from around the county. Of course, it is always nicer if the weather is kind and on Sunday 14th June it was absolutely glorious and consequently we were able to see Northleach, in its picturesque rural setting, at its best.

This was a most enjoyable afternoon, well-organised by our hosts and with the most fantastic tea prepared by the Womens Institute. Displays covered every inch of wall space in Westwoods Hall, including the foyer, depicting aspects of Northleach's history. Special attention was given to the fact that Northleach was a 'planted' town with burgage plots leading off the High Street and a triangular market place. This was the subject of Peter Dawson's talk, illustrated with old maps and plans of Northleach and of other towns to compare and contrast. We were left with the puzzle as to why so many market places were apparently triangular when constructed. If any reader knows or can suggest why this is so, please contact me and I will let Peter know.

Enid Sly gave us a fascinating introductory talk about the development of Northleach over the years using early views and photographs from her own collection. Enid was especially pleased to be able to show a slide of a painting which the Society had only recently acquired of the market place from which, because of the existence today of one or two of the houses in the painting, it has been possible to ascertain the exact position of the original market-house.

After the talks the group of 60+ split into three groups, two exploring the town and the third going to the church, returning to the hall later for a very welcome tea.

*Elaine North*



### GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY AFTERNOON

*Saturday 3rd October 2009 from 1.15pm to 5.00pm*

*At Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester. Entry, including tea, £5.00 payable on door*

#### 'Housing the Poor: Social Housing for All'

Speakers: Professor Steven King on 'The Poor Laws and the Provision of Housing'

Judith Ellis on 'Almshouses, a Life of Privilege?'

Christine Seal on 'Cheltenham Poor'

Cecile Hunt on 'Almshouses in the Forest of Dean'



Pate's Almshouse, Cheltenham

Cheltenham Local History Society, along with many other local societies and organisations, will be attending this event. Any member able to help in manning the Society's sales tables and display, please contact Sue Newton (01242 243049). This year's theme is "Housing the Poor: Social Housing for all" and it is hoped that we shall have a new Chronology on sale compiled by Jill Waller. Further to my appeal for ideas and help with the display, if you would like to prepare some text (an A4 sheet on a specific aspect is often sufficient) or can provide photographs, drawings, documents, or plans etc. relevant to the above theme, please do get in touch. I would very much like to receive contributions from members with regard to:

- \* Cheltenham's development and economic growth
- \* Legislation—poor laws etc.
- \* Demolition of 'slum' areas
- \* Poverty and provision of housing today in Cheltenham

*Elaine North* (Tel. 01452 857803)

### MEMBERS' REQUESTS



A member of the Society has a quantity of old carpentry tools for sale (see photograph), including a set of woodcarving chisels in a carrying case. All date from the early 1900s. Any reasonable offer accepted. Phone (01242) 578438.

**David Carroll** is looking to purchase old copies of *The Patesian* (Cheltenham boys' grammar school magazine) for the years 1940-1956 and the years 1967-1975 inclusive. Please phone (01274) 411286 if you can help.

**Heather Atkinson** is still looking for information on the Delancey Hospital (see report of her talk on p5). Please phone 01242 232740 or e-mail [heather.atkinson9ao@yahoo.com](mailto:heather.atkinson9ao@yahoo.com) if you can help.

*For those members unable to attend the AGM on 28th April 2009 summarised reports are printed below.*

*Full minutes of the meeting will be circulated prior to next year's AGM.*

*If you did not have a copy of the accounts and would like one posted to you, please telephone Geoffrey North on 01242 857803 or e-mail geoffreynorth@blueyonder.co.uk*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 28TH APRIL 2009

### Election of Officers and Committee

*The following were elected:*

**Chairman:** Susan Newton **Secretary:** Heather Atkinson **Treasurer:** Sue Brown

**Committee:** Jill Barlow, Steven Blake, Kath Boothman, Joyce Cummings, Gwyneth Rattle, Sally Self, David Scriven, Dorothy Seton-Smith, Brian Torode

### Chairman's Report (*summarised*)

The Chairman, Mrs Susan Newton, said that in the last season the Society had maintained its record-breaking numbers: membership now stood at 315. The year's outings had begun with a tour of Frocester Court guided by the owner, Arthur Price. In June Aylwin Sampson had led a group on a 'walk and talk' around the Park, and the final trip had been to the Lido. All had proved both enjoyable and informative. The meetings, including the morning meetings at St Luke's, had all been well attended and had covered a wide range of topics. The raffle at the research and display evening in January had raised £100 for the Mayor's Charities. The third Local History Afternoon at St Andrew's Church, on July 20th, had seen even more organisations taking part than before. She thanked retiring members of the Committee for all they had done, and Jill Waller in particular for being willing to continue producing Chronologies and looking after the Library. The biggest change to the Committee was Geoff North's departure. Despite his own heavy workload he had been a highly efficient and thoroughly professional Treasurer, besides supporting the Society in various other ways on numerous occasions. She and the Society were most grateful to him for all his help. She welcomed Sue Brown, the new Treasurer, and new Committee members Sally Self and David Scriven. Thanks were also due to Tom Maslin, who had recently completed the demanding task of creating a new Society website and would be receiving a special 'thankyou'. She also thanked Kath Boothman and her Newsletter team, Aylwin Sampson, Mike Greet, Mike Rigby, Anne Dunn and Susan Hamilton for their various services to the Society.

### Treasurer's Report (*summarised*)

Mr North said that after eight AGMs he was very pleased to be standing there for the last time as Treasurer. Sue Brown, who was highly competent and experienced in dealing with Society accounts, had agreed to take over that role. He was not retiring altogether, however. Besides supporting the new Treasurer he would continue to be responsible, with Elaine, for the sales tables at events which were crucial to the Society's cash-flow and thus helped to keep subscriptions down. Sales income at morning meetings was so good that in effect these meetings were self-financing. He urged members to give unwanted books to Elaine either as donations or to be sold with a percentage going to the Society. Judy Smith's gift of books belonging to her late husband Peter had raised a further £100 in the past year. He thanked her again.

The accounts were showing another surplus, of £736.06. Two grants had been received: £200 from the Arts Council and £500 from the Severn Trent Community Fund. The Deposit Account was almost unchanged at £2209.71. Regular income had balanced expenditure, chiefly thanks to sales income from donated items and to the economies of scale associated with longer print runs of the Journal. He thanked Sally Self, the new Journal Editor, and her husband Russell for their continued efforts to sell Journals throughout the year. As stocks of some back numbers were quite high he had authorised a 'Buy one get one free' offer with immediate effect. The Chronologies did not make a profit and ways would have to be found of increasing sales, but he thought they were useful and should be continued. The Severn Trent Grant had financed the cost of the display created by Mary Nelson and Ken Pollock using photographs of the 2007 floods in Gloucestershire, and had also covered the colour printing of the Floods supplement in the current year's Journal. The previous year's summer visits had made an unexpected profit, which was attributable to the reasonable fees commanded by the guides and to Steve Blake's organising expertise. The cost of printing and photocopying relating to membership had been reduced by issuing a membership programme to members instead of a laminated membership card. Fewer renewal notices and reminders were needed now that so many members paid by Standing Order. The final figure under 'purchases' (£382.78) included the purchase, for retention or resale, of copies of the issue of the magazine *Who Do You Think You Are?* in which the Society had been featured. The Arts Council grant had been used to buy a roving microphone. He had fitted the Society laptop with speakers, which had proved very effective when it was used with the digital projector to show Lynda Hodges' DVD of Prestbury at St Luke's. In conclusion he thanked members for all their help and support over the past eight years. (He has since received Gift Aid repayments totalling £1382.69 as expected, and a further payment of about £400 is still awaited.)

The Treasurer presented a cheque for £100 to the Mayor for his Charities.

### Address by the President, the Mayor, Councillor Robin Macdonald (*summarised*)

The Mayor said that on a visit to St Mary's church that morning he had read the tablet commemorating Captain Skillicorne, who founded the spa which led to Cheltenham becoming a fashionable town, especially after the visit of King George III, Queen Charlotte and their daughter in 1788. From a small hamlet on the river Chelt, Cheltenham had since grown to become the second most important town in the county, but with the largest population. The Captain's son, William Nash Skillicorne, had been one of the first Mayors of Cheltenham. He himself was proud also to be Mayor and proud of the town's many attractions and of the people, such as Richard Pate and Francis Close, who had influenced its development.





## NEW PUBLICATION

### THE LAUNCH OF 'COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES OF CHELTENHAM', June 5th 2009

Writing is a generally enjoyable, sometimes frustrating, but usually solitary pastime, as many members of Cheltenham Local History Society will already be aware. I had spent four years alone in between paid work, family and other commitments, editing and developing Peter Smith's original hand-typed article for the Society's *Journal* into a 128-page book, complete with considerable further research, 130 illustrations and eight maps. It was therefore something of a shock to find myself at Parmoor House, home of the Cheltenham Civic Society, on 5 June 2009 in the august and noisy company of 50 or so others celebrating the long-awaited publication of *Commemorative Plaques of Cheltenham* (Reardon, 2009) over a glass of wine.

Stephen Clarke, Chairman of the Cheltenham Civic Society, began proceedings by telling the four and a half year story that had led to the publication of the book. He listed the many people who had helped with its publication, many of whom were present, including John Henry, Christine Tustin and Phil Newcombe from the Civic Society, and Helen Brown and Steve Blake from Cheltenham Local and Family History Library. Also thanked was experienced local publisher Nicholas Reardon who had guided me so patiently through the actual process of publication.



Author Sue Rowbotham with Judy Smith and Brian White at the launch

The Mayor, Councillor Lloyd Surgenor, said he was often asked by American visitors at civic events what famous people had come from Cheltenham. He was able to mention the best-known ones, of course, such as Edward Jenner and Gustav Holst, but he would now be able to dip into the book and speak more authoritatively about others who were perhaps less famous but equally worth celebrating.

Martin Horwood, Cheltenham's M.P., whose academic background is in history, said he found the stories of the people and events behind the plaques fascinating and enlightening, and that he too would find the book an essential reference work from now on. This was evidenced by the fact that Martin's copy of the book was already well-thumbed, and the corners of several pages had been turned down. He said, with a smile, that he had one small complaint - there was only one politician in the book - and joked that he would start a campaign to have blue plaques erected to others too.

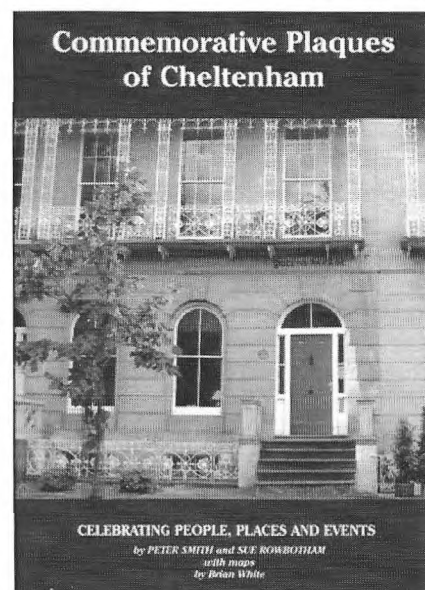
I was delighted that so many familiar faces from the Local History Society were present at the launch, and particularly pleased to see Judy Smith, who was representing her late and much-missed husband Peter, and Brian White, whose meticulously hand-drawn maps of the plaques' locations do so much to enhance the book. It was good to see Brian looking well again after his recent operation. My thanks to Heather Atkinson, Roger Beacham, Elaine & Geoff North and Jill Waller for coming along too. Everyone's support at the launch and kind comments on the book are really appreciated. My greatest thanks must, of course, go to Peter Smith, without whom the book would never have been written, and my only regret is that he was not able to share in the occasion.

*Sue Rowbotham*

#### **More about the book :**

This handy little book, laid out in an easy-to-understand format and a nice size to use as a guide book if wandering around the town, contains a Chronological List of Plaques, listed in order of unveiling, with the location of each and details of the sponsor or sponsors. Just one plaque was co-sponsored by Cheltenham Local History Society, that of JOHN GODING (1816-79) aptly described as 'Cheltenham Historian'. This one can be found at 3, Portland Street (now the Everest Restaurant) and was unveiled on 14th October 1995. The late Jean Lacock, former Chairman of Cheltenham Local History Society, attended the unveiling with members of the Society. Goding's book *Norman's History of Cheltenham* printed in 1853 is familiar to many of us and frequently referred to today and is considered to be the first comprehensive history of Cheltenham.

Copies can be ordered direct from Sue Rowbotham (Tel: 01242 580035, e-mail: sue.rowbos@tesco.net) for the special discount price of £6 (plus £2 postage & packing within the UK) with £1 going to CLHS. Please quote 'CLHS' when you order a copy.



## LOCAL NEWS

### Jenner Gardens

The aim to officially open the Gardens on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, the 260<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jenner's birth, had to be changed, due to the unplanned removal of the railings around the graves which had become unsafe, leaving dangerous sharp iron stumps. As I write this report on the 28<sup>th</sup> May, the work to replace these railings has just begun. The gardens will now be officially opened on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009 by the new Mayor of Cheltenham, Cllr. Lloyd Surgenor.

The Friends of Jenner Gardens last met on the 28<sup>th</sup> April and I am pleased to report that the main outstanding concern – the locking and unlocking of the Gardens – has now been resolved, as the Council have agreed to make arrangements for this. The Information Panels were installed in March and they look very good.

The planting is now in place and has been selected to reflect the environmentally challenging nature of this site – a very small, enclosed town-centre historic graveyard. The formal planting includes Rosa 'Molineux' (English rose), lavender 'Hidcote', *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Elizabeth' (cinquefoil), *Sarcococca humilis* (winter box), *Vinca minor* (lesser periwinkle), *Mahonia 'Charity'*, *Berberis darwinii* and *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (Chinese jasmine). Further wildflower planting has also taken place using Pictorial Meadows 'Marmalade' seed. It is hoped that by the end of June some of the new plants will be in flower.

Unfortunately no additional funding has come forward to date, so funding is still required for the bronze-resin bust of Edward Jenner, which is estimated to cost £10,000, and also for two additional seats. Any sponsorship or help via interested persons or organisations would be most welcome.

A report on the opening of Jenner Gardens will follow in the November newsletter.

*Mary Nelson*

### Sir Henry Elwes

Dr Henry Elwes, Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, was made a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian order in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Some time ago the previous Editor of this Newsletter mistakenly referred to Dr Elwes as 'Sir Henry'. In her subsequent apology she remarked that she was sure it was only a matter of time before he was given this honour as he fully deserved it! Well, now the Lord Lieutenant can rightly be addressed as 'Sir', and on behalf of the Society we would like to offer him our hearty congratulations.



## OBITUARY

### Eva Bailey (1923 - 2009)

Eva and Norman regularly attended Cheltenham Local History meetings so it was a great shock for members to learn that Eva had passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> May at Cheltenham General Hospital. Eva was always willing to help at events and keen to display and talk about her research on 'The Indian Connection with Cheltenham' about which she was so enthusiastic. Our thoughts are with Norman and their daughter Stella and family at this sad time. Stella spoke about her mother at the Service of Thanksgiving for Eva's Life held at Christ Church on 9<sup>th</sup> June, saying Eva was always organised and that it was typical of her to have left a short summary of her life to be used at her funeral. From this we heard that during World War II Eva served in the National Fire Service on operational duties for which she received the Civil Defence Medal. After the war she became an administrator at the University of Salford (formerly the Royal Technical College) where she met and married Norman who was a lecturer there. During their life together they moved around quite a lot. Stella was born while they were living in Portsmouth and in the 1960s the family moved to Cheltenham. Eva taught at both Christ Church and Benhall Junior Schools for quite some time and later became a writer of educational history books, and contributed to the BBC Schools programmes.

Besides being a valued member of Cheltenham Local History Society, Eva was actively involved with other local groups including Probus and the Park Residents' Association. Local history was a special interest and many will have heard her interesting and informative talks.

Eva worshipped at Christ Church and had been a sidesman there. A very strange thing happened just before her funeral service on 9<sup>th</sup> June. A leaflet caught Geoff's eye at the side of the church and, keen to learn a little more about the history of Christ Church, he walked over to pick up a copy of the leaflet only to find that it had been written by Eva! It seemed that Eva had had the final word.



*Elaine North*

*Note: If anyone would like a copy of the leaflet 'Welcome to Christ Church' please contact me (01452 857803) and I will happily post one to you.*

## FEATURE

## LOTTERY GRANT ENABLES LOCAL AMATEUR ARCHAEOLOGISTS TO MAKE NEW DISCOVERIES BY “SEEING THROUGH THE TREES”



A typical aerial photograph and a LIDAR surveyed ground surface of the same area.

Thanks to a grant just awarded to Gloucestershire amateur archaeological group GADARG under the Lottery “Awards For All” scheme, local amateur archaeologists can now become involved in learning about and exploiting the latest ground-breaking technology to discover and research hitherto undetected archaeological features in the countryside.

Aerial photography has long been a way of detecting archaeological features in the landscape but its weakness has always been the inability to see what lies on the ground beneath dense woodland foliage.

This has now changed with the advent of air-borne

laser technology called LIDAR (for light detection and ranging) which uses laser beams to detect and measure accurately physical features on the ground but covered by trees and undergrowth. Ancient earthworks, burial mounds and habitation sites, roadways and even Civil War emplacements are just some of the features that can potentially be revealed in this way. A LIDAR survey covering certain parts of the county has recently been carried out and the resultant data is now in the public domain and available for recording and interpretation.

The lottery money awarded to the Gloucester and District Archaeological Research Group (GADARG) is for a project that brings together existing and budding amateurs with their professional counterparts at the County Archaeological Service and any other local heritage groups and individuals young and old in the community interested in joining in this activity. Parishes for which LIDAR data is available include Cranham, Painswick, Upton St Leonards, Woodchester and Standish. Initially work is planned to concentrate on land belonging to the National Trust. By permitting access to their properties, the National Trust has shown that it clearly appreciates the potential value of this work.

The grant will pay for the raw LIDAR data to be processed, for the equipment needed to assess the evidence on the ground and to provide training for volunteers. The project will provide opportunities for hands-on experience in interpreting the LIDAR images and recognising and recording potentially interesting sites on the ground through a range of activities such as field-walking, geophysics and earthwork surveying and, for those less keen on the outdoor aspects, through documentary research. And there is no need to be concerned about lack of experience because training and supervision will be provided in all the techniques required.

Anyone interested in being part of this new and exciting initiative and wishing more information is invited to contact either Tony Roberts at the County Archaeological Service (daytime only, 01452 425705, e-mail: Tony.j.Roberts2@gloucestershire.gov.uk) or Ann Maxwell of GADARG (01386 751662, e-mail: dandamax@waitrose.com).

*Terry Moore-Scott*

## OBITUARY

### Eric Woodhead

A Yorkshireman through and through, Eric was born in Bradford and graduated in science from Leeds University. He came to Cheltenham to work as Patents Attorney at Dowty’s, where his association with Sir George led to many visits to America and Europe.

In 1960 he and Heather moved to Tivoli Road, making a home for their children there.

Eric’s wide interests found outlets in membership of Probus, Cheltenham Cricket Society, the Yorkshire Society (of course) and our local history society. He became a member of a small group researching the history of Tivoli Road, his legal experience being employed in unravelling the deeds of the houses and resulting in articles on this topic in our Journal; this activity greatly alleviated his grief over his wife’s death some years ago.

Eric was an avid reader. He also enjoyed explaining how magicians deceive us and had a wide knowledge of vintage films. His favourite comedian was Norman Evans.

He died on May 29th 2009, aged 88.

*Aylwin Sampson*



Eric with his younger daughter Sally

**CAN YOU HELP?**

**Bill Hartland**

Does anyone have any information, or personal memories, about the bandleader Bill Hartland who died last year? He and his band used to play at dances at the Town Hall and elsewhere in Cheltenham in the 1940s and 1950s. Any relevant photographs or press cuttings would also be very welcome.

**William or Charles Bridges** and his wife Ann, (a nurse born about 1811 at Monmouth), had sons Charles, born about 1828, and Richard born about 1831, both in Cheltenham. In the 1881 census Ann, a widow, is living with one of their sons in Malta Cottage, Malthouse Lane. William/Charles Bridges' occupation is given on both sons' marriage certificates as "veterinary surgeon, deceased". Ann was widowed in or before 1852. Can anyone help with any information on William/Charles Bridges?

**Dorothy Hilda Haines** gave her address as Prescott Hill Farm in 1937. Does anyone have any knowledge of her? In the 1936/7 electoral rolls there is no Prescott Hill Farm. There is a "Prescott Farm" linked with John Holborow who lived at Charlton Kings. Gilbert and Helen Holder lived at Hill Farm, Prescott. There is no one named Haines at Prescott, but at Gretton there is a Dorothy Haines living at "Glenbrook" Gretton, and Thomas and Emily Haines also living at Gretton. Any information regarding Dorothy, any history of the area and its farms and families would be appreciated.

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

**Heritage Open Days**

The Prestbury Local History Group is researching 'the ways we travelled', including both maps and methods of transportation through the ages in and around the parish of Prestbury, with a view to creating a display for the Heritage Open Days in September. They would be most grateful for any relevant information. If you can help please contact Lynda Hodges on 01242 580661 or e-mail [rhodges@doctors.org.uk](mailto:rhodges@doctors.org.uk)

**FEEDBACK...**

There was an excellent response to the query in the last issue about the whereabouts of the 8 surviving **Penfold pillar boxes**. Now that we have the information it seems a pity not to share it! So here is the list of locations, with street names and grid references:

1. St Paul's Rd, junction with Marle Hill Parade SO49229
2. Douro Road, near Malvern Place, SO939220
3. College Lawn, near Hammond Court, SO951213
4. Pittville Circus Road, junction with Hewlett Road, SO960225
5. Montpellier Walk, near the Rotunda, SO945219
6. Lansdown Place, junction of Queens Road and Lansdown Parade, SO938217
7. Bayshill Road, junction with Parabola Road, SO944221
8. Pittville Spa, junction of Evesham Road and Cleavelands Drive, SO953238

(There is also a ninth box, currently in the Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery store. It may be seen by appointment.)

We are not aware of a walk specifically designed to take in the 8 working boxes, but the respondent who supplied the list points out that it would be easy to construct one with the aid of a street map. For further information on pillar boxes he recommends the Letter Box Study Group, who cover pillar boxes throughout the UK. They can be contacted via their website: [www.lbsg.org](http://www.lbsg.org)



Box no. 5



Box no.6

**NEXT ISSUE**

Please forward items for inclusion in the NOVEMBER 2009 Newsletter by

**MONDAY 12th OCTOBER 2009**

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)

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