



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 113

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November 2025



EDITORIAL

This marble statue on a traffic island opposite the Rotunda is a familiar sight, but I wonder how many people have ever looked closely at it. The tall granite plinth on which it stands is a multiple drinking fountain, with lion-head taps and bowls for dogs on three sides, and on the fourth a horse trough, currently planted with colourful begonias. Behind the flowers one can just make out an inscription, which reads: 'In memory of HM King Edward VII "The Peacemaker" 1901-1910. Presented to the town of Cheltenham by the late J W Drew Esq and Mrs Drew, of Hatherley Court Cheltenham'. Joseph Webster Drew was a retired solicitor, originally from London, who had evidently enjoyed a successful career in this town and wished to give something back. He had announced his gift in a letter to the Mayor in February 1913, stating that the statue was being made by Messrs Boulton (the designer was the firm's chief artist Ambrose Neale) and 'represents the late King Edward as the

Spirit of Peace leading the Spirit of Mischief to the still waters'. The King's designation as a peacemaker referred to his support for the negotiations that led to the signing of the *entente cordiale* between England and France in 1904. He is shown here informally dressed in a Norfolk suit, such as he might have worn at Sandringham. Sadly, Mr Drew died in June 1913 and thus did not live to see his statue erected.

Kath Boothman

November 2025

Cheltenham LHS

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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 21st January 2026:

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

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

Morning lectures take place at St Luke's Church Hall on Tuesdays. A donation of £3 from all attending is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no extra charge) from 10.00 am and lectures begin at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the hall is limited. If you need to reserve a space please contact Alison Pascoe, tel. 01242 519413 or email administrator@cheltlocalhistory.org.uk

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 25th November:

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

Tuesday 27th January 2026:

Kirsty Hartsiotis—The Arts & Crafts Movement in Cotswold Churches

Tuesday 24th February 2026:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 31st March 2026:

Ian Boskett—Tolkien and the Cotswolds: the Shaping of Middle Earth

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 25th November:

Angela Dunsby—Schools, Scholars and Scolding

Tuesday 16th December:

Robin Burton—The History of Christmas and Wassailing

Tuesday 27th January 2026:

Dr Simon Draper—Surnames and Local History

Tuesday 24th February 2026:

Ian Boskett—A walk down Memory Lane via steam, tram and horse

Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Meetings are held at the Dunrossil Centre, Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin St, Gloucester, GL1 3DW, beginning at 7.30pm. Parking is available, entry is free and refreshments are provided.

Wednesday 26th November:

Dean Irwin—Eleanor of Provence, Gloucester and the Jews

Wednesday 28th January 2026:

Rebecca Lane—Recording and Investigation of the Fleece Hotel, Gloucester

Wednesday 25th February 2026:

Richard Coates—National and Local Place-names

REVIEWS

Local History Afternoon, Saturday July 12th

This event took place, as on the last occasion in 2022, at St Andrew's Church, Montpellier. The theme three years ago was 'Trade and Industry'. This time it was 'Hospitality', focussing chiefly on hotels, pubs and lodg-



ing houses. The Society's own display in the Main Hall told stories of a vast number of public houses and hotels all over Cheltenham, some now lost but many others still extant, while displays by other societies and organisations in the Garden Room were designed, as usual, to

reflect their own areas and their own particular interests. The afternoon began with a brief introductory talk in the Church, and this was immediately followed by the first of two talks, given by Helen Wallimann. Helen grew up in the Savoy Hotel, and her title was 'Hospitality in a Changing World: The Savoy Hotel, 1945-1986'. Her book *Living in Hotels* was on sale in the Mews Room, where there was also a second hand book stall. Later Steven Blake gave a talk entitled 'What the Visitors Thought: a light-hearted look at Cheltenham since the 1700s'.

Two guided walks were on offer, both leaving at 2.15pm. Although it was an exceptionally hot day, a number of willing walkers duly assembled for each of them. David Elder led his group to discover some of the boarding and lodging houses where visitors to the spa used to stay, while Alan Jones' party went to see some 'historic hostelrys and by-gone boozers', otherwise known as pubs. When they returned most of them were glad to find a seat, a cup of tea and a piece of cake in the Main Hall, where refreshments were served all the afternoon.



When the event closed at 5.15 pm it was generally agreed that despite the excessive heat it had been, like previous such events, well-attended, and altogether a successful and enjoyable occasion.

*OBITUARY***Anthea Jones (1935-2025)**

Gloucestershire has lost one of its most distinguished local historians this autumn, with the death of Dr Anthea Jones on 20 September, a few weeks before her 90th birthday. A gifted teacher, Anthea had been head of history for 15 years and director of studies at the Cheltenham Ladies' College, before spending a long and productive retirement immersed in her county's history and topography. She wrote exemplary histories of Tewkesbury and the Cotswolds, and a masterly, beautifully illustrated history of Cheltenham (*Cheltenham, a new history*, 2010). She edited Bristol and Gloucestershire meeting-house certificates for the Gloucestershire Record Series (vol. 32), masterminded for BGAS an online database of the 1909 Inland Revenue valuation for the county, and produced a study of the Gloucestershire engravings of Johannes Kip. On a wider stage she wrote the classic *A Thousand Years of the English Parish*, and editions of the travellers Thomas Baskerville and John Walker. She was an authority on garden history too, and was contemplating a study of apple orchards when her years caught up with her. Her insightful intellect, enthusiasm and curiosity never left her, and conversation with her about history or current affairs, right up to her final days, was always a delight.

Dr Anthea Evelyn Jones was born in Wanstead, Essex in 1935, attended Felixstowe College for Girls in 1948-53, read Modern History at St Hugh's College, Oxford in 1954-7, and was awarded a doctorate from the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1980. She was the wife of Glyn Jones (who predeceased her) and the loving mother of sons Jonathan Newman (also predeceased) and Peter Newman. She had five grandchildren. Anthea lived at Charlton Kings until a few months before her death in a Cheltenham nursing home.

John Chandler

(with information from Peter Newman)

**Visit to Chipping Campden, Tuesday August 19th**

The party left by coach from Royal Well at 9.00 am. After a pleasant run of about an hour with occasional commentary from our well-informed guide Mary Moxham as we drove through or past such attractive Cotswold villages as Stanton, Willersey and Weston Subedge, we arrived in Chipping Campden in good time for morning coffee. This was served at the grade II listed Cotswold House Hotel near the market hall, where we afterwards met our local guides. We were divided into three groups. First of



all our guide Vin told us something of the history of the town. The Romans brought sheep to the Cotswolds, which led to the town's rise as a wool trading centre in the middle ages. Henry de Gondeville, lord of the manor under Henry II, gained a market charter for the town in 1180 and encouraged craftsmen to settle here, adding to its prosperity. As we walked along the High Street, Vin explained that the houses were nearly all much older than their 17th century frontages and had long narrow burgage plots behind them, often with workshops or smaller dwellings at the back. Here and there were gaps between the houses where pedestrians and horses could get through to the buildings behind. In the gaps one could see that whereas the frontages were of ashlar, the side walls of the houses were generally of the rougher construction known as rubblestone. One burgage gap had a room over it, which would not be permitted now, the whole town being a conservation area. Passing through the former sheep market we stopped opposite the Café Huxley. Here a row of very old half-timbered houses stood where once there were semi-permanent market stalls. Vin drew attention to holes in the window-frames of one house, marking the position of bars, put up for protection in the 19th century when Brunel was building a railway nearby and employing large gangs of unruly Irish 'navvies' who rioted when he tried to sack them. Walking down Sheep Street we crossed a bridge over the Cam, Chipping Campden's little river, and came to the Old Silk Mill, which was converted by C R Ashbee in 1902 into workshops for his Guild of Handicrafts.

Here we went upstairs to the historic workshops run by the 4th generation of the silver-smithing Hart family, saw the craftsmen at work at their ancient benches, admired all the finished goods on



display and learned something of the processes involved in forming a bowl from a sheet of silver, fascinating to watch. Walking back up the High Street, we stopped to look at the Market Hall where the walk had begun. Built in 1627 for the sale of local produce by Sir Baptist Hicks, a rich London mercer who became Viscount Campden, it is now looked after by the National Trust. Further along we came to the Woolstaplers' Hall, which dates back to the 14th century but looks newer because C R Ashbee, who lived in it for a while, gave it a new frontage. On the other side of the road we saw the more convincingly 14th century house of wool merchant William Grevel, later Earl of Warwick. Turning up a side street we saw a row of alms-houses, still in use, built by Sir Baptist Hicks. Beyond it is a gatehouse, all that survives of Hicks' once grand house, which burned down during the Civil War. We next entered the 15th century church of St James via an avenue of lime trees planted in 1770, 12 in number to represent the 12 apostles. Under the tower arch we were



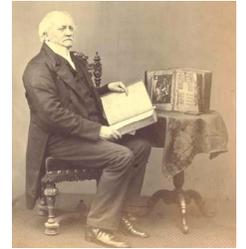
shown a unique pair of embroidered pre-reformation altar hangings and a 15th century cope. Some fine brasses on the chancel floor include that of William Grevel, who died in 1401. In the Sanctuary is the fine canopied tomb of Thomas Smythe, (d.1593) a high-ranking courtier and personal friend of Henry VIII. He is shown in full armour with his two wives and their thirteen children. The Gainsborough Chapel contains the tomb of Baptist Hicks,

Viscount Campden. His effigy wears the coronet and robe of his peerage. Besides being a purveyor of fine cloth and a moneylender to James I and his court, he was a generous benefactor to this town and its church.

After a break for lunch we met at the Court Barn Museum of Art and Design for a talk by Mary Greensted of the Guild of Handicrafts Trust. She described how C R Ashbee, a London-born architect and member of the Arts and Crafts movement, brought a community of craftsmen and their families (150 people in all) to Chipping Campden in 1902. The old mill, once used for spinning silk yarn, was converted into workshops, and more craftsmen came, including George Hart the silversmith whose descendants are still there. A school of arts and crafts was also established, but the whole enterprise struggled financially and the mill closed in 1907. However, traditional crafts are still practised in the town, as we could see from the fine furniture on display in the museum. There was also an interesting display about the Northcote brickworks, set up after World War I to provide work for local men and support the government's post-war mission to build 'homes for heroes'. It is still a thriving business.

Then it was time to board the coach again for the journey home. By 5.30 pm we were back in Cheltenham after another very enjoyable day out.

Our first speaker of the new season, on 17th September, was **Margaret Jones**. She took as her theme **The Thomas Phillipps Collection at Thirlestaine House**, explaining that her interest had been aroused when her husband asked her to translate an Anglo-Norman document that had once been in the Phillipps collection. Phillipps (1792-1872) was an avid collector of books and manuscripts, especially the latter, from his youth. Margaret showed examples of fine medieval illustrated MSS, but he bought many other kinds too, even suspected forgeries. He described himself once as a 'vello-maniac', and spent money so freely that his father entailed the family home, Middle Hill House at Broadway, to prevent him from selling it. By the 1850s he had over 50,000 MSS as well as 40,000 books and needed more space. Leaving the house to his eldest daughter Henrietta, Phillipps leased Thirlestaine House—empty since North Northwick died—and laboriously moved his collection there. Cheltenham then became a destination for scholars from many countries. The German historian Leopold von Ranke met Phillipps when he was visiting the town in 1865, was invited to see the collection and to his delight was allowed to spend weeks studying it. Phillipps died in 1872, leaving it all in trust to his daughter Katherine and her husband John Fenwick. He had decreed that the collection was to be kept intact and no-one, especially Roman Catholics (!) was to touch it, but the Fenwicks contrived to make it accessible by requiring a letter of introduction, details of what the visitor wished to see and a payment of £1 per day. Phillipps had catalogued much of what he bought, and the list could be consulted at the British Museum. In 1879 Paul Viollet from the Paris Faculty of Law came and was welcomed, but was not allowed to photograph a MS that interested him: no photography was another of Phillipps' rules. In 1883 Nikolai Bubnov from the University of St Petersburg came to pursue his study of the 10th century mathematician Gerbert d'Aurillac. The German polymath Theodor Mommsen came in 1885 to see and copy a 4th century MS, and when Fenwick soon afterwards got permission to sell some MSS Mommsen saw to it that 621 of them went to the Royal Library in Berlin. By then Thomas, the third of the Fenwicks' five sons, had taken charge of the collection. In 1890 two Icelandic scholars identified a long-lost MS, the Codex Scardensis, in the collection, but were not allowed to buy it because its value was unknown. When it was auctioned at last, in 1965, it went to Iceland. The French professor Paul Meyer saw a certain Norman-French MS sold to Phillipps at auction in 1861, but managed to see it for himself only in 1881. It proved to be a hitherto unknown biography of William Marshall, a prominent figure in 12th century England. Finally two American girl graduates spent three happy days in 1936 studying at Thirlestaine House. In 1938 Thomas Fenwick died. After being stored during the war, this hugely important collection was sold in 1946 and dispersed, largely to the USA. The audience asked many questions at the end.



At our Tuesday morning meeting on October 7th **Nicolas Wheatley** gave us a talk entitled **Final Journey—the Untold Story of Funeral Trains**. Nicolas said the use of trains to take people to their desired place of burial (or, later, cremation) dated back to the 1840s. He showed a map of the London area with seven cemeteries developed in the 19th century in places such as Highgate and Tower Hamlets. Then in 1854 the London Necropolis Company opened an enormous new one at Brookwood, south-west of London, to be accessed by train from a dedicated station at Waterloo. The trains, carrying both coffins and mourners, ran from the main line down a branch line to two stations within the cemetery, one for Anglicans and one for Nonconformists. The Necropolis Railway, as it was called, was used for nearly 90 years, until Waterloo was bombed in 1941. Nicolas showed a picture of a train with a coffin van in addition to passenger carriages, noting that both dead and living passengers were segregated by class and religion. The very first coffin to be carried by rail went from London to Derby in 1840. In 1852 the Duke of Wellington died at Walmer Castle and was carried by train from Deal for his funeral in London. Nicolas showed a picture of Gladstone's coffin being loaded on to a train at Wrexham in 1898 to be buried in Westminster Abbey. Disraeli was carried to High Wycombe for burial. Queen Victoria, the first monarch to be carried by train, was first taken from Osborne to Southampton on the royal yacht and then to Windsor on a special ceremonial train with a wreath on the front. The largest number of coffins ever carried on one train was 48, following the disastrous crash of the airship R101 in 1930. The dead were taken from Euston to Bedford for burial at Cardington, many of them in a communal grave because only 26 of the bodies were identifiable. When another airship, the R28, which had been sold to America after World War I, crashed near Hull in 1921, 15 of the Americans who died were taken by train from Hull to Plymouth for return to the USA. In 1936 King George V was carried from Sandringham to London. From there his coffin went by GWR to Windsor, as did that of his successor George VI in 1952. When Winston Churchill died in 1965 his coffin went by special train from Waterloo to Hanborough near Bladon, where he was to be buried. British Rail stopped carrying coffins in 1988, but an exception was made in 2001 for RMT leader Jimmy Knapp by adding an extra carriage to a scheduled train to take his coffin to Glasgow for burial at Kilmarnock. Princess Diana was carried by hearse, while her sons and other family members travelled to her funeral by royal train. Queen Elizabeth's coffin was flown to Northolt and taken by hearse to Windsor. Over the years many other notable people, from Francis Close to the 'white Rajahs' of Sarawak have been carried on funeral trains. Nowadays this service is still sometimes provided by heritage railways, but only for the benefit of their own workers and volunteers.



At the second evening meeting of the season, on 22nd October, **John White** told us about **Roger Fenton, mid-19th Century Photographer, and his Visit to Cheltenham**. He began by showing two of Fenton's pictures, The Plough at Prestbury and the bridge over Pittville Lake, both taken in 1852. He then gave us a short history of photography. Nicéphore Niépce (1765-1833) produced negative images as early as 1816, but it took him another ten years to find even a partial solution to the greatest challenge in early photography, which was to 'fix' the print so that it did not darken with further exposure to light. Louis Daguerre, who was his rival and later his partner, built on Niépce's work and invented the Daguerrotype, in which a latent image on a polished silver plate was developed using mercury fumes. John showed one taken in 1838. Meanwhile Henry Fox-Talbot, a gentleman amateur, had succeeded in producing a permanent image in a different way. John explained the basic chemistry involved in taking black and white photographs, using silver halide to coat the paper and sodium thiosulphate as a 'fixer'. Daguerre patented his own process, but the patent was bought by Richard Beard, who opened a studio in London in 1841. Fox-Talbot's method, which he named 'calotype', also became popular. John showed a picture of a mostly open-air studio at Reading with several photographers at work, experimenting. Roger Fenton, born in 1819 to a wealthy Lancashire family, studied painting in Paris after graduating from University College, London, then returned to London to study law. He became interested in photography and in 1847 joined the Calotype Club, recently formed by a group of talented young photographers. In 1851 Fenton went to Paris to see the work of the Société Héliographique, a French photographic club, wrote a paper on it and began experimenting with the recently invented wet collodion process. In 1852 he went on a tour, which brought him to Cheltenham. The same year saw the publication of one of the first manuals, Thornthwaite's well-illustrated *Guide to Photography*. In September 1852 Fenton went to Russia with the engineer Charles Vignoles, took a photo of the bridge Vignoles was building at Kiev and also visited Moscow and St Petersburg. Six of his pictures were published in a magazine called *The Photograph Album*, and many more appeared in a big exhibition in South Kensington in 1858. Fenton was involved in creating a Photographic Society in London in 1853 and also advised the British Museum on setting up a photographic gallery. When Queen Victoria saw it she invited him to take pictures of the royal children. Fenton became a professional photographer, his best-known work being done in the Crimea, where he had to use a mobile darkroom. He is recognised as the first official war photographer. When his pictures were exhibited in Cheltenham they received a glowing review in the *Examiner*. After the war he did more landscape photography, making sets of prints to sell, but retired in 1862. He died in 1869 of heart failure.



FEATURE

The Cheltenham Poisoning Case – September 14th 1849

Arsenic was incredibly easy to get hold of in the 1840s. It was used almost everywhere. It could be found in wallpaper, toys, laundry detergent, cosmetics, medicine, clothing, and even socks – leading a Times journalist to ask what could possibly be trusted if socks might be dangerous! In an article entitled 'Poisoning made easy' in Douglas Jerrold's newspaper on 9th September 1848 (a year before the case this narrative concerns) the following remarks indicate the scale of the problem:

'The means are cheap and expeditious, the process secret and difficult of detection.'

'The material is at hand—to be bought for a few pence at every druggist's shop' and: -

'A decree of the House of Lords (i.e. for a divorce) is an expensive matter; but poison is dirt cheap.'

The reason most people got it was to destroy rats, but arsenic of course doesn't discriminate between its targets! If taken in small doses over time the symptoms are gastrointestinal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting and dehydration—which could easily be confused with cholera. It is pretty certain that many cases went undetected. In other cases, circumstances might lead to suspicion.

That is not to say that all arsenic poisonings were murder. Arsenic is a white powder that looks a bit like sugar, and there were many ways it could be mixed with other less noxious substances. In 1858 a confectioner in Bradford requested ingredients for some lozenges from a chemist. He wanted a cheap filler for sweets called *terra alba* (a dishonest practice, but not uncommon). The chemist was ill, so he sent his apprentice to get the *terra alba* from a tub in the attic. The apprentice went to the wrong tub, and for a little girl eating the resulting lozenges this was fatal.



Coming to the Cheltenham case, it occurred at 13 Chapel Street on the 14th of September 1849. The head of the house was Diana Gregory, a widow. She lived in the house with her three children Elizabeth, Caroline and Samuel. They had a lodger called Emanuel Barnett, whose wife was a cook at the Monson Villa Teacher Training College. On that day also there was a visitor, James Keylock, who was Diana's brother.

Diana spent Friday morning away, but before she left at ten o'clock her daughter went out and purchased four cucumbers for a penny. This was

against Diana's judgment, as they looked very 'unwholesome'. That they were unwholesome was proven by a surgeon, Mr Brookes, who attended after the poisoning. One of the cucumbers was left and it was found to be 'full of seed and a watery liquid; the effluvia from it was almost intolerable and was putrid.' It is important to note that such a cucumber could cause food poisoning and might well have caused instant vomiting.

There seems little doubt that it was the lodger, Emanuel Barnett, who gave the arsenic to the Gregory family. According to Barnett's inquest testimony, he had been sick the night before and came home early from work, at eleven o'clock, because he still felt ill. How this can be reconciled with desiring apple dumplings from Elizabeth Gregory is difficult to say, but that is what he requested. Barnett himself 'fetched the flour which I have had for some time, and apples from my room' and the dumplings were made. It was almost undoubtedly the flour that was the source of the arsenic.

When the family sat down to a dinner of bread, putrid cucumber and poisoned apple dumplings it was clearly not likely to end well, and it didn't. Both Samuel and Elizabeth Gregory were to die.

Exhibited September 1849 Cheltenham	Samuel Gregory	male	14	son of Diana Gregory	Poisoned by swallowing arsenic obtainable from by Emanuel Barnett	Samuel Mayes Deputy Coroner 11 Worcester Street Gloucester	Testified September 1849
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Samuel's death certificate with the coroner's verdict as to the cause of death

Barnett was arrested immediately and came up for trial at the assizes some months later, indicted for murder. Diana Gregory, giving evidence, described the events as follows: -

'My boy (Samuel) was the first to complain; he seemed all of a perspiration; he said, 'I'm very ill mother,' and went from the table; I said, 'You will be better directly.' Soon after, the deceased (her daughter Elizabeth) got up and appeared very ill. She said it (the dumpling) tasted like 'nutgall', which you put in the teeth; she was very sick. The complaints of those suffering prevented the rest (Barnett and my brother) from eating so much as they otherwise would have done, and myself from eating anything. The deceased appeared to get worse; my daughter Caroline was taken in a similar manner about a quarter of an hour afterwards, as also my brother and lodger; out of the whole seven dumplings there was only about one and half eaten, and out of the four cucumbers three consumed. There was one of the dumplings to put up for the son of the lodger, but in consequence of what the deceased said to its tasting like nutgall, I said 'For goodness gracious sake I would not give it them as these are so bad' and he replied 'Well, I will put it out of the way.' I said, 'Take it away', or words to that effect; I do not know what he done with it'.

What Barnett did with the dumplings was to take them to the back yard and to the privy. He told the policeman that he had 'chopped the dumplings up in pieces, and ... flung them down the privy' and then to make sure 'washed it away with three or four buckets of water, into the main sewer'. If he was guilty he failed to cover his tracks, however, as a piece of dumpling remained, and also the handkerchief in which the flour was brought downstairs was not disposed of. Barnett insisted that the dumpling found was the one he had eaten a piece of - but how would he have known? This is of course highly suspicious, as was the disappearance of a half cup of the flour that had been left in the cupboard. Had Barnett in fact eaten any of the dumplings himself? Caroline Gregory was clear that he had not, and that not a 'morsel' of the two halves of dumpling on his plate had been touched. The mother was less definite: she 'could not swear whether the prisoner had or not eaten any of his dumpling'.

Moreover, we know that Barnett was already sick, but according to the evidence he was not so sick as to be unable to carry Samuel upstairs and go out to pick up medicine for the rest of the family. It seems to me highly likely that Barnett was the murderer here, but what was his motive?

Caroline Gregory said that in September the family were on good terms with Barnett, but had not always been so, as they complained about his daughter walking upstairs with clogs on! The only other possible motive is animosity towards James Keylock, who Barnett knew was staying for dinner as he had heard Mrs Gregory's invitation at breakfast.

'James Keylock, brother to the last witness, deposed that he had been working with the prisoner about two years ago. At this time a complaint was made by the master of the prisoner for his neglecting to do some work, and the prisoner afterwards said the witness must have told the master of it, and if he were not so old a man, he would strike him.'

Caroline Gregory also said Barnett had told her he 'wanted to double her uncle up like a nutshell'. All of which seems a rather minor motive for poisoning a whole family!

In English criminal law, a guilty verdict must be given without reasonable doubt, and there was reasonable doubt. There was no evidence as to where Barnett had acquired the arsenic, if indeed he had purchased it. Arsenic could have got into the flour in any number of ways, added by person or persons unknown, as in the Bradford lozenge case mentioned earlier. Also, his brief asked a very reasonable question - Why did Barnett not just adulterate Diana Gregory's own flour with the arsenic rather than bringing flour from his room?

So, Barnett was found Not Guilty.

It may well be that the above case helped to influence the passing of the Arsenic Act of 1851 which made the registering of sales mandatory.

Martyn Beaufort

*nutgall: a substance with various medicinal properties obtained from galls on oak trees

SOCIETY NEWS

New members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Helen Edmondson	Catherine Morton Lloyd	Kevin Scullin
Jack Avery	Ian and Dara Sandland	Jean Pearse
John Kerr	Roger and Diane Brown	Eric Hatcher
Jeremy Lake	Allen and Jennifer Miller	Nigel Gilhead
Grace Pritchard-Woods	Nigel and Angela Willoughby	

Society Update

We extend a warm welcome to all new members and a 'thank you' to those who have renewed their subscriptions for 2025/26. Although the talks programme was paused as usual during the summer the Society remained very active, with four local walks in June, our local history afternoon in July and the outing to Chipping Campden in August. We are grateful to everyone involved in making each of these events a success.

Also in August, we participated in a workshop at The Wilson, where 22 members engaged very constructively with ideas to help shape the future museum galleries. We will keep you informed of any further developments as they arise.

In September the new speakers' programme began with two excellent talks by our members Margaret Jones, on the Thomas Phillipps Collection at Thirlestaine House, and Nicolas Wheatley, on Funeral Trains. Details of future talks can be found on our website under the 'Events' tab.

Finally, we still receive requests for past editions of the Journal, but small print-runs can be prohibitively expensive. If you have copies to spare from the last four years please consider donating them to the Society for re-sale.

Stuart Manton

Dr John Moore Walker's prescription book – an update

The transcription of the Cheltenham doctor's prescription book (see the July Newsletter, page 20) has been completed, and can be accessed from the 'Transcriptions' page of our website. With 2,500 entries covering a two-year period from July 1877, and comprising names, addresses and some other details such as occupations, plus a list of paupers, it gives an interesting insight into the working life of Dr Walker, one of the Medical Officers of the Dispensary in St George's Place, and his patients, who came from both the poorer and the more well-to-do areas of the town.

Many thanks to new volunteer Susan West, who completed the lion's share of the transcription, also to Oliver Pointer.

Alison Pascoe

Preparing the next issue of our Journal

Although it will not be published until March 2026, I am already editing the next CLHS Journal, issue 42.

I am delighted to say that, as ever, we have no shortage of articles which, with the honourable exceptions of pieces from The Wilson and a University student, have all been researched and written by Members of the Society. That we can publish an annual professional-looking Journal of such high-quality content from within our Society is an enormous credit to you, the Membership. And it is something to which all Members should feel able to contribute, if not with an article, then with an image for our annual photo-essay. In this we focus on visual, often common-place, features around town. Seen so frequently, these can easily fade into the background and become overlooked – until they are 'developed' away. Then we miss them, and wish we had tried to save them or at least record them.

So far we have looked at front door letterboxes and railings. This time a suggestion came to look at metal utility covers in our pavements recording the fore-runners of today's service providers. These might include the ubiquitous 'Cheltenham Corporation' pavement gutter coverings or earlier and more local water company providers. Even the humble GPO cover is fast becoming a rarity. But, I have also noticed that Cheltenham is blessed with a remarkable design range of bollards, marking pathways or restricting access. So, while looking down for utility ironwork, let's include 'bollards of note' too! Simply take an image on your mobile and forward it to me, ideally as a jpeg file and preferably with an indication of where you took it. I will select the best for our photo-essay; contact details below. Or, just let me know what you have seen and where, and I can take the image. A few pages in each Journal cannot hope to provide a comprehensive review on any one feature. But seeing a few examples might, I hope, prompt us to look around more actively when out and about, and to notice and appreciate what makes Cheltenham such a distinctive and attractive place.



Oliver Pointer

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FEATURE

How Badminton, Indian-style, was launched in Cheltenham in 1873

No one knows for sure how the game of badminton came by its name. At some time in the middle of the nineteenth century the ancient pastime of shuttlecock and battledore was enhanced by the addition of a net, and a process was set in train for the game of shuttlecock keepy-uppy to evolve into a competitive racket sport which could claim a place alongside real tennis, rackets and squash. The metamorphosis is said to have taken place on the estate of the Duke of Beaufort in Gloucestershire amongst his family and friends. Legend has it that a guest at Badminton House professed himself unable to ride, shoot, fish or dance and thus attracted the disapproval of the duke, who called upon him to invent a new game as penance for his social shortcomings. To appease his host, and possibly to hide his shame, the guest locked himself into his room and emerged only when he had completed the design of the new game. His brainchild was tested, the duke was impressed, and the guest was returned to favour. However, folklore is silent on the date of the house party and the names of the duke and his guest, so the story is short on detail and we are left just with the certainty of the name.

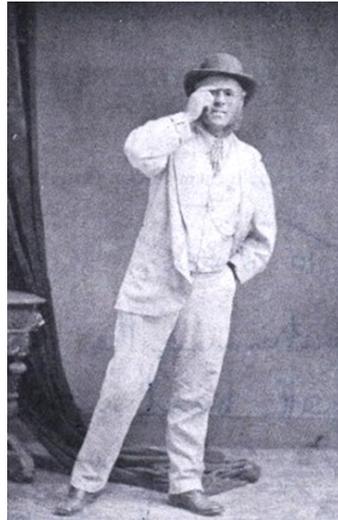


From Gloucestershire badminton travelled to India with British servants of the Raj, and here it developed into a game popular with both sexes in fashionable society. It was thus the first competitive racket sport played by women and was to be the precursor to lawn tennis, which also first became popular as a social activity for the upper-middle classes and gentry at large rather than as a

sweaty exercise for the energetic male. In India codes of rules were developed for different localities – Simla and Calcutta to the fore — and sets of badminton equipment evidently offered for sale. One of these sets made its way to Cheltenham in the late 1860s.

The Reverend Julian Robinson, editor of *The Pioneer* of Allahabad from 1867 to 1873 but previously an East India Company chaplain (and known to some as Julian the Apostate as a consequence), maintained a family home in Cheltenham where his two youngest sons went to school. He visited from India in 1868/69 and brought with him a badminton set for the

entertainment of his large family. His son Harry, aged nine, viewed the apparatus with fascination and years later wrote nostalgically of red lacquered poles, a red cord that ran along the top of the net, red guy ropes and shuttlecocks with alternate red and white feathers (letter to *The Times*, 10/6/1927). The set was erected in what would have been the garden of 4 Lansdown Parade and Harry and his elder siblings amused themselves with the game at their home. The family diversion came to the attention of local sports retailer James Lillywhite, and he dropped by to familiarise himself with the pastime and its equipment. James was a scion of the famous Lillywhite cricketing family. A former county cricketer, he was cricket coach to Cheltenham College and manager of the College's sports facilities. Since the mid-1860s he had been a sports equipment supplier of national standing, and he was principal founder of retailers Lillywhite and Frowd, initially of Borough in London, later of Piccadilly. In Cheltenham his shop and sports depot was at 3 Queen's Circus, just off Imperial Square. To young Harry he was a cricketering hero, and Harry looked on reverentially as James studied the play of his siblings and measured up the court and equipment. Harry's memories were to be long-lasting and James was to put his research to commercial use.



James Lillywhite
In cricket-umpiring pose

In the years that followed, badminton extended its popularity in India so much that by 1872 Bombay's *Times of India* could report that in the North-West Provinces 'all the world hereabout is nearly mad on the subject of Badminton, the new fashioned game of shuttlecock across a rope', and early in 1873, 'the tea and talk of garden parties are relieved by groups scattered over the lawn playing the truly picturesque game of Badminton'. *The Friend of India* went even further in July 1873, declaring that badminton 'may now be said to have been established from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, played as far north as Simla and as far south as Trevandrum'. In the same month *The Homeward Mail* related that 'The Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief are at regal Simla, immersed in Balls and Badminton', and the Governor of Bombay and Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay army 'are at pleasant Poona – where Badminton seems to receive more attention than politics'. For the Vice-Regal visit to Lucknow that December a badminton tournament for mixed pairs was included in the programme of events and the Viceroy's daughter Emma took first prize, a gold negligée. Emma, aged twenty, was accompanying

her widowed father on his travels and acting as his hostess. Badminton had penetrated to the upper reaches of society. England took note and in Cheltenham James Lillywhite scented an opportunity and set about manufacturing badminton sets in replication of the Robinson import complete with a set of rules. *The Times of India* had published a description of the Indian game and its basic rules at the beginning of February – labelling it 'racquets for ladies' – but there was no uniformity of approach across India and local rules prevailed. James appears to have adopted rules much the same as those set out at length in a *Field* article of 18th October 1873 and described as the 'Simla' rules 'as adopted at Murree in the Punjab'. At the end of this article the *Field* editor mentioned that cards of rules were available from James at 3 Queen's Circus and a Lillywhite advertisement was judiciously included on the next page, prominent at the right hand side but sandwiched between accolades for Essence of Anchovies and John Lillywhite's Football.

THE NEW OUT DOOR
INDIAN LAWN GAME
(Prettier, healthier and merrier than Croquet)
BADMINTON
Or
LAWN RACQUETS
Sole Registered Proprietor for the British Isles
JAMES LILLYWHITE
3, Queen's Circus, Cheltenham

The *Cheltenham Looker-on* of 7th June 1873 had carried the first Lillywhite advertisement:

His kits – comprising 'every requisite for the game' with registered rules at three guineas for a Best Quality set – were evidently a British first and



An early badminton set

James's advertising at national level encompassed the *Field*, the *Sporting Gazette* and his cricket annual. Quite what was meant by 'Sole Registered Proprietor' is uncertain – James was proud owner of nothing in particular - and in his *Cheltenham Chronicle* advertisements he modified his wording to 'Rules Registered by James Lillywhite and introduced in this country solely by him'; his aim perhaps was to suggest that if someone wanted a copy of the rules, they should buy one of his sets. We have no record of the

volume of sales he achieved, but the inclusion of the game in a national sports encyclopaedia called *The Popular Recreator* would have provided a fillip.

Nigel Lawford

(To be continued)

FEATURE

Ron Summerfield

Cheltenham has always had its fair share of eccentric inhabitants, none more so in the latter part of the 20th century than the antiques collector and dealer Ron Summerfield.

Ronald Ernest Summerfield was born in Derby in 1915. His father, Ernest, had his own decorating business while his mother, Enid, ran her own hardware store. It was in this store that Ron first displayed for sale a few antiques that he had acquired; this was a small beginning to what became a lifetime obsession. The family moved to Cheltenham in 1952 and purchased a shop where Ron could deal in antiques. It was at the top of Montpellier Avenue on the corner of Montpellier Spa Road. The flat above soon became so cluttered with



Ron Summerfield as a young man



21 Royal Parade

Ron's purchases that his father bought the big end-of-terrace house 21 Royal Parade, which is on the corner of Bayshill Road and Fauconberg Road. It had 32 rooms and had formerly been a nursing home. Rooms were let out by the Summerfields, but it wasn't long before they started filling up with Ron's collection. This consisted of almost anything: paintings, jewellery, piles of books and newspapers, furniture, clocks, ceramics, glass, etc. Eventually the last tenant left the house.

After father Ernest died in 1962, Enid moved back to Derby, where she lived until she died in 1978 at the age of 90. Ron kept adding to his stock and gradually became less and less interested in actually selling anything much, unless it was to finance further purchases. He made no attempt to display anything, and the shop became a dusty and almost impenetrable maze. He would say to prospective customers in his shop 'I'm not selling you that, it's good stuff', and if he did want to sell something he loved haggling. He was a regular visitor to Christie's office in the Promenade, asking them to value his latest acquisition. The Borough Council became concerned that one of the



outer walls of his house had become bowed out because of the sheer weight of contents, but Ron took little notice. There were even a number of old cars in his garden. He must have driven the vehicles until they were clapped out, and then couldn't bear to part with them.

Eventually in March 1989 he became seriously ill and an ambulance was called to his house. By this time every room was piled high with stuff, even the passageways and staircases being filled with books and papers. To get Ron out of the house and into the ambulance he had to be winched out of an attic window. He knew that he was dying, but hadn't made a will. Fortunately, he was persuaded to do so by a small group of upright local citizens who impressed upon him that if he didn't make a will the Government would get all his money. Thus after he died on Good Friday, 1989, the Summerfield Charitable Trust came into being.

The recording and cataloguing of all his possessions was a mammoth task and took 10 people 4 months to complete.



Ron Summerfield's shop as it is today

Including the contents of a barn in Derby there were about 2 million items among which, of course, was a great deal of what we would term rubbish, but eventually 14,000 lots went up for auction. The sale, which is believed to be the largest in terms of items in one collection in the second half of the 20th century, was conducted by Christie's and Bruton Knowles and took place over 25 days in Cheltenham, London and Malvern. The total sum raised was over £7 million, which is equivalent to about £20 million today. Since then the trustees of the Summerfield Charitable Trust have donated millions of pounds to a variety of worthy causes within Gloucestershire. Ron's house was eventually renovated in 1999 and is now split into four smart flats. The shop has had a variety of tenants, but recently has lain empty for some time.

There was one rather touching postscript to the disposal of the collection. Staff at the Cheltenham Museum were allowed to choose items for display, and one of these was a painting of a beautiful girl, which Ron particularly wanted them to have because it reminded him of his mother. It was painted in 1950 by an artist who lived in Cirencester, Frank Cadogan Cooper (1877-1958). It was called 'The Ugly Duckling' and mystery surrounded the identity of the sitter. It turned out to be a lady named Valerie Anderson, who was 16 at the time of the painting. She was born at Sheppey in Kent in 1933, and in 1950 was living and working in Cirencester. She married an American called Stefano Tarantolo a year later and emigrated with him across the Atlantic. Her sister had been looking at Cheltenham Museum on the internet and came across the mention of the painting. In 2008 Valerie came over from America to see it for the first time since it was painted. A



5-minute interview with her can be viewed on YouTube (just Google 'ugly duckling Tarantolo'). She says that she was working in Boots in Cirencester when the artist came into the shop and said 'I want to paint you'. He offered her half a crown an hour (2/6d, or 12½ pence in modern money) to sit for him, which was much more than she earned in Boots. The sittings lasted for several weeks and the artist was very particular as to how he wanted to portray her. She confessed to being slightly disappointed with the painting at the time - she would have preferred to be portrayed more like film star Greta Garbo! Valerie said,

however, that it did a great deal for her self confidence. She is still alive, aged 92, and living in Delaware.

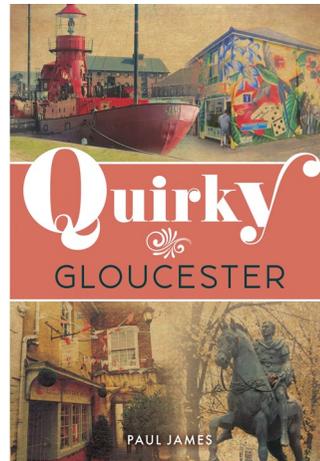
Martin Ward

NEW PUBLICATION

Quirky Gloucester by Paul James

Gloucester was a significant city in Roman Britain and has played an important role in the history of this country in the two millennia since then. It has also had an often strange history of its own over this period, and in this book Paul James, drawing on archive material as well as his own extensive local knowledge, takes a look at his home city and uncovers some of its quirkiest aspects. From Pinchbelly Alley to rainbow streets, and from mock mayors to cheese-rolling, this book explores some of the oddities and characters of this ancient city. Readers will find stories of long-lost legal cases, ancient customs, modern myths, unusual foodstuffs, curious attractions, remarkable animals and much more.

Published by Amberley Publishing in November 2025, £15.99 in paperback.



BOOKS FOR SALE



This time around a selection of books with a local architectural slant; one or two for the season of Halloween; and a couple of good Christmas stocking fillers.

Martin Bailey, ed, *The Everyman Theatre Official Centenary Brochure 1891-1991 A Celebration Of The 1st 100 Years* (1991) **£2.50**

F A H Bloemendal, photos, text by Alan Hollingsworth, *Cotswold Architecture & Heritage* (1992) **£8.00**

John Britton, *The History And Antiquities Of The Abbey And Cathedral Church Of Gloucester Illustrated By A Series Of Engravings Of Views Elevations Plans And Details Of That Edifice* (Delhi, Rep of 1829 edn, 2016) **£5.00**

Jack Farley, *The Misericords of Gloucester Cathedral* (1981) **£5.00**

Reverend H Haines, *A Guide to the Cathedral Church of Gloucester* (Gloucester, E Nest, Oxford & London, James Parker & Co, [1867]) **£12.00**

Friends of Glenfall House & Glenfall House Trust, *Glenfall House The growth of a Garden over 200 years* (2012) **£0.50**

Reverend Francis T Havergal, illus by Robert Clarke, *Monumental Inscriptions In The Cathedral Church of Hereford* (1881) **£12.00**

Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches* (2004) **£12.00**

Ledbury – *An Introduction To Ledbury's Heritage [backed with] A History of The Market House, Ledbury* ([1990s]) **£1.00**

Andrew Lewis, *The History of Charlton House* (Spirax-Sarco Engineering plc, [2011]) **£6.00**

Massé, H J L J, *The Cathedral Church of Gloucester A Description Of Its Fabric And A Brief History Of The Episcopal See* (Bell's Cathedral Series; 1908) **£2.50**

Richard K Morris & Ron Shoemsmith, eds, *Tewkesbury Abbey History, Art & Architecture* (2003) **£8.00**

Philip Moss, *Historic Gloucester An Illustrated Guide to the City & its Buildings* (2009) **£5.00**

Timothy Mowl, *Cheltenham Betrayed* (1995) **£ 7.50**

Aylwin Sampson, *Gloucester Close* (1976) **£2.00**; *Cheltenham Observed* (1984) **£2.50**; *Cheltenham Outlined* (2003) **£2.00**; *The Story of the Queen's Hotel Cheltenham* (1993) **£2.00**

John Sawyer, *Cheltenham Parish Church Its Architecture and Its History* (1903) £5.00

R J L Smith, *Glenfall House Gloucester Diocesan Conference and Retreat Centre* (1999) £0.50

David Verey & David Welander, *Gloucester Cathedral* (1979) £6.00

Phyllis White, *Grovefield House near Cheltenham and Captain James Pritchit of the Warwickshire Militia* (2009) £3.00

Robert Willott, *Rebuilding Blockley* [Oliver Dick's architectural works in the village] (Blockley Heritage Society, 2010) £7.00

Robin Brooks, *A Grim Almanac of Gloucestershire* (2010) £3.50

Keith Clark, *The Ghosts of Gloucestershire* (1993) £2.00

Jill Evans, *Hanged At Gloucester* (2011) £6.00

Florence Jackson & Gordon Ottewell, *Walking in Haunted Gloucestershire* (1994) £2.00

Bob Meredith, *Cheltenham Town of Shadows* (1988) £2.00

John Hudson, *A Cotswold Christmas* (both the 1993 & 1998 edns) £3.00

Cheltenham And The Cotswolds In The 1920s (Gloucestershire Echo, 2012) DVD £5.00

And just a reminder that these and many other books on local history of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire and the surrounding counties are available to browse on our website: [Donated Books Shop – Cheltenham Local History Society](#). To check availability and buy, contact me; free local delivery, else by post outside of Cheltenham.

Oliver Pointer

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FEATURE

LAZ the LIGHTNING ARTIST

One of our members, Roger Beacham, whom many of you will remember from his days as the Local Studies Librarian at Cheltenham Library, has sent us this charming portrait. Roger sat for this sketch, by Laz the Lightning Artist, in 1954 in E L Ward's department store, corner of North Street and High Street, while his mother was on errands elsewhere in the shop, such as having her nylons 'invisibly repaired'. Roger and his brother sat for their Laz sketches under the staircase that led to Mr Ward's office, embarrassed to be in full view of the customers.



Son of a Polish father and an Austrian mother, Abraham Lazarus, *aka* Laz the Lightning Artist, worked in department stores all over the UK, beginning before the Second World War in his home town of Grimsby. He toured the country after the war, working for two or three weeks at a time in major department stores. His sketches were completed within three to five minutes, while he chatted away to the children. Occasionally he was asked to sketch adults. In 1960 one of his elderly subjects, Miss Blundell of Cirencester, left him several thousands pounds in her will, and £500 to his sister Rachael, with whom he lived in Grimsby. Laz died at home in 1960, aged 59. Perhaps more of our members have a 'lightning sketch' by Laz?

Jill Waller

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the March 2026 issue by **Monday 16th February 2026** 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.