



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 114

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March 2026

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Cheltenham LHS

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7.00 pm at St Luke's Church Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham. (See agenda enclosed with this Newsletter.) The Mayor, as President of the Society, will chair the meeting.

Election of Officers and Committee 2026-27

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2025 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they so wish. Nominations are invited for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and for committee members. If you would like to nominate someone or be nominated yourself, either for one of these posts or as a committee member, please contact the Secretary John Beard (email secretary@cheltlocalhistory.org.uk or telephone 01242 514059) for a nomination form.

After the AGM business is concluded, **Sue Rowbotham** will give a talk entitled **Arle Court, a House through Time**.

SUMMER VISITS

You are invited to take part in the following visits with the Society. **IF YOU WISH TO BOOK PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR PAYMENT AND A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.** There will be a priority booking period for members only until 13th April and, as places are limited on these visits, you are advised to book early to be sure of getting a place. If you wish to bring a non-member as a guest, please indicate this on the form when booking your own place. If there is any availability after 17th April, places will be offered to non-members in order of application. If you find that you cannot attend a visit for which you have booked, please inform Sue Brown (01242 231837) or another committee member of your cancellation, so that someone else may have the opportunity to take your place. If you don't let us know that you cannot attend, we shall expect you to pay the cost.

Saturday 20th June at 2.30 pm, repeated Saturday 27th June at 2.30 pm.

Visit to Moat House, Uckington

Guided tour of Moat House, Uckington, a Grade II listed moated site and house with an early 17th century core. We will see the ground floor, stables and barn, and enjoy tea/coffee and biscuits in the garden. By invitation of the owners, Chris and Sue Rose. Cost £10 to include guided



EDITORIAL

Our Journal editor Oliver Pointer came across these unusually artistic railings in St James' Square. Interestingly, they turn out to be by a local iron founder who also made humble street furniture such as bollards, the subject of Oliver's photo essay in the latest *Journal*. To find out more about it, turn to page 23.

Kath Boothman

tour and refreshments. All proceeds to St Mary Magdalene Church, Elmstone Hardwicke, Roof Repair Fund.

Tuesday 9th June at 6.00 pm, repeated Thursday 18th June at 6.00 pm.

Historic Swindon Village

Walk with Eileen Allen to explore historic Swindon Village, starting from Swindon Village Hall Car Park, including Swindon Hall and Swindon Manor (external only) and St Lawrence's Church. Cost £4. All proceeds to St Lawrence's Church Roof Restoration Fund.

Tuesday 18th August, departing from Royal Well at 9.00 am and returning at 6.00 pm.

VISIT TO BRADFORD-ON-AVON

Bradford-on-Avon has an extraordinary history for a small town—an Iron Age hill fort, a Roman villa, two of the most outstanding medieval buildings in the country (the Saxon church and the Tithe Barn), fine Georgian houses, a hillside of weavers' cottages and a varied and fascinating industrial history. We will meet an intriguing gallery of people—a couple of kings and a queen, a saint who talked in riddles, a Dutch master, a couple of Olympic medallists and the first woman to fly around the world.



The Hall

Arriving at 10.35 am, we will first have tea/coffee at The Hall, a Jacobean mansion house with a wealth of architectural, industrial and engineering history to explore. We will then divide into two groups, and while one group has a guided tour of The Hall the other group will have a guided walking tour of the town. There will be free time for lunch. Options include Timbrell's Yard riverside coaching

inn, Pablo's Bistro for Spanish tapas, the Sweetpea Kitchen at the Weaving Shed in Bridge Yard for comfort food, the Bunch of Grapes in Silver Street for pub food and the Bridge Tea Rooms, a cosy dining room filled with homely trinkets, hefty wooden beams and the chink of fine bone china. We could also explore The Shambles (the only timber framed houses in this stone built town) for independent shops and cafés, or walk to The Lock Inn and Café overlooking an active lock on the Kennet and Avon Canal. Picnics can be enjoyed in the grounds of The Hall or the Tithe Barn. In the afternoon each group will have its second tour, and we will leave Bradford at 16.25 pm, arriving back at Royal Well at 18.00 pm.



The Town Bridge

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2026-27

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 16th September:

Louise Nicholson—Reviving the Cotswold Canals

Wednesday 21st October:

Jonathan Holt—The Architectural Follies of Gloucestershire

Wednesday 18th November:

David Jones—Finding the Original Cheltenham Racecourse.... on Cleeve Hill

Wednesday 20th January 2027:

Steve Rowley—Wassail Wassail

Wednesday 17th February 2027:

Simon & Ann Cooper—Flax: Ancient and Modern in the Maritime Environment

Wednesday 24th March 2027:

Becky Dine—A History of Leckhampton Court

Wednesday 21st April 2027:

Andrew Mellwer—The Glosters at Waterloo

Wednesday 19th May 2027:

AGM followed by Stuart Manton—Cheltenham's Zoo Wars of the 1830s

MORNING LECTURES 2026-27

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. Parking is limited. If you need to reserve a space please contact Alison Pascoe on 01242 519413 or administrator@cheltlocalhistory.org.uk

Tuesday 6th October:

Paul Barnett—A County Goes to War: Gloucestershire's role up to D-Day

Tuesday 1st December:

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

Tuesday 2nd February 2027:

Melanie Barge—Pillow Talk: the Archaeology of Rabbits

Tuesday 6th April 2027:

Neela Mann—Founders, Flags & Fields: Americans in Glos. 1650-1950

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 24th March:

Andy Mellor—Tolkien and the Cotswolds: the Shaping of Middle Earth

Tuesday 28th April:

Ian Boskett—A walk down Memory Lane via Steam, Tram and Horse

Prestbury Local History Society

www.prestburyhistory.com

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

Monday 27th April:

Michael Cole—Prestbury's Lost Buildings

Monday 1st June:

David Elder—Dr Edward Adrian Wilson

Charlton Kings Local and Family History Society

www.charltonkings.org

Meetings are held in the Stanton Room, Charlton Kings Library, Church Street on Tuesdays, starting at 2.00 pm. (Talks begin at 2.30 pm.)

Tuesday 28th April:

David Williams—National Signals Intelligence and Security (NSIST) GCHQ Document Transfer Request: The History of Signal Intelligence

Tuesday 26th May:

Alan Jones—More Stories of Charlton Kings Ale and Beer House

Tuesday 23rd June:

Richard Chatham—Concorde

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 28th April:

AGM followed by Steve Goodchild—Tewksbury Alleyways

Tuesday 26th May:

David Aldred—Cheltenham's Lung: the Long Making of Cleeve Common

REVIEWS

At the meeting on November 19th our Chairman **Stuart Manton** told us all about **The Genesis of Cheltenham's South Town**. He said that 'South Town' was the term used in the 19th century when that part of town was being developed. Originally it referred to the land to the west of the Bath Road, but for the research project that gave rise to the South Town website it was taken as the area from the Bath Road to Park Place and from Suffolk Road to Shurdington Road. The first industrial premises which appeared in the early 19th century were soon overtaken by housing, though a map of 1810 still showed few buildings or roads between the town centre and Leckhampton village. The Westal Brook, which runs under the Exmouth Arms, marked the boundary between Cheltenham and Leckhampton. In 1810, by which time Henry Thompson and his son had built much of Montpellier and Lansdowne, the town was ready for a major expansion southwards. The extensive lands belonging to the Norwoods of Leckhampton Court were inherited by the entrepreneurial Charles Brandon Trye. He later bought Grotton Fields (the name, like Gratton, means 'rough ground') and then had control over the whole area from the top of Leckhampton Hill to Suffolk Road. Much of South Town was built on Norwood and Trye land, and this is reflected in the street names. When Lord Sherborne built a tramway to transport coal and timber from Gloucester to Cheltenham, Trye added a branch line up Leckhampton Hill to carry stone from the quarries there all the way to Gloucester docks. This line, opened in 1811, influenced the layout of streets to the west of the Bath Road, which developed rapidly over the following 20 years. The Bath Road was a toll road, started in 1813. The toll house was where the roundabout is; thus, when the Norwood Arms was built in 1823 it stood at the gateway to Cheltenham. Meanwhile Park Place, the first 'gentry' street, was laid out in 1825 by Pearson Thompson. Great Norwood Street dates from 1830-1840 and was built by Henry Norwood Trye, son of Charles. Grafton Road came next, the grand houses at its west end, built by Thomas Billings, contrasting with the artisan dwellings at the Bath Road end. As zones for commercial and other development did not yet exist, housing and industry were mixed, and there were many businesses in and near the Bath Road such as wheelwrights and blacksmiths, of which Parry's timber yard (closed 1984) was one of the last. The two main churches in the area were St Philip's & St James' and Bethesda, both of which, like St James' school, had to be enlarged as the population steadily grew. Finally Stuart showed an evocative photo of the Bath Road in 1905 when trams still ran along it. He answered many questions at the end, and recommended the website, cheltenhamouthtown.org.uk for further information.



At the morning meeting on December 2nd Dr Matthew Andrews gave a talk entitled **A Connected University: the Origins and Development of the University of Gloucestershire**. Dr Andrews said that this relatively young university had a complex history, in which it was possible to trace 43 antecedents over nearly 200 years. He showed a 'family tree' on which the oldest entries were the Mechanics' Institutes of Cheltenham (1834) and of Gloucester (1840) which, like the 'Lit and Phil' institutions were part of a national movement aimed at providing education for adults who had had little schooling. Around the same time universities were founded in many large towns, generally not modelling themselves on Oxbridge but offering a broader range of courses suited to less educated and less wealthy students. The church took a leading role in this movement, which included plans to train more teachers. The Cheltenham Training College, founded under the aegis of Francis Close



An early picture of Francis Close Hall

in 1847, had a very evangelical tone. Some training colleges with a less religious ethos developed into (or merged with) universities, but Cheltenham's remained as a training college for over a century. Local architect Samuel Daukes designed its first building, Francis Close Hall. Dr Andrews showed a register of the male students at St Paul's (the men's college) with much information about each, comments on their character and even a note as to whether they were communicants. Some had been teachers or Sunday school teachers already. A similar list of early female students at St Mary's Hall showed that many of them had been nursery governesses or dressmakers, which suggests that academic standards could not have been high in the early years. The facilities the colleges offered, however, were good; he showed pictures of the laboratories and the gymnasium at St Mary's. Another antecedent of the present university was the Cheltenham School of Art, founded in 1852 to provide 'cheap instruction in drawing and colouring'. It developed into the Pittville School of Art. There were art and science colleges in Gloucester too with similar practical aims, which in time merged to form the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology. In 1990 GLOSCAT joined St Paul's and St Mary's to form the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, which could award degrees validated by Bristol, and after 1992 its own degrees. It achieved university status in 2001. Back in 1959 there had been a proposal to build a campus-style university in Gloucestershire (like Sussex, founded in 1961). That would have been nice, Dr Andrews commented wistfully. As it was, the university had the considerable drawback of being on several sites. However the new city campus in Gloucester has excellent facilities, many of which are shared with the public, and he looked forward to further developments as the university continually evolved to meet current needs.

On Wednesday January 21st Louise Ryland-Epton gave us a talk entitled **Blood, Magic and Power: the Murder by Witchcraft of William Bayntun**.

The events in question, Louise said, happened in Wiltshire in 1564, when Edward Bayntun, head of a wealthy landowning family, lost his only son. The Bayntuns had a colourful history: Edward's wife Agnes, the daughter of a convicted traitor, had had an affair with a married man who left her a fortune, and the family of Dorothy, his brother Henry's wife, was ruined when two of her brothers were executed as rebels. The family estates had been lost and regained several times and were now entailed to Henry's sons unless Edward produced an heir of his own. So baby William's death was a disaster for Edward.



An early image of witches

Since Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558 there had been many plots threatening her life, some supposedly involving witchcraft. John Jewell, Bishop of Salisbury, preached against witches and petitioned the Queen to use the law against them. In 1563 Parliament passed the Witchcraft Act, which made causing death by witchcraft a capital offence. There had been few trials for witchcraft until then, but with the Act in force there were to be many more. Soon after William's death his parents accused a widow called Agnes Mills of murdering him by means of 'sorceries and charms'. Agnes and her husband had been tenants of the Bayntuns for many years, but after he died she struggled to manage on her own and may have been working for the family, perhaps helping with child care. She was thus an easy target. She was taken to the county gaol near Salisbury, and under questioning (or perhaps under torture) she confessed to witchcraft. Bishop Jewell chose to act as a justice in the case, but it was tried by the circuit judges who visited Salisbury twice a year. Despite her confession Jewell felt there was insufficient evidence against Agnes: the use of 'charms' by healers was normal, so had someone incited her to misuse them? Suspicion fell on Dorothy, the baby's aunt, because his death made her son the new heir. The justices called in Jane Marsh, a Somerset widow who had a reputation as a witchfinder, and at the trial (held at the Bishop's Guild Hall, which was also a prison) Jane declared that Agnes Mills had indeed killed William at Dorothy's instigation. Agnes was then hanged. Dorothy, however, retaliated by having Jane herself locked up as a charlatan or a witch, and to clear her own name she tried to prove that Agnes was innocent. Jane then said she had been bribed to implicate Dorothy, but Edward and his wife counter-claimed that Jane had been coerced into withdrawing her accusation against Dorothy, and Jane admitted it. Dorothy, insulated by her rank, never faced a charge, but her name was tainted and she and her sons were later deleted from the Bayntun family tree. Edward and Agnes had another son, who survived. Agnes Mills' case is the first recorded execution of a witch in England.

Anne Strathie's talk on Tuesday February 3rd was based on the title of her latest book **A History of Polar Exploration in 50 Objects**, to which she added 'and a rediscovered local polar history story'. She began with a



Cook's ship *HMS Endeavour*

map of c1600 which clearly showed that almost nothing was known about either polar region at that time. The three great voyages of Captain Cook in the 1770s took him into the Bering Strait in search of a north-west passage and far enough south to glimpse Antarctica. He was the first explorer to take artists with him, and she showed some of the sketches they brought back. Under John Barrow, Secretary to the Admiralty, after the Napoleonic wars the resources of the navy were used for exploration. There was great public interest in both the polar regions, and following each expedition vast panoramas of arctic landscapes were put on display around the country for people to see. They even came to Cheltenham. An Antarctic venture in 1839-43 under James Ross and Francis Crozier set up observatories in various places as part of a project to locate the south magnetic pole. Anne showed a picture of one they set up in Tasmania. From there they went south until they reached the vast wall of ice then called the Barrier (now the Ross Ice Shelf) and, sailing along it, discovered to their astonishment a live volcano, which Ross named Mt Erebus. Each expedition followed up scientific studies done by previous parties, and penguins were one subject of interest. Edward Wilson was later to risk his life to collect the eggs of the emperor penguin, first discovered by Crozier. In 1845 Sir John Franklin with the ships *Erebus* and *Terror* led a new expedition to find the north-west passage from Greenland. When he had not reappeared two years later search parties were sent out, but without success: both ships were lost. In 1874 Captain George Nares in *HMS Challenger* sailed to Antarctica primarily to study marine biology and to find out why icebergs looked blue. He was able to establish for the first time that there was land under the ice. In 1895, to mark 50 years since Franklin set out, more expeditions went south, one of which studied Weddell seals and identified seal meat as valuable nutrition for Antarctic seafarers. Scott's *Discovery* was the first ship purpose-built for scientific study in polar conditions. By that time (1912) there were photos as well as sketches to display to the public at home, thanks to photographers such as Frank Hurley and Herbert Ponting, who also used ciné film. Anne showed a sledge flag once belonging to Scott's companion Henry 'Birdie' Bowers, whose mother came from Cheltenham. Another explorer with a local link was George Watkins of Dumbleton Hall, who won the RGS medal for journeys in the arctic. In conclusion Anne told the story of Frances Wilson, daughter of a friend of Dr E T Wilson, and her travels to the arctic (where she met Nansen) and elsewhere with her wealthy husband George Baden-Powell.

Stuart Butler, who spoke to us on February 18th, describes himself as a 'performative presenter' rather than a speaker, and his talk included readings from prose sources and poems, some of them his own. His theme was **Stroud and the Five Valleys in the 18th and 19th centuries**. His own grandmother's family had been weavers and spinners in the Stroud valley, he said, and his particular interest was in the lives and sufferings of working people like them. Although their work brought prosperity to the mill-owners, their lives could be very hard. In the 18th century when the weavers went on strike and General Wolfe's redcoats (whose uniforms were made of the famous Stroud Scarlet cloth) were sent in to suppress them, Wolfe himself observed that they were underpaid and half-starved. Besides being used for British army uniforms the scarlet wool cloth (of which Stuart



An old mill at Chalford

brought a sample to show) was exported in large quantities to America, India and elsewhere. The East India Company was a major customer, and it had strong links with the slave trade and the opium wars. The cloth was even worn by plantation owners in the West Indies to intimidate slaves. In the 18th and 19th centuries Britain was almost continuously at war—John showed a long list of assorted conflicts—which all represented good business opportunities for cloth makers and traders. The negative side of their trade is often overlooked: in Chalford, for instance, there are history plaques telling how much prosperity it brought to the area without mentioning the connection to slavery. In Uley, another pretty village, the impoverished workers threatened rebellion in 1795, partly inspired by Thomas Paine's book *The Rights of Man*, which posited that revolution was permissible against a government that did not support its people's natural rights. This very influential book was naturally seen as seditious by the 'boss' class. Workers were alarmed by the introduction of machinery in mills, and Gloucestershire saw machine-breaking episodes as early as the 1790s. The political activist and poet John Thelwall, when staying with Coleridge at Nether Stowey, wrote a poem (which John read out) about the ordinary people of Chalford and their lives of drudgery. He next read an extract from William Cobbett's *Rural Rides* (1826) commenting on the poverty of the people in Stroud. Strike leaders were sent to Northleach prison, while strike breakers, driven by the desperate need to feed their families, were ostracized and persecuted by their work-mates. John read his own 'verse history' about just such a poor strike breaker. In the 1830s agricultural workers were affected by the introduction of threshing machines, which gave rise to the so-called Captain Swing riots, while demands for the extension of the franchise led to the Chartist riots. One consequence of this unrest was a high rate of emigration from Gloucestershire between 1788 and 1832, especially from the Stroud valley.

FEATURE

A Carriage built for a Portuguese Baron

One of the finest exhibits at Lisbon's National Coach Museum is an early 19th century state carriage. Once the property of a Portuguese nobleman, the Baron of Porto Covo da Bandeira, it was made in Cheltenham at Francis Garrett's Coach Manufactory.

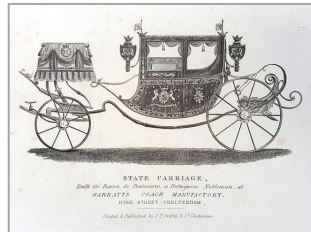
Francis Garrett was born in 1790 in Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, and by 1817 he was working as a coach maker in Cheltenham. His company logo describes him as 'of Long Acre', suggesting he learnt his skills in the London street that was the beating heart of England's coach-building trade. Between 1790 and the late 1820s there were several Garretts working near Long Acre, making springs and leather fittings for coaches.

In Cheltenham, Francis Garrett owned coach-building premises at 418 High Street (now the entrance to Bath Road) and 31 Winchcombe Street (now 57-59). He married Ann Long at St Paul's Parish Church, Shurdington in 1814, and had three sons and three daughters between 1816 and 1835. His brother, Thomas, was also employed at the manufactory, which was operating during a golden era for English coach-making. In *A Treatise on Carriages* (1796), William Felton writes: 'the art of coach-building had been in a gradual state of improvement for half a century past, and had now arrived at a very high degree of perfection, with respect to the beauty, strength, and elegance of our English carriages.'



The Baron of Porto Covo

Over the next four decades Garrett's productivity is proven by the volume of his adverts in local newspapers for new and refurbished coaches, which could be viewed and purchased at his premises. Among the items are a 'handsome town-built chariot... with all appurtenances'; 'a landau carriage with a folding fabric roof' which was 'suitable for a family in town and country, or for travelling on the continent'; and a 'sound and invaluable' horse that would suit 'any timid person requiring a safe and quiet' ride! While Garrett's business was thriving in Cheltenham, Portugal was experiencing big social change. The country's 1820 Liberal Revolution produced a burgeoning bourgeoisie, upon which King John VI lavished titles and wealth. Among the biggest beneficiaries was the newly appointed Baron of Porto Covo da Bandeira, a banker and politician



described as a 'great monied man' by *The London Packet and New Lloyd's Evening Post*. He chose to display his emerging affluence by commissioning a luxurious new carriage to transport him during royal processions.

Garrett created a 'coupé' carriage measuring 5.05 x 1.91 x 2.18 metres, which could be entered via foldable steps. The Baron's coat of arms are on the body panels and on the coachman's seat; the woollen fabric interiors feature red and blue decorative embroidery; the raised coachman's seat and four lanterns enabled better visibility; and the steel springs, which carry Garrett's name, aided a smoother ride.



On 18th March 1824 the *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, in a report from Cheltenham, said: 'We have felt much gratification in seeing the splendid equipage which has been built in this town for a foreign Nobleman of distinction, and is most credible [sic] to the builder, Garrett, the Coach and Harness Maker, at whose manufactory it may now be seen. We may well congratulate our townsmen on the admirable workmanship displayed by one of their members; and we cannot but feel pleased by the preference

thus so kindly given by the Gentleman who has, by his recommendation to his exalted friend, afforded the resident and visiting Nobility and Gentry of this place of fashionable resort an opportunity of knowing that they can here obtain the services of artists of talent and ability, who, in their style of manufacture, and the taste of their decorations, ornament, and construction, rival the most eminent artists of the Metropolis'.

Who was the 'Gentleman' mentioned in the article, and why did he recommend Garrett's services to the Baron of Porto Covo? One possibility for our mystery man is the Duke of Wellington. Not only was the Duke a frequent visitor to Cheltenham during this period, but he also served with distinction in Portugal, initially in repelling Napoleon's forces and later in helping to settle Portuguese political unrest.

Two findings connect the lives of Garrett, Wellington and the Baron of Porto Covo. First, a young Private William Garrett (brother of Francis) served under Wellington in the Royal Regiment of Dragoons in Lisbon in 1811.

This was during the Peninsular War, which saw France fight a coalition of British, Spanish, and Portuguese forces. Secondly, the Porto Covo family invited Wellington to use their Lisbon palace as an HQ for British troops during the Peninsular War years and on the eve of the Portuguese Civil War a decade later. 'A private letter from Lisbon mentions that the Baron de Ponto Covo da Bandeira invited the Staff of the British Army to take up their residence in his Palace', reported Pierce Egan's *Life in London and Sporting Guide* on 28th January 1827.

If Wellington wasn't the 'Gentleman' in question, three other men of distinction link the Baron of Porto Covo with this part of England at that time. Infamous aesthete William Beckford (of Fonthill Abbey) had a romance with Porto Covo's uncle, Jacintho Fernandes Bandeira, while staying at Lisbon's magical Monserrate Palace in the late 1700s. In 1809 the same building was the short-term residence of Lord Byron, who visited Cheltenham three years later. And one of Portugal's great writers, the Viscount of Almeida Garrett (yes, that name again!), moved in the same social circles as the Baron of Porto Covo and came to live in Warwickshire in 1823.



Could one of these gentlemen have witnessed Garrett's fine craftsmanship and recommended him to Porto Covo?

A personal recommendation was probably necessary because Garrett wasn't located in London, which was the coachbuilding capital of Europe and the main recipient of royal and noble commissions. However, the enthusiasm for Garrett's craftsmanship from modern experts such as Jose Cardoso Brito –

who makes charming miniature replicas of historical coaches like Garrett's, which he describes as 'beautiful' – suggests he did 'rival the most eminent artists of the Metropolis'. And such is the enduring beauty of the carriage that it was chosen to adorn 250,000 Portuguese postage stamps, which marked the National Coach Museum's centenary in 2005. The ultimate stamp of approval.

Talking of deliveries, if Porto Covo's carriage had been made 25 years later, a Cheltenham man called John Patience might have helped with its transportation from Garrett's manufactory to the docks. At the time of the 1851 census, John was working as a coachman and living in Vernon Place. His landlord and likely employer, Francis Garrett, was living next door in Vernon House, a stone's throw from Barrett's Mill and Garrett's headquarters.

John's great-great-grandson Derek Patience writes: 'What a stunning piece of engineering this coach is, a handsome cab indeed!' Through his family research, Derek has found 'Garrett was a man of some substance

in the town, being a Churchwarden at St. Mary's Church, as well as an Overseer for the Poor. He died intestate, but his estate was sufficiently large for it to attract inheritance tax'. Indeed, on 5th April 1847, the *Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly* described the coach maker as 'a man of property'.

Towards the end of Garrett's life, the rise of railways and steam-driven vehicles loomed over the coach-building trade. But with his invention of the 'Treble Power Lever Steam Engine', it appears Garrett was willing to move with the times. On 20th January 1849 the *Gloucester Journal* reported: 'Our ingenious townsman... just patented an improvement in the steam-engine, which... will effect a saving of two thirds of the fuel, and allow of a great reduction in the size of the boiler'.

In Garrett's final weeks he continued to innovate, focusing on improved reaping technology for the Royal Agricultural Society. On 25th August 1853 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported: "The adjourned trial of the reaping machines which were selected out of the twelve that were tested at the recent meeting of this Society, at Gloucester, took place on



The former site of Garrett's High Street coachworks

Wednesday last, on Mr. Pusey's farm, at Pusey, Berks. Out of the six selected only five made their appearance, Messrs. Garratt [sic] and Son having withdrawn from competition.' The Garretts' absence is poignant. Francis had just died at the age of 63 and would be buried at St. Mary's church. Garrett's High Street premises were soon demolished to make way for an extension of the Bath Road. The building materials were auctioned by Mr G J Engall in October 1854, and on 28th August 1855 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported that the property recently purchased by the Cheltenham Improvement Commissioners, 'formerly occupied by Messrs Garrett & Co.'s coach-factory, leading from the High Street into the Bath Road, has now been converted into a broad and spacious thoroughfare, which... is not only a great improvement to the locality, but one of convenience to the public in general'.

Barnaby Simons

With grateful thanks to Jill Waller, Derek Patience, Jose Cardoso Brito, Ana Paula Lopes at the National Coach Museum, and Sytske Knol at the National Trust Carriage Museum.

*SOCIETY NEWS***New members**

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Alaster Wilden	Joy Mitchell	Emily Anderson
Rebecca Morris	Jacqueline Betancourt	Marilyn Ivory
Patrick Travis	Mark Baker	Clare Wiseman
Jennie Cosby	Kate Fleming	Pauline Dooley
Susan Bilbey	Zandra Cullen-Jones	

Society Update

It has been encouraging to see so many members and visitors attending our meetings over the winter, as we now look forward to a full programme in the year ahead. In particular our popular **Research and Display morning from 9.30 am to 12.00 noon on 7th April** promises to be an excellent showcase for our members' research and we hope to see you there.

We have been busy over the winter updating our two websites, <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk> and <https://cheltenhamsouthtown.org.uk>. The first contains a wide range of local history resources and information about our activities, whilst Cheltenham South Town offers a window into one locality along the lines of 'A Street Through Time' (in fact, several streets). Please do take a look at what is available and let us know what you think.

And now a quick reminder that our Annual General Meeting is on 20th May, starting at 7.00 pm. This will be an opportunity to hear about what we have been doing and ask any questions about our future plans.

Stuart Manton

Heritage Open Days 2026: 11-20 September

England's largest festival of history and culture. Thousands of volunteers across the country invite you to experience local history, architecture and culture, all for free. This year's theme is 'Everyday Histories – Exploring daily working life through the ages'. Do you have a story to share, a local figure or historic place you would like to see recognized? Events must be free from entrance to exit and must be registered by 13th August.

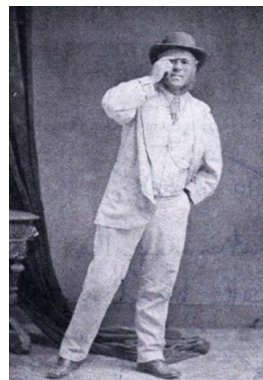
For more information see <https://heritageopendays.org.uk>, and if you have an idea for a local walk, talk or a visit please contact Mary Moxham marymoxham@gmail.com.

*FEATURE*

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

(Part 2)

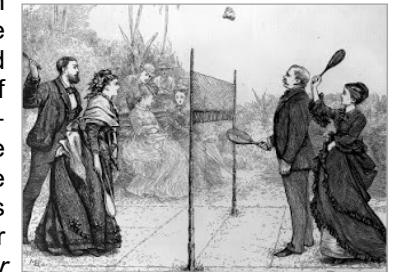
In March 1873 Cassell, Petter & Gilpin began publication of a weekly leisure activities magazine called *The Popular Recreator* with the aim of providing a guide to indoor and outdoor amusements for both young and old. Its scope was vast, and over a year it covered all manner of games and hobbies from mainstream sports such as cricket, angling and golf to card games, egg collecting, paper-flower making and window-gardening.



James Lillywhite, c1877

At the beginning of 1874, amongst some twenty-five articles on assorted recreations, it included an essay on 'Indian Badminton or Lawn Racquets'. The writer of the piece seems to have taken his title straight from James Lillywhite's 1874 cricket annual (just published) and looked to James for most of his information, introducing him as 'the well-known Mr James Lillywhite of Cheltenham', the man who received into his hands the rules from India and 'by whom we have been kindly favoured with much information regarding the game'. The article featured the familiar anecdote on the birth of the game (how a guest of the Duke of Bedford who would not join in with the usual sporting pursuits was challenged to come up with a new game, and invented Badminton), together with a diagram of the court with measurements and a statement of the rules. It finished with what it termed 'four further rules...given by Mr Lillywhite' added 'by his permission'. In so far as there was any national authority on the game at the time, it seems to have been James Lillywhite.

Badminton could be accommodated readily in a middle-class back garden and there was no particular need to turn to clubs for facilities. The game became quite popular, but in general it was played socially rather than as a serious form of exercise, and its vulnerability to wind limited its usefulness outdoors. There were few sightings of the sport to be had in the Cheltenham press other than in sports equipment advertisements: in September 1874 a correspondent of the *Examiner* referred to the possibility of providing 'archery, croquet and Badminton





Walter Clopton Wingfield (1833-1912), known as the founder of modern lawn tennis

grounds' in Imperial Square, and in November there was a passing reference to the summer season 'when Badminton and Lawn Tennis were all the rage at garden parties', but little more was to be found.

One London club at least took an active interest as part of a bid to arrest falling membership. Jefferies of Woolwich proclaimed itself supplier of shuttlecocks 'as used by the All England Badminton Club' in September 1874, and in February 1875 the All England Croquet Club in Wimbledon formally advised its members that its activities now embraced Badminton. Earlier, in the opinion of Sir Harry Perry Robinson, whose father had brought the first badminton set to Cheltenham, Walter Clopton Wingfield had also taken a keen interest in the game, and Lillywhite's Badminton

sets had attracted his attention. In a letter written to *The Times* in 1927 on the subject of the origin of lawn tennis, Sir Harry expressed the opinion that Wingfield's tennis game of Sphairistike—launched in 1874—was derived from Badminton, and he was not alone in his view: the *Morning Post*, for one, concurred in its review of tennis in March 1875. Sir Harry described what he saw as the similarities in the games and added:

'I do not know whether any record exists of Major Wingfield's possession of, or contact with, one of the Lillywhite badminton sets, but the fact that it was from one of the sets copied from my father's that the new game was invented was always accepted in my family as so well established, that I have no doubt that we had information from Lillywhite, who would probably know all about it.'

The Harry who had played Indian Badminton in a Cheltenham garden as a nine-year-old back in 1869 had progressed from pupil at Cheltenham Juvenile Proprietary School to scholar at Westminster School, student at Christ Church, Oxford and then established author and *Times* correspondent. For services as official *Times* war correspondent during the First World War he was appointed KBE and awarded the Legion of Honour. It was said in his *Times* obituary in 1930 that 'as an annalist of the War his accuracy about details was the reward of very great industry and precision'—he was a credible witness.

It seems quite likely that the popularity of Badminton in India and the marketing of Lillywhite's Badminton sets—his package of equipment and



Sir Harry Perry Robinson

rules—were the trigger for Wingfield to design and market his lawn tennis sets. James was an experienced retailer and his approach may have shown the way for someone unfamiliar with the world of commerce at a time when Gentlemen held themselves aloof from the unseemly process of trade. Wingfield's Greek-derived title for his product – 'Sphairistike or Lawn Tennis' – has an echo of Lillywhite's 'Badminton or Lawn Racquets'. Lillywhite's advertisements in the Cheltenham press would have slipped under the major's radar, but the national advertising and reporting would at the very least have caught the eye of his sporting collaborators.

The lightness and aerodynamics of the shuttlecock were the fatal flaw for Badminton outdoors, and in India some attempts were made to remedy the defect by substituting a projectile less sensitive to wind. In a feature on Badminton in India in April 1874, the *Graphic* mentioned that 'battledores and shuttlecocks are generally used but in windy weather racket bats and a woolen ball are substituted'. There was to be no satisfactory solution, however, and in fashionable society at large lawn tennis quickly overtook Badminton as the preferred racket sport—Lawn Racquets gave way to Lawn Tennis. With a new sport to supply from his depot, James would have shed no tears—as one door half closed, another opened—and on top of the provision of tennis rackets, balls, shoes, and nets complete with poles and runners, before long he was offering to lay asphalt courts at 1 shilling and 3 pence per yard.

Nigel Lawford

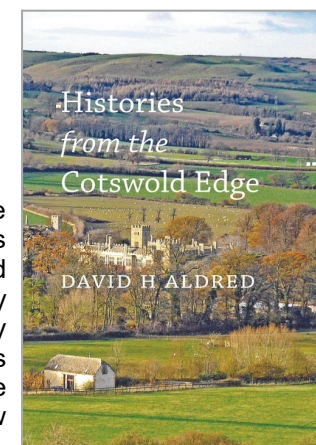
NEW PUBLICATION

Histories from the Cotswold Edge

by David H Aldred

Anyone interested in the history of this part of the Cotswolds will find much to fascinate them in this book. The reader learns how Bishop's Cleeve and Woodmancote got their names, how the railway came to Broadway twice, how a Cheltenham boy became Australia's national poet, how trams came to Cleeve Hill, how Guiting Power became the centre of an amazing stone industry and how tobacco growing was important in Winchcombe. There are also descriptions of a medieval feast in Prestbury, a royal visit to Sudeley, the early history of Cheltenham races and the impact of the First World War on the area. The book is profusely illustrated with archive and modern illustrations.

Published by The Hobnob Press in November 2025, £14.95 in paperback



FEATURE

Just Passing Through: the Writers who Visited Cheltenham and Gloucestershire

Shakespeare fans probably know the story about the Bard having visited Gloucestershire in his youth. References to places and people in some of his plays suggest first-hand local knowledge. Solid evidence is lacking, but the idea that he came here to escape the attention of the Stratford-upon-Avon authorities after a poaching incident is intriguing.

Gloucestershire has produced its fair share of home-grown literary talent since Shakespeare's day. Laurie Lee, Ivor Gurney, John Moore, P J Kavanagh and U A Fanthorpe are just some of the noted 20th century writers who were born here or lived here. But in addition to resident writers, there's a fascinating group of visiting authors who came here, often for an early version of the 'wellness' experience or spa break. Cheltenham was a big draw. Well-established as a spa town since the 18th century, it welcomed a steady stream of visitors willing to trust the dubious benefits of its mineral waters. As far as we know, hot stone massages, aromatherapy and full-body mud wraps were not on offer in those days; it was all about 'taking the waters'. The results were mixed, it's fair to say. However, the efficacy of the waters was clearly sufficient to allow Cheltenham to become a rival to Bath in the 18th and 19th centuries.



One of the most famous literary visitors was Alfred Tennyson, whose presence in the town is rather misleadingly commemorated by a plaque at 10, St James' Square. It tells us that 'Alfred Lord Tennyson lived here 1846-1850'. In fact, Tennyson was a visitor rather than a resident. At an earlier time he had come to Cheltenham to put the waters to the test, following a calamitous business venture and a bout of hypochondria. It seems the experience didn't

greatly improve his mood, susceptible as he already was to fits of gloom. In Tennyson's case, this first encounter with Cheltenham was not viewed as a holiday. In fact, he endured a gruelling six-month hydropathy cure, involving cold water treatments of various kinds. I spoke to Dr Michelle Geric, Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Westminster, about his experiences. 'Tennyson had ambivalent feelings about

Cheltenham," Michelle told me. "The hydropathy was a serious business."



In fact, so anxious was the poet about the state of his health that he viewed the treatment as "a life or death situation". In 1844 his mother and extended family moved to St James' Square. The house became a bolt-hole and writer's retreat for Tennyson, who often retired to a remote upper room to write. Clearly, there was something in the water conducive to the creative process. It was here that he wrote much of the long poem that established his reputation. *In Memoriam* is regarded by many as one of the great works of 19th-century poetry. In places, its imagery suggests that Tennyson found inspiration in the Cotswolds scenery surrounding him, as well as the geological interest of the area:

*There where the long street roars hath been
The silence of the central sea.*

Michelle Geric believes that Tennyson's marriage to Emily Sellwood in 1850 achieved a more effective solution to his health problems and relieved the acute anxiety about epilepsy that had haunted him. Once he and Emily established their marital home on the Isle of Wight, the poet laureate closed the chapter on his time in Cheltenham and did not return.

In Jill Waller's fascinating compilation of the town's literary visitors entitled *A Chronology of Cheltenham's Literary Connections* we learn about the visits of Byron (who declared the water to be 'sufficiently disgusting'), Jane Austen, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens – to name just a few. Sadly, in Jane Austen's case serious illness had set in and she died ten months after her visit to the town.



George Orwell

Slightly further afield, in the Cotswold village of Cranham in 1949, George Orwell sought relief from his tuberculosis in a sanatorium. The treatment he received couldn't cure him, but the peace and quiet of the location enabled him to complete *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

It's remarkable to think that Cheltenham and the county of Gloucestershire have been intimately connected with the creation of two of English Literature's greatest masterpieces.

Jonathan Taylor

Local History Resources for Cheltenham Primary Schools

LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCES FOR CHELTENHAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BRINGING LOCAL HISTORY ALIVE



Cheltenham Local History Society has launched an exciting new brochure to support the development of topics within Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum. Although aimed at Cheltenham primary schools, it is sure to attract wider interest.

In addition to a directory of more than 60 local, regional and national history resources, the brochure also contains ideas for classroom topics, types of teaching materials available and a real-life case study, where the Society teamed up with Naunton Park Primary School.

If you are a teacher looking for new ideas to inspire and engage your classes, this free resource may be just what you need.

The brochure is downloadable in pdf format from the Society's website <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/schools>. We hope you will find it useful.

If you have any queries or ideas about the brochure, or just want to ask a question, please get in touch via our 'contacts' page.

Stuart Manton

'A fantastic resource for teachers covering the fascinating local stories of Cheltenham and the surrounding area. Plus an easy 'how-to' list of all the people and places you can call on to help bring Cheltenham's history to life for your pupils.'

Jemma Fowkes

Community Heritage Officer at Gloucestershire Archives



BOOKS FOR SALE



Usually, we would offer here a selection of books for sale. On this occasion we are asking for donations of books to sell.

Over the past few years we have raised a considerable sum of money for the Society by selling books, donated by members, at meetings and via our website. In recent months donations have dwindled somewhat and, while we still have a good range of the standard general histories of Cheltenham for the newcomer to the town, we do not have so much to offer that is less commonly seen.

So, as thoughts turn to spring cleaning, can I ask you to look along your shelves and perhaps consider creating some space by donating books that you no longer need, want or, perhaps, have shelf space for? I am happy to call, look and collect. For reasons of limited storage space, we restrict ourselves to books on the history of Cheltenham and its immediate surroundings, and on wider historical themes just in Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds. These might be formally published books, or more ephemeral publications such as maps, prints, town guides or directories, individual parish and church histories. We try to offer books in reasonable or better condition, but an unusual title in any condition always attracts attention.

Please do consider helping your Society in this way. Proceeds of all sales go directly towards the running costs of the Society and its aim of promoting the exploration, recording and celebration of the heritage of Cheltenham. There is always an up-to-date listing of available books to buy on the CLHS website; delivery free locally.

We are grateful for your support in donating books, and I look forward to seeing what you might find on your shelves and feel able to offer to us.

Oliver Pointer

hardy_pointer@hotmail.com 07400 197989

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FEATURE

Of Bollards, Railings and Marshalls

Serendipitous links are one of the subtle pleasures of local history research. Thus it was a small joy, when compiling the photo essay on bollards for the current issue of the Journal (42 – 2026, pp.63-69) to make a link back to the parallel article of the previous year on railings (41 – 2025, pp.89-93).

A bollard stamped with the name 'Marshall [of] Cheltenham' found in Montpellier Street led me to Amina Chatwin's unbeatable study of Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork

(1975 & 1984). Despite granting only four lines to this lowly example of the

iron founders' art (at the foot of page 56), she does reference unspecific examples of the bollard in question and later devotes five pages (pages 71-75) to a brief history of the family firm of Richard Eede and Charles Marshall, in town c1822-2016.

Amina notes that Charles Marshall senior and his wife Catherine lived at Beech Cottage (now House) in St James' Square, on the corner with St George's Place. Today divided into flats but still a handsome building, the chief glory of the site are the extraordinary railings running along the top of the roadside garden wall (as shown on the front cover of this Newsletter). Evidently inspired by German ironwork of the 17th and 18th centuries, the wrought iron railings are decorated with stylised flowers, each slightly different, and some very untrustworthy-looking imp heads.

How we missed including these in last year's photo essay I cannot imagine. If you are passing nearby do go and look at them, recently restored and painted. A fine sight. Other, more conventional-looking Marshall railings are to be found further along the Beech House railings and along the front of the Borough Offices on The Promenade. Our recently re-issued Chronology of Trade & Industry (2022, pages 16-17) contains a short reference to other extant examples worth hunting down. And I'd wager that there are more Marshall bollards to be identified hidden in plain sight around town, the locations of which I would be most interested to hear about.

Oliver Pointer



FEATURE

LAZ the LIGHTNING ARTIST (again)



In our last issue we published this charming little sketch of one of our members, Roger Beacham, aged about four. It was the work of Abraham Lazarus, a Polish/Austrian artist who worked in department stores all over the country in the 1940s and 1950s. He called himself 'Laz, the Lightning Artist', and his speciality was quick sketches of children. In Cheltenham his base was E L Ward's department store, which stood on the corner of North Street and High Street.

We wondered whether any other members remembered the (possibly embarrassing) experience in their early years of sitting in public view in a shop while this talkative man (Laz always chatted to his little subjects) drew a picture of them, and to our delight two people did remember it and still had the resulting image to prove it.



Here on the left we have Christopher, little brother of member Rob Rimmel, sketched just before his 4th birthday. Rob says he was rather envious and wished he had been done too! On the right, at about the same age, is Graham, husband of member Ann Harding. He was born in 1954 and may have been one of Laz's last subjects, for Laz died in



1960. He would surely have been pleased to know that his work is not forgotten and that, 70 years on, some of it still survives.

Kath Boothman

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the July 2026 issue by
Monday 9th June 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.