



Cheltenham Local History Society

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Photo: James Morris

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EDITORIAL

It is cheering in these times of economic gloom to have something to celebrate and be proud of. The refurbishment of the Everyman Theatre this summer (completed on time and within budget in just 17 weeks) is just such a thing. As this photo shows, the transformation is remarkable. The décor of the auditorium has been restored as far as possible to what it was in 1801 when the present theatre first opened, the boxes by the stage which so long housed lighting equipment have been put back to their proper use and there is new seating throughout. To quote its chief executive Geoffrey Rowe, the re-opening launches the Everyman into a new era. For Society members there is something extra to look forward to: we hope to arrange a 'behind-the-scenes' visit to the theatre next summer, and Michael Hasted, whose new book on the history of the Everyman is featured on p10, has agreed to give us a talk in the 2012-13 lecture season.

Kath Boothman

LECTURE PROGRAMME

December 2011—April 2012

Meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade, at 7.30 pm on the third Tuesday of each month from September to March, with a later Tuesday for the AGM in April. Visitors are welcome to attend at a charge of £1.00 per person per meeting. The Research and Display Evening in January is open to all without charge.

Tuesday 15th November 2011:

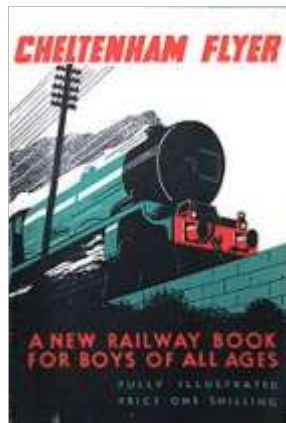
Revd John Thompstone—North Cotswold Churches

Why are the Cotswold churches there? Who built them and when? What styles of architecture do they represent? Can we imagine their medieval interiors and the impact wrought by the 16th century Reformation? What of the long 18th Century—and how did the Victorians not only restore them, but also introduce their own insights into how a Parish Church should appear? From the great 'Wool' churches, to the humble village ones, the Cotswolds provide rich and diverse examples of buildings that have contributed to, and been part of, the social as well as the religious life of the nation.

Tuesday 20th December 2011:

Mr David Aldred—Echoes of the GWR 1962-64

The influence of the Great Western Railway could still be seen in Gloucestershire in the early 1960s when steam still ruled the rails. This will be a light-hearted picture show for the Christmas season taking a nostalgic look at the trains which pulled out of St James and Malvern Road stations and the routes they served. It will bring back memories for some and show others what they have missed!



Tuesday 17th January 2012:

Research and Display Evening

The annual social evening gives members a chance to meet informally and to show the results of their researches. This year, as the Society is about to reach its 30th birthday, we hope to make the evening something of a celebratory occasion. There will be a display on World War II (previously shown at Sir Thomas Rich's in October) and any member who would like to contribute wartime memorabilia to go with it is very welcome to do so. As 17th January is the 100th anniversary of the day Captain Scott's party reached the South Pole, we also hope to have a display marking that event. In addition, as usual 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 him on 01242 524593 or e-mail david.scriven@hotmail.co.uk

Tuesday 21st February 2012:

Mr David Elder—Cheltenham's Good Doctor: the life of Edward Thomas Wilson (1832-1918)

Dr E T Wilson, father of Cheltenham's famous Antarctic

explorer Edward Adrian Wilson, was a highly respected medical practitioner who not only brought significant



public health improvements to Cheltenham, but also instigated the foundation of several important institutions and societies for the town, among which are included the Museum, the Delancey Hospital and the Photographic Society. In this illustrated talk David Elder will share insights into the life and character of this exceptional man, whose epitaph on the family gravestone reads simply: 'He went

about doing good.' The talk will be based on research undertaken for a biography to be published in January 2012.

Tuesday 20th March 2012:

Dr James Hodsdon—Cheltenham Manor Court Records 1692-1803

James will outline the role of the manor court in the 1700s, beginning with an explanation of the extent of the manor (which included much of Charlton Kings) and its various tithings, and what the courts were for. Most of the surviving court records relate to copyhold land inheritance and sales, documenting the development of the town in the busy years after the spa waters were discovered. He will show how you can get local history, family history, place-name history, and more, from the court records.

Tuesday 24th April 2012:

AGM followed by Mrs Caroline Adams—Food from the Past

A whistle-stop tour of the history of food and food production! We'll explore the transition from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle during the Mesolithic period and how the emergence of agriculture, settlement and the domestication of plants and animals brought great change to the way people lived and ate in the Neolithic period. The different ways of transporting, cooking, storing and eating food will be discussed as well as the impact of trade routes, particularly in the Roman and Crusader period, where spices and herbs were frequently traded and used. We'll look at everyday food and sumptuous feasts, including some very inventive Roman and Medieval recipes! We'll then finish with more recent food history, including market gardens during the Edwardian period, rationing and 'production orientated' agriculture after the Second World War.

Tuesday 10th April 2012 at 10.00 am for 10.30 am:

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

Dr Christina Beardsley—Unutterable Love: the Passionate Life and Preaching of F W Robertson

The Victorian Romantic preacher Frederick William Robertson (1816-53) is often referred to as 'Robertson of Brighton', where his most famous sermons were delivered, but his creativity was nurtured during his curacy at

Christ Church, Cheltenham (1842-44). As well as outlining Robertson's short life and extensive influence, the lecture will focus on the significance of the Cheltenham period during which he studied Italian, German literature and theology, and undertook his first visit to Ireland. A married man, Robertson became infatuated with another woman in Cheltenham, as he did later, and more seriously, in Brighton, where he was overwhelmed by 'unutterable love'.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Prestbury Local History Society

All meetings are held at the Library in the Burgage, Prestbury, starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.50.

Monday 21st November:

Michael Cole—Lost Buildings of Prestbury

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

Meetings are held at St Philip's & St James' Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham at 8.00 pm.

Thursday 17th November:

Eileen Fry—War Poets (with local emphasis)

Thursday 15th December:

Dr F Wilson-Coop—Symbolism in Christian Art

Thursday 19th January 2012:

Dave Walton—Gloucestershire Poets

Thursday 15th March:

Alan Pilbeam—Atkyn's Gloucestershire: the County's Landscape 300 Years Ago

Thursday 20th April 2012:

John Putley—Stand and Deliver: Highwaymen of Gloucestershire 1700-1830

Charlton Kings Local History Society

Meetings take place in the Baptist Church, Church Street, Charlton Kings, starting at 7.30 pm. Guests welcome, £2.

Tuesday 22nd November:

Dr Christine Seal—Domestic Servants in the 19th Century

Tuesday 24th January 2012:

Dr Steven Blake—In the Footsteps of George Rowe: Travels in the Australian Goldfields 1852-9 and 2010

Tuesday 27th March 2012:

John Heathcott—Ancient Woodlands of Gloucestershire

Gotherington Local History Society

Meetings are held at Gotherington Village Hall starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors £1.00.

Tuesday 29th November:

Philip Moss—The Spas of Gloucester

Tuesday 24th January 2012:

Sue Rowbotham—The Blue Plaques in Cheltenham

Tuesday 28th February 2012:

Geoff North—Marianne North: Victorian Artist and Traveller

Tuesday 27th March 2012:

Jinx Newley—Bristol, City of Monks and Bones

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Www.bgas.co.uk

Meetings are normally held at Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors pay £1 per meeting.

Wednesday 18th January 2012:

Neil Holbrook—Mind the Gap: From Roman Forts to Civilian Towns in South-West England

Wednesday 15th February 2012:

Geoff North—VAD Hospitals in Gloucestershire

Wednesday 21st March 2012:

Anthony Burton—250 Years of Canal History in Britain

Historical Association, Cheltenham and Gloucester Branch

Meetings start at 7.30 pm. Cheltenham meetings are at the Up Hatherley Library, Caernavon Road, and Gloucester meetings at The Friends' Meeting House, Greyfriars (off Southgate Street).

Monday 16th January 2012 in Cheltenham:

David Elder—Dr Edward Adrian Wilson: a Centenary Celebration. A discussion of the life and work of the famous Polar explorer

Monday 13th February 2012 in Gloucester:

David Smith—Render Unto Caesar: The Impact of the Established Church on Ordinary People, c1500-1857

Monday 27th March 2012:

Guy Walters—The Berlin Olympics of 1936: Dress Rehearsal for the coming Conflict between Fascism and Democracy

Friends of All Saints Church

Meetings are held in the church in All Saints Road, Cheltenham. Guests welcome, £3.

Thursday 16th February 2012 at 2.30 pm:

Dr Brian Knight—Bishop Ellicott and the Horsepond: Reflections on the Life of a Bishop of Gloucester in Victorian England

Swindon Village Local History Society

Talks start at 7.45 pm at Swindon Village Hall.

Non-members pay £1.00.

Wednesday 16th November:

Carolyn Greet—A Bygone Age: Cheltenham 200 Years Ago

Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th December, 11 am—5 pm:

Christmas Tree Festival in St Lawrence's Church

This annual festival, now in its 5th year, has proved very popular and is becoming well established in the calendar of village events. About 20 decorated trees, created by individuals and village organisations, will be on display and visitors are invited to vote for their favourite exhibit. The theme this year is 'Around the World at Christmas'.

Admission £2 for adults, accompanied children free. Refreshments are included. There will be a raffle for 3 Christmas hampers, and Christmas goods will be on sale.



MORE FOR YOUR DIARY

2011 Paterson Memorial Lecture

Monday, 12th December 2011 at 7:30 pm
at St Matthew's Church, Clarence Street

Sir Richard MacCormac

Architect of the new award-winning
Maggie's Centre in Cheltenham

'An Allusive Modernity'

Sir Richard is one of the UK's leading architects, a former President of the Royal Institute of British Architecture and former Chairman of the Royal Academy Architecture Committee, Commissioner for English Heritage and a Trustee of the John Soane Museum. He has taught and lectured widely and published articles on urban design and architectural theory. With a vast portfolio of award winning projects ranging from the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge to the Tesco Supermarket at Ludlow, Sir Richard's architecture has been described as having "moments of exhilarating beauty" combining art and architecture with a sense of history. Sir Richard will talk about architecture today, how we might supersede the failure of functionalism, rediscover the richness of architectural meaning and engage with history without compromising the authenticity of the new.



**Admission on the door £5
including glass of wine**

A Cheltenham Civic Society Public Lecture

13th ANNUAL DE FERRIERES LECTURE

Wednesday, March 21st 2012 at 7.15 pm
at Dean Close School

Dr David Wilson

Edward Wilson's Antarctic Notebooks: the Science, Faith and Art of a Polar Pioneer

Dr David Wilson is a noted Polar historian and a great-nephew of Cheltenham's Antarctic hero, Dr Edward Wilson, who was the Chief Scientific Officer of Captain Scott's 1910-12 expedition and a member of the team that reached the South Pole on 17th January 1912. A pioneering scientist and a deep mystic, Wilson was also among the last of the great expedition artists. A century after his famous death, his great-nephew will guide us through his work, whilst adding a personal dimension to this centenary occasion.

Admission £8. Tickets are available from the Bacon Theatre box office and from the Tourist Office in town.

REVIEWS

Summer events and visits July–August 2011

The **Montpellier Fiesta** on Saturday July 9th was once again a lively occasion, attracting substantial crowds even though last year's sunshine was replaced by intermittently showery weather. The arrangement of the stalls had been altered again, and we found the new 'back to back' configuration perhaps a little too cramped for comfort. We were however in quite a prominent position and our display drew a good number of interested visitors. The Society wishes to thank all those who helped on the day.



Two of our 3 summer visits were 'repeats': to the Ladies' College on July 12th and to Charlton Park on July 26th.

On **August 23rd** a 30-strong group gathered at **Francis Close Hall** to hear about the college and its history from the Librarian Lorna Scott and her assistant Louise Clough. After a brief introduction we were divided into two groups, one to be taken around the extensive grounds and the other to look at the college archives and the library. A wide selection of books was on display, together with original documents, one of the most exciting being the deed of gift of almost six acres of land valued at £2,600 known as 'Plough Garden' from Miss Jane Cook on which St. Paul's College was built. A memorial tablet in the old entrance porch records her generosity.

gloucester citymuseum



PATRICK CONOLEY

75 Years of Sculpture

5th November–3rd December 2011

Open 10.00 am to 5.00 pm Tuesday to Saturday

Patrick Conoley produced hundreds of sculptures, usually in wood or stone, many of them to be found in and on public buildings. He created the classical figures on Pittville Pump Room as well as sculptures for Tewkesbury Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. Gloucester City Museum is hosting a commemorative exhibition celebrating the skill and work of this gifted sculptor.

After a refreshment break we switched groups and went to see the original college buildings in Swindon Road designed by Samuel Daukes. The Revd Francis Close was the person with the vision to open a Teacher Training College in Cheltenham, and indeed it was only the sixth Anglican training college for elementary school teachers when it opened in 1847. After an initial phase it had separate departments for men and women, St Paul's in Swindon Road being the college for men.

All who attended agreed that it had been a very interesting and enjoyable afternoon and that Revd Francis Close would be proud to see that his college is now part of the University of Gloucestershire.

Sue Brown

Autumn lectures Sept-Oct 2011

The first of the new season's lectures was an illustrated talk on September 20th by **Anthea Jones** entitled **The Fun of the Chase: Searching for Information in the 1909 Survey of Land Values across Gloucestershire**. Anthea began by explaining how the survey came into being: the introduction of old age pensions in 1908, coupled with the perceived need for rearmament as the threat of war loomed, compelled Lloyd George's government to raise taxes. It decided to spread the burden fairly widely by levying a tax on any 'unearned increment' in the value of landholdings. To this end it was necessary first to carry out a nationwide survey, which began in 1909. It was an enormous undertaking and, as Anthea said in answer to a question at the end, although many records survive only small parts of them have been studied so far. Gloucestershire's records are far from complete but are remarkable in that they continued to be updated for many years after the initial survey was completed. When a property had been surveyed it was marked in colour on a map, of which she showed some examples. The information listed for each property included its owner, occupier, acreage, the value of its land and buildings, any tithes paid and, if it was copyhold, the fee for transfer to a new tenant. Tithes, which were paid only on agricultural land, had been a valuable source of income for the church for centuries past and were still levied to a surprising extent. In Prestbury, for example, it was found that 112 properties paid a total of £9293 in tithes in 1909. Copyhold leases, another survival from the Middle Ages whereby the lord of the manor claimed a fee whenever a tenancy changed hands, were also still surprisingly widespread. There were six in Suffolk Square alone, for example, and almost all the little terraced houses in Upper Park Street were copyhold tenancies. The survey covered not only dwellings of various kinds, but a great variety of other properties including churches, inns, orphanages, cemeteries and even the locks on the River Avon. Anthea then described her own experience of driving around Uckington and Elmstone Hardwick in search of some of the properties there on which information had been recorded. She showed some lovely photographs, and it did indeed sound as if 'the chase' had been fun. In conclusion, she explained that all the information transcribed from the survey forms is being made available on a website, www.glos1909.org.uk. There is a great deal still to do, and more volunteers would be welcome.

On October 18th there was a large audience for **Dr Mark Curthoys'** talk on **Cheltenham in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography**. He said that the dictionary, which is freely accessible online to public library ticket holders, now contains 57,000 lives of noteworthy people in all walks of life in the British past. It is searchable by place, and a search on 'Cheltenham' produces references in over 750 articles, including that on George III, whose visit in 1788 is noted. Of the individuals who have entries in the dictionary 39 were born in Cheltenham, from the clergyman Sebastian Benefield, born in Prestbury in 1569, to the Rolling Stone Brian Jones, born in 1942. Over 250 dictionary subjects were educated in the town, and nearly 110 died here, ranging from the banker Sir Robert Herries (1815) to the jockey David Nicholson (2006). The results can reveal unexpected trends: there was a radical tradition, represented by William Edwin Adams, and deep-rooted support for women's suffrage, as reflected in the number of prominent Cheltenham suffragists included in the dictionary. Paradoxically for a town which celebrates Jenner, Mary Hume-Rothery established the movement against compulsory vaccination here. There are fewer examples of prominent Indian Army figures than might have been expected; many, however, turn up as parents of pupils at Cheltenham's schools, or relatives of subjects in the dictionary. Mark said the dictionary's editors welcome suggestions, corrections, new information, or other feedback (please contact mark.curthoys@oup.com). The audience left feeling enlightened, intrigued and almost certainly keen to log on and see for themselves.

The sunny morning of Tuesday 25th October found a large gathering at St Luke's to hear **Eric Williams'** talk on **Lost Villages: Gloucestershire and Beyond**. Eric began by remarking that, although 'lost' villages are commonly assumed to have disappeared during the middle ages, in fact the process still continues today. His first local example (out of the 180 or more in the county) was Shipton Solers, the site of which can be seen from the Frogmill Inn near the A40. Showing a picture of a field with humps, ridges and a deep furrow, he explained that this was a 'toft and croft' pattern, the tofts being the humps where houses had stood, the ridges being the outlines of the crofts that belonged to them and the furrow being the 'hollow way' or main street through the village. It had probably been abandoned because it was really just an outlying part of the nearby village of Shipton Oliffe, which had shrunk. He next referred to Whittington, where the village still exists but has apparently moved to be closer to its water supply, and the long-lost village of Sennington near Sevenhampton. When this site was excavated in the 1930s only early medieval artefacts were found, and it may have been destroyed as early as 1150. He then told stories of other places around the country, from Kenfig Castle and its village of Mawdlen, lost in the invading sand dunes near Porthcawl, to Hallsands in Devon, where a fishing village at the foot of a cliff lost its beach as a result of gravel-dredging off the coast, to the drowning of Derwent Valley villages in a reservoir and the appropriation of Tyneham in Dorset as a firing range for the Royal Tank Regiment. Finally there was the former market-gardening village of Heathrow, the sad fate of which we all know only too well! It was a most interesting and entertaining talk.

REVIEW

'Gloucestershire Communities in the Second World War' GRCC Gloucestershire Annual Local History Afternoon

Saturday October 1st 2011
at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Longlevens

The weather was unseasonably sunny and hot on October 1st, which may well explain why fewer members of the general public came along this year. However, the local history societies were present in force as usual, and judging from the quality and variety of their displays they had all found the theme of the meeting a rewarding one to work with. The award for the best one this time went to Chipping Campden. CLHS had not only a wide-ranging display of pictures and documentation relating to the war years but also two 'living exhibits': Mrs Catherine Hayne, who came to Cheltenham as an evacuee and whose reminiscences of that time are currently being serialised in this Newsletter, travelled up from Wiltshire for the day, and Mrs Dorothy Jewell, a member of the Society, came along to share her memories of living through the bombing. Both were suitably 'labelled' by Elaine North and had some interesting conversations. Two CLHS members, Carolyn Greet and Sally Self, were finalists for the Bryan Gerrard Award.



Doreen Jewell meets Catherine Hayne



Mrs Catherine Hayne

The first speaker was Virginia Adsett, who as an Outreach Officer for Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum organises re-enactments of the evacuee experience for local schoolchildren. Her theme was 'The Pied Piper Scheme: Childhood Evacuees to Cheltenham during the Second World War'. Objects she had brought for display included children's books of the period which reflect wartime experience. In January 1939 a census was taken in Cheltenham to find out what accommodation would be available for evacuees in the event of war, and by September plans had been made for the reception of children, mothers with babies and whole schools. Many were evacuated here from Birmingham, and later, when there was a fear of invasion, also from London and from coastal towns such as Eastbourne. Besides foster homes and hostels in the town there were camp schools in the country, notably one at Pipewood which was so successful that its occupants have stayed in touch ever since. The billeting officers, who also had to find 'digs' for war workers, carried great responsibilities and had a very busy time.

The next speaker was Nigel Cox, curator at Gloucester Folk Museum, who spoke about Gloucester Civil Defence in World War II. The government had established the Civil Defence Force in 1937, requiring each county and borough to set up its own branch. Gloucester City Council produced a handbook, issued to all wardens, that gives an interesting insight into the way the city organised itself. He showed a photo of the Barton swimming pool converted into a first aid post and hospital, complete with showers for victims of potential gas attacks. Boy scouts were used as messengers, and a large rattle, which he demonstrated, served as an 'all clear' signal after air raids. Gloucester, as an important railway town, was bombed 9 times, but was fortunate in that the raids were not very successful. There were 150 casualties, however, and 27 lives were lost. Most members of the Civil Defence Force were older men in reserved occupations. Those on the ARP teams came to know one another well, and at quiet times, as records show, amused themselves with activities such as cooking and playing darts. The Civil Defence Force remained in existence through the cold war and was not abolished until 1968.

Finally, Alan Strickland, Chairman of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology, discussed how the war changed the countryside by introducing defensive features, many of which remain to this day. Much of this came only after the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940, when it was decided that, in addition to coastal defences, inland barriers were needed. Defence lines were set up across the country to protect important manufacturing areas such as Bristol, using existing obstacles such as canals as far as possible. Lines of concrete cubes, ditches and innumerable 'pillboxes' were added. He described the 'pillboxes' in some detail, showing examples and explaining how they were designed, sited and often disguised. Being shell-proof and made of reinforced concrete they were very hard to demolish, and many survive. There were also various forms of road barriers that could be put in position quickly when need arose: a row of big blocks by the Swindon-Cirencester road at Latton is a surviving example. Air raid shelters of various kinds can still be seen, notably a large one outside Cirencester Hospital, and there are many memorials.

Dr Steven Blake, closing the meeting, thanked everyone involved for their support and help.



Ron Prewer and Elaine North

FEATURE

Mrs Catherine Hayne continues her reminiscences of life as an evacuee in wartime Cheltenham. Here she remembers her schooldays, beginning in 1940 when she was 4 years old:

A CHELTENHAM CHILDHOOD IN WORLD WAR II

There is a far distant memory of tricycling home from a nursery in Lansdown, and of grazed knees as I fall off on to the pavement outside our lodgings in Devonshire House. But the first real 'school' experience is at Crossways, a gabled corner house in a leafy street, somewhere south of Lypiatt Road. I am left here as my mother wants to join my father in Birmingham. For a week I endure it— a counting frame, some stories, sharing a bedroom with a boy my age (three or four) and a cuckoo clock. Then comes the incident: parsnips for lunch which I refuse to eat; they appear again, cold, for tea. This is too much. So I go to the lavatory at the top of a flight of stairs. 'I can go on my own', I say. And I come down the stairs, open the front door and walk away from Crossways unseen, across the town and back to Devonshire House. The Wilkins (our landlords) must have alerted my parents! So next we all go to a flat in Kings Heath, Birmingham, and spend every night for a week in a cupboard as the windows are blown in.

Mother and I settle back in Cheltenham and I start at the Ladies' College, which costs five guineas a term. Being interviewed by the headmistress, Miss Popham, is, mother tells me later, like being in the presence of royalty. Our credentials are suitable, and I begin in the Kindergarten. The entrance is in Bayshill Road, and within is a spacious place with picture windows and shiny blue floors. We put on our pink or green overalls in the cloakroom and find our form-rooms. There are not only Elizabeth, Sally, Anne, Jennifer and Wendy, but also Jasper Clutterbuck, and James and Anthony destined for Eton. They do bad things, like crawling under Miss Crowte's desk to look at her knickers; one Alan Heber-Percy stabs a pencil into my forehead when Miss Crowte is not looking; and long hair like mine in plaits is never safe. Our breaks, after cocoa and lemon buns in the entrance hall, are in the playground on the flat roof of the building, overlooking the main school.

Across the lawn we see the grand senior girls, wearing their pale green suits. The teaching, I know later, is Froebel based, and we are happy learning with dedicated teachers like kindly Miss Doy, who sends me a postcard when I have mumps. As we progress through Class III.3 to III.1, we experience specialist teachers— Miss Thorley takes singing and Miss Breakwell Music and Percussion; Miss Kennard is Maths and I am humiliated because I do not know my tables. Once a month marks for Department are read out in Assembly—mine is usually D....

In 1945 the Ladies' College Junior School closes; as my family's requisitioned Birmingham house is still occupied, our stay in Cheltenham extends to the Spring of 1947. I and a number of fellow pupils move to the newly opened Thirlestaine School. Here we wear grey skirts and gold blouses. Our first term is spent in the Thirlestaine Court Hotel in exciting wooded grounds. The classroom (for nine girls and Miss Maunde) is a bedroom with fitted carpet. After Christmas, the refurbished new school, in Thirlestaine House on the Bath Road opposite Cheltenham College, is ready. It has classical pillars and marbled floors, and we are divided into two houses called Valiant and Renown. My classroom is another ex-bedroom. I am off school with measles and return to find the class learning Latin, reciting 'mensa mensa mensam'. (Simon? Who is he, I wonder.) My favourite teacher is Miss Berriman, who encourages me to write stories and talks about her family. Then there is blonde Miss Jones with her GI boyfriend waiting outside. Miss Tyndale-Biscoe from the Ladies' College takes us for gym. Mother gives me a book, *The Birth of a Baby*, with interesting photos, which I take to school. A bad idea! I am sent home with it.

This year I begin a diary and on February 6th I record: 'Lesley brought a banana to school and I had a bit.' This was new — a post-war experience. One day we meet the Mayor of Cheltenham, Miss Winterbotham, and are allowed to finger her chain. Sometimes we go swimming at the Alstone Baths, and in summer we play tennis on courts in the Old Bath Road. On a day in June, during break, I open a small door at the base of Thirlestaine House and with my friend Justine walk into darkness along a narrow passage leading to the cellars. Light from basement windows shows silhouetted outlines of coaches and carriages! Surprisingly I am not reprimanded for this. Instead, my fellow pupils and I are given a guided tour of these cellars, the wine vaults, with vehicles which have been stored here since the nineteenth century.

In January 1947 I write: 'We listened in Miss Peplow's (the headmistress's) drawing room to the departure of the Royal family to South Africa.' This year my parents are moving to their new Birmingham house. For two weeks I enjoy boarding at Thirlestaine. Would I like to board at the Ladies' College? No. I opt for the new adventure and school in Birmingham, and with my first cat, Tigwig, I leave Cheltenham.



Catherine with her mother and elder brother John in 1943

To be continued

LOCAL NEWS

MORE ON THE LLOYD GEORGE SURVEY OF LAND VALUES, 1909

Material from the survey of land values is steadily accumulating in spreadsheets being compiled by volunteers, some from Cheltenham, with the aim of making it all available on the internet in due course. Nearly 100 Gloucestershire places have been tackled to date. The material being transcribed is in Gloucestershire Archives. But there is more material available in the National Archives; there you can inspect the Field Books compiled by the surveyors in the process of establishing the value of each property. One Cheltenham Local History Society member has been examining local field books. An example of the information he has found is set out below. It would be of enormous interest if any Cheltenham member would visit the National Archives and collect more such material for the area.

Southfield Farm, Charlton Kings, is at the top of Sandy Lane. You may well have walked through the site following the waymarked footpath. In 1909 there was the complex of buildings which exist today (see right), although now converted from farm use. The surveyors recorded them as follows:

No 1 House Brick blue slate & cement

2nd floor 4 attics

1st floor 2 bedrooms dressing room nursery bath room H & C water WC linen

pantry servants room (1 new room added since 1909) box room 2 staircases

Gr floor 3 best rooms kitchen back kitchen old dairy lavatory scullery & passage

maids sitting room bootroom coal house lavatory cellar below

No 2 (Bailiffs brick slated) 1st floor box room (water & bath since 1909)

3 good bedrooms

Gr floor 2 front rooms kitchen & boiler dairy back kitchen coal house.....

So it goes on. There are also cottages, outhouses and various farm buildings, all described in similar detail.

Anthea Jones

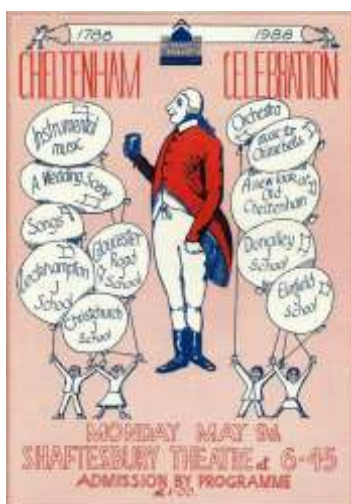


Photo: Anthea Jones

OBITUARY

LESLIE BURGESS (1928-2011)

Few individuals in Cheltenham's recent history can have been as well known and widely admired as 'Les' Burgess, who died on September 3rd at the age of 83. Though by profession he was a teacher, it is as a musician that he is most vividly remembered. His obituary in the *Echo* described him as one of the finest trumpet and cornet soloists of his generation and, in the words of his son Paul, his love of playing was only matched by his enjoyment of teaching others to play.



Leslie was a Cheltonian by birth, educated at Naunton Park School and trained as a teacher at St Paul's College. He learned to play the cornet and trumpet with the local Salvation Army Band as a boy in the 1930s and joined the army as a member of the Royal Tank Regiment band after the war. This led to a period of study at the Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, where he was a prizewinner and played with the State Trumpeters in front of the royal family on a number of occasions. Returning to Cheltenham in the 1950s, he soon began to make his mark in the musical life of the town. Leslie was much in demand as a trumpeter, playing in the Morris Motors Band and the Cheltenham Silver Band. He formed a flourishing Brass Consort and the Cotswold Orchestra, and established the Cheltenham Youth Brass, which thrives to this day. For 22 years he conducted the Cotswold Male Voice Choir. As John Fisher remembers, he was a versatile composer and lyricist, and his *Cotswold Song*, dedicated to the choir, became its enduring signature tune. Thanks to his connection with Kneller Hall the choir formed a link with the Band of the Life Guards, which led to an annual series of sell-out concerts in the Town Hall, raising many thousands of pounds for local and national charities.

Meanwhile he taught, first at St Mark's Primary School and then as Deputy Head at Elmfield Junior School under Ken Lloyd and later under Brian Torode. Brian recalls that Leslie delighted in sharing his musical talents with the pupils, composing the music for many school productions and running a club for children interested in learning to play brass instruments. Sally Self, who also worked with him at Elmfield, particularly remembers the musical *A Cheltenham Celebration* that Leslie wrote to mark the bicentenary in 1988 of George III's visit to the town. Choirs from several local schools took part in this production, which brought together Leslie's love of music and his great interest in the history of Cheltenham. It also allowed him to display yet another talent by designing a poster to advertise the show (see above).

As a long-standing member of CLHS Leslie contributed numerous articles to the *Journal*, mainly on musical topics. His final piece of work, which we hope to publish in the next issue, is a small fragment of his great legacy to this town.

Kath Boothman

FEATURE

ROWENA CADE AND 'ELLERSLIE'



Most people are by now familiar with the name Rowena Cade Avenue, one of several roads on the former Gloscat site in The Park. It commemorates the founder of the Minack open-air theatre in Cornwall, who once lived in this town. In 1906 her father, a Derbyshire industrialist, retired to Cheltenham, where his brother was Headmaster of Cheltenham College Junior School, at first living at Heath Lodge in Pittville Circus. In 1908 the family moved to Ellerslie, a substantial mansion in Albert Road. (It is now a residential home run by the Orders of St John Care Trust.) Rowena Cade lived there until the start of the First World War and for some of the time was a pupil at the Ladies' College. After the First World War the house was sold, the family scattered and Rowena settled in Cornwall and in due course created the theatre on the cliffs near Porthcurno.

In some of the publicity about the Minack – and in many other sources of information, including the internet – it is suggested that Ellerslie had once been owned by Sir Walter Scott. However, the novelist died in 1832 and the house is of later origin. He is only once recorded as ever having visited Cheltenham – in 1826, when he came to take the waters, staying for two days with his sister-in-law at Oxford Buildings in the Upper High Street (see Jill Waller, *A Chronology of Cheltenham's Literary Connections*). Moreover, the land it stands on was acquired in 1847 and Ellerslie itself was erected as late as 1874. It was first mentioned in local directories in 1882. It is therefore inconceivable that Sir Walter Scott could have had any direct connection with the house or the site. I understand from the Secretary to the Minack Theatre Trust that he likewise could find no such evidence, though the claim was made by Rowena Cade herself and also by the companion of her sister Kay. The moral – all too familiar to those researching local and family history – is not to rely solely on what people say, even if it is a 'family tradition', and where possible to check it against other sources. For all that, it would have been a feather in Cheltenham's cap if Sir Walter Scott had indeed owned property here!

The present owner of Ellerslie is the Gloucestershire County Council and I thank its Information Management Service for supplying me with copies of the deeds of title (in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act).

Eric Miller



Rowena and her parents at tea in the garden

NEW PUBLICATION

A THEATRE FOR ALL SEASONS

The History of the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham by Michael Hasted
with a foreword by Steven Berkoff

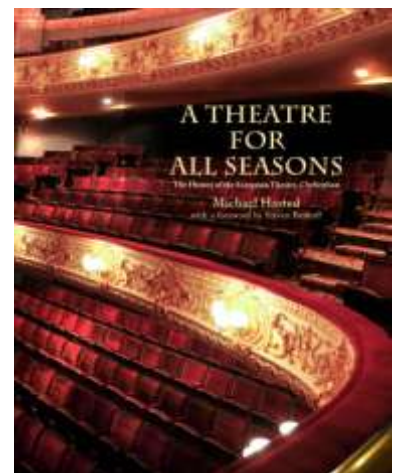
The Opera House in Cheltenham's Regent Street opened on 1st October 1891 with a performance of *Lady Clancarty* starring Lillie Langtry. The theatre was designed by one of the greatest theatre architects of all times, Frank Matcham, who designed nearly 200 theatres in Great Britain including the London Palladium. Over the next seventy years The Opera House was to play host to some of the greatest names in British theatre and variety.

The theatre survived imminent closure in 1959 to rise from the ashes as the re-named Everyman Theatre in 1960. For the next 35 years it was the home of repertory, nurturing such talents as Steven Berkoff, Josephine Tewson, William Gaunt and Penelope Keith.

When the rep ended in 1995 the theatre reverted to being a venue for touring shows and has presented some of the best pre- and post-West End plays and musicals ever since.

Based largely on the reminiscences of actors, directors and other members of staff who worked at the theatre as far back as the 1920s, *A Theatre for all Seasons* tells the story of the good times and bad, of the financial problems that nearly closed the theatre on several occasions, the ghosts and the personalities of a typical British provincial theatre.

Published on 30th September 2011 by Northern Arts Publications, an imprint of Jeremy Mills Publishing Ltd
Hardback, 194 pages, lavishly illustrated with more than 200 pictures, full colour throughout. ISBN 9781906600617
The book is on sale, price £25, at local bookshops and at the Everyman Theatre.





BOOKS FOR SALE



As members will know, good quality local history books priced between £2 and £10 are regularly offered for sale at meetings. In addition the Society has a quantity of more valuable and/or less easily obtainable books, surplus to the needs of the library, and the Committee has decided that these too should be offered for sale to members. They include the following:

Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII, David Starkey (signed by the author) - £25

A History of Britain 3000BC—AD1603, Simon Schama - £10

Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution, Simon Schama - £3.50

Crickley Hill : The Hillfort Defences, P Dixon - now £20

An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham, J Hodsdon - £30

There are various volumes of the **BGAS Record Series**, now for sale at **only £5 each**, as follows:

(Vol 6) The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522 (2 copies)

(Vol 7) Tewkesbury Churchwardens' Accounts 1563-1624 (2 copies)

(Vol 11) Original Acta of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester c 1122-1263

(Vol 13) The Bishop Benson's Survey of the Diocese of Gloucester 1735-1750

(Vol 14) A Calendar of the Registers of Apprentices of the City of Gloucester 1595-1700

(Vol 15) A Calendar of the Registers of the priory of Llanthony by Gloucester 1457-1466, 1501-1525

(Vol 19) Notes on the Diocese of Gloucester by Chancellor Richard Parsons c1700 (2 copies)

(Vol 20) Abstract of feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire 1300-1359

(Vol 21) Gloucester Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1611-1687

Also Vols 17 & 18 A Catalogue of the Medieval Muniments at Berkeley Castle - 2 volume set £8

The Society is always grateful for donations of suitable books in either the lower or the higher price range. If you have anything to donate, or if you are interested in buying any of the books listed above, please contact Heather Atkinson on 01242 230740 or e-mail heatherbell71@hotmail.com

TRIBUTE

Graham Baker (1946-2011)

It was with great sadness that we learnt in June of the death of the former County Local Studies Librarian, Graham Baker, after a long illness. Graham had worked for Gloucestershire County Council as a librarian at both Cheltenham and Gloucester Libraries for 25 years and will be remembered affectionately by all his colleagues as a man of great kindness, patience and knowledge.

Graham was born in Calne, Wiltshire in 1946 and trained as a librarian at Aberystwyth. In 1979 he joined Cheltenham Library as Assistant Divisional Librarian (East division). While working there he became heavily involved in the building of the new music and junior library building in Cheltenham. In 1991 as part of the library re-organisation he moved to work at Gloucester Library as the County Local Studies Librarian. His many achievements in this role included setting up the Local Studies centres around the County, building up collections of material in local areas for use by customers researching their own local or family history. Graham was also the Honorary Librarian for the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society from 1992-1998. He was involved in the Newsplan project which resulted in many vulnerable local Gloucestershire newspapers being microfilmed and preserved for the future. He initiated Routes to Roots and introductory leaflets to all the local studies collections in the county and later, with Kate Haslem, produced the *Your House has History* booklet. But perhaps Graham's greatest challenge and lasting legacy was the launch in 1997 of Locate, the computerised catalogue of the Gloucestershire Collection. This legacy lives on today with the Gloucestershire Archives online catalogue which in 2010 brought together Locate and the Archives catalogue into one over-arching catalogue. Graham's final achievement before he retired was the successful move of the Gloucestershire Collection from Gloucester Library to the Gloucestershire Record Office in December 2005, leading to the creation of Gloucestershire Archives the following year.

Graham's love for and knowledge of history was evident in his work but he could talk knowledgeably on any subject. He was always encouraging, kind and helpful to both colleagues and members of the public, and always cheerful even though his health in later years was deteriorating. But above all he will be remembered for his quick wit and wry sense of humour. Graham was a delight to work with and will be sadly missed.

Katrina Keir

Local & Family History Librarian, Gloucestershire Archives



Graham with his wife Christine on the occasion of his retirement in December 2005

CAN YOU HELP?

Imperial Motor Mart


A couple living in Australia have bought a white 1961 E-Type Jaguar that originally came from Cheltenham. The first owner of the car, a well known racing personality, purchased it from the Imperial Motor Mart, which at that time had a showroom in Royal Crescent. The new owners are anxious to find any information, photographs or any other material relating to this company with a view to making a scrap-book of the car's history.

Frederick D. George and his dog

Frederick George of the famous Cheltenham family of bakers and confectioners, living at 'Ashmead', Leckhampton, was the owner of a very important Irish wolfhound. An enquirer who is an historian of the Irish wolfhound breed requests any information on this dog and his master, who for some unknown reason disappeared in 1895. George's wife Martha Janet is recorded in 1901 as the proprietor of 'George's Bakery'. She died in 1935 and is buried at St. Peter's Church, Leckhampton.

If you can help with either of the above queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail: joyce@cyberwebospace.net

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tel. 01452 425295. email: archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Winter Opening Hours



December 2011

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2012

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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30	31					

- Archives and Copy Certificate Office OPEN 9am-5pm (6.30pm Thursday)
- Archives OPEN 9am-5pm. Copy Cert. Office CLOSED
- Archives and Copy Certificate Office CLOSED
- Archives CLOSED. Copy Cert. Office OPEN 9am-4pm (by appointment only)
- Archives Public Research Room and Copy Cert. Office OPEN 9am-5pm. Access limited to microfilm/fiche, computers and reference books. Service to fetch original archives not available due to essential strong room work.

**CLHS DISPLAYS
IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY**

Mon.5th -Fri.16th December: **Christmas in Cheltenham**
CLHS helpers will be on hand from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm on Wednesday 7th December.

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward items for inclusion in the MARCH 2012 Newsletter by

Monday 13th February 2012

to the Editor: Kath Boothman
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Cheltenham
GL50 2SD

Tel: 01242 230125
E-mail: kbooth@dircon.co.uk

The Committee is happy to consider requests to place advertisements in the Newsletter and/or include flyers for circulation to members.