



# Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 83

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council  
Registered Charity No. 1056046  
<http://www.cheltlocalhist.btck.co.uk>

November 2015



## *EDITORIAL*

One of the best features of Cheltenham in any season is its wealth of trees, from the giant planes at Royal Well to the flowering cherries in some of the newer parts of town. In the older residential areas such as The Park, shown here, the stately mature trees lining the streets put on a fine display at this time of year, especially when the autumn colours are as vivid as they have been recently. Jobs that involve driving around, as with this postman in his van, must have an added appeal on days like this.

*Kath Boothman*

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## *LECTURE PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2015-MAY 2016*

Meetings start at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade. Visitors pay £2.

*Tuesday 8th December:*

### **Ian Hollingsbee—Inside the Wire: The Prisoner of War Camps and Hostels of Gloucestershire 1939-1948**

Stalag VIII-B, Colditz, these names are synonymous with POWs in the Second World War. But what of prisoners in captivity on British soil? Where did they go? Gloucestershire was home to numerous prisoner-of-war camps and hostels, and many Italian and German prisoners spent the war years here. *Inside the Wire* explores the role of the camps, their captives and workers, together with their impact on the local community. This talk draws on Ministry of Defence, Red Cross and US Army records, and is richly illustrated with original images. The talk also features the compelling first-hand accounts of Joachim Schulze, a German POW who spent the war near Tewkesbury, Erwin Engler, a German POW in Leckhampton who married a local girl and three Italians who married in Newent. This is a fascinating but forgotten aspect of the Second World War.

*Tuesday 19th January 2016:*

### **Research and Display Evening**

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

*Tuesday 16th February 2016:*

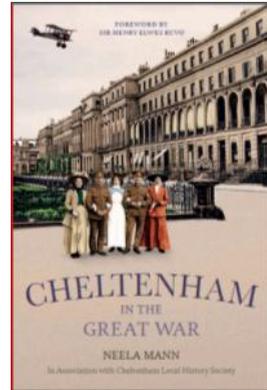
### **Paul Barnett—Port to Port: the Sharpness Canal**

In this talk the speaker charts the fortunes of Gloucestershire's waterborne trade via its famous ship canal. Starting in the south at the rural dock of Sharpness, the viewer is taken on a pictorial journey northward along the sleepy Gloucestershire ship canal, momentarily stopping at points of interest, until eventually 'heaving to' in the city's historic Gloucester dock. This is achieved by using a combination of recently acquired ship-side images and their historic equivalent, as captured in a re-discovered series of documentary images from the 1950s.

*Tuesday 15th March 2016:*

**Neela Mann— Cheltenham in the Great War**

This previously un-researched period of Cheltenham's history is full of fascinating stories of remarkable people and events. Two factors in Cheltenham's favour led to the town making an enormous contribution to the war effort. But what was it the people here in Cheltenham did during World War I, how did they cope and what was happening here? Neela Mann introduces the book she has written, in conjunction with the Society, chronicling life in the town in those years. It will be published in March 2016 by The History Press. It is hoped copies of the book will be available for sale at a special price at this meeting.



*Tuesday 19th April 2016:*

**Tony Conder—Gloucester's Railways, Then and Now**

When railways were young Gloucester was a very desirable target for a railway. Freight traffic was the thing and the newly opened docks taking ships from anywhere in the world offered the midlands a great opportunity. Bristol also wanted a link with Birmingham via Gloucester, partly to negate the competition from the docks but also as a way for Brunel's broad gauge to penetrate northwards. The Birmingham line upset every town and city in the Severn valley by ignoring them; Cheltenham's independence from its older neighbour led to rival railway plans. Eventually two lines met at Gloucester, one broad, one narrow, and the scene for chaos was set. Richly illustrated with contemporary photographs and prints, this is the story of how Gloucester developed its connections to the country and helped set the pattern for railways worldwide.

*Tuesday 17th May 2016:*

**AGM followed by Gwilym Davies—Folk Music of Gloucestershire**

The county of Gloucestershire is fortunate in having a rich heritage of folk music, from children's singing games to wassail songs to Morris dances to songs of love, war, country life, humour, the supernatural, ancient ballads, songs from the gypsy community and so on. Gwilym has spent many years researching and performing the music and is an acknowledged expert in the field. The talk will be illustrated with audio and video clips from his extensive archive as well as live performance. You will also hear about an exciting Heritage Lottery funded programme to put all this material on line and to spread the word to schools, choirs, musicians of all types and researchers.

*MORNING LECTURES 2016*

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £2.00 from all those attending these lectures is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits served (no charge) from 10.00 am. Lectures start at 10.30 am. All are welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only—please contact Chris Conoley (01452 700428) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

*Tuesday 1st March 2016:*

**Lionel Walrond—The Cotswold House**

Scores of books have been written on the Cotswolds, most of them full of pretty pictures but lacking in constructive data. One reason is that until the mid-1950s vernacular architecture was an unknown discipline. The Cotswolds are a large area composed of lesser regions resulting from economic growth and geological variations. There are also changes in house style due to status, function and evolving fashion. In the speaker's own book, *The Cotswold House*, co-written with Tim Jordan, the aim is to help readers understand and appreciate what they see.

*Tuesday 5th April 2016:*

**Hugh Torrens—The extraordinary, but forgotten story of the Cotswold Stone Pipe Company trying (but failing) to provide clean water to the cities of London, Dublin and Manchester between 1805 and 1815**

Water pipes had at one time been made of elm, which was too short-lived, and later of cast iron, which was more expensive and tended to stain the water. The Stone Company advocated clean, 'pure' stone as the best alternative. It chose Guiting stone as its source material, and for a few years 30 tons of bored pipes left the manufacturing works at Guiting every day. The lecture will explore the rise and dramatic fall of this amazing enterprise, in which many of Britain's most celebrated engineers were involved.

*FOR YOUR DIARY***Charlton Kings Local History Society**

[www.charltonkings.org.uk](http://www.charltonkings.org.uk)

All meetings are held at the Baptist Church, Church Street, starting at 7.30 pm.

*Tuesday 24th November:*

**Steven Blake—John Bellamy (1803-93), a Gloucestershire Travelling Showman**

*Tuesday 26th January 2016:*

**Nicholas Herbert—The Development of Cotswold Villages**

**Leckhampton Local History Society**

www.llhs.org.uk

Note new venue: Meetings are held at Glebe Cottages, Church Road, Leckhampton (next to the churchyard), at 8.00 pm Admission £1 for visitors.

*Wednesday 18th November:*

**Ingrid Walden and Adrienne Grinyer—Victorian Village Christmas**

*Wednesday 20th January 2016:*

**John Loosley—Researching Family History in Gloucestershire**

*Wednesday 16th March 2016 at St Philip's and St James' Church:*

**Adrian Barlow—Cheltenham's Victorian Architecture**

**Swindon Village Society**

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £1.

*Wednesday 18th November:*

**John Dixon—Barbara Cartland and Tewkesbury**

**Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society**

www.bgas.org.uk

The first meeting will be held in the Frith Room, Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester and all subsequent meetings at the Friends' Meeting House, Greyfriars, Gloucester. Talks start at 7.30 pm. Visitors pay £1.

*Wednesday 18th November:*

**Stephen Clews, Manager of the Roman Baths in Bath—The Beau Street Hoard: 17, 577 silver coins from Bath**

*Wednesday 20th January 2016 :*

**Jonathan MacKechnie-Jarvis—The Life and times of Gloucester's Chimes**

*Wednesday 17th February 2016 :*

**Judith Ellis—Campden 100 Years Ago: a snapshot of the life in Chipping Campden**

*Wednesday 16th March 2016:*

**Dr Jan Broadway—J C Wheeler's of Gloucester: the History of a Commercial Nursery, 1750-1974**

**Prestbury Local History Society**

www.prestburyhistory.btck.co.uk

Meetings are held at Prestbury Women's Institute Hall (corner of Bouncers Lane/ Prestbury Road), starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.

*Monday 23rd November:*

**Margaret Davies—The Burgage**

**Gotherington and Area Local History Society**

Meetings are held in Gotherington Village Hall, starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors are welcome, £2 per meeting.

*Tuesday 24th November:*

**Ian Mackintosh—The History of Stroud**

*Tuesday 15th December:*

**Patrick Furley—The Magic Lantern Show**

*Tuesday 26th January 2016:*

**Alec Hamilton—Arts and Crafts Treasures of Gloucester Cathedral**

*Tuesday 23rd February 2016:*

**Adrian Barlow—Victorian Architecture: a Betjemanesque Introduction**

*Tuesday 22nd March 2016:*

**Andrew Armstrong—Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Gloucestershire**

**Holst Birthplace Museum**

www.holstmuseum.org.uk

4 Clarence Road, Cheltenham

*Friday 20th November at 7.30 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Winchcombe Street*

**ISOBEL AND GUSTAV HOLST—AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP?**

A talk by **Philippa Tudor**

Tickets from the Holst Museum and the Wilson Tourist Information Centre, £10 (members £8), children £5, to include a glass of wine

*REVIEWS*

*Summer events and visits July—October 2015*

**Visit to Rodmarton Manor and to Chalford and Selsley churches,  
Friday June 26th**

Leaving Royal Well by coach at 9.30 am as usual we arrived about 40 minutes later at Rodmarton Manor near Cirencester, where we had coffee before meeting our guide John Biddulph, son of the present owner. He said that the Manor had been built between 1909 and



1929 for his great-grandfather Claude Biddulph, a younger son of the wealthy Biddulph family from Ledbury. The house itself, its furnishings and gardens were all prime examples of the work of the Arts and Crafts movement started by William Morris, which aimed to promote a return to the use of hand tools and

local materials. Much of it was attributable to the Barnsley brothers and Ernest Gimson, leading lights in the movement, who had set up workshops at Sapperton. The cottage-style wing to the left (now converted into flats) had been designed as staff quarters and kitchens, while the taller central section contained family accommodation and formal rooms. Entering by the front door we passed through the drawing room, former ballroom and dining room, all of which contained



The gardens at Rodmarton

many fine examples of furniture by the Barnsleys, Gimson, Peter Waal and other craftsmen, made in workshops either here or at Sapperton. Upstairs we saw bedrooms with more beautiful hand-made furniture and, in the corridor, a vast appliqué picture of George VI's coronation made by the Rodmarton Women's Guild. The tour ended in the small chapel with its stone arches and plain wooden pews, still used for events such as family christenings. Mr Biddulph then invited us to explore the extensive gardens. Wandering around these varied,

intricately linked spaces kept us happily occupied for the rest of the morning.

We were then given an excellent sandwich lunch before moving on to **Christ Church, Chalford**. This, the churchwarden told us, had been built as a chapel of ease for Bisley in 1725. In 1924 the then vicar Walter Carder, an admirer of the Arts and Crafts movement, had commissioned new woodwork from Gimson's workshops, starting with the organ gallery and rood screen. The pulpit had been remodelled by Jewson, Barnsley's successor. There were also Cheltenham connections: two marble memorials carved by C Lewis, who worked at St Mary's, and an organ built by Williams of Cheltenham.

Our final stop was at **All Saints Church, Selsley**.

This church, we learned, was built in the 1850s with a gift of £4000 from a local millowner who had bought a large house nearby. He commissioned Bodley, who had worked with George Gilbert Scott, to design the church. Local workmen were employed and mostly local materials used, such as the Tetbury tiles on the roof. Bodley knew William Morris and invited him to make the windows; it is the only church in the world with all windows made by Morris's workshops. Some were designed by Burne-Jones, Ford Maddox Brown and Rosetti, and several are said to be portraits of people in Morris's circle. Our visit ended with a very welcome cup of tea, after which we returned to the coach and headed for home. Many thanks to David Johnson for organising a most enjoyable outing.



All Saints, Selsley

### South Cheltenham heritage walk, Wednesday 15th and 22nd July

We gathered outside Waller's 1901 Town Hall on a balmy July evening for a fascinating walk led by David Elder. We heard of lectures given there by Captain Scott and Ernest Shackleton and, poignantly, one by Amundsen with Dr Edward Thomas Wilson in the audience, two months before he knew of his son's death. Opposite is 6 Imperial Square, once the home of Charles Tennyson Turner, brother of the more famous Alfred Lord Tennyson. We stopped by the Rodney Road car park to mourn the destruction of the delightful octagonal Gothic-style Cambrey Spa building that once stood there. Across the road 3 Wolseley Terrace, now called Isbourne House, was the home of P G Wodehouse. Someone who works there joined us and was enthralled to hear the history of the building. Turning into Vittoria Walk, we passed the house where Gustav Holst lived from the age of eight. Further up is the former Hygeia House where Henry Thompson dispensed medical waters. In Montpellier Parade we paused by the site of Westal, the home of the Wilson family from 1874 until the 1930s. Two literary connections followed: Cecil Day-Lewis lived at Belmore House, 96 Bath Road, and Anthony Trollope at 5 Paragon Terrace. We then entered Cheltenham College's grounds to view the plaque honouring its former pupil, Edward Wilson. The evening ended with a drink in the Beehive, much frequented by C Day-Lewis.



*Sue Brown*

### Hidden Tewkesbury, Wednesday 19th August

Our leader John Dixon began this rather damp evening walk by leading us from the Abbey across Church Street and down an alley to the former Baptist Chapel of 1655 and its graveyard, in which is the grave of Shakespeare's nephew. At this point one of the party unfortunately suffered a painful fall after slipping on wet paving and was unable to continue. The rest of us next saw weavers' houses where men used to make hosiery beside big upstairs windows, and the Royal Hop Pole Hotel, once a coaching inn, with its plaque quoting a reference in *Pickwick Papers*. Like many other places in Tewkesbury it is a medieval building



with a later facade. Re-crossing Church Street we went down the 200-foot Lilley's Alley to a little house called Claypipes, and John explained that the owners of long burgage plots such as this often built cheap cottages at the back to rent out. We emerged by the Swilgate Stream, source of the 2007 floods. Back across the main road we came to the site of a former steam-powered stocking factory, nicknamed 'Chimney Pot Row', and followed the route of the single-line railway from Ashchurch that used to bring in grain for milling at the Borough Flour Mills by the Avon. A road along the mill leet brought us back to the Abbey. Most of us then rounded off this enjoyable ramble with a drink at the Hop Pole.

*Autumn lectures September –October 2015*

Our first autumn meeting, on September 15th, began with the formal presentation to Geoff and Elaine North of the Peter Smith Award for 2015 (see page 17).

**Nick Humphris** then gave us a talk about **Chedworth Roman Villa**. He said he had been a mechanical engineer and had become involved with the villa as a volunteer. He showed a map marking the sites of the several villas in this area, and a picture of Chedworth as it might have appeared in its heyday, around 380AD. It covered about two acres and had been the private dwelling of a wealthy individual, name unknown. At one end was a hospitality suite and family accommodation with bath-houses and other facilities, and at the other end were service buildings. Its isolated location, only 8 miles from Cirencester but in a blind valley, was unusual but was explained by the existence of a natural spring in the north-west corner of the site. There the Romans had built a nymphaeum, a shrine to the water nymphs. Because of this spring there had probably been an iron age settlement there long before the villa was built in the first century AD. It had been much extended over the following 200 years, and the site as now revealed included not only many high-status rooms with mosaic floors and hypocausts but also two bathhouses. One reception room measured 60ft x 20ft. In the late 4th century the Roman Empire had been shaken by barbarian revolts, and by 401AD all troops had been withdrawn from Britain. In the course of the 5th century, with Roman rule at an end, the abandoned villa would have disappeared into the landscape. It had been rediscovered only in 1864 when a gamekeeper working for the Earl of Eldon, who owned the land, found a mosaic that had been uncovered by rabbits. James Farrer, an antiquarian, set about excavating. Roofs were put over the mosaics and a museum in the style of a mock-Tudor lodge was built to store the artifacts found. Later the whole estate was sold for £2500 to BGAS, who gave it to the National Trust in 1924. Much work had been done since, the latest development being the replacement of some old buildings with a large new display and study area, opened in 2012. The owner of the villa, he suggested, might have started his day by visiting the nymphaeum, then going hunting, perhaps with guests. He showed a mosaic illustrating hunting with dogs. On their return they would have gone through the various cleansing, relaxing and refreshing stages of the bath house routine before repairing to the dining room for a feast. This 30ft x 20ft room had space for entertainers at one end and a table (with chairs, rather than couches) at the other. He showed pictures of its fine mosaic floor, which featured Bacchus and Ariadne and the four seasons. Unlike most villas, Chedworth did not seem to have incorporated a farm, but there may have been one nearby close to the River Coln. A different area of the villa site was being studied each year, current effort being focussed on the big reception room. In response to questions at the end he said that there would have been an extensive plumbing system, doubtless including more latrines—only one had been found—and that the mosaic artists could well have been British, since several groups of them were known to have worked at other sites.

October 6th saw our first meeting at St Luke's, where **Geoff Newsum and Caroline Meller** gave us a (virtual) **Historical Tour of Gotherington**, with Geoff doing the talking and Caroline showing a rich collection of images of the many characterful old buildings in the village. Geoff said he would begin with the oldest parts of the village. Granna Lane had been a greenway from the Cotswolds to the Severn Valley. A mile up the track was an iron age site where a bronze age hoard had been found in the 1970s, and in the other direction a Roman site with quantities of pottery had been discovered in 1982. A field nearby was the site of a plane crash, where two young men from the RNVR had been killed in December 1946. Another field had been a camp site for navvies working on the railway. The railway station had closed in 1970 but was now owned by railway enthusiasts who were working to restore it. Manor Lane, further towards the village centre, led to the manor. He explained that Gotherington had been a sub-manor of Cleeve in the 8th century before being split into Upper and Lower Gotherington under the Bishop of Worcester. An image from the Bayeux tapestry showed Thurstan the standard bearer, who was lord of Gotherington at the time. In the 13th century it had become the property of Tewkesbury Abbey. The Black Death had led to population decline and the decay of the manorial system, and after the dissolution of the monasteries Gotherington had eventually passed into the hands of the wealthy Craven family, who had probably built the present manor house.



One of Gotherington's many thatched cottages

After the enclosures they retained most of the land, but sold it in 1853 to one James Hutchinson of Cheltenham, whose grandson sold it off in lots in 1894, thus finally breaking up the 1000-year old estate. Returning down Manor Lane he pointed out the former home of Stella Marsden, who had set up a still-active link between Gotherington and a village in Gambia. Further into the village were several picturesque old properties: Baldwin's farmhouse had 14th century origins, two cottages dated from 1680 and beside the war memorial was a tiny cottage half sunk into the ground, once occupied by a family with 10 children. Passing the sites of the former village poor house and smithy we came to Malleson Road, named after a wealthy merchant family from London who had introduced a district nurse to the village, built the village hall and established a men's club and reading room. Thus far, Geoff explained, we had seen Upper Gotherington: Lower Gotherington had always been smaller. He pointed out Home Farm, once owned by Henry Holliday who had butcher's shops in Cheltenham, and Agg's Lane, named after Adeline Agg who had lived there all her life and died at 103. More houses and cottages followed, all with points of special interest. We were not surprised to learn that there are 22 listed buildings in the village! It had been an eye-opening tour, and in some ways a refreshing change from Regency Cheltenham.

On 20th October the meeting began with the presentation of an Arts Council Award to David Drinkwater, military historian. The acting Chairman Sue Brown presented him with a framed certificate, and he expressed his thanks to CLHS as a whole and to certain members who had persuaded him to join the Society.

**John Loosley** then gave a talk on **Childhood Employment in Gloucestershire**.

John said his interest had been aroused by material he had come across while doing a project on Oakridge. Nowadays we are horrified at the idea of child labour, but 200 years ago a poor family would gladly send an 8-year-old out to work. The Chimney Sweepers Act of 1788 said no boy younger than 8 should be apprenticed : some people deplored the use of boy sweeps, but they were still seen as necessary, and the legislation only tried to control rather than stop the practice. There was casual employment for children as crossing sweepers and errand boys, and some factory work even in the 18th century. Pin manufacturers in Gloucester employed mostly girls aged 14-18, and Tewkesbury had stocking framework knitters. Other-



A boy being hired by a sweep

wise the majority of child workers were in rural occupations, helping their parents with farm work and perhaps earning a little by bird-scaring or stone-picking. The enquiries conducted under the Settlement Act of 1667 to determine who was eligible for parish relief are a good source of information about child workers, and show that many pauper children were placed as apprentices to get them 'off the parish'. Such apprenticeships were often for husbandry and housewifery and offered no real training. After 1830 there were more schools and more limits set on the hours children could work, but families in cramped cottages still wanted teenagers, especially girls, to leave home. Flora Thompson in *Lark Rise to Candleford* showed how girls were routinely sent into service at 13 or even 11. In the north child employment was increasingly centred in factories, notably the Lancashire mills, which gave rise to much concern. He showed a picture of a small boy at a spinning mule, and a list of 19th century Acts governing child labour in factories, mines and workshops, all aimed at restricting the ages of child workers. After 1872 no child under 12 was to work underground, and after 1878 no child under 10 was to work at all, while those aged 10-14 should still spend half their time at school. All these provisions were widely abused, not least because until 1891 education was not free. John's researches had revealed the existence of a silk mill (one of several in the county) in Oakridge Lynch which by 1881 had become a major source of employment for girls, who sometimes left school early to go there. There had been similar levels of childhood employment in the Forest of Dean, where the work was mostly mining and much harder. He showed pictures of children dragging hods of coal on skids along low tunnels, and described boys of 12 in ironstone mines carrying loads of ore on their backs. Such children often had little or no education. The audience had obviously listened with much interest and asked several thoughtful questions at the end.

**‘Immigration and Emigration to, from and within Gloucestershire’**

**GLHA Local History Day**

*Saturday 24th October 2015*

*at Pate’s Grammar School, Cheltenham*

The meeting began at 11.00 am with a welcome from Dr Steven Blake. He outlined the programme for the day and introduced the first speaker, Dr Jessica Lutkin, who called her talk ‘From Iceland to Portugal: Resident immigrants in Gloucestershire and Bristol, 1330-1550’,



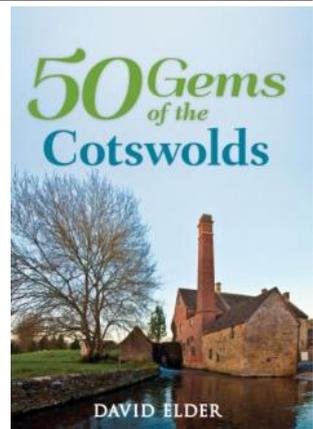
and drew attention to a newly-created website, [englandsimmigrants.com](http://englandsimmigrants.com). The lunch break followed, with sandwiches served in the ante-room and time allowed to look round the displays. Theo Wiggill, a visiting researcher from Australia with ancestors in Sheepscombe, then spoke on ‘The British Settlers of 1820 to South Africa: Bradshaw’s Party from Gloucestershire’. The Bryan Jerrard Award, sponsored, as it was last year, by the History Press, was presented to John Rhodes for his article ‘The Civil War Defences of Gloucester’, published in the BGAS Transactions, Vol 132. The last speaker of the day was Florence Nyasamo-Thomas on the theme ‘Untold Stories’: Exploring Cheltenham’s Black History’. Finally, the award for the best display went to Gloucester. Dr Blake then closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their support.

*NEW PUBLICATION*

**50 GEMS OF THE COTSWOLDS**

By David Elder

To many, the Cotswolds epitomise rural England at its best, and it remains one of the most frequently visited parts of Britain. Yet this region defies simple stereotypes. If you know where to look you’re as likely to come across a mysterious stone circle, an Iron Age fort or the castle where Edward II was murdered as an ancient church or a handsome limestone manor house. Once the centre of the English wool trade during the Middle Ages, the Cotswolds were rediscovered by the Arts and Crafts Movement in the late 19th century. Towns such as Chipping Campden and Stow-on-the-Wold have many secrets to reveal. Places of outstanding beauty and treasures of historical interest are both to be found in this thoughtfully-compiled guide.



Published in paperback in July 2015 by Amberley Publishing, price £13.49

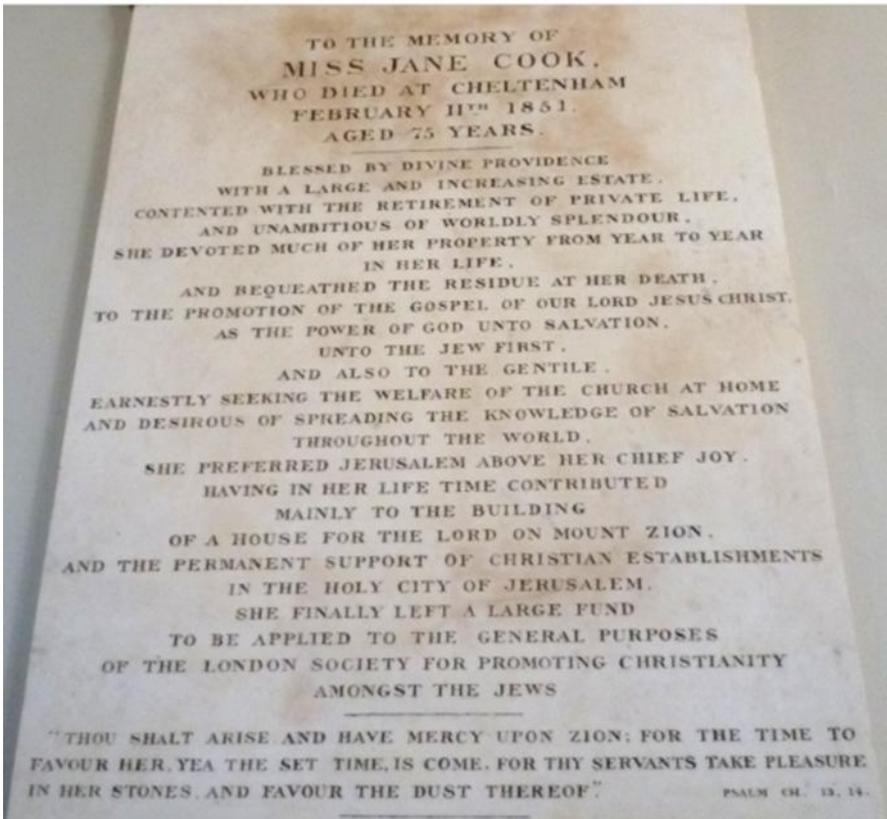
*FEATURE*

## JANE COOK

### An Extraordinary Cheltenham Lady

*(The author wishes to acknowledge that much of his narrative, of which this is the third instalment, is based on an article written in 2001 by Alan Munden.)*

One of the main elements of Jane's Christian faith and the motivation for many of her generous gifts and bequests was the conviction, shared by many evangelical Anglicans of her day, that the return of Jesus Christ to Earth was due and that the Jews must be converted to Christianity in preparation for it. It is hard for us today to understand this obsession, but it was firmly believed that the 'second coming', predicted in the bible, would only take place once the Jewish people had returned to Israel and had been converted to Christianity.



Memorial to Jane Cook formerly in Jews' Chapel, Bethnal Green, now in Christ Church, Spitalfields

Jane was obsessed with the conversion of Jews both in Britain and abroad. One of her main endeavours, on which she expended great efforts and large sums of money, was missionary work to aid this conversion. Work in Britain was centred on the East End of London, a very poor area where many Jewish immigrants had settled. Jane supported the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People, formerly the London Jews' Society; and the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, of which she was a life member. The latter interdenominational missionary society was founded by Charles Simeon in 1809. In 1811 a five-acre site in Bethnal Green was leased as a centre for missionary activity and it was here that a church called the Episcopal Jews' Chapel was built. By 1845 Jane had donated £1,377 to support this cause, an amount that increased to £21,000 by 1850, and in total reached about £60,000. In 1851, when Jane left substantial gifts to the London Society in her will, it is estimated that there were 2,000 Jews living in London and 600 baptisms had taken place in the Episcopal Chapel. The terms of her will show caution as well as a shrewd grasp of finance: her bequest was to be considered and maintained as a reserve fund, the capital not to be expended 'unless for extraordinary contingencies'.

Jane's efforts to help the London Jews went beyond conversion. She saw the need to assist poor people after they became Christians. In her will she included £1,000 to the Operative Jewish Converts Institution. This was formed in 1831 and was linked to the Episcopal Chapel. The institution was necessary because many of the Jews who converted to Christianity lost their jobs. In her will Jane also donated £2,000 to the Episcopal Jews' Chapel Abrahamitic Society, which had been established by members of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, to help the many enquiring and baptised Jews who could not be supported by the Operative Jewish Converts Institution. It was designed to teach useful trade skills to poor converts. She donated £10,700 to purchase and maintain a House of Industry which became a home and workshop for converts. Here they were taught woodworking, bookbinding and printing. She gave £200 to be invested in a fund to establish converted Jews in work. She also provided £4,000 towards a relief fund for elderly, infirm converts. She supported Judah Lyons, a converted rabbi, as a scripture reader to distribute tracts. In 1850 she gave £2,000 to be invested to provide a yearly salary of £60 for a converted Israelite to be a house surgeon or apothecary in Jerusalem. Meanwhile at home she was not alone in promoting these causes: by 1849, with the support of Francis Close, the Anglican churches in Cheltenham had given £8,143 to the London Society.

In that year Jane gave a large sum to establish a mission to Jews living in China. The first bishop of Victoria in Hong Kong was consecrated, but the mission made slow progress because there were few Jews to convert. A more successful enterprise concentrated on the conversion of the more numerous Jews living in Poland, where in 1850 she gave £550 to the London Society to purchase land for a settlement for Jewish workers in Krakow.

The main focus of Jane's generosity towards the conversion of Jews abroad was support for work in Jerusalem. The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews saw the establishment of an Anglican bishopric in this city in 1841 as an important step in providing a Protestant presence in the Middle East. It was believed that this presence would restore the evangelical faith to an area dominated by the idolatry of the Roman and Eastern churches. Towards the end of her life, and in her will, Jane used her financial and political muscle in the advancement of her obsession about establishing Protestantism in this region.

Christ Church is an Anglican church located at Mount Zion inside the Old City of Jerusalem. The construction of this handsome building was financed by the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. From 1834 the London Jews' Society had aimed to establish a Protestant church in Jerusalem and in 1835 an appeal was launched. In 1837 a site was purchased near the Jaffa gate, and the foundation stone was laid in 1842.



Christ Church, Jerusalem



Samuel Gobat, Bishop  
of Jerusalem

The building of the church was highly controversial as it was the first Protestant Christian church in the Muslim Ottoman Empire. After the stonework of the superstructure was erected the Turkish authorities denied that they had given their permission and work was stopped. Efforts by the British Parliament to obtain permission to continue building rumbled on for many years. A petition for its continuance was signed by 1,400 clergy and 15,000 laity and presented to the British Prime Minister. Work eventually resumed and Samuel Gobat the Bishop of Jerusalem consecrated the new building on 21st January 1849. It

remained the seat of the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem until 1899.

It is probable that Jane provided much of the initial funding for Christ Church and, through her religious and political contacts, the push for establishing the Anglican presence in Jerusalem. She donated £2,600 towards the completion of the building in 1845 and a further £1,000 two years later. The timber roof and internal wooden fittings were fabricated in London and sent to Jaffa in a specially chartered vessel. They were then transported to Jerusalem on the backs of camels. The stone-masons employed to build Christ Church and possibly many of the stones in the building came from Malta. Jane gave another £13,000 in 1848, £8,500 of which was for the minister's stipend. A further £2,000 was for Hebrew Bibles, New Testaments and the Book of Common Prayer for the Jews of Jerusalem and Palestine.

*Mike Bell*

*(to be concluded)*

## *SOCIETY NEWS*

### New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Penelope Hall	Malcolm Norman
Alex and Sarah Chalk	Zelianne Yates
Richard White	Dr Clifford Williams
Simon and Sandra Wheeler	Mrs Jamie Muddiman Fraser
David Fisher and Christina Harlin	Alison Mildon
Peter Witts	

### *New members' interests:*

Malcolm Norman—the Norman family, especially George Norman, Mayor of Cheltenham.

Jamie Muddiman Fraser— early Cheltenham Baptists, specifically Bethal Baptist, and long-standing ‘characters’ of the town

Zelianne Yeates—the Pates family and associates of Richard Pate MP, Tudor Gloucestershire, the reformation and its effects on social mobility

Peter Witts—industrial and railway history, utilities, Great War period, architecture

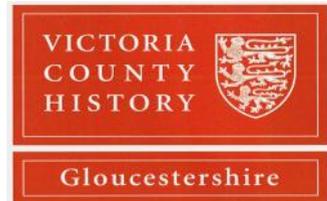
### VCH News

#### **Thankyou, CLHS!**

I was absolutely delighted to open a letter from David Scriven in September, announcing that the Committee had decided to make a grant of £1000 towards the work on the Cheltenham VCH this year, and enclosing a cheque for that amount. This is in addition to the funds raised through Sally’s Teas and Talks, mentioned opposite. The Gloucestershire County History Trust is very pleased indeed to have not only this donation, but also the promise of similar cheques in 2016 and 2017. Sustained support of this kind is extremely valuable, as it provides strong evidence of local interest and commitment, which we can build on when approaching other local bodies for funds.

Meanwhile the work goes on, and we continue to be grateful for the sterling efforts of our many volunteers. While the Red Book itself may be some way off, we hope that some of the recent Cheltenham research will see the light of day rather sooner, in paperback form. This will help further to raise the profile of the project and keep up the momentum.

*James Hodsdon*



## OVER TWELVE HUNDRED POUNDS!

I should like to thank all members and their friends who have come to the three Teas and Talks that were held in 2014 and 2015. We have raised the superb sum of £1206. I should also like to thank, very warmly, the speakers who came and gave generously of their time: Dr Steven Blake and Ann-Rachael Harwood, on 'Twenty Objects from The Wilson'; Tom James, who spoke on 'Mary Seacole, Jamaican nurse' and Heather Forbes, who talked about 'Old Music from the Archives'. Apart from an entertaining talk, Heather brought along a rarely seen 13<sup>th</sup> century cartulary from Winchcombe Abbey, which included a glued-in sheet of music used as a flyleaf – it was a great treat to get so close to an eight-hundred year-old document.

We hope to raise more money in 2016 by holding another Tea and Talk and, for variety, a coffee morning including a talk. If you were unable to come this year, please watch out for the dates next year – they will be advertised in the Newsletter and on the webpage. However, what VCH Cheltenham would really appreciate is a steady stream of money, enabling them to budget for the future – a small monthly donation would be the best way to support this important work. If you feel able to do this please use the following web address : <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/gloucestershire/support>



Meanwhile it has been decided that the Society should make a grant of £3000 to the Gloucestershire County History Trust for the Cheltenham VCH project, spread over the years 2015-17. The first cheque for £1000 has already been sent.

*Sally Self*

## Congratulations Geoff and Elaine!



Geoff and Elaine North, seen here with Judy Smith, were the worthy winners of this year's Peter Smith Award, which was formally presented to them at the first autumn meeting on September 15th. For their many years of energetic support for all the Society's activities, and particularly for the countless well-researched and richly illustrated displays they have created, they fully deserve this token of our appreciation.

*LOCAL NEWS***Angel Award for Pittville Gates Project**

It was reported in the *Echo* on September 18th that the Friends of Pittville had received an Angel Award from Historic England for their recently completed two-year project to restore Pittville gates. The awards are given out every year. The certificate, signed by Duncan Wilson of Historic England and by composer Andrew Lloyd-Webber, said :

‘This is to recognise the tremendous time, effort and determination of Friends of Pittville for the rescue of Pittville gates. Heroic rescue projects like this make an important contribution to local and national history, to the life of the community and to the vital task of securing England’s rich and varied heritage for present and future generations.’

Karen Radford, Cheltenham Borough Council’s conservation and heritage manager, commented that the gates had transformed the appearance of a prominent corner of the townscape.

Judie Hodsdon, who chaired the restoration project, expressed the group’s great pleasure at receiving the award. Society members will surely agree that it was extremely well deserved.

**SEARCHING FOR A NEW JOURNAL EDITOR**

As you will be aware we have made several, so far unsuccessful, appeals for a new editor for the Journal. We realise that total responsibility for the Journal can seem very daunting and that working to a deadline can be difficult. We have therefore decided that we will try a different approach. We would like to recruit several Sub-Editors who would be responsible for between one and three articles, which they would prepare for publication, with images and captions. These would then go to Sally Self, who has agreed to continue for another few years. Sally would assemble the articles, add the annual contributions from Steve Blake and Julie Courtenay, compile an index and produce the covers. This would relieve her of much of the preparatory work and would enable the Journal to carry on for a time. Training could be given to anyone who felt that they were in a position to help and perhaps after a couple of years might feel able to take over the whole editorship.

If on the other hand, you have missed the previous appeals, and would like to take full responsibility then please speak to Sally.

*Sally Self*

01242 243714 : [journal.clhs@btinternet.com](mailto:journal.clhs@btinternet.com)

*FEATURE***Cheltenham's Slave Owners**

Earlier in the year one of the staff at the Cobalt Unit at Linton House in Thirlestaine Road asked me whether anything of note had happened there during either of the world wars. From a quick trawl of local directories for the relevant dates it was clear that there was nothing worth mentioning – no Red Cross Hospital or requisitioning by the War Office, for example. During the First World War the occupant had been Mrs St Clair-Ford, who had arrived there in 1868 with her late husband (Captain St Clair St Clair-Ford, ex-Indian Army, noted for his many benefactions, such as Naunton Park and the Charlton Kings Working Men's Club), and after her death it was used as a staff house for Cheltenham College.

However, Linton itself is a fine early 19<sup>th</sup> century building, and I realised that it and its occupants deserved further investigation. Consequently an account of the house as well as some of the neighbouring mansions is due to appear in the next *Journal*. An earlier building on the site (Gilstead Lodge) had been occupied by one Samuel Brandford Cox. He was the former owner of a sugar plantation in British Guiana at a location called Zeelugt, which is the name he gave to the house when he enlarged it. After the First World War that name was dropped in favour of the less Germanic-sounding Linton, though in fact Zeelugt is a Dutch word, as the sugar plantation occupied land formerly colonised by the Dutch; the settlement is still in being today.



Inspection and sale of a slave

A series of Indian Army officers lived at Zeelugt during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, eg Major-General Whish of the Bengal Artillery; Major-General Tickell of the Bengal Engineers, with his wife, five sons and two daughters, mother-in-law, butler and five other servants; Dr George Lamb, Physician-General to the Bengal Army; and also George Nevile Wyatt, a former indigo planter from Behar.

One particular detail in Samuel Cox's background has prompted me to undertake wider research, to be written up at a later date. This is the revelation from data compiled by University College, London, that at one time Cox had owned as many as 335 slaves on his plantation. Further perusal of the database has enabled me to identify a number of other men and women who gave a Cheltenham address when applying for compensation following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. By coincidence, this little-known aspect of our history was recently described in an excellent BBC TV programme ('Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners'). The British government paid out £20 million to the claimants, and this influx of new capital helped fuel the nation's industry and commerce. No doubt Cheltenham's own prosperity may also be attributed in part to windfalls received by certain of those who visited or settled here.

*Eric Miller*

*FEATURE*

## **Brawls, Bills and Blunderbusses: territorial disputes in 16th and 17th century Cheltenham**

In the summer of 1551, a priest out walking happened upon a group of young men laying nets in a lane to catch hawks that were breeding in an adjacent grove. The priest was George Ligon, whose nephew, William Ligon of Arle Court, held a substantial estate in Cheltenham, including the manor of Redgrove in the south-west corner of the parish. When the men refused to stop, he rushed back to his nephew's house, interrupting the household's dinner to deliver the news. The Lignons immediately set out to confront the interlopers with several of their servants, all armed with staves and various farming implements. When they began breaking down the nets, a violent confrontation was inevitable. But the men they rushed to meet were not strangers, nor common thieves, but their "nigh kinsmen". Their argument was with William Read, who owned the grove where the hawks had been raised, and his brothers John and Gabriel, the sons of George's cousin Richard. Accompanying them were Henry and Nicholas Norwood, whose father's manor of Leckhampton bordered Ligon's estate in Redgrove. Despite the kinship between the Lignons and the Reads, the resulting brawl, fought with swords, pikes, bills, staves, and fists, was close and nasty. John Read remembered William Ligon striking Gabriel Read so hard with



A long-handled bill, or billhook

a staff that Gabriel sank to his knees defenceless; George Ligon recalled a companion of the Reads sneaking to attack an unarmed Ligon servant from behind. The brawl seems to have been ended when John Read was struck down from behind with a sharp bill, which he complained 'did cut & cast down his bones and flesh from the top of the blade of the shoulder until the middle of the back, cutting with the said stroke five of the ribs of your said subject clear in sunder, so that his lights and lungs might easily have been in so much that your said subject of the said grievous wound from the time of his said hurt until Candlemas last past, being twenty weeks...'

Almost a century and a half later, in 1693, another armed brawl in the vicinity of Cheltenham was only resolved with the intervention of the House of Commons. This time the quarrel centred upon ownership of a tree, known as the Forden Elm. The tree grew next to a highway near Forden House (the future Charlton Park), which belonged to John Greville. His brother, Giles, was lord of the manor of Ashley, within Charlton Kings, and the tree in question had been planted near the

house by one of their ancestors. But although the Grevilles were lords of Ashley, their manor was held of Sir Ralph Dutton's manor of the hundred of Cheltenham, and it was not clear which manor had the rights to the wastes, the uncultivated marginal lands that bordered the fields. Dutton's steward, John Prinn, had



An English flintlock blunderbuss

tried to assert his master's rights by ordering the felling of the tree, but Greville threatened to shoot the workmen. In the meantime, 'some poor people' (commanded, claimed witnesses, by John Greville) chopped down the tree during the night, taking away the roots and branches. The next day, when Prinn and the blunderbuss-wielding constables confronted this 'rabble', numbering forty and still chopping up the tree, Greville appeared nearby with a hand gun in his hand. Prinn, armed with a warrant from a local Justice, demanded Greville's gun, though the latter was on his own land at the time and qualified as a gentleman to own a gun. No wonder, then, that Greville refused and 'gave him a box on the ear', leaving Prinn 'black and blue several Days'. Greville was bound over to appear before a Justice, but had his case dismissed at a private session. Taunted by Greville, Prinn had the case brought before the House of Commons. Perhaps wisely, the Commons carefully determined that Greville had not breached Dutton's privilege as an MP, and discharged the case. However, Prinn still had the last laugh, buying Forden House from the Grevilles in 1716.

At first glance, these two 'riots' appear to be worlds apart. The naked aggression of the sixteenth-century confrontation is apparent, each side claiming the other attacked without thought or provocation. Fought with sharp weapons and agricultural implements, it resulted in grievous wounds. In contrast, despite the presence of firearms, the only violence of the seventeenth-century brawl was a single blow to the face resulting in bruises and hurt pride. Whilst the Lignons had confronted the Reads with armed retainers and asserted their rights through force of arms, Prinn confronted Greville with the local constables and a warrant from a Justice. This greater disciplinary power of the law and legal officers in the later seventeenth century is particularly apparent if one considers that, at the time of the brawl in 1551, William Ligon was the sheriff of Worcestershire and his brother-in-law was the sheriff of Gloucestershire, William Read was a future sheriff of Gloucestershire, and both would serve as Justices within the hundred of Cheltenham. The two cases also reveal the greater stratification of society in the 1690s compared to the 1550s. In 1551, the Reads shared the dinner of a tenant at his house whilst the Lignons fought alongside their servants, but in 1693 Greville was a remote commander of the poor of his manor, who were dismissed by some witnesses as 'a rabble'. Yet Greville could also pose as a champion of the poor

man, giving his tree to them to frustrate Dutton's plans to use the wood to repair the local gaol. However, both incidents were at core the same, revolving around disputed rights to the marginal waste lands that bordered their possessions. The Lignons were fighting to assert their right to the lane and hedges that ran between their lands and those of the Reads; Prinn was asserting Sir Ralph Dutton's right to the Forden Elm to emphasise his right also to the highway in which it stood. This was not merely a matter of honour, though. The value of the wood that grew in the lanes and hedgerows of the manors was certainly not inconsiderable. But more than this, both cases demonstrate the crisis of authority created within the manor of Cheltenham by an absentee lord (the Crown in the 1550s, Sir Ralph Dutton in the 1690s). Elsewhere, lordship over a hundred had been reduced to little more than a few customary pecuniary rights, but Cheltenham hundred was a liberty which was merged with the manor of Cheltenham, clouding the question of authority. The resident gentry within the hundred had long been struggling to establish their estates as autonomous manors. The Lignons in Arle, the Grevilles in Ashley, and the Norwoods in Leckhampton were just three such families. Although Prinn was undoubtedly a gentleman, as a barrister he was looked down upon by Greville, and as steward of the manor of Cheltenham he was resented as the agent of the absentee lord. That the struggle over the Forden Elm represents a larger struggle for authority within Cheltenham is aptly symbolised by Dutton's plan to use the wood to repair his gaol, and Greville's recruitment of the poor to defeat it.

It was through such brawls as these, and the legal battles which followed, that the gentlemen of Cheltenham hundred established and defended their rights against their neighbours. One can easily imagine that it was a constant struggle.

*Alex Craven*

## **THE PATERSON MEMORIAL LECTURE**

**Wednesday, 2nd December 2015 at 7.30 pm  
in the Harwood Hall, Christ Church, Malvern Road**

The speaker this year is Sir Donald Insall, architect, conservationist and author of several books on the care and conservation of old buildings. He has been described as one of the leading conservation architects of his generation.

Sir Donald's theme will be 'Living Buildings'.

Admission: £7.50 at the door



## BOOKS FOR SALE



### DONATED BOOKS, MANY IN 'AS NEW' CONDITION

The New Club—Neil Parrack (new copies) £8.50

A Grand City: Bristol in 18th and 19th Centuries –Ed M J Crossley Evans, now £6 (2 copies)

History of Cirencester—Beecham , now £23

Miniatures— Dudley Heath (1905) £20

Mee—The King's England series, and Pevsner County series: Various counties and prices, please contact me for details.

BGAS RECORD SERIES (see November 2014 Newsletter for titles). Various prices between £5 and £20 and 'bundles' as below.

Bigland's Gloucestershire Collections, Vols 2,3,5,8; 4 volumes for £30.

Gloucester Apprenticeship Records, Vol 14, £10, Vol 25, £25, or both for £30

Gloucestershire Feet of Fines, Vol 16, £5, Vol 20, £5, Vol 27, £30 or all for £35

Berkeley Muniments, Vol 17, £5, Vol 18, £20, or both for £22

### OTHER TITLES

Back again Mr Begbie—Revd Begbie, OBE (ex Cheltenham College Day Boy) - £20 (new condition)

A Gloucester Boy, A story of life in the 1950s & 1960s—C Ballinger - £8.50 (new condition)

Don't forget to check out the Society's book table on lecture evenings, where many other books are on sale. You can always make me a reasonable offer on book table books. Thank you to everyone who has brought books to me that they no longer need, and to Elaine North for kindly pricing them up for me so that we can obtain their realistic value in today's market. It is surprising how much we can raise for CLHS in this way. If you are interested in any of the above books, or wish to donate books to CLHS, please contact me either on 01242 232740 (ex directory) or at [heatherbell71@hotmail.com](mailto:heatherbell71@hotmail.com) . Many thanks.

*Heather Atkinson*

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### *CAN YOU HELP?*

#### **Mystery photo**

An enquirer would like to know whether anyone can help identify this picture, taken by the well-known Dutch photographer Hugo van Wadenoyen, who had a studio in the Promenade in the 1940s and '50s.



#### **Auction catalogue wanted**

An enquirer is anxious to track down the auction catalogue for the contents of 4, Oxford Parade, Cheltenham, which took place at the house on 2nd and 3rd October 1907. The auction was conducted by Young & Gilling of the Promenade. Some historical documents of Young and Gilling have been deposited at the Archives in Gloucester, but these appear to be related only to sales of houses.

*If you can help with either of these queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail [joyce@cyberwebospace.net](mailto:joyce@cyberwebospace.net)*

### NEXT ISSUE

Please forward articles for inclusion in the March 2016 issue by  
**Monday 15th February 2016**  
 to the Editor : Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA  
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