



# Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 89

Affiliated to Cheltenham Arts Council  
Registered Charity No. 1056046  
<http://www.cheltlocalhistory.org.uk>

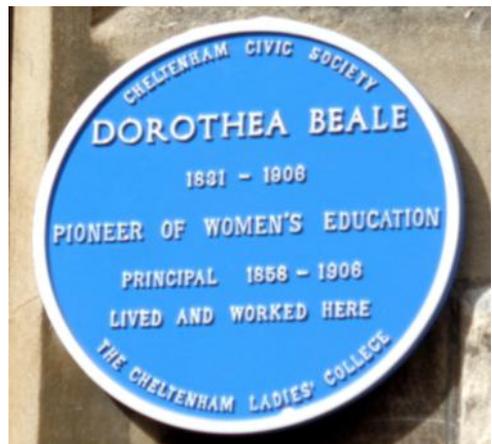
November 2017



## *EDITORIAL*

On September 6th Cheltenham acquired a new blue plaque, this time commemorating someone who was already a local celebrity when she was awarded the freedom of the borough back in 1901. The Mayor Cllr Klara Sudbury said that as an alumna of St Hilda's College, Oxford, which had been founded by Miss Beale, she was delighted to have been asked to unveil her memorial. The present Principal Eve Jardine-Young said the College was proud that this extraordinary woman had been honoured by the town which had meant so much to her.

*Kath Boothman*



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## *EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2017-18*

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

*Tuesday 12th December:*

### **David Aldred—Cleeve Hill, the Cotswold Health Resort**

For hundreds of years Cleeve Hill provided valuable common land for the inhabitants of Bishop's Cleeve and Southam. Then in the last decade of the nineteenth century it rapidly developed as the Cotswold Health Resort, when Cheltenham people and money moved out of town to create a playground and an affluent outer suburb which still holds its attraction as a place to visit and live. Most of this development took place in the two decades before the Great War. This talk will chart many of these changes and show how they created the landscape we see today .

*Tuesday 23rd January 2018:*

### **Research and Display Evening**

Our annual social evening gives members a chance to meet informally and to show the results of their researches. As usual refreshments will be served and there will be a raffle. Sue Robbins 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 and/or source materials. Please contact Sue on 01242 233439 or e-mail [robbins114@btinternet.com](mailto:robbins114@btinternet.com)

*Tuesday 20th February 2018:*

### **David J H Smith—The Fifth Earl of Berkeley and Mary Cole (1784-1811): a Regency Scandal**

The fifth earl of Berkeley goes down in the history of the family as the 'wicked earl'. By his will of 1810 he disinherited his legitimate sons, leaving his fortune to his favourite but illegitimate eldest son William. As a result the title and estate were separated for over a century and his actions contributed to the extinction of the title. This all came about because of his liaison with Mary Cole, a Gloucester butcher's daughter, whom he met when he was over forty and she was in her late teens. But was she a naive ingénue or a cynical gold digger? Come to the talk and find out.

*Tuesday 6th March 2018 at 10.00 am for 10.30 am:*

(Note venue: St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place)

### **Ray Wilson—The Quarries and Tramroads of Leckhampton Hill**

Come and learn the origin of the celebrated landmark above Cheltenham known as the Devil's Chimney. This fully illustrated talk by Dr Ray Wilson will reveal

this as part of the story of the quarries on Leckhampton Hill and the tramroads that served them. In the 1920s, four 70 foot high steel lime kilns were built on the hill served by a standard gauge incline railway. Today it is possible to see the substantial remains of this unsuccessful venture. The talk will also include the story of the ‘riots’ in the early 20th century.

*Tuesday 20th March 2018:*

**Barry Simon—The History of Swindon Village**

Barry Simon is Chairman of the Swindon Village Society. As well as being the ‘Nimbys’ for that area the Society’s members have also undertaken research into the area’s one thousand years of history. In particular they have produced seven books of local history which record the memories of those who grew up around Swindon Village and have lived in the area over the past ninety years. In turn this knowledge has proved useful in averting or redirecting a number of unwelcome developments. This talk will cover the thousand year history and also note how such knowledge can be turned to local advantage.

*Tuesday 3rd April 2018 at 10.00 am for 10.30 am:*

*(Note venue: St Luke’s Hall, St Luke’s Place)*

**Carrie Howse—Rural District Nursing in Gloucestershire, 1880-1925**

Few people have heard of Elizabeth Malleon (1828-1916), founder of the Rural Nursing Association, or realise the importance of Gloucestershire as the place where her national system of rural district nursing began. This talk describes the development of district nursing in rural Gloucestershire from the 1880s, when Elizabeth Malleon moved to the area from London. The establishment of her local charity and its expansion into a national scheme is traced to its affiliation and eventual amalgamation with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, the organisation from which today's system of district nursing has evolved. The subsequent progress of the work in Gloucestershire is then followed through the lives of and relationships between three tiers of local society: the middle and upper class ladies who devoted years of their lives to the administration and management of the rural district nursing system, entirely on a voluntary basis; the specially trained nurses who delivered the care; and the poor patients who benefited from it.

*Tuesday 17th April 2018:*

**Alex Craven and Beth Hartland—VCH Cheltenham**

Alex and Beth have both been involved in the preparation of Cheltenham’s own volume in the Victoria County History series for the past few years, working on different time periods: Medieval in Beth’s case and Early Modern in Alex’s. They will talk about the process of making the book: the archives they visited, the documents they used, the problems that cropped up, the interesting stuff that had to be left out. They will also be very willing to answer any questions about these materials or about the book itself.

*Tuesday 22nd May 2018: AGM followed by*

**Alan Pilbeam—A Week’s Holiday in the Forest of Dean in 1880**

In 1880 John Bellows the Gloucester printer and antiquary published ‘A Week’s Holiday in the Forest of Dean’. It was the first pocket guide to the Forest and together with the newly opened railway introduced visitors to the Forest. He describes the places he visited, his means of travel, the people he met and the wildlife he observed on his walks. He was a sensitive and sympathetic observer and in this talk Alan revisits the places and the scenery and comments on what remains from those early days.

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*FOR YOUR DIARY*

**Prestbury Local History Society**

[www.prestburyhistory.com](http://www.prestburyhistory.com)

Meetings are held at Prestbury Women’s Institute Hall (corner of Bouncers Lane/ Prestbury Road), starting at 7.30 pm unless otherwise stated. Guests pay £2.

*Monday 28th November:*

**John Simpson and Steven Blake—Pittville**

**Leckhampton Local History Society**

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

Meetings are normally held at Glebe Cottages, Church Road, Leckhampton (next to the churchyard), at 7.30 pm. Admission £2 for visitors.

*Wednesday 20th December:*

**John Putley—Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Gloucestershire**

*Wednesday 17th January 2018:*

**Angela Panrucker—The Story of Sudeley Castle**

*Wednesday 21st February 2018:*

**25th Birthday Celebrations—A look back on 25 years in Leckhampton’s Local History Association**

*Wednesday 21st March 2018:*

**Sarah Parker—The Life and Legacy of Dr Edward Jenner (1749-1823)**



**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 28th November:*

**Angela Panrucker—Quaint and Quirky Gloucestershire**

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*Tuesday 23rd January 2018:*

**Steven Blake—Who built Pittville? Speculators, Builders, Colonels and Ladies of Independent Means**

**Gotherington Local History Society**

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

*Tuesday 28th November:*

**Tony Conder— ‘Do You Remember Adlestrop?’**

*Wednesday 13th December:*

**Simon Pickard—The Gloucestershire Waites**

*Tuesday 23rd January 2018:*

**Dr Simon Draper—Anglo-Saxon Boundaries**

*Tuesday 27th February 2018:*

**Amber Patrick—The Brewing Industry in Gloucestershire**

**Historical Association**

Meetings normally begin at 7.30 pm and visitors pay £3. Cheltenham meetings take place in the Teaching Block, University of Gloucestershire Park Campus, and Gloucester meetings at the Oxstalls Campus.

*Monday 11th December in Cheltenham:*

**Dr Steven Mistoris, National Museum of Wales—The History of the Christmas Card**

*Monday 15th January 2018 in Gloucester:*

**Professor Charles Insley, University of Manchester—Aethelfled, Queen of Mercia**

*Monday 12th February 2018 in Gloucester:*

**Dr Mari Takayanagi, Senior Archivist, Parliamentary Archives—Parliament and the Suffragettes**

*Monday 19th March 2018 in Cheltenham:*

**Peter Hennessy (Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield), Queen Mary University of London—Writing the History of Our Own Times**



**Exhibition**

**Holst Birthplace Museum**

*July 1st—December 20th:*

**Gustav's Gramophone**

The Holst family gramophone is on display. Come and hear some vintage sounds in this special exhibition!

**THE PATERSON MEMORIAL LECTURE**  
**Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 7.30 pm**  
**in Pittville Pump Room**

**TRISTRAM HUNT**

**A Museum for the Future**

**What lies in store for our museums and galleries?**

Tristram Hunt is the former shadow Secretary of State for Education and the recently appointed director of the Victoria and Albert Museum. From 2001 to 2010 he was a Senior Lecturer in History at Queen Mary University of London. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a member of the Council of the Royal College of Art and an enthusiastic campaigner for arts education.

*Tickets £12 (including a glass of wine)*

A Cheltenham Civic Society event in collaboration with Friends of the Wilson

*NEW PUBLICATION—special offer*

**CHELTHENHAM BEFORE THE SPA**

by Beth Hartland and Alex Craven



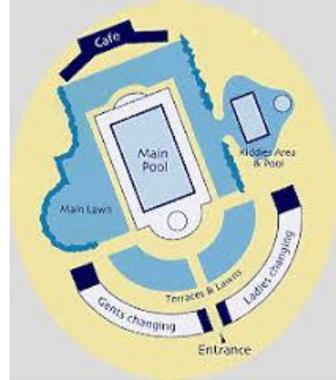
The familiar image of Cheltenham as a large and prosperous former spa town, world-famous because of its Georgian and Regency architecture, its festivals and educational establishments, masks an earlier history. Although numerous descriptions of the town have been published, most say little about the centuries before the 1740s, when it began to develop into a fashionable resort. This is the fullest account ever attempted to chronicle those centuries, from the late Saxon period until the 18th century.

**To take advantage of the pre-publication 25% Discount Offer, fill in the accompanying flyer and return it to any Committee member or email your interest to either James Hodsdon [jj49@btinternet.com](mailto:jj49@btinternet.com) or Sally Self [journal.clhs@btinternet.com](mailto:journal.clhs@btinternet.com)**

## REVIEWS

### *Autumn lectures September - October 2017*

This year's lecture season began on 19th September with an illustrated talk by **Julie Sargent** on **The History of Sandford Lido**. Julie said that bathing, first in spas such as Bath and then in the sea, when sea-bathing became popular in the 19th century, had long been valued as a healthy activity. Open-air pools in inland towns had proliferated by 1950, yet by 2006 there were very few left. Cheltenham's lido was built on a 4½ acre site sold to the Council by Cheltenham College in 1926, and it opened in 1935 looking much as it does now, though the café was not built until the following year. Julie played a recording of a speech made at the opening ceremony and showed a photograph of the mayor's wife switching on the aerator that powered the fountain. One of Sandford Lido's very special features was that all the original engineering installations, long modernised at most lidos, still survive today. She showed an aerial view of the site in 1938, the year the children's pool was opened. The lido stayed open in World War II and was used by American troops, some of whom were living in bell tents in the car park. As happened in many towns, the opening of a municipal indoor pool made the lido less popular in later years, and in 1982 it was threatened with closure for the first time. A public outcry saved it, but in 1994 a survey revealed that the ground under both pools was subsiding. Again there was an outcry against closure, and in 1996 a charitable trust was formed to take over operational control, armed with a 25-year lease and a grant to set it on its feet. Strenuous fund-raising efforts followed. Since 1996 two million pounds have been spent, including a grant of £382,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and much work has been done, always with the emphasis on restoring things as they were. During the refurbishment of the main pool in 2006-7 piles were put in to support the bottom of the pool and at the same time it was made slightly deeper and longer so that it is now a full Olympic-size pool, the only such outdoor pool in the country. It re-opened on 15th August 2007. It featured in the Pre-Games Training Camp Guide for the 2102 Olympics and was used as a training pool by the Malawian team. Now the Gloucester Rugby Club uses the lido for pre-season fitness training, there are many season ticket holders and all kinds of events and competitions are held to keep it financially viable and above all to encourage people to come. Julie showed a sad picture of the derelict Twickenham lido; too many lidos have gone, she commented, but they were built to improve the nation's health and are still very much needed in that role today.



Ground plan of Sandford Lido

On 3rd October at St Luke's **Dave Walton** took the theme **Gimson and the Barnsleys**. It was the story of Ernest Gimson, son of a Midlands iron founder, and the brothers Ernest and Sidney Barnsley, from a Birmingham family of builders, who all became disciples of William Morris and leading lights in the Arts and Crafts movement. Gimson, born in 1864, was articled to an architect on leaving school and first met William Morris when Morris gave a lecture to the Leicester Secular Society. In 1885 Gimson went to work in London for the architect John Dando Sedding, whose office was next door to the showrooms of Morris & Co. There he developed an interest in craft techniques and came very much under Morris's influence. He also met the Barnsley brothers, born in 1863 and 1865, who had attended art school in Birmingham and, like him, trained as architects. Gimson and Sidney Barnsley helped to found a company employing craftsmen to make furniture in Bloomsbury, but it failed and in 1893 they moved to the country, possibly choosing Gloucestershire to be near William Morris at Kelmscott. Ernest Barnsley soon joined them and they all settled at Pinbury Park, near Sapperton, which they leased from Lord Bathurst for £75 a year. There they made solid handcrafted furniture for sale and for their own use out of local woods, using no mechanical tools except a circular saw. Among their most popular designs were ladderback chairs. Gimson's main talent was as a designer, but the other two were expert craftsmen. In 1900 with Lord Bathurst's agreement they all moved to Daneway House, where they restored the



Daneway workshop, showing one of the distinctive ladderback chairs

14th century manor house as an exhibition centre for their work and built houses for themselves, of which Dave showed pictures. Sidney Barnsley preferred to work alone while Gimson and Ernest Barnsley were partners and employed craftsmen, notably the Dutch cabinet-maker Peter Waals who joined them in 1901. They also took architectural commissions, and in 1903 Ernest Barnsley left the partnership to work as an architect. Gimson, helped by Sidney's daughter Lucy, designed more finely detailed furniture in later years and set up a local smith, Alfred Bucknall, to make brass handles and other metal items for him. He also trained local boys as woodworkers. Gimson died in 1919 but the business continued under Peter Waals, who established a new workshop in Chalford and employed many of Gimson's craftsmen, Norman Jewson among them. Jewson married Sidney's daughter Mary and later restored Owlpen Manor, and was also involved in the building and furnishing of Rodmarton Manor, the great project the Barnsley brothers worked on for over 20 years until they both died around 1926. Gimson and the Barnsleys had effectively made the Cotswolds a centre for the Arts and Crafts movement in their lifetime, and there is still a thriving Guild of Gloucestershire Craftsmen today. Dave encouraged his audience to pay a visit to the Wilson, where he leads regular Arts and Crafts tours.

**Angela Applegate's** subject on 17th October was **Music, Friendship and the Cotswold Hills: A Life of Gustav Holst.** Angela said the three things mentioned



in her title were what Holst himself had said were important to him. Despite his foreign-sounding original name, Gustavus Theodore von Holst, he was born here in 1874 in the house that is now the Holst Birthplace Museum and christened at All Saints, where his father was organist. The family was very musical. Gustav's great-grandfather Matthias Holst taught the harp in St Petersburg. His grandfather Gustavus, also a harpist and composer, moved to London and then to Cheltenham. His son Adolph married the singer Clara Cox Lediard, but she died when their two sons, Gustav and Emil, were only 8 and 6. Adolph remarried and had two more sons. Gustav

showed musical talent from the start, learning to play the violin, piano and trombone. His health was never good: besides asthma and poor eyesight he suffered from neuritis, which particularly affected his right arm. On leaving Pate's grammar school at 17 he obtained his first paid job as organist and choirmaster at Wyck Rissington on the extraordinarily meagre salary of £4 a year. In 1892 he produced an operetta, *Lansdown Castle*, which was well received in Cheltenham. His father then paid his expenses for a year at the Royal College of Music while Gustav lived very frugally, even sometimes walking home to Cheltenham from London. (He always loved walking.) In 1895 he won a scholarship, which allowed him to stay at the College, and also began a lifelong friendship with Ralph Vaughan Williams. Attending lectures at William Morris's socialist club in Hammersmith, he was invited to conduct the Hammersmith Socialist Choir, where he met his future wife Emily. In 1898 he joined the Carl Rosa Opera Company as coach and first trombonist. By 1901 he was earning enough to marry Emily; Angela showed a picture of them, both smiling, on their honeymoon in Berlin. They settled in Shepherd's Bush where in 1907 their only child Imogen was born. Gustav became a school music teacher, notably at Morley College and St Paul's Girls' School, composing in his spare time. He was very successful and well liked as a teacher but, although he worked extremely hard, success in his other work was slow to arrive. He had a very wide range of musical interests from madrigals to Indian music. In 1914—his poor health exempted him from military service in the war—he began composing *The Planets*, a highly original suite partly inspired by his interest in astrology. Its first complete performance in 1920 made him famous overnight, but he disliked publicity. In 1923 he was concussed by a fall from a podium and subsequently had a nervous breakdown. After a year he continued working until an ulcer, unsuccessfully operated on, led to his death in 1934. Thus ended the life of a fine local man who left the town and the world a splendid legacy. Finally Angela described the museum, urging us to support it, and drew attention to the 'Gustav Holst Way' walking route, opened in 2011.

*FEATURE***ROBERT BRUCE FOOTE (1834 – 1912)**

The name of Robert Bruce Foote rings few bells in Britain today, not even in his birthplace of Cheltenham. He does not feature in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, though he is mentioned in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and wikipedia. In India, however, where he spent his entire working life, he is remembered and revered as the ‘Father of Indian Pre-history’. There he had been a pioneer of studies in geology, archaeology, ethnography and related subjects, as well as being a skilled artist. He served in the Geological Survey of India for 33 years, during which time he travelled on horseback all over the sub-continent, discovering prehistoric artefacts in over 4,000 sites as well as mineral resources and painstakingly recording his findings.



Robert Bruce Foote

He was born on 22 September 1834 at No 10 Promenade Terrace (today No 117 The Promenade). There is also a record of a baptism in that year in Cripplegate, London. He was the fifth child of Dr William Henry Foote, who had formerly been a Surgeon in the 17th Regiment of Foot and later the 67th, serving in India until 1826 but retiring on half-pay through illness. Dr Foote, his wife Sophia and their family had evidently been living in Cheltenham since at least 1831. A few months after Robert's birth the family had moved to Aberystwyth, where his father died.



CLIFFS OF MAGNETIC IRON, ON THE GODAMULLY

Drawing by Robert Bruce Foote

Robert Bruce Foote married his first wife Elizabeth Anne Percival in Madras (today Chennai) in 1862 and they had three children. Sadly, Elizabeth died in 1870, and back in England he married secondly Eliza Melissa Wells, whose mother had been born and married in Charlton Kings. All nine of Robert's children appear to have been born in India. The eldest son, Henry Bruce Foote, entered Cheltenham College in September 1877 when Robert's address was given as Madras. Robert died at

Calcutta in 1912 and is buried at Holy Trinity Church in the Yercaud hill station, near Salem, Tamil Nadu, along with his second wife.

The Indian film-maker Ramesh Yanthra has taken up Robert Bruce Foote's cause and is preparing a documentary about his achievements. A trailer can be found at <https://vimeo.com/202627726>. He has persuaded me to contribute videos of relevant scenes in Cheltenham together with commentary. I am grateful to Ramesh Yanthra and Sue Rowbotham for much of the above information and also the website [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com). There are still gaps to be filled, however, such as Foote's schooling and further education (he isn't listed among the Oxford or Cambridge Alumni, but how did he acquire his understanding of geology?)

*Eric Miller*

*Illustrations courtesy of the Geological Survey of India*

### *Summer events and visits, July - September 2017*

#### **Visit to the Jet Age Museum, Staverton, Thursday 17th August**

Arriving at the museum at 2.00 pm we were divided into groups to be shown round the site. Our first guide Trevor, one of the volunteers (the museum is a volunteer-run trust, he explained) took us outside to climb into a BEA Trident and watch a video about the 'Autoland' landing system developed by Smiths Industries in the 1960s. The Trident was the first British-built plane to have such a system. Back in the main hall we learned about the career of the engineer Frank Whittle, whose pioneering work on gas turbines in the 1930s led to the invention of the jet engine. We saw a model of the Gloster E28/39, Britain's first turbojet aircraft, and a Meteor, the first British jet fighter, which was the only Allied jet to see action in World War II. Many of the exhibits in the museum tell the story of



The Gloster Gamecock

the Gloster Aircraft Company, which began in 1917 by taking over H H Martyn's aircraft business at Sunningend and in later years became part of Hawker Siddeley Aircraft. Among the aircraft on display are the Javelin, the first British fighter with built-in radar, and by contrast the Gloster Gamecock, the last wooden fighter, built by H H Martyn for de Havilland in World War I. Various restoration projects are ongoing, as our guide explained, including a Hawker Typhoon cockpit and a Horsa wooden glider. Finally we were taken outside again to climb into the cockpit section of a 1960s Avro Vulcan, where we sat in the pilots' and navigators' seats while we learned all about it. We then had time to look round the museum again before ending the visit with tea in the cafeteria. It had been most interesting (even for the non-technically-minded), and the stories told to us by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides had added much to our enjoyment.

## Montpellier Fiesta, Saturday July 1st



This annual summer festival held in Montpellier Gardens seems to grow more elaborate and more popular year by year, and again this time we were lucky with the weather. There were as usual very many charity stalls as well as people selling crafts and gift wares, and our stall, made a little more conspicuous this time by strings of bunting with our name on (made by Maggie Winterburn) attracted a good share of interest from the large crowds of visitors. Books and

publications sold made a total of £134.50. The Fiesta also brought us 3 new members. The Society wishes to thank all those who helped on the day.

## Visit to Malvern and Madresfield Court, Wednesday 12th July

Leaving Cheltenham by coach as usual at 9.30 am on a day which started dull but turned out pleasantly fine, we arrived in Great Malvern about an hour later and had coffee at the Scene Café in the very much modernised town theatre before setting out in two groups for a walking tour led by local Civic Society guides.

Our guide said that there were 100 natural springs in the Malvern Hills. The town had been put on the map as a spa in the 1850s by two doctors, Dr Wilson and Dr Gully, who believed that water cures, as offered at spas abroad, coupled with exercise and plain food, would be better for their patients than the often harmful medical treatments then in use. Dr Wilson built the first purpose-built spa, called The Establishment. Many people came, and before long assembly rooms (now the theatre) and a concert hall were opened to provide entertainment for the visitors. Jenny Lind and Elgar both lived and worked here for a time, and Shaw put on plays. Between 1800 and 1900 the population grew from about 800 to 16,000. Walking uphill we came to Park View, the grand house where Dr Wilson practised. Opposite was the Priory, dating from 1085, originally part of a Benedictine foundation,



The view from Rose Bank Gardens, Malvern

which has medieval windows second only to those of York Minster. In 1545 it was bought for £20 by the townspeople to save it from being appropriated by

Henry VIII's commissioners. Further uphill we stopped at the 15th century former priory gatehouse, now a museum, and passing under the arch came to a statue of Elgar and a drinking fountain where we could sample the Malvern water. From the Rose Bank Gardens near the top of the hill we admired a fine view over the town. There had once been a bottling plant up here run by Schweppes, who took the Malvern water to the Great Exhibition in 1851. Returning downhill we passed The Tudors, where Dr Gully practised from 1842 to 1872. Darwin brought his consumptive daughter Annie here for treatment but she died, aged 10, and is buried in the Priory churchyard. A long flight of steps brought us to a large park behind the theatre where our walk had begun.

We then had lunch in Malvern and drove on to Madresfield Court, the moated home of the Lygon family. After a brief look at the large and beautiful gardens we listened to a short talk. The house, we heard, is nearly 1000 years old and has never been sold.

Founded as a simple hall house by Walter de Bracy, a Lygon ancestor, around the year 1100, it was much enlarged in Tudor and Victorian times. The Lygons, always prosperous, became Earls of Beauchamp in the 18th century. Our guide Kay then took



us across the moat and through a lobby to a panelled and richly furnished entrance hall, noting that this part of the house was largely the work of the 19th century 6th earl. We next saw the library, where the 7th earl had commissioned C R Ashbee to do the interior décor in Arts and Crafts style. The elaborately painted interior of the chapel was a wedding present to the 7th earl from his wife Lettice in 1902 and had taken 23 years to complete. We then climbed into a long gallery, originally Tudor but much altered in the 1850s, where Evelyn Waugh, friend of the 8th earl's brother Hugh, wrote his novel *Black Mischief*. The fine furniture in this room and elsewhere and the displays of such things as china, weapons and carvings showed that the Lygons were, as Kay said, great collectors. On the walls everywhere were family portraits. The most memorable of the remaining rooms was the vast staircase hall, two stories high with three glazed domes and a unique glass balustrade, which had been built to accommodate a huge marble fireplace, an engagement gift to the 7th earl. At the end of this entertaining and instructive tour we had a welcome cup of tea and boarded the coach to drive home. It had been another good day out with CLHS.

## SOCIETY NEWS

### New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Richard Sharpe

John and Gina Wilson

Lynda McLaren

Graham Nicholls

Oliver Pointer

Tess Beck

Ian and Lyn Johnstone

Sarah Northern

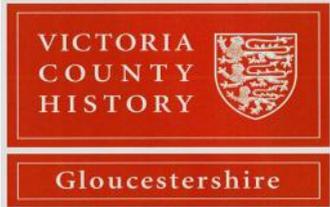
Mr and Mrs J W Cooper

Marguerite Habgood

Sue and Dave Moisey

### VCH News

In the summer we were hopeful that the VCH paperback 'Cheltenham before the Spa' would be out by now, but to paraphrase Robert Burns, the best-laid plans don't always quite pan out. However, those who managed to get a ticket for John Chandler's sell-out talk at the Literature Festival on 6 October will have seen an image of the cover, and the talk included some of the illustrations to be featured in the book. We really are on the final lap now, and with the LitFest talk out of the way, so to speak, we are steadily crossing the last items off the to-do list. I am learning how complicated it is to get image reproduction permissions, licences and so forth...



*A detail from the charming Jean-Claude Nattes sketch of Upper Alstone Mill, to appear full-size in the book (courtesy of the Wilson).*

When we realised that John's talk had sold out so quickly, we tried hard to get a bigger room allocated, but it was not to be, so we intend to run it again at a larger venue, once we have a firmer publication date, most likely early in 2018. A big thank you to all those who have already registered interest in buying a copy of the book!

It has been quite a season for festivals, with several familiar faces contributing to the 'History Tag' event at the Gloucester History Festival in September – an intriguing and enjoyable sequence of short talks, devised by that ever-ingenuous Dr Chandler, where each speaker passed a verbal baton to the next, in chronological order down the centuries. After the event, we wished we'd had a time-lapse camera to show how the audience came and went over the 5 hours! Every talk managed to shoe-horn in a reference to the VCH at some point. Slightly further afield, over the summer we had some very generous grants for the continuation of our Cirencester project, which means our fundraising efforts in the New Year can now re-focus squarely on the Cheltenham area. The final

tranche of CLHS's much-appreciated 3-year grant to the VCH Cheltenham work was received recently, and will be a good lever to help open other doors, I hope. And finally, our congratulations to Alex and Claire Craven on the safe arrival of Joseph Thomas on 8 October.

*James Hodsdon*

## Projects

What would we all do without volunteers! With so many of the CLHS volunteers having other calls on their time, I am amazed that they still find time to catalogue documents at the Gloucestershire Archives, index the Miles scrapbooks, make progress with Mike Grindley's archive, list Borough town plans and transcribe Council minutes and 'Stubbe's diary' (D885/M68)— I feel tired just listing them all! Those working at the Archives have completed the Ticehurst and Wyatt deposit, D2025, all 286 boxes and around 38 maps. We are now progressing to a smaller deposit which will shed further light on an important period in the development of the Cheltenham Original Brewery during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We have completed listing the contents of the first Miles scrapbook and are now well into number two, and I'll start the preliminary work on Volume 3— listing images with pages— in the next month.

We are working towards a new 'page' on the CLHS website. This is partly in response to no-one coming forward, as yet, to take on the Journal Editorship and to cater for members' research that is not suitable for publishing in the Journal. David Drinkwater has transcribed and set up pdfs of the Council Minutes from 1888-1940: this is a mammoth achievement and deserves wider recognition. Thanks to three keen volunteers, an Oral Project has been set up. At present they are trying out their techniques on themselves and close friends, but in future they will be looking for people willing to be interviewed, those who have lived in Cheltenham all their lives, or who came here for a specific reason – this covers about all of us! If you feel you might be interested in being interviewed, in a low key and friendly manner, please contact me and I can put you in touch. Indeed, if you have spare time and one of our Projects interests you (it can be for as little as a couple of hours a week) then please make contact and I can give you more details. Local history can be more than listening to talks – why not get involved?

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

### **John Guilor 1928-2107**

Many members will remember John Guilor, who with his wife Inge was a member of the Society from 2002 to 2015. More recently John had been living in Astell House, where he was very pleased to be re-acquainted with Brian White when Brian moved in last year. John died on 18th August at the age of 89 and his funeral was held on 13th September at the Cheltenham Crematorium.



*FEATURE***LOWER ALSTONE MILL**

What remained of the unlisted brick-built former corn mill by the reduced flow of the Chelt at the end of Arle Avenue, a victim of twenty-first century vandalism and fire-setting, had had nothing to do with milling since the first world war. If its machinery had not been removed during the second, it would have gone when the building was converted into a social club for the neighbouring gas works around 1950. After the planning application had been approved by Cheltenham Borough



Lower Alstone Mill until recently

Council in June 2017, the demolition men were able to begin readying the site to accommodate nine flats and four houses .

Planning applications nowadays are accompanied by an array of reports and assessments by agencies and experts, each one zealously guarding its slice of the development pie. It is unfortunate, though probably inevitable, that inaccuracies will be perpetuated by the almost incestuous relationships between them.

The county archaeological service, quoting a heritage assessment by an outside contractor, maintained there is no cartographic evidence for a water powered grist mill prior to a date between an inclosure map of 1806, which does not show the mill, and Merrett's map of 1834,

which does. This is not correct. A mill is shown on the site, as 'Mr Neals Mill', on 'A Plan of the Roads Leading from Alstone Cross to Pilford Lane', drawn up by Coates and Son, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1776.

According to an on-line draft of the forthcoming Victoria County History volume on Cheltenham, ownership of a mill on this site is in fact known at least as far back as Thomas Sturmy in 1595; through a series of bequests and a marriage the family kept the mill until it was sold to John Compton in 1697. He sold it to one of the Packer family, who owned Upper Alstone Mill, and Packer sold it to Joseph Neale in 1714. Three generations of that family kept it, the last being William, the 'Mr Neal' of 1776.

The Neale mill was seemingly demolished by 1806, probably because it needed updating and improvements after more than two hundred years, and was replaced by a standard early nineteenth century brick-built water mill. It had no unusual features or functions to distinguish it from the hundreds built or rebuilt at the time all over the country, the long war with France being over, and the population rising. It had an undershot water wheel, three pairs of mill stones, and a boulder for sifting out the white flour which was the most profitable part of a corn mill's

trade. The millers who ran the new mill can be traced in census returns and trades directories. Pigot & Co's county directory of 1822 does not include the mill, nor does the usually very reliable edition of 1830, though this does not necessarily mean that there wasn't one. Inclusion was subject to a fee. The 1844 issue, however, shows William Dunn as miller at Lower Alstone Mill. By the census of 1851 John Davis is the tenant, a miller and baker employing three men. Many corn mills also operated bakeries; it guaranteed work for the mill and gave the miller two profit margins. Harper's Cheltenham Directory of 1857 lists James Boulton as miller, and Slater's of 1858 has Frederick Boulter, still there in the 1861 census at what is there called 'Boulter's Mill'. Mills were commonly known by the names of their millers, a constant source of confusion with some sites. He was still there in the Post Office directory of 1863, but by the 1870 issue, the mill was being run by John Henry Sadler. In the census of the following year, Sadler is employing a carter, Tom Phillips, and an engine driver, William Slatter, so the mill must have had a steam engine by then. After about 1850, there are increasing numbers of engine drivers to look after the steam engines used more and more in a large variety of businesses. By 1879, according to Kelly's directory, Frederick Boulter is back at the mill, where he is still found in the 1881 census. By the 1891 census, Boulter is described as 'miller, retired' but still living locally. The miller, living at Mill Cottage, is George Edward Gardner, who had formerly worked the old Arle Mill, the next downstream, where there was no steam engine to counteract the depredations of the local water company, who had bought Upper Alstone Mill to acquire its water rights in 1885, and sold it on as a steam mill only, according to a sale notice in Gloucestershire Archives. Kelly's 1894 directory shows James Stock as miller at Lower Mill, although in the 1897 issue, somewhat mysteriously, Gardner is back.



The mill under demolition

Some mills stayed in the same hands for long periods – witness the earlier mill on this site. A continual changing of millers, however, often indicated too much hard work for too little money, and this may have been the case with Lower Alstone Mill. It was sold by auction in 1898, with George Gardner still the tenant, paying only £25 per annum rent – another sign of poor returns. Three years later, in the census, Tom Phillips had moved up from carter to mill manager, and if that meant that his workload had lessened, it was probably because his trade had done the same. Milling with stones was fast being superseded by milling with iron rollers in steam-powered mills generally sited in the docks where imported corn was landed, and small urban and semi-urban water-powered mills were disappearing fast. At long last, this one has now disappeared completely.

*Mike Beacham*

## LOCAL NEWS



### Friends of Pittville receive Queen's Award

On 29th July in a ceremony held in Pittville Park Dame Janet Trotter, Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, presented the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the Friends of Pittville, in the words of the citation, for '*caring for the environment and heritage of Pittville for the benefit of the people of Cheltenham and beyond*'. Its most recent achievement,

as is well known, was the restoration of the Pittville gates. Judie Hodsdon, chairman of the Friends, receiving the award on behalf of the group, said it was a great honour and was recognition of the work they had done during the past eleven years. She wished to acknowledge the contributions of all the volunteers who had helped in so many ways, as well as the support given by the members over the years.

### BGAS Library

The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Library has moved from Francis Close Hall to its new home in Delta Place in Bath Road (almost next to the Playhouse and opposite Sandford Park). Despite its name, the collection includes books on architecture, geography and history both local and national as well as on archaeology. Many of the 12,000 titles are not available for study anywhere else locally.

Visitors are welcome to browse the collection on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays by arrangement with the Hon. Librarian, Louise Hughes ([archives@glos.ac.uk](mailto:archives@glos.ac.uk), 01242 714851), but to borrow a book you must be a member of the Society and have obtained a library card from the University of Gloucestershire. If you want to join you need to contact Louise and email her a photo. You then also become a member of the University Library and can borrow books from any of their campus libraries. The library catalogue is available to view on the BGAS website ([www.bgas.org.uk](http://www.bgas.org.uk)) and on the University website under Special Collections and Archives. You can plan your research ahead of your visit or just make an appointment, turn up and see what you can find. It's a treasure trove.

*Jill Barlow*



*FEATURE*

**'...with much dread.'**  
**An early casualty of The Ladies' College**

In the archives of the Ladies' College is a letter, written in spidery copperplate on a small sheet of black-edged paper and partly crossed, in the economical fashion of the time (that is, with extra lines of writing running at right angles over the lines already written). The writer is a Miss Elizabeth Holmes of 6 Lypiatt Terrace, Cheltenham, and the date is January 16th 1854. The recipient of the letter, addressed simply as 'My dear young friend', is unknown but seems to be a former pupil of Miss Holmes. The 1851 census reveals that 40-year-old Elizabeth Holmes was indeed a teacher, as were her two elder sisters Isabella and Marianna; the three of them ran one of the many small private schools that offered a modest education, both day and boarding, for middle-class children of both sexes at that time. Some of these schools had twenty or more pupils, often including children whose parents were abroad, but the majority were much smaller. The Holmes sisters' school was particularly small: only four boarders in 1851, and with only one resident servant in the house. It was a precarious way for three unmarried women to earn a living. Miss Holmes sounds as if there is little cheer and comfort in her life:



Lypiatt Terrace

*My dear young friend*

*Many thanks for your kind affectionate letter. I have not had anything that pleased me so much for a long time. If the world grows cold to us it is a pleasant thought that there may be some exceptions to the general rule, some who yet feel a kind interest in the instructors of their youth even when prosperity has made them many new friends and friendship has wound around them other claims.*

A recent bereavement partly explains her depressed state of mind:

*..our dear friend and neighbour Mr Thomas, a man universally esteemed by all who came within the sphere he so much adorned, died after a few hours' illness... You will excuse me entering in to these particulars when I say that he was our only true friend here and we feel his loss deeply.*

It strikes us as odd that these three ladies had only one true friend in Cheltenham, until we find out a little more about them. Unlikely as it seems, they came from

Tynemouth, and probably spoke with an accent so unfamiliar to local ears that they sounded almost as foreign as the French governesses and Italian music teachers who had settled in the town in recent years. It could have been quite difficult for them to find acceptance in Cheltonian society. It is worth noting, too, that Lypiatt Terrace may not have been a very prestigious address at the time because it was only partly built. The land had been parcelled up for sale in 1847, by 1849 there were four houses and by 1851 still only ten. It would not be completed until 1860. In 1850 the occupant of No 6 was a Mrs Holmes. Could she have been the mother of the three sisters, or an aunt, and did they move here to share her house? Their school is listed for the first time in Kelly's Directory only in 1851, and by then Mrs Holmes had either died or moved on. We cannot know for certain why the sisters came, but perhaps the imagined prospect of an affluent clientele for their teaching skills was enough to attract them. If so, by 1854 their hopes had not been realised. And now Miss Holmes is worried about her health:

*Since I wrote I have had much to suffer while I have had to put on a cheerful aspect. I cannot tell you what it has been for I do not know myself, but feeling alarmed by the continuance of the malady I have had advice and I hope it will cease to give me pain and inconvenience, but having even the occasional visit of a doctor two months is a serious affair in our situation.*

Doctors cost money, and with the little school as perhaps their only source of income the sisters are by no means affluent. They really need more pupils, but unfortunately

*We do not increase our Boarders, indeed we seem at present stationary, distance[d] from those who formerly knew us and out of sight forgotten, we see the few we have do us credit and would gladly add to them if we could, but know not from whence to hope.*

Competition from other schools will of course always be a problem. Now there is one particular cloud on the horizon that fills her with foreboding:

*A Ladies' College has just sprung up here, and though every judicious person sees many evils arising from it, yet at first it will take up all the new pupils we might have a chance of getting, for new things are a fashion, yet large numbers, say three hundred girls together, and five to be employed in it as Professors are Roman Catholics. With more disadvantages than I can enumerate, yet we and such as we will be the sufferers and enter on this half year with much dread.*

The 'Roman Catholics' would be the aforementioned foreign teachers of music

and languages, some of whom did soon find employment at the Ladies' College. Elizabeth Holmes was more far-sighted than most of her contemporaries, for few people at that time, barely four months after the Ladies' College opened with 82 girls, imagined that it might one day have 300 pupils. Although that figure was not achieved in her lifetime, her forebodings were not misplaced. Only a year later, in 1855, the Holmes sisters' school appears for the last time in Kelly's directory, the advent of the College having been perhaps the final nail in the coffin of an already failing enterprise.

Reading the rest of the letter one feels they did not deserve this fate. Despite their limited means the sisters were kindly compassionate people:

*It is but little we have in our power, yet in conjunction with our kind friends the Thomas family we sent a nice parcel of warm clothing to the poor of West Ireland.*

The previous year they had also sent money to buy food for a destitute child in Dublin, but

*...this year I fear we shall not be able, things are almost at famine prices. It is the dearest since we have had school.*

How did they earn their living after their school closed? Perhaps they survived for a while by taking individual private pupils, or even by teaching in other schools. Elizabeth herself died in 1858 at the age of 47 (her mysterious illness must have been something serious) and is buried at St Mary's. Her sisters stayed on in Cheltenham, but no longer lived in Lypiatt Terrace after 1856. The 1861 census shows Isabella, the eldest, employed as matron at the Priory School, a boys' boarding school in Priory Street off the London Road, where she would have been in charge of about 50 mostly teenage boys - quite a change from her former lifestyle. Her age is given as 57, but she was more likely 59. She must have been a resilient character. Marianna was the sole lodger in the house of a waiter at 23 Bath Parade, identified herself as a governess and claimed to be 49, though her true age was probably 53. They had clearly come down in the world, but must have felt that it was too late to make a fresh start elsewhere. They both died in Cheltenham, Isabella aged 76 in 1877 and Marianna the following year at the age of 70. How they supported themselves in their final years we can only imagine.

The Holmes sisters' story is a sad one but probably not unique. Many schools such as theirs must have been too small to withstand competition from larger and better resourced establishments—not necessarily the Ladies' College or, in the case of boys' schools, Cheltenham College, but others of their own kind. There were, as has been said, large numbers of little private schools with a mere handful of boarders. Most of these survived for only a few years, but others with more pupils ran for decades, and the market for the kind of affordable private education they offered remained buoyant to the end of the century and beyond.

*Kath Boothman*



## BOOKS FOR SALE



### News from the CLHS ‘donated books’ stall

I thought it would be a good idea to advertise a selection of local history books, some of which are small and light and could be posted to those members who are unable to come to the evening meetings and who miss out on browsing our book stall. If you are interested in any of the books below please contact me by phone on 01242 232740, or email [heatherbell71@hotmail.com](mailto:heatherbell71@hotmail.com)

The History of Hesters Way, vols 1 & 2. The Hesters Way History Group, paperback, £2 each

Discovering Alstone, vols 1 & 2. Ed C Green, paperback, £4 each

Cheltenham’s Ornamental Ironwork, Amina Chatwin, paperback, £4

Scene together, Aylwin Sampson, paperback, £3

Cheltenham Observed, Aylwin Sampson, paperback, £4

Everyman Theatre, Official Centenary Brochure, paperback, A4 size, £4

Guide to the Cheltenham Ladies’ College, 1931, paperback, A4 size, £4

Pleasure Town, Cheltenham 1830-1860, hardback, £7.50

Cheltenham, A History, S Rowbotham & J Waller, hardback, signed copy, as new, £12

Cheltenham, A Pictorial History, S Blake, hardback, signed copy, as new, £12.50

A History of Cheltenham, G Hart 1st Ed 1965, hardback, £10. 2nd Ed 1981, hardback, £10

Leckhampton 1894, the End of an Era, Ed B Stait, 1st Ed 1994, paperback, £4

Old Leckhampton, D Bick, paperback, £3

A Gloucestershire Quiz Book, J Owen, paperback, £2

Bishop’s Cleeve to Winchcombe in old Photographs, D Aldred, £4.50

General History – ‘Life and Times of...’ by various authors, Ed Antonia Fraser.

Hardback, good condition – not in order of reign! Alfred the Great; King John; The Norman Kings; The Saxon Kings; William I; Edward I; Edward II; Edward III; Edward IV; Richard I; Richard II; Richard III.

£5 each, £8 for 2 and £10 for 3.

I would like to thank everyone who has brought me their unwanted books – it is surprising how much we can raise for the Society by selling them on. We can also occasionally offer local maps and pictures at reasonable prices.

Finally, a mystery. A few months ago, a lady asked for Brian Torode’s John Middleton book. I told her I had his working copy at home and she said she would like it. I have not seen her since, although I often bring it. If you are that lady, please contact me and I’ll bring it for you.

*Heather Atkinson*

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## CLHS DISPLAYS IN THE LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

November-December	When the 'Spanish lady' came to Cheltenham: The influenza epidemic of 1918-1919
January-February	'Cheltenham Before the Spa': Cheltenham up to 1740, Victoria County History publication
March-April	Food for Free: the History of Cheltenham Allotments

## NEW PUBLICATION

### Bristol and Gloucestershire Aerospace Industry

by Steph Gillett

From the Boxkite to Concorde, many famous aircraft were built at Bristol. The British & Colonial Aeroplane Company was established in 1910 at Filton, and Bristol aircraft engines were first built at the nearby Patchway site in the 1920s. Beginning with fighter aircraft during the First World War, The Gloster Aircraft Company, as it was later known, built planes in Gloucestershire from 1917 to 1964, including the RAF's last biplane and its first jet fighter. Dowty developed landing gear and fuel control systems and acquired Rotol Airscrews. Parnall constructed aircraft and gun turrets at sites in Bristol and Yate.

This book covers the wider aspects of the aerospace industry, including its social impacts and continuing significance, utilising a number of archives to create a unique and well-illustrated view of aviation around Bristol and Gloucestershire.

Published in paperback in October 2017 by Amberley Publishing, price £14.99



## *CAN YOU HELP?*

### **Dorothy Lilian Winstone Smith**

An enquirer is researching Dorothy Smith, born in Cheltenham in 1902, who married George Stannard in Bridport on 12 July 1922. George was a chef at the Imperial Hotel in Cheltenham. This was an exceptionally brief marriage, as in March 1923 they were divorced in Cheltenham. Dorothy married three further times. Does anyone have a photograph of Dorothy, either at one of her weddings or on any other occasion?

### **Général Antoine Brénier de Montmorand**

An enquirer tells us that his ancestor Général de Montmorand was taken prisoner in Portugal in 1808, during the Napoleonic wars, and sent to Cheltenham where he enjoyed a good social life. (It seems his preferential treatment was a reward for preventing his soldiers from killing two wounded British officers.) He was freed in 1809. In his letters he mentioned meeting Sir John Sinclair, Sir George Dallas, General Crawford, Admiral Welles, Lord Moira, the Duke of Queensbury and the future Duke of Wellington. He went to balls and dinners and attended 'Rooms' (presumably the Assembly Rooms in the High Street). The enquirer wonders if there are any records to show where he might have been detained, and would also like information about the people he met and the 'Rooms'.

### **Henry Payne**

An enquirer says that her grandfather, the stained glass artist Henry Payne (1867-1940), lived c1875-1885 with his mother and stepfather in Normal Terrace, off the High Street. She would like to know which schools he might have attended and whether any records of such schools survive.

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

## NEXT ISSUE

Please forward any material for inclusion in the March 2018 issue by  
**Monday 12th February 2018**  
 to the Editor : Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA  
 Tel: 01242 230125 e-mail: [kbooth@dircon.co.uk](mailto:kbooth@dircon.co.uk)

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