

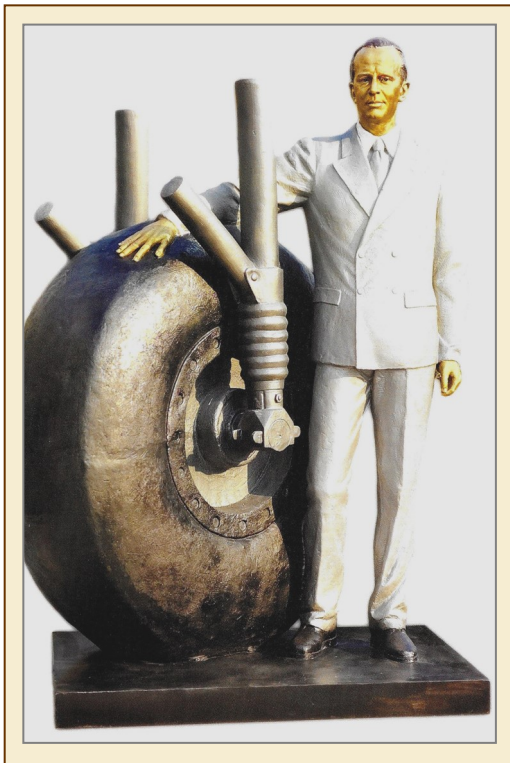


Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 112

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council
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<http://www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk>

July 2025



EDITORIAL

Many people will not need to be told who is the subject of this fine bronze statue, unveiled last year in Wiltshire. The object beside him (the wheel and undercarriage of a Lancaster bomber), provides a good enough clue: it is of course Sir George Dowty. He is thought of in Cheltenham rather as 'one of ours', because the hugely successful company he founded and ran here was so important to the local economy and employed so many people, but he was not in fact a local man.

Born in Pershore in 1901, the seventh of eight brothers (the eighth was his twin, Edward) he was educated at Worcester Grammar School. He joined the firm of Heenan and Froude in Worcester as an apprentice engineer, but soon moved to London to

work as a draughtsman with the British Aerial Transport Company. It was here, aged only 17, that he began to gain the training and experience, and to discover the vocation, that was to launch his extraordinary career. From there he moved on to other jobs....

There is so much more to tell! To find out what he was doing by the time he was 21, and what happened after that, please turn to page 16.

July 2025

Cheltenham LHS

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2025-26

We are continuing to hold evening meetings at St Luke's Church Hall, at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm on Wednesdays. All parking spaces at St Luke's Hall, both front and rear, are available for members' use. A donation of £2 from all attending is appreciated. For the benefit of members who are unable or reluctant to attend in person, talks will be recorded and can be viewed online for up to four weeks after the event.

Wednesday 17th September:

Margaret Jones—The Thomas Phillipps Collection at Thirlestaine House

Wednesday 22nd October:

John White—Roger Fenton, Mid-19th Century Photographer, and his Visit to Cheltenham

Wednesday 19th November:

Stuart Manton—The Genesis of Cheltenham South Town

Wednesday 21st January 2026:

Louise Ryland-Epton—Blood, Magic and Power: the Murder by Witchcraft of William Bayntun

Wednesday 18th February 2026:

Stuart Butler—The Elusive Digger Settlement at Slimbridge

Wednesday 25th March 2026:

Dr Steven Blake—George Rowe's 'Illustrated Cheltenham Guide' of 1845: then, now and in the intervening years

Wednesday 15th April 2026:

Tony Condor—Gloucestershire and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Wednesday 20th May 2026:

AGM followed by Sue Rowbotham—Arle Court: a House Through Time

MORNING LECTURES 2025-26

Tuesday 7th October:

Nicolas Wheatley—Funeral Trains: the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Connections

Tuesday 2nd December:

Dr Matthew Andrews—Origins and Development of the University of Gloucestershire

Tuesday 3rd February 2026:

Adrian Barlow—Down Winterbotham Road: the Enduring Legacy of a Cheltenham family

Tuesday 7th April 2026:

Research and Display event

FOR YOUR DIARY

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.leckhamptonlhs.weebly.com

Meetings normally take place in St Peter's Church, starting at 7.30 pm.

Tuesday 30th September:

Ray Wilson—The Industrial Heritage of the Cotswolds

Tuesday 28th October:

Christine Whitemore—'Mr Jenkins's Antediluvian Repository, and other Curiosities of 1850s Cheltenham and Leckhampton

Tuesday 25th November:

Steven Blake—What the Visitors thought: a Light-hearted Look at Cheltenham since the 1700s

Winchcombe History Group

Meetings are held at Abbey Fields Community Centre, Back Lane, Winchcombe GL54 5PR, at 7.00 pm (tea and coffee available) for 7.30 pm.

Monday 22nd September:

Richard Chatham—The History of Stoke Orchard Airfield

Monday 27th October:

Sean Callery—Cheltenham's Northern Lights: Tales of a Rival and a Racecourse

Gotherington & Area Local History Society

Meetings are held in Gotherington Village Hall, normally on the fourth Tuesday in the month at 7.30 pm. Visitors pay £3, refreshments included.

Tuesday 23rd September:

Josh Hargreaves—Archaeological Findings in the Meadow Development

Tuesday 28th October:

Richard Chatham—Ciser to Gliders: the History of Stoke Orchard

Tuesday 25th November:

Angela Dunsby—Schools, Scholars and Scolding

Swindon Village Society

Meetings are held in Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Visitors pay £3.

Wednesday 17th September:

John Heathcott—The History of the Cotswolds

Wednesday 15th October:

David Aldred—Hailes Abbey and the Holy Blood

For those members who were unable to attend the AGM on 21st May 2025, summary reports are printed below. If you did not have a copy of the accounts and would like one posted to you, please telephone the Treasurer on 01242 231837, or e-mail suebrown1492@outlook.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st MAY 2025

The Chairman Stuart Manton welcomed the Mayor Cllr Dr David Willingham, who as President of the Society had agreed to chair the meeting.

Election of Officers and Committee

The following were elected:

Chairman: Stuart Manton

Treasurer: Sue Brown **Secretary:** John Beard

Committee: Kath Boothman, David Jones, Mary Moxham, Alison Pascoe, Oliver Pointer, Maggie Winterburn

Chairman's Report (*summarised*): Stuart Manton's report took the form of a Powerpoint presentation with commentary. He said eight evening and three morning meetings had been held during the year, with talks on a diverse range of subjects from the history of mummers' plays to Jane Austen's will. Thanks were due to Mary Moxham for organising the programme, and to Alison Pascoe and John White for recording the talks for the benefit of members unable to attend. An extra meeting was held in February 2025 at Richmond Village with a talk by member Sue Rowbotham on the history of Arle Court. Two walks were organised, one exploring the Suffolks and the other tracing Cheltenham's literary connections. The main summer outing in June, expertly led by John Chandler, was to Salisbury and Old Sarum. There were also visits to the Holst Victorian House in August and to Broadway, including the Gordon Russell Museum, in October. The Society still provided a permanent display in Cheltenham Public Library. In addition, at Richmond Court there was a display on Dowty at Arle Court, and a display on Alfred Miles was shown at the GLHA Summer Afternoon. The Society also had a stall at the Cheltenham Arts Council Street Fayre. He thanked Sue Brown, Maggie Winterburn and everyone who had helped with these displays. The South Cheltenham History Festival in September, led and sponsored by CLHS and hosted by Bethesda Methodist Church, was a three-day free event with talks, walks and an exhibition celebrating the bicentenary of the Bath Road area. It attracted around 500 visitors with very positive feedback. Meanwhile, as part of the drive to bring in more young members, the Society was engaging with the history department at the University and working with local schools, notably Naunton Park School in 2024. Further improvements were made to the website, which in addition to Journals, Newsletters and Chronologies contained a wealth of resources such as street directories,

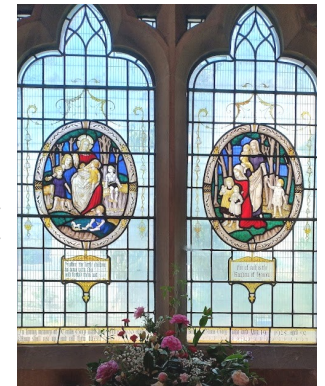
newspapers, research articles and oral history recordings. He thanked David Hewitt, the webmaster, and Alison Pascoe for looking after it all. Thanks were also due to Oliver Pointer and Kath Boothman, editors respectively of the Journal and the Newsletter, for keeping up the high standard of their publications, to Sue Robbins for looking after the Library and to Oliver Pointer (again) for running the Donated Books 'shop'. CLHS collaborated with various organisations during the year, notably GLHA and The Wilson. Sally Self and her team were still working at the Archives, supporting research for the Cheltenham volume of the VCH. The Society's most expert researcher Jill Waller had answered 92 local history enquiries since the last AGM. David Elder, Eric Miller and Sue Brown had received Cheltenham Arts Council Awards, while the Peter Smith Award was given to Eric Miller and to David Elder, who stood down as Chairman in August. Anne Bateman and Sue Robbins were now leaving the Committee. He thanked them, and the whole committee, for their hard work, and all members for their support.

Treasurer's Report (*summarised*): Sue Brown said the Society had had a successful year and its finances were sound. There was a net surplus of £521.01. Subscriptions had again increased, with membership rising from 374 to 399. Donations totalled £212.18, of which £120 related to Jill Waller's research. Some of the donations also resulted in a claim for Gift Aid, which was a valuable addition to the Society's funds. It was very pleasing to note that sales of donated books had raised £969.70. Entrance fees for meetings made a surplus of £377.19, and the 2024 summer visit showed a surplus of £271.50. The Research and Display morning in April cost £112.07, and the South Town exhibition cost £166.20. Turning to payments, Sue said that as before the new method of producing the Journal had kept the cost down and expenditure on postage had been minimised by hand-delivery of the Newsletter and Journal. The new website was well established and CLHS was also provisionally hosting the South Town History website. The cost of both during the year was £376.42. CLHS was grateful to receive a Cheltenham Arts Council grant of £250 towards the purchase of much-needed new display boards. The bank balance at 31 March 2025 was £12,184.46, of which £11,484.56 was in the unrestricted fund and £700 in the Peter Smith Award fund.

Address by the Mayor, Cllr Dr David Willingham (*summarised*): The Mayor said he knew from his own experience that research into local history could be very useful to councillors. It was often necessary to look at such documents as old tithe maps, for example, to discover the truth about commons and rights of way. On the St Benedict's site, where a special school was to be built, it seemed that there were pits of some kind, and historical records would have to be consulted to find out what they were. Work such as CLHS members did was important, and he appreciated it.

REVIEWS

On March 25th **Neela Mann** gave us a talk entitled **The Greys: Black Gold, Navy and Silver**, the story of one particular family based on two windows and three memorials in St Philip's and St James' church. The two windows were in memory of spinster sisters, Cecilia and Olivia Grey. Nearby were memorials to their mother Catherine Maria (d.1870) and their grandmother Elizabeth (d.1842), and a plaque commemorating their brother. The sisters led a quiet life but were of high social standing, the Greys having been wealthy landowners in Northumberland since the 17th century. In 1777 Ralph William Grey, the sisters' grandfather, married Elizabeth Brandling, the daughter of a colliery owner who gave the young couple a piece of copyhold land, ultimately the property of the Duke of Northumberland. The Duke owned the mineral rights on the land, but failed to obtain the Greys' consent before opening a coal mine to exploit the 'black gold' for himself. The resulting dispute led to court cases which dragged on for years, even after the Duke bought the Greys out for the equivalent of £10.5 million. Elizabeth Grey, who is buried in the crypt, had 11 children, the most successful of whom was Charles Edward Grey, MP for Tynemouth and later Governor of Barbados and other Caribbean territories. Another son, John, the father of Cecilia and Olivia, joined the army in 1805 and was present at the famous ball given by the Duchess of Richmond the night before the Battle of Waterloo. He was wounded in the battle, but recovered to marry Catherine Maria Grindall, niece of Warren Hastings' private secretary. Her family had made its fortune in India since the 1600s. Admiral Sir Richard Grindall, another uncle, sailed with Cook on his second voyage in 1772, lost his right arm in the French Revolution and was a friend of Nelson. John and Catherine Maria Grey had numerous children, and she was also a successful novelist, producing 21 novels mostly of the type mockingly dubbed 'silver fork novels' by Hazlitt because they described the clothes and habits of high society people who used forks to eat fish. Colonel John Grey died in 1842 when Cecilia and Olivia were about 9 and 11. Their brother John William became a Major-General and married the daughter of J R Scott who built Thirlestaine House. Another brother, Francis Lennox Grey, married a 16-year-old Irish singer called Louisa Caulfield and later served as a magistrate in St Lucia, where he drowned in a boating accident in 1870. Louisa, who had stayed behind in London, enjoyed success as an actress for many years under the name Lennox Grey, even touring America in the 1870s, but failing health and legal troubles ended her career, and despite marrying twice more she was in and out of the workhouse in her last decades. As for Cecilia and Olivia, they lived on in Cheltenham until the 1920s, dying at the ripe old ages of 89 and 92.



Our speaker at the morning meeting on April 1st was **Eleanor Rawling**. Her subject was **Walking Gloucestershire with Ivor Gurney**, and she had provided the audience with a sheet of extracts from his poems. She said she led walks in the area Gurney used to frequent and had published two books, detailing the routes he followed and relating them to his poetry. She herself had grown up on Cooper's Hill and, as a teenager reading his poems, had recognised the landscape around there from his descriptions. He had a strong sense of place. Even his war poems related to Gloucestershire. He joined the Gloucestershire Regiment in 1915 and was sent to France. In the first extract, from *That Centre of Old*, the memory of peaceful Cooper's Hill provides an antidote to the noise and terror of a bombardment. Born in Gloucester in 1890, the son of a tailor, Gurney won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, where he proved to be very talented but difficult to teach. He suffered from bipolar disorder, and found that solitary walking eased the anxiety and depression it caused, as well as giving him pleasure and enhancing his creativity. In an essay written in 1922 he told how the countryside inspired his music. The poem *When from the Curve* similarly conveys how the landscape inspired his poetry. He was a musician first, and began writing poetry only after meeting the poet F W Harvey, who encouraged him. Gurney was unusually specific about the places he referred to, which are often easily recognisable to the reader even when he does not mention place names. Eleanor showed a map of the area he wrote about, and said she had produced two books of walks by exploring it herself. As an example she showed a walk around Leckhampton, with a circular route marked on a map. She quoted from the poem *Leckhampton Chimney has Fallen Down*, in which he imagined how the landscape might change if that happened. In another poem *Old Thought* he imagined enjoying the sensation of running through the landscape. Gurney said in a letter to Marion Scott, his teacher at the Royal College, that he felt the Cotswolds were part of him and he needed to be there. The routine and discipline of army life was on the whole good for him, but following a gas attack at Ypres in 1917 he was sent home and after that was in and out of mental hospitals for years. For a while he was in Dartford: *Hell's Prayer* is one of several poems expressing the deprivation he felt when he was far from the Cotswolds. Another time he was in this area and walked out one day, heading for Leckhampton, as recorded in the poem *The Little Way*. From 1922 he was permanently in an asylum. He stopped writing in 1927 and died of tuberculosis in 1937, aged 46. Not much of his work was published in his lifetime, but in a volume of poetry published in 1919 he called himself a war poet, and it is in that capacity that he is best known and appreciated now.



On 16th April we had two speakers, **Ian Mackintosh and Ann Taylor**, both members of the Stroudwater Textile Trust, to tell us about **400 Years of Stroudwater Textiles**. Ann explained that the title referred to an area where cloth was made on an industrial scale. She showed a map marking the location of old fulling mills, many of which had belonged to religious orders. The first two in the Stroud Valley dated back to 1212. The industry grew there because both topography and geology, and above all the water supplied by the various rivers, favoured it. She pointed out four early mills on a half-mile stretch of the Slad Brook. The work of spinning and weaving on handlooms was done in cottages, then the cloth was collected for fulling in the mill. Ian handed round a sample of unfulled cloth, which was scratchy and frayed easily. The fulling process involved wetting it and pounding it with heavy water-driven wooden hammers until it



shrank to two-thirds of its original width, becoming thicker and stronger. Then, while still wet, it was brushed to raise the nap by a machine with teazels mounted on a rotating drum, and the nap was sheared to leave the cloth smooth—a skilled job. Ian passed round a piece of billiard cloth. Ann showed a picture of Stroud in the 1770s with lengths of cloth, some dyed red, stretched out on racks in the fields to dry. As time went by mills grew bigger, some with spinning and weaving on the upper floors, initially all still water-powered. The opening of the Thames and Severn canal in the 1790s had already helped the industry to prosper by improving communications, and the advent of steam in the 19th century expanded it further, enabling it to take on big contracts. Bowbridge Mill made scarlet uniform cloth for the army in the Crimean War. There were indigo dyeworks making navy and black cloth for menswear and for navy uniforms, the wool in this case being dyed before the cloth was woven. She explained how cochineal was used to make crimson, and how cloth dyed with this, known as 'Stroud cloth', sold well in the US and Canada. The East India Company was an important customer, buying £40,000 worth of goods from the Stroud Mills in 1815 alone. Later there was more efficient machinery, such as the 'spinning jenny' that produced a finer stronger yarn, and the shearing machine that took the hand shearer's job. Samuel Marling, who bought Ebley Mill in 1840 and installed steam power, won a prize for the best black cloth at the Great Exhibition in 1851. He bought the nearby Stanley Mill and became the biggest mill owner in the area. Other mills closed or amalgamated, and over time many new and specialised products such as fireproof and insulated fabrics were developed, often for export. After World War II Marlings made a variety of synthetic materials, with Marks & Spencer among their customers. Lodgemore Mill in Stroud is still working and trading worldwide, though employing far fewer staff, thanks to automation. Some mills in Stroud are open to visitors, and Ann and Ian urged the audience to come and see them.

After the AGM on 21st May **David Elder** gave us a talk on **Cheltenham's Iconic Buildings**. David said he would first give us a chronological tour. Our oldest building is the Minster, built around 1170 and with 14th century tracery in its rose window. Leckhampton Court, parts of which date back to the 1330s, is the oldest medieval house. It was saved from demolition in 1976 by Sue Ryder and her husband Leonard Cheshire. Charlton Park, now St Edward's School, was built in 1701 and stands on the site of a medieval hunting lodge. The oldest Regency buildings are in Royal Crescent (1805-c1820). The Playhouse, once the Montpellier Baths, was built in 1809 and the Masonic Hall, the first purpose-built masonic hall outside London, in 1823. The Pittville pump room, a fine spa building commissioned by Pitt in 1825, had to be restored after being used for storage in the war. The Municipal Offices were known as Harward's Buildings when they were completed in 1835, and are said to be modelled on the Louvre. The last important classical building in the town was the General Hospital (1849), which once had land around it used for growing vegetables. The Main Library, founded in 1857, originally housed the museum on its upper floor. The Sandford Lido (1935) cost £15,700 when it was built and attracted 1,000 visitors in its first year. A hotel and two houses, including Edward Wilson's home Westal, were demolished to make room for the Eagle Star building in 1968. Among recent developments were the GCHQ 'donut' (2003) with its concentric rings of offices, and the Princess Royal stand at the racecourse, which can hold 7,000 racegoers. Turning to diversity of style, David noted the former County Court building (1871) which is in the Italian Renaissance style. The Manor by the Lake (1858), once called Arle Court and for many years Dowty headquarters, is Gothic revival, while Middleton's All Saints church (1868) is French Gothic. There is much Gothic influence in the Ladies' College buildings too, notably in the use of stained glass and statuary. Alma House in Rodney Road has art nouveau features inside it, the Town Hall (1903) is Edwardian baroque and the Daffodil in Suffolk Parade, the first purpose-built cinema in Cheltenham, is pure art deco. Some buildings have unusual features. One such is the dome on the Ladies' College, built at a time when astronomy was on the curriculum. The Everyman Theatre (1891) by Frank Matcham has steel cantilevers supporting its balconies and a flat ceiling painted to look like a dome. Many buildings have been put to different uses over time. Thirlestaine House (1838) became a picture gallery under Lord Northwick. The old Cheltenham College pool is now used by the NHS for storage. The Montpellier Rotunda has been many things since its spa days: a social venue, a concert hall, a bank and now a restaurant. For a small town, David concluded, Cheltenham has an astonishing range of buildings.



Leckhampton Court

'Around Leckhampton' walk, Tuesday June 3rd and Monday 30th June.

It was a grey blustery evening on June 3rd—though the sun came out later—when a group assembled in the Bath Terrace car park for a walk with Anne Bateman round the streets to the west of the Bath Road. Anne showed a map of the parish, with church and manor house marked, and explained that Leckhampton can be traced back to Saxon times, the name meaning 'a homestead or settlement where vegetables (not necessarily just leeks!) grow'. We walked first to Great Norwood Street. Anne said the Giffards were lords of the manor of Leckhampton until the 1480s, when a daughter married into the Norwood family and the land passed to them. Over the years much of it was sold off. In the 19th century Charles Brandon Trye developed limestone quarries on the hill with a tramway (opened in 1810) running down into Cheltenham and across to Gloucester. This piece of history is recorded on a display board and various plaques at the Norwood triangle, where we stopped



At the Norwood Triangle

next before moving on down Gratton Road to the junction with Grafton Road. Many street names in Leckhampton, Anne said, derive from the names of fields: Gratton for instance (originally *graed tun*) means 'stubble field'. We were now at St Philip's and St James' church. Built in 1840 as St Philip's (Anne showed a picture of it) when the parish boundaries changed in 1864 it proved too small for the growing local population. The present church was built around the old one in 1882, with a tower added in 1903, and was renamed St Philip's and St James'. Across the road is the grand villa called Brandon House, built around 1835 for Henry Norwood Trye, son of Charles Brandon Trye the quarry entrepreneur. Now on a relatively small site, it would once have had much larger grounds. Walking on to the corner of The Park, opposite the Italianate villa called Cornerways, Anne told us how Thomas Billings bought Fullwood Park, as the land within the perimeter of The Park was called, and set out to convert it into Zoological and Botanical Gardens in time for Queen Victoria's coronation—a short-lived venture as it turned out. We turned left and came to the site of Tudor Lodge, a Gothic mansion built by Samuel Daukes of which only a single gatepost remains. Turning left again towards Shurdington Road Anne pointed out the Waterford Court flats on the opposite corner, which replaced a huge villa called Leckhampton Hall. Heading towards the Bath Road we came to Tryes Road (named after the landowning Trye family), where the fish and chip shop on the corner was once a grocery store run by people called Tombes who previously made pony-traps in Brandon Place nearby. We walked up Gratton Road to St Philip's Street (originally called Charles Street before the church was built) and so back to the car park after an enjoyable and interesting ramble.

Old Charlton Kings walk, Wednesday 18th June and Wednesday 2nd July. Mary Moxham was the guide for this walk around the lesser-known byways of Charlton Kings, where she herself had lived, she said, for 40 years. The parish was a large one, extending from Sandford Mill in the west to Ham Hill in the east, and was once part of the royal demesne of Cheltenham. The name 'Charlton' derived from 'churl', a Saxon word for a labourer, and it was apparent from old records that most of the population here were labourers. We walked through the churchyard. Mary said there had been a church on this site since about 1100, though the present one underwent a major refurbishment in the 1870s. Parish registers went back to 1638. We looked at a memorial to 14-year-old Robert Buckley Podmore, whose family lived at Charlton House, now the headquarters of Spirax Sarco. Pausing to look at the rose window, which is said be a copy of the one in the Minster, we came to the lychgate. Most lychgates are old, but this one was created after 1918 as a memorial to members of the Boulton family, one of whom was killed in the war. Walking up Church Street past some early 19th century houses called Waterloo Cottages, we stopped at the Charlton Kings Social Club, founded in 1888 by the local vicar as a working men's club, an alternative to the many pubs in the area where men spent their leisure time. It had many facilities including a reading room and library, billiard room, refreshment room, rifle range and a recreation ground at the back, and it proved very popular. Now it is just a social club for the whole community. Mary drew attention to a decorative plaster frieze below the lintel, given by Arthur Martyn (of H H Martyn) who lived nearby. Across the road was a set of stocks, a well-preserved bit of local history, near a large house that was once a forge and a brewery. Further on we came to a block of retirement flats on the site of a row of alms-houses. Passing the Baptist chapel (dated 1875) we turned left at the Merryfellow pub into School Road, once called Mill Lane. There we passed the former National School, built in 1873, opposite the Charlton Kings Infant School. Turning down a lane to the right we came to the Hearne Brook, a stream running through the gardens of several houses alongside a narrow lane which, Mary said (and showed us on a map) was once part of the main road to London. At the confluence of the brook with the Chelt (an area called Spring Bottom) we crossed a footbridge leading to Church Walk, which took us to Copt Elm Road. The handsome red brick houses here, Mary said, were built by William Russell who once owned the land. The bricks were made at Pilford. Passing through the churchyard again we came out opposite the Royal Hotel, built in 1830, formerly one of the many local pubs. It had been a good walk, and had taught some of us a lot about Charlton Kings.



Photo courtesy of Patrick Phair

SOCIETY NEWS

New members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Sarah Byard	Meg Powell	Dave Hall
Barnaby Simons	Peter and Pamela Stokes	Mark Harris
Michelle Greet	Alan and Gillian O'Gorman	June Bailey
David Willingham	Christine Alexander	James Bell
Beverley Doe	Frances Arrow	Richard Farrimond

With this newsletter are final reminders for payment of outstanding subscriptions which were due on 1st May. If no payment is made by 1st October I will assume you no longer wish to belong to the Society. Obviously I hope you remain as members.

Maggie Winterburn

Membership Secretary

Society Update

At the AGM in May I thanked and congratulated the members of our managing committee for their contributions throughout the year and explained that two members were standing down, after many years of service. The Society depends upon people willing to give their time to support our activities and I encourage you to consider how you might help, even in a modest way. Please speak to me, without commitment, if you would like to know more about this.

We believe that local history, appropriately presented, is of interest to people of all ages and we are particularly pleased to have included an article from students at the University of Gloucestershire in our 2025 Journal. Contact with the university is continuing and we hope to build upon this relationship. In addition, our 'Working With Schools' group has now drafted a local history resources pack for primary school teachers and will be 'market testing' this in the coming weeks.

Our speakers programme commences at 7.30pm on Wednesday 17th September, when Margaret Jones will be talking on 'The Thomas Philipps Collection'. Before then may I remind you about our day trip to Chipping Campden on Tuesday 19th August, including morning coffee at the Cotswold House Hotel, guided walks around the church and Old Silk Mill, and a visit to the Court Barn Museum of Craft and Design. All of these details may be found on our website.

Have a great summer.

Stuart Manton

OBITUARY

BERYL ELLIOTT 1933-2025

Beryl Elliott, who died on 31st March this year, was a keen member of CLHS from the 1980s, serving as Secretary from 1993-1995 and hosting Society coffee mornings at home with her husband John. Beryl's interest in history was initially sparked by her father's fascination for the Roman and mediaeval periods, but it was not until many years later, after moving to Cheltenham to take up a position at GCHQ, and living for 15 years opposite a field of ridge-and-furrow, that curiosity led her to enrol on a course on 'Landscape and documents'. Beryl was soon hooked on tithe maps and inclosure awards, censuses, wills and indentures, with a focus on her own parish of Prestbury, and especially the 17th and 18th centuries.

Beryl was a regular contributor to the Journal and wrote a number of well-researched articles on Prestbury including 'Prestbury Park Farm' in J3 (1985), continuing up to 'A Quaker in 18th Century Prestbury' in J38 (2022). Beryl also made another valuable contribution to the Society – an index of Journals 1 to 10 which was included in J11. She and John were involved with the CLHS project team which undertook the indexation of the Cheltenham Examiner newspaper, which is still available on our website for all to access and use. In addition Beryl was an occasional speaker at Society meetings, usually on her favourite topic of Prestbury, but also covering 'How the sewers came to Charlton Kings', and was Secretary of the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives in its early days in the 1990s.

Beryl's husband's family haulage firm of Elliotts, with their cream and brown liveried lorries, was based for many years in Bouncer's Lane before relocating to Bishop's Cleeve.

Alison Pascoe

STOP PRESS!

There are still a few coach seats available for our outing to Chipping Camden on Tuesday 19th August. Tickets cost £35, payable in advance.

If you would like to join the group, please contact the Treasurer Sue Brown at suebrown1492@outlook.com, tel.01242 231837.



FEATURE



Latin Inscriptions on the Montpellier Pump Room

The editorial in the last Newsletter, with its early engraving of the Montpellier pump room, reminded me that a few years ago my son was contracted by Cheltenham's newest restaurant to put up a new flag to fly above the building that was once Lloyd's Bank and is now the Ivy Brasserie.

He noticed, from his elevated panoramic view above the Rotunda in a cherry picker, high above the colonnade, that there appeared to be an engraved inscription on the original front facade, which the colonnade added later has obscured from the pedestrians below. Fortunately, my son had the presence of mind to take some photos.

The only reference I can find that mentions this inscription in all the books I have on Cheltenham's history is that in Rowbotham & Waller's book *Cheltenham – A History* (Phillimore 2004) p26: 'Behind the stone lion above the entrance, and, curiously, out of sight from the ground, is the carved motto *Infirmo capiti fluit utilis utilis a/vo* which roughly translates as 'Our waters cure head and stomach aches'.



The inscription is from Horace (65-8 BC, the leading lyric poet in the time of Augustus) and, in the days when such spas were fashionable this was a fairly common legend that could be found over the top of other spa pump rooms of that period from Cumbria to the Isle of Wight. But as in Cheltenham, such classical inscriptions became less fashionable in later Victorian times and were thought vulgar and covered over, or removed altogether. Hippocrates in his work, 'De Aere, Aquis, et Locis', (On Airs, Waters, and Places), stated that, 'those with loose bowels should opt for harder, more crude and salty waters'. Surely this more than adequately sums up Cheltenham's spa water as a remedy, albeit a little less subtly than Horace's phrase. The poem from which this passage comes was addressed to his friend, Quinticius, and is number 16 in the first book of Epistles. In the poem Horace describes the estate where he is now living,

through which 'a stream ... flows, bringing its aid to infirm heads and stomachs'.

Pearson Thompson commissioned the famous London architect J B Papworth in 1825-6 to add a dome to the Long Room at Montpellier, which has since been better known as the Rotunda. As is obvious from the photos, the engraved inscription above the original Montpellier pump rooms was meant to be seen and appreciated by its patrons.



Further embellishments for Montpellier Spa included rustic gardens with an avenue of trees which formed a walkway towards the town centre. The gardens were laid out with exotic plants, rustically fenced winding paths, a Chinese pagoda and the Italian marble fountain, which had been 'liberated' by Napoleon from its piazza in Genoa only to be 'liberated' again at sea by the British, and found a home in Montpellier's new garden. It now graces a secluded alcove on the Broad Walk, looking a little lost and forlorn. The area around the splendidly dominant Rotunda was further developed, with the avenue of trees being replaced by the famous row of classically fronted shops divided by a series of white Greek caryatids.

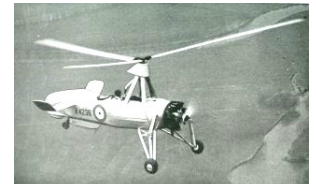
However, the inscribed motto from Horace in Montpellier seems not to have set a fashion trend; with the exception of *Salubritas et eruditio*, 'Health and Education', Cheltenham's Latin motto from 1887, the paucity of Latin inscriptions, epitaphs, commemorations and religious dedications in Cheltenham is a little surprising.

Of course, spas built or developed by the Romans had Latin names, e.g. *Aquae Sulis* – 'Spa Town of Sulis Minerva'. *Aquae Calidae* – 'Spa of Hot Springs'. Sul, or Sulis, was the name of the Celtic goddess of hot springs, whom the Romans identified with their goddess, Minerva. The spa at Buxton was *Aquae Arnemetiae*, 'Waters of Arnemetia', who was the Romano-British goddess of sacred groves. Droitwich Spa's Latin motto is *Sal Sapit Omnia*, 'Salt Flavours all'. But considering the great passion for English spas, springs and baths built in the Greco-Roman classical style between 1750 and 1850, it is odd that there is not an abundance of classical Latin inscriptions adorning their fronts and portals—or is it that perhaps they are still there, but have just been hidden, or covered over like that in Montpellier?

David Jones

The Dowty Story continues...

In 1921 George Dowty joined the design office of A V Roe & Co, and by the age of 21 he had designed the landing gear for a Cierva Autogyro (pictured). His precocious skill as a designer was all the more remarkable because at the age of 12, experimenting with photographic chemicals, he had lost the sight in his right eye when a bottle of magnesium powder exploded. From 1924 to 1931 he worked for the Gloster Aircraft Company, focussing on undercarriage design and developing new components. Then he decided to set up a company of his own called Aircraft Components Ltd, and in June 1931 resigned from Gloster Aircraft and moved to Cheltenham. It was an invention of Dowty's own, an internally sprung wheel, that brought the company its first success when the Kawasaki Company of Japan ordered six internally sprung undercarriage wheels. To build them Dowty rented a mews workshop in Lansdown Terrace Lane. This unprepossessing little building (left) can still be seen.



In 1933 he had 11 employees, and the number went up to 45 the following year when Dowty got his first large production order, making undercarriages for the Gloster Gladiator and tailwheels for the Bristol Bulldog. In 1935 he leased a factory and bought Arle Court.

Here we call upon an eye-witness. CLHS member Terry Elmes, writing in this Newsletter in 2008, cast his mind back to 1934:



'When I became an apprentice at Aircraft Components Ltd, Sir George Dowty's first company, the offices were in Bath Place and the workshops were in Grosvenor Place South... One day during the second or third year of my apprenticeship I was in the drawing office upstairs at Bath Place when a message came to pack everything up and load it into a lorry—we were moving to Arle Court. The Court had been empty for a number of years and Mr Dowty had bought it cheaply, so the story went, for £6,000. There was a caretaker in the cottage adjoining the lane who had kept the house somewhat shipshape. So we moved in. The drawing office was housed in the ballroom, Mr Dowty and his first wife had their office in the library nearby, and other offices were in the bedrooms. The stables were converted into workshops containing machines and benches.'

In the next few years the company grew rapidly, and by 1939 there were factories in Canada and America as well as in other parts of Britain. During the war years George Dowty's talents as an aeronautical engineer put his company at the heart of the battle, contributing a variety of vital components to almost all British aircraft.

After the war Dowty diversified, applying his interest in hydraulics to new products such as pit props and industrial pumps. Aircraft Components had already been renamed Dowty Equipment in 1940, and Dowty Seals was founded in 1945. A new factory opened at Ashchurch in 1946, and companies were acquired in Wiltshire and Coventry.



Portrait of George Dowty by James Gunn, ARA



In 1948 George Dowty married for the second time. His wife, Marguerite Gowans, was Canadian and they had a son and a daughter. Meanwhile he was active in the Royal Aeronautical Society, being elected President for 1952-3. Two years later he was awarded its Gold Medal.

By this time there were so many Dowty companies, both founded and acquired, that it was decided to govern them as a group. Dowty Group Ltd, with its headquarters at Arle Court, was formally incorporated in 1954.

In 1956 George Dowty at last received the recognition he had long deserved when he was knighted 'for services to industry'. He was also given the Freedom of the Borough of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

Sir George died 50 years ago this year at his home in the Isle of Man. The statue shown on the front cover is one timely tribute marking this anniversary. Another is the recent publication in Worcester of his diaries, edited by his last secretary.

He may not have been strictly 'one of ours', but we can be proud that one of the greatest engineers of the 20th century built his career in this town.

Kath Boothman



Sir George at Buckingham Palace.

FEATURE

Here is another contribution to our occasional series of reminiscences

MEMORIES.....

I was born and brought up in Cheltenham. I'm in my late '70s now, yet I have distinct recollections of that time.

I started at the Grammar School in the High Street in 1957 and left in 1965. Soon after that, the old school was demolished. (I wasn't responsible for its demise, honest!) Everywhere was accessible in those days. For example, after school we'd join friends in Geraldine's basement café for a coffee and a chat.



The old grammar school in the High St

In the summer term it was easy to obtain your class registration, then just stroll out of school, thereby missing the afternoon lessons. The local swimming pool, the Lido, was the preferred place to go, especially on a Friday afternoon.

It wasn't difficult to get a job in the 1950s, providing you had turned 14 years old. Thanks to a friend who already did part-time work, I was able to start at the local newspaper, the Gloucestershire Echo, fetching and carrying bundles of papers from printing press to bench and out to the bus depot, where the papers were put on buses to be distributed to various local areas. In the '50s the Echo was located in Post Office Lane in the middle of Cheltenham, but many years later it moved out of town (and is now based at Gloucester Quays.)

My next job was in Montpellier, in a garage owned by Haines and Strange. Part of this job was doing a five-minute car wash. There were eight of us providing this service, either students like me or ex-Borstal lads. Needless to say, the wage wasn't great. I was doing this in the winter of 1962-63, the worst winter of the early '60s. It was very cold and it was hard work, especially as there was a constant stream of dirty cars waiting, but I must have liked the job because I went back there at Easter!

Another workplace was the Gloucestershire Dairy in Imperial Lane. It was situated between the Cadena Café and a music shop, neither of which is there any more. I was employed by the Dairy for several years and did a variety of jobs. My last task there was when the boss gave me a milk float to drive (even though I hadn't passed a driving test) and simply equipped me with an 'L' plate and a load of milk, orange juice, eggs etc. I managed very

well, except for one incident when, in trying to turn a tight circle in a small courtyard, I deposited most of my load on to the ground! I didn't get into trouble, surprisingly. I just phoned the depot and another float brought me more goods. Actually, all the time I was there breakages were invariably treated casually! Sadly, there is now no sign at all of the Depot, the Café or the shop. The former was demolished and turned into a car park. Some tiles on a wall are the only evidence left.



A milk float such as David might have driven

Our school lunch times were lengthy, allowing us to get out and about. Therefore it wasn't unusual for more senior pupils to walk up the High Street towards the Strand, where there was an upstairs café called the Aztec. Here a group of us would spend time playing on the pin-table and listening to records on the juke box. Every Saturday morning a crowd of us would gather in the Town Hall. It was an opportunity for teenagers to drink coffee, chat and listen to the music of the day. It was called 'Disc Break', and it was someone's great idea.

I now live in Bradford, but I do return to Cheltenham to re-live old memories.

They were happy days!

David Carroll

Cheltenham Heritage Open Days 2025

Cheltenham Heritage Open Days is part of a national festival celebrating our heritage and in 2025 will cover a wide variety of themes, through many free walks, talks, displays and open venues. The programme will run from 12th–21st September and the brochure will be available to download from 18 July via the Civic Society website www.cheltcivicsoc.org. Alternatively, paper copies can be picked up from the Heritage Open Days stand at the Farmer's Market, in the Promenade, from 9am-2pm on Friday 8th August.



FEATURE

ACQUIRED AT AUCTION

Dr John Moore Walker's prescription book

In July 1877, Dr John Moore Walker arrived in Cheltenham from Eastbourne and took up residence at 30 Winchcombe Street. He started to see patients almost at once, treating the little girl of Mrs Lawrence of Glenfall Street and several other small children from Union Street, Beaufort Buildings, and Jersey Street. His adult patients included Alfred Miles, coachbuilder of Albion Street, a name very familiar to CLHS members for his scrapbook history of the town! By 1880 Dr Walker had relocated to Crescent Terrace, between the Promenade and Royal Crescent, and after working as one of the Medical Officers of the Cheltenham Provident Dispensary at 49 St George's Place, he left Cheltenham in the mid-1880s, moving to Birmingham where he continued to work as a medical practitioner until his death aged about 70 in 1913.

Dr Walker's prescription book (1877-1879) came up for auction in February 2025, and CLHS were approached by Gloucestershire Archives with a request to contribute to a bid to be made by the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives (FoGA). The auctioneer's catalogue listed it as a Cheltenham pharmacist's book, and it was

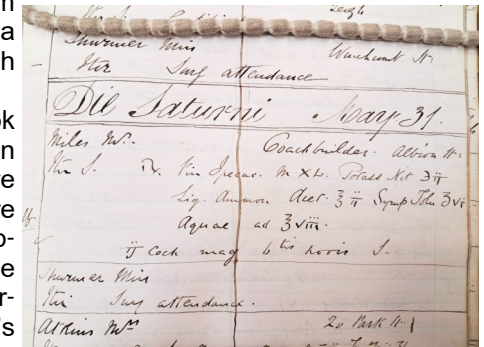


Image: Gloucestershire Archives D17049/1

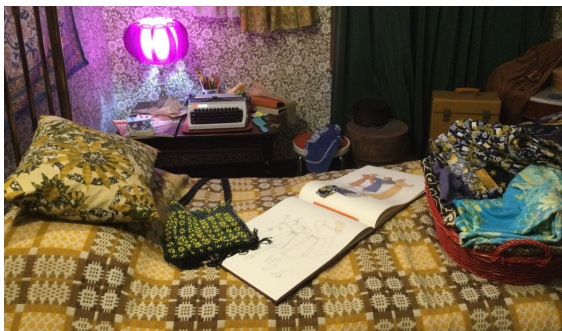
only later that we identified that it in fact belonged to Dr Walker who had used it to record his patients and prescriptions. We were pleased to be able to make a contribution (with additional support from a small number of CLHS members) towards FoGA's successful bid. The first part of the book, from January to June 1877, covers Dr Walker's practice in Eastbourne before his move to Cheltenham in July, and continues until August 1879. At a much later stage it evidently came into the hands of Edith Anne Howell of Erdington, Birmingham, who inscribed her name in the front, but its subsequent path to the auctioneer is unknown.

A small team has started to transcribe the names and personal details such as addresses, occupations and amounts paid, where given, although not the detailed medical prescriptions, and it is intended that a fuller article on Dr Walker's life and career and an analysis of the book's contents will be written up at a later stage.

Alison Pascoe

MORE FOR YOUR DIARY

From Bombs to Bellbottoms July 19th—September 21st



What was Holst Victorian House like before it was a museum?

To celebrate 50 years since it opened its doors to the public, the museum will host a new temporary exhibition, which will see two of its 19th-century spaces turned into 20th-century room sets.

Through these rooms, carefully curated to tell the stories of past inhabitants, visitors will gain a fascinating insight into the house's domestic life during the past century. A specially designed newspaper will help guide visitors around these exciting spaces, supplementing the Victorian Room Guide for the other rooms.

Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10.00 am - 4.00 pm.

APPEAL from the Historical Association, Gloucestershire Branch

We are looking for a few volunteers to join our committee, not to take on any of the 'offices' but just to be rank-and-file committee members, contributing ideas for talks and outings, helping to look after visiting speakers and assisting generally with publicity, correspondence etc.

Our meetings (which are sometimes advertised in this Newsletter) are generally held either at the Park Campus of the University in Cheltenham or at the Oxstalls Campus in Gloucester. Some are on Zoom.

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact our secretary Robert Sutton on 01242 574889 or email histsocglos@gmail.com

A message from BGAS

The BGAS library has recently moved from Hardwick to Frances Close Hall campus and is due to re-open on 30th July. The number to telephone to book an appointment to visit is still 01242 714617.



BOOKS FOR SALE



Prompted by our Summer outing to **Chipping Campden**, this time we feature some of our Cotswold related books.

On Chipping Campden itself: *Campden House and the Almshouses* (2012) £0.50; **F W Coldicott**, *Memories of an Old Campdonian* (1994) £3.00; **Stephen Nixon, ed**, *A Guide to St James' Church, Chipping Campden* (2013) £1.00; **Edward R Vyvyan, ed**, *Dover's Annalia Dubrensia A Reprint* (Cheltenham, 1878) £10.00; **Jane Wilgress**, *Alec Miller Guildsman and Sculptor in Chipping Campden* (1987) £2.00; **Jill Wilson**, *Mr Harrison Is Missing The Campden Wonder – a true story?* (2010) £3.50.

General: **Kenneth H Green**, drawings by **Gerald Gardiner**, foreword by **Gordon Russell**, *The Cotswolds an introduction* (1952) £3.00; **Charles & Alice Mary Hadfield**, *Introducing The Cotswolds* (1976) £3.00; **Douglas Jack**, *Around and About the Cotswolds* (c.1970?) £1.50; **Christopher Knowles**, for **Cheltenham Tourism**, *The Romantic Road* (c1991) £1.00; **H J Massingham**, *Cotswold Country* (The Face Of Britain series) (1941-2) £4.00; **G F Nicholls**, paintings, described by **Francis Duckworth**, *The Cotswolds* (A & C Black, 1908) £8.00; **Gordon Ottewell**, *Literary Strolls around The Cotswolds and The Forest of Dean* (2000) £3.00.

Aylwin Sampson, *Town Walks in the Cotswolds* (Chipping Campden, Broadway, Moreton-in-Marsh, Winchcombe, Stow-on-the-Wold, Northleach, Burford, Painswick & Tetbury) (1992) £1.50; *More Town Walks in the Cotswolds* (Tetbury, Burford, Moreton-in-Marsh, Chipping Campden) (1992) £1.00; *Town Walks in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds* (Burford, Chipping Norton, Woodstock, Witney) (1997) £2.50.

Broadway: *A Guide And Map Of Broadway* (1971) £1.00; **Jeremy Myerson**, **Gordon Russell**, *Designer of Furniture, 1892-1992* (1992) £10.00.

Painswick: **St Clair Baddeley**, *The Official Guide To Painswick The Queen of the Cotswolds* (1930s?) £3.00.

Slad: **Valerie Grove**, *Laurie Lee: The Well-Loved Stranger. The Laurie Lee Memorial Lectures No.1* (2000) £3.00; **Patricia M Hopf**, *The Turbulent History of a Cotswold Valley The Upper Slad Valley and The Scrubbs* (2006) £7.50.

And finally: **Cotteswold Dairy – Harry & Roger Workman**, *Fuelled By Milk Childhood memoirs from Harry Workman, how he founded Cotteswold Dairy and 80 years on* (2017) £5.00; **Alan Sutton**, *The Cotswolds of one hundred years ago* (1990) £4.00; **L V Gibbings, ed**, *The Cotswold Sheep* (1995) £4.95.

The full list of donated books for sale (often updated with new stock) can be found on our website: <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk> under the resources tab.

DEERHURST LECTURE 2025
The Stained Glass at Deerhurst Church
 by Robert Walker



13th SEPTEMBER 2025 at 4.00pm
ST MARY'S CHURCH, DEERHURST

Tickets*: £10.00 / Students £5.00
 *available on the door from 3pm (includes refreshments)

PROGRAMME: 2pm a guided tour of the church
 • 3pm refreshments • 4pm lecture •

www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk

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FEATURE

A GARDEN ROLLER RESTORATION

Stephen Holmes, of North Bristol, recently contacted the CLHS having just completed the impressive restoration of a garden roller, manufactured by T. W. Harvey & Sons of Cheltenham. Stephen was wanting to know more about the maker of this roller, which probably belonged to a family member, Frederick Edmonds of Old Bath Road, in the 1930s.



Born in Chipping Sodbury in c.1833, Thomas Watts Harvey was apprenticed to a Worcester ironmonger, for whom he worked for 26 years. In 1874 he moved to Cheltenham, taking on the business of the late John Hemming Wilks, at 192 High Street (now no. 345); the words 'Wilks Ironmongery' can still be seen in relief against the brickwork above the first floor. In c1898 Harvey moved his business to 180-181 High Street (now nos. 313-317, the Frog & Fiddle pub), near the Bowling Green. All manner of ironmongery, from stoves to wire netting, was produced in extensive workshops to the rear. A new company was formed in July 1900, T. W. Harvey & Sons Ltd, and when Thomas died in 1912 the business was continued by his sons; the name of the company remained unchanged. The firm was taken over by Haine & Corry Ltd, Gloucester builders' merchants, in 1964. I am sure Thomas Watts Harvey would be proud to see one of his garden rollers so beautifully restored.



Jill Waller

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the November 2025 issue by
Monday 13th October 2025

to the Editor: Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End Cheltenham GL50 2QA

Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: kboothman3@gmail.com

We are always very pleased to receive contributions from members—articles of any length, interesting facts and photos, memories, comments, are all welcome.