

Introduction

In the second half of the 19th century Cheltenham developed from a spa resort into a town with a reputation for healthy and congenial surroundings, where middle-class people on fixed incomes could live comfortably. It was in this period that Cheltenham gained its Curry & Colonels reputation, as large numbers of officers who had served in India retired to the town.

Cheltenham achieved borough status in 1876. The rapid growth of the 19th century gave way to a period of population stagnation in the early 20th century, caused in part by the comparative lack of industry.

Topography and Settlement

Thomas Carter & Jan Broadway

In the 1850s Cheltenham was still largely agricultural and sparsely populated, with its population concentrated in the areas around the High Street, London Road to the East, Tewkesbury Road to the West and Bath Road to the South. In 1870 the *Imperial Gazetteer* noted the 'sumptuous detached villas' and 'everywhere the pleasing ornament of trees' with the Promenade 'the seat of nearly all the shopping and stir; while the other quarters spread away in fashionable airiness, ease, and retirement'.¹

As Cheltenham grew, so too did the need for improved infrastructure and housing for the poor. A better understanding of the need for sanitation and clean water to prevent the spread of diseases led to the increasing involvement of the local authority in the regulation and planning of housing. Cheltenham's position as a health resort made this particularly important, and the local council regularly exercised its powers to address problems of slum housing. The industrial development of the town in the early 20th century necessitated expansion to provide homes for the workforce. Cheltenham had expanded dramatically by the outbreak of the Second World War and developed an entirely new topography, with the Regency centre ringed by modern suburbs.

Boundaries

The 1852 Cheltenham Improvement Act adopted the boundaries of the ancient parish and parliamentary borough of Cheltenham as the extent of the powers of the improvement commissioners.² These became the boundaries of the municipal borough, when Cheltenham was incorporated in 1876.³ The municipal boundary was extended in 1893 to encompass the developed area north of Leckhampton Lane and east of a watercourse rising opposite Collum End Farm in Leckhampton and meeting Hatherley Brook south of the Park.⁴ The boundaries of the municipal borough were extended again in 1935, when 434 a. were transferred from the parishes of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury and Up Hatherley.⁵

The boundary of the parliamentary constituency of Cheltenham was extended in 1868 to incorporate the north-east corner of Leckhampton, but a proposal to also incorporate the western half of Charlton Kings was not adopted.⁶ The boundaries of the constituency were extended again in 1885, to include that part of the parish of Charlton Kings lying to the north of the Banbury & Cheltenham Railway.⁷ The parliamentary borough was extended again in 1917 to include the remainder of the parish of Charlton Kings.⁸

Population

During the second half of the 19th century the population of Cheltenham continued to grow,

¹ J. M. Wilson, *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales II* (1870), 408-9.

² 15 & 16 Vic. c. 50; GA, CBR B2/12; Septimus Pruen, *The Cheltenham Improvement Act 1852* (Cheltenham, 1853), 7.

³ OS Map 1:10560, Glos. XXVI (1885 edn); *Copy of the Charter of Incorporation of the Borough of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, c. 1877).

⁴ OS Map 1:10560, Glos. XXVI (1903 edn).

⁵ *Census County Report* (1931), pt. 1, table 3; *Census County Report* (1951), pt. 1, table 3; GA, CBR/C2/1/2/1/32, 145.

⁶ *Boundary Commission Report* (1868); OS Map 1:10560, Glos. XXVI-XXVII (1885 edn).

⁷ *Boundary Commission Report* (1885); OS Map 1:2500, Glos. XXVI-XXVII (1886).

⁸ *Boundary Commission Report* (1917); GA, CBR/C2/1/2/14, 164.

although at a slower rate than in the previous decades. The population was 39,693 in 1861, 43,972 in 1881 and 49,439 in 1901.⁹ Although the town's status as a fashionable spa resort declined, it retained a reputation as a healthy place to live with good leisure facilities. In 1887 Bartholomew's *Gazetteer* described Cheltenham as one of the 'healthiest, cleanest, and cheapest places in the kingdom'.¹⁰ Growth was sustained by a steady flow of returning Anglo-Indians, predominantly civil servants, military officers and their families, creating a sizeable leisured population of limited means.¹¹ The population remained roughly stable during the first three decades of the 20th century, compared to rapid growth in neighbouring Gloucester.¹²

The outbreak of the Second World War saw a rapid increase, with the National Register recording a population of 57,357 in September 1939.¹³ During the war, the population was swelled by the arrival of evacuees, civil servants, and military personnel, including a large number of United States military after 1942. The War Office purchased land at Benhall and Oakley, initially for its own relocated staff and from 1942 for American military personnel. Following D Day, the Ministry of Pensions arrived to set up an office to deal with the pensions of military personnel.¹⁴ A large number of people were evacuated to Cheltenham from Eastbourne in 1940, many of whom were still there in 1944. In July 1944 2,165 people were billeted in the borough under the official Government Evacuation Scheme, more than half of whom had arrived in the previous month.¹⁵ Besides those who arrived under official schemes, many more travelled unofficially to find accommodation with friends and relatives, and it was calculated that some 7,000 people arrived in the town in June 1944.¹⁶

Infill and Consolidation

The domination of the professional and leisured classes in the late 19th century stimulated the construction of more shops¹⁷ and places of entertainment, predominantly in the Promenade. The Imperial Club for 'resident noblemen and gentlemen' had premises on the Promenade from 1856 until 1874, when the New Club opened in the north-west corner of Imperial Gardens.¹⁸ The Imperial Club's premises on the Promenade were subsequently converted to provide the town with a post office of a 'substantial and lasting character'.¹⁹

Cheltenham was attractive not only for those Anglo-Indians seeking the health benefits of its spa waters, but also for respectable civil servants and army officers pursuing a suitable place to educate their children.²⁰ Cheltenham College and Cheltenham Ladies College dominated their surrounding areas in Bath Road and Bayshill respectively. In 1864 a company was set up to build four boarding houses for Cheltenham College.²¹ The colleges also acquired private residences for

⁹ *Census*, 1861, 1881, 1901.

¹⁰ Bartholomew, J., *Gazetteer of the British Isles* (1887), 152.

¹¹ E. Buettner, *Empire Families* (2004), 221-3.

¹² *Census*, 1911, 1921, 1931; *VCH Glos.* IV, 170-1.

¹³ *National Registration of United Kingdom and Ireland* (1939).

¹⁴ *Glos. Echo*, 26 Oct. 1944 & 8 May 1945.

¹⁵ GA, CBR/C2/3/12/2, 133-35.

¹⁶ GA, CBR/C2/3/12/2, 133-35.

¹⁷ See Economic: Commerce, Shops and Service Industries.

¹⁸ See Social: Leisure and Culture.

¹⁹ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 19 Dec. 1876.

²⁰ E. Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford, 2004). See Part II: Education.

²¹ *Chelt. Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1864.

boarders, such as Boyne House in Sandford Road²² and Fauconberg House on St George's Road²³. These developments led to a revival of house-building in the town. The Christchurch estate had been laid out in the 1840s, but not developed.²⁴ In 1875 the 47 acres were put up for auction as building land, but failed to sell.²⁵ A subsequent sale in 1879 was more successful.²⁶ Christchurch Road was adopted as a public highway in 1890.²⁷ The adjoining Eldorado Road was under development by 1894.²⁸ A substantial part of the land running alongside the Great Western railway tracks was acquired by the Ladies College as a playing field.²⁹

Many of the houses built between 1850 and 1900 were comparatively modest, semi-detached villas and neat terraces of artisan's houses for Cheltenham's increasingly middle class population. In 1850 the Cheltenham & Glos. Freehold Land Society purchased 15 acres of land near Lansdown Station, fronting the turnpike to Gloucester and divided it into 62 freehold plots. They named the estate Libertus, representing the aim of the group to promote freehold ownership as a way to increase enfranchisement.³⁰ Three of the plots were bought by Reverend G.P Griffiths for the foundation of St Mark's church.³¹ Although described in 1860 as an area of 'numerous pretty and respectable cottages',³² a number of plots remained undeveloped for some time.³³

Between 1856 and 1870 modest terraced housing was built in the area between the northern end of Gloucester road and the new St James's railway station; along the Old Cemetery Road, Bloomsbury Street and Stoneville Street, on streets aptly name Great Western Terrace and Great Western Road.³⁴ Further developments occurred in this area in 1883-4 with the construction of a terrace of 'cottages' along Millbrook Street by the Cheltenham Cottage Company.³⁵ The Sydenham estate of semi-detached houses north of London Road and east of Carlton Street was developed slowly between 1868 and 1900.³⁶ In 1913 a house on the estate was described as 'pleasantly situated' and 'within easy distance of both Colleges, Clubs, and Town'.³⁷ During the 1870s artisan's terraces were built on an area between St Paul's Road and Pittville Park owned by Cheltenham solicitor Frederick Marsh.³⁸ Courtney Street became a public highway in 1890 and Marle Hill Road in 1902.³⁹ Similar terraces were built in Dagmar Road, Albany Road and Alexandra Street in Tivoli.⁴⁰ In 1867 landowner Alfred Bevan laid out All Saints Terrace in Fairview, with approximately 30 artisan terraces completed by 1872.⁴¹ In 1886 Charles Winstone, a builder, bought a four acre plot

22 *Chelt. Examiner*, 6 July 1889.

23 *Chelt. Examiner*, 4 Jan. & 11 July, 1871.

24 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 36.

25 *Chelt. Looker-On*, 31 July 1875.

26 *Chelt. Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1879.

27 GA, CBR/C2/2/1/3, 5 May 1890.

28 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 56; GA, CBR/C2/2/1/7, 2 July 1894.

29 *Plan of Cheltenham* (1897).

30 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 101.

31 See Part II, Religious History.

32 *Chelt. Looker-On*, 17 Mar. 1860.

33 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 May 1868; *Chelt. Examiner*, 20 Nov. 1889.

34 H. Davies, *Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Directory* (Cheltenham, 1870).

35 See Part II, Charities for the Poor.

36 *Chelt. Examiner*, 19 Feb. 1868; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 175.

37 *Chelt. Looker-On*, 20 Sep. 1913.

38 GA, CBR/B2/10, October 1870; OS Map 1:2500 Glos XXVI.4 (1887 edn.).

39 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 47, 110.

40 OS Map 1:2500 Glos XXVI.11 (1888 edn.); *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 1, 2, 50.

41 GA, CBR/C2/3/33, Feb. 1867.

known as Fairview Gardens and built Winstonian Terrace 'in contravention of byelaws and in spite of disapproval of his plans'. By 1897 Winstone had built the western half of the road and turned it into a thoroughfare to Victoria place.⁴² In 1894 Alstone Lodge and its five acre estate failed to sell at auction.⁴³ In the following decade artisan terraces were built on the site by various builders.⁴⁴ Some in Alstone Terrace were constructed for GWR workers.⁴⁵

Following the formation of the borough council in 1877, a number of new buildings formed part of the effort to revive the town's fortunes as a spa resort, including the Winter Garden, Opera House and Art Gallery.⁴⁶ In 1896 the corporation planned to construct a *kursaal*, where people could take the waters, attend concerts and socialise, and baths at the south end of the Winter Garden, converting the ground floor of the existing structure into municipal offices with a palm court and orangery above.⁴⁷ These plans were abandoned, when the Local Government Board refused the £48,000 loan required to fund construction.⁴⁸ Following the demolition of the old Assembly Rooms and their replacement by a branch of Lloyds Bank in 1899, the current Town Hall was designed by Gloucester architect Frederick William Waller and opened in 1903.⁴⁹ In 1898 a visitor drew attention to the town's 'noble promenade' and newly installed Neptune fountain, its public grounds, spas and Winter Garden, as evidence of municipal enterprise.⁵⁰ By contrast as the combination of an ageing population and a lack of employment opportunities saw Cheltenham's population begin to decline, it earned the nickname of the 'town to let'.⁵¹

Slum Clearance and Interwar Housing Expansion

Although the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act 1875 gave the council the power to buy up, demolish and rebuild slums, the related cost and respect for property rights prevented the power being exercised. In 1897 1-9 Barnard's Row were declared unfit for human habitation.⁵² The landlord Edward Steel of Montpellier refused to pay for repairs, claiming that the current rents did not cover the cost of improvement. He offered to sell the houses to the council for £500, but this was refused.⁵³ It was not until 1922 that 4-9 Barnard's Row were demolished as part of a programme of slum clearances.⁵⁴ Following the further strengthening of the council's powers by the 1909 Town Planning Act, the Public Health Committee identified many areas such as Swindon Passage, Barnes Yard, Grove Street and the Lower High Street for slum clearance in 1913.⁵⁵ No action had been taken before the outbreak of the First World War.

Following the armistice and the passing of the 1919 Town Planning Act, the council revisited the areas of slum housing which required clearing identified in 1913 and recognised the need for an additional 500 new working-class houses. They also appreciated that house building would offer

42 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 195-6; OS Map 1:2500 Glos XXVI.8 (1887 edn.); OS Map 1:2500 Glos XXVI.8 (1903 edn.).

43 *Chelt. Examiner*, 4 Apr. 1894; *Chelt. Examiner*, 23 June 1894.

44 GA, CBR/C2/3/33; OS Map 1:2500 Glos XXVI.7 (1903 edn.); OS Map 1:2500 Glos XXVI.7 (1923 edn.).

45 *Glos. Echo*, 15 Aug. 1905.

46 See Social History.

47 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 Aug. 1896.

48 *Bath Chronicle*, 2 Sept. 1897.

49 GA, CBR/C2/3/34, June, 1896; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 242; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 Dec. 1903.

50 *Chelt. Examiner*, 15 June 1898.

51 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 15 Aug. 1903.

52 GA, CBR/C2/2/1/10, 6 Dec. 1897.

53 GA, CBR/C2/2/1/11, 7 Mar. 1898; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 Feb. 1898.

54 GA, CBR/C2/3/24, Feb. 1922.

55 GA, CBR/C2/3/24, October 1913.

vital employment opportunities for returning soldiers.⁵⁶ They purchased 118 a. adjoining the Libertus estate on the Gloucester Road and by November 1919 had approved plans for 50 houses of 6 types.⁵⁷ The council also formed a 'Women's Advisory Committee', made up of representatives from organisations such as the Women's Temperance Movement and Women's Co-operative Guild, who viewed the plans and made recommendations about how to make the designs as efficient and practical for housewives as possible.⁵⁸ The Mayor cut the first sod and planted a ceremonial tree on the St Mark's estate in April 1920,⁵⁹ while the first ten houses were ready for occupation by January 1921 and another 100 houses and a small factory were under construction.⁶⁰

In April 1921 plans to clear the area around Stanhope Street north of Tewkesbury Road, known locally as Dockem, for a new estate were put on hold when it became clear there was insufficient funds or accommodation for displaced residents.⁶¹ Tenders were sought for groups of houses in Stanhope Street from 1923.⁶² It was not until after 1925 this area was extensively redeveloped, starting with slum clearances and the construction of new two and three bedroom brick houses in the roads between Elm Street and Stanhope Street and the construction of a new road, named Cobham Street in 1926-7.⁶³ The adjacent roads Sun Street and Queen Street were not redeveloped until 1936.⁶⁴

In 1926 the council purchased c. 8 acres between Folly Lane and Hanover Street on which to build 80 houses.⁶⁵ The tender from a Cardiff-based company to build the houses was accepted in April 1927⁶⁶ and the names Hudson Street and Manser Street adopted.⁶⁷ In October 1927 there were over 500 applicants for council houses, while the council had only 30 on the Hanover estate and 12 in Stanhope Street ready for occupation. Although 164 houses would be built that year and fresh land was being acquired for the expansion of the Hanover estate.⁶⁸ Margrett Road, which connected Folly Lane to St Paul's Road, was added to this estate in 1929.⁶⁹

Between 1931 and 1939, as the population increased by 10.3%, the number of dwellings increased by 19%.⁷⁰ As part of its five year programme for housing development, required from all councils by the 1929 Labour government, the council identified St Paul's Street South, Swindon Place, Grove Street and Limekiln Row as areas for demolition and planned to build 500 new houses.⁷¹ As the economic position worsened, the council dropped a plan to build an additional 58 houses on the St Mark's estate.⁷² By 1933 the council had demolished 66 houses in Stanhope Street, 31 in Stanhope Street and 38 in Swindon passage.⁷³

56 GA, CBR/C2/3/24/3.

57 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/16, & Apr., 5 May & 1 Dec.

58 GA, CBR/C2/3/18, Jan. 1920.

59 *Glos. Echo*, 27 Apr. 1920.

60 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 22 Jan. 1921.

61 GA, CBR/C2/3/18, Mar. 1921.

62 *Glos. Echo*, 23 Nov. 1923.

63 GA, CBR/A3/1; GA, CBR/C2/3/1/1, Oct. 1928.

64 GA, CBR/C2/3/18, Sep. 1936.

65 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/23, 253.

66 *Glos. Echo*, 1 & 4 Apr. 1927.

67 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 86, 109.

68 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 Oct. 1927.

69 GA, CBR/C2/3/16, May 1929.

70 G. Payne, *A Survey of Gloucestershire* (Gloucester, 1945).

71 *Glouc. Citizen*, 28 Nov. 1930; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 6 Dec. 1930.

72 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 9 Jan. 1932.

73 *Glos. Echo*, 9 Aug. 1933.

In 1929 the council purchased land between Whaddon Road and Hewlett Road to build 92 houses⁷⁴ and in Pilley Lane in the south-west of the borough for 103 houses.⁷⁵ By May 1930 all the houses in Pilley Crescent had been built and 62 of the houses in Whaddon Avenue were completed.⁷⁶ In 1933 the slum clearance programme resumed with 26 areas consisting of approximately 145 separate blocks of property, identified for demolition over a period of four years. This included Swindon Place and Poole Way in 1933, Exmouth Court in 1934, Grove Street in 1935 and Alstone Lane in 1936.⁷⁷ To replace these properties new housing was constructed in several areas. Seven acres of land, previously the grounds of the 19th century villa Alstone Lawn, were acquired for the construction of 49 houses on Pates Avenue, named for the chair of the housing committee.⁷⁸ In 1934 the council purchased 12 a. of orchard on Tewkesbury Road for a development of 132 houses called the Moors. The first houses were ready for occupation by February 1935.⁷⁹ In 1935 the council purchased Whaddon Farm (80.611 a.) for the creation of a housing estate, which would include a new church and a 7a. playing field.⁸⁰ Tenders to build the first 126 houses were sought in June 1935⁸¹ and a further 162 at the end of 1936.⁸² The innovative circus road Clyde Crescent, which encircled the recreation ground, was part of the later phase, which also included a new school on the Crescent, allotment gardens behind Cromwell Road and an engineering works off Severn Road.⁸³

Much of the private housebuilding in the interwar period centred on the consolidation and infilling of existing roads, or construction on land occupied by obsolete and dilapidated large villas and their substantial gardens. Rowanfield Road, formed in 1869 to connect the Libertus estate to Alstone Lane and on the western limit of Cheltenham's suburbs, was sparsely occupied by market gardens and well-spaced cottages until the First World War.⁸⁴ With the inter-war expansion of the Sunningend complex,⁸⁵ the road slowly began to infill with denser housing⁸⁶, and the road was to form the starting point for the post-war Rowanfield Estate. In 1934 private developers obtained planning permission for 70 houses on Beechurst Avenue and Eldon Avenue, built on the land of a large house and garden between Hewlett Road and Hales Road that had previously been offered to the council.⁸⁷ In 1936 The estate agent and auctioneer Charles Castle of Hollington House, Hales Road, obtained planning permission for the Grove, a new road of mixed detached and semi-detached houses.⁸⁸ The Hatherley Court Estate was built by local builders Rodgers and Davis in 1937 on open fields owned by the house of that name. It encompassed extensive construction off Hatherley Road and Bourneside Road and the addition of a new park.⁸⁹ Haldon House, Painswick

74 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/26, 108, 152, 173, 190, 192, 246.

75 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/26, 238, 246, 253.

76 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/27, 160.

77 GA, CBR/C2/3/18, Jan. 1934, Oct. 1935, Oct. 1936.

78 GA, CBR/C2/3/18, Jan.-Oct.. 1933; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 134.

79 GA, CBR/C2/3/18, Jan.-July 1934, Feb. 1935; CBR/C2/1/2/31, 83, 230; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 118.

80 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/32, 38, 92, 120.

81 *Glos. Echo*, 21 June 1935.

82 *Glos. Echo*, 4 Dec. 1936.

83 Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 290.

84 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 152; *Kelly's Glos. Directory* (1914).

85 See Economic, Manufacturing.

86 *Glos. Echo*, 21 Mar. 1935.

87 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 17; GA, CBR/C2/3/23, April 1934.

88 GA, CBR/C2/3/23, Jan. 1936; *Glos. Echo*, 16 June 1936.

89 GA, CBR/C2/3/16, Nov. 1937; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 23, 79.

Road with 200 ft of frontage was demolished in the 1930s and six houses built on its ground.⁹⁰ Suffolk House, the remodelled Gallipot Farm, was replaced by an art-deco block of flats designed by the architect Eric Cole.⁹¹ In 1936 G.A.M. Hall obtained permission to build 73 houses on the former Cakebridge Farm, adjoining the new Pate's Girls' Grammar school. The four styles of house were spread over four roads on the Cleeve Mount estate off the Prestbury Road.⁹² In 1937 Cambray Court, a luxury development of 56 flats, replaced Cambray House, latterly a boarding house for the Ladies College.⁹³ Elmfield House, off Swindon Lane, gave way to a new road, Elmfield Road, and housing built by Cunningham & Gibauld in 1937. A further road of maisonettes, Elmfield Avenue, was added to the estate by 1940.⁹⁴ In 1938 Six Chimneys Lane, named after the recently demolished farmhouse, was renamed Arle Avenue in response to a petitions from the residents of the newly completed collection of suburban semi-detached housing on that road.⁹⁵ Private developments also helped to extend Cheltenham's suburbs beyond its previous boundaries. To the north of the town centre, in parallel to the council's development at Whaddon Farm, a private residential development grew on fields owned by Priors farm. This estate, made up of 175 aluminium bungalows on four new roads, led to Cemetery Road being renamed Priors Road in 1935.⁹⁶ The area of farmland and market gardens to the west of Gloucester Road between Arle and Alstone was an area of intensive expansion. Semi-detached housing developed along the length of Arle Road from the mid-1930s onwards as new roads and planned estates were created. Arle Drive, between Arle Road and Alstone Lane, notable for its scheme of Art-Deco houses, was completed in 1935.⁹⁷ Between 1937-8 Western Estates Ltd developed two new roads of semi-detached housing named Merriville Road and Merriville Gardens, between Arle Road and Alstone Lane.⁹⁸ The same developers completed a looped road, Brooklyn Gardens off the north side of Arle Road in 1940.⁹⁹ Between 1938-9 the Pye Brothers developed an extensive planned estate of semi-detached housing along the length of Brooklyn Road, built in 1921 to connect Tennyson Road to Arle Road.¹⁰⁰ This network of suburban roads were named on an apple theme such as Orchard Way, Hawthorn Road, Bramley Road and Russet Road.¹⁰¹ The interwar period also saw significant impacts on Cheltenham's topography due to the increase in motorised transport. In August 1920 the Streets and Highways Commission discussed the need to begin adding specialised signage for motorists¹⁰², whilst by July 1921 the council were debating the application for funding for a programme of road widening, junction adjustments and the tarring of road surfaces.¹⁰³ The town's earliest and most prominent dedicated filling station was built on Westal Green in 1928. What was once a green, complete with ornamental fountain,

90 *Glos. Echo*, 12 Apr. 1928; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 32.

91 *Glos. Echo*, 13 Jan. 1938; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 172.

92 GA, CBR/C5/6/1/2/10/4518; *Glos. Echo*, 19 Dec. 1936.

93 *Glos. Echo*, 10 Oct. 1938; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 30.

94 GA, CBR/C2/3/23, June 1937, Mar. 1938; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 57.

95 GA, CEO/63G050, July 1938; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 8.

96 GA, CBR/C2/3/16, Feb. 1935; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 140-1.

97 GA, CBR/C2/3/33, Nov. 1934; *Glos. Echo*, 18 June 1938.

98 *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 112; *Glos. Echo*, 18 June 1938.

99 GA, CBR/C2/3/16, April 1940.

100GA, CBR/C2/3/33, May 1921; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 26.

101GA, CBR/C2/3/16, June 1939.

102GA, CBR/C2/3/33, August 1920.

103GA, CBR/C2/3/33, July 1921

became a roundabout with this unusual pagoda roofed petrol station at its centre,¹⁰⁴ alongside a classical ashlar-faced electricity sub-station.¹⁰⁵ An increase in traffic led to the introduction of traffic lights¹⁰⁶ and Belisha beacons,¹⁰⁷ and the remodelling of the junction where the High Street met the Promenade, with the demolition of a block of buildings and the instillation of a roundabout.¹⁰⁸ The following year the Cambray Spa on Oriel Road was demolished to make way for a car park.¹⁰⁹

The Second World War inevitably put a hold on any further housing development in Cheltenham as men and materials were required for the war effort. The need for materials had a noticeable physical impact to the look of the town with miles of iron railings and gates removed for recycling into munitions. In July 1940 the council agreed to remove all the railings from corporation property, except those surrounding Montpellier Gardens.¹¹⁰ Six months later the Salvage Committee appealed for all non-essential railings to be surrendered.¹¹¹ The decision to sacrifice the 30 tons of wrought iron from the Montpellier Gardens railings was taken in January 1942.¹¹² Also taken were two cast iron canons from Sevastopol which had stood atop the Crimean War memorial outside the Queens Hotel.¹¹³ A Luftwaffe raid on 11 December 1940 damaged c1,600 homes, making around 600 people homeless, and damaged the sewers in six streets. The majority of the damage was to St Mark's estate, near the Sunningend works and the railway, around Stoneville Street and in the vicinity of the Old Bath Road.¹¹⁴

In September, 1941 the council agreed to begin planning for a substantial number of new post-war homes to be built to the west of the town.¹¹⁵ In May 1945 the council agreed to purchase Prior's Farm (c82 acres) for housing¹¹⁶ and Cheltenham's first pre-fab house was formally opened on the site in December 1945.¹¹⁷

104CBR/C5/6/1/2/7/2428 ;

105Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 278.

106*Glos. Echo*, 26 Apr. 1934.

107*Glos. Echo*, 1 Feb. 1935.

108*Chelt. Chronicle*, 11 Jan. 1936.

109*Glos. Echo*, 21 Apr. 1937.

110*Glos. Echo*, 30 July 1940.

111*Glos. Echo*, 13 Jan. 1941.

112*Glos. Echo*, 14 Jan. 1942.

113*Glos. Echo*, 25 Mar. 1942.

114*Glos. Echo*, 17 Jan. 1941; GA, CBR/C2/1/2/38, 51-3.

115GA, CBR/C2/1/2/38, 206.

116GA, CBR/C2/1/2/42, 144, 146.

117*Glos. Echo*, 13 Dec. 1945.

Local Government

Alex Craven & Jan Broadway

Although Cheltenham was created a parliamentary borough in 1832 it remained unincorporated, with responsibility for local government divided between unelected paving and lighting commissioners, the parish vestry, and the officers of the manor. The paving and lighting commissioners were replaced in 1852 by improvement commissioners, who were to be elected by ratepayers. The controversy concerning these elections led to the incorporation of the town in 1876.

Improvement Commissioners

The Cheltenham Improvement Act of 1852 appointed a body of 30 improvement commissioners to oversee local government within the town.¹¹⁸ The commissioners were granted the powers of their predecessors concerning the improvement of the streets and lighting of the town, to which were added powers over the water supply, sewers, burials, dangerous buildings, and the maintenance of order under the terms of the 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act and the 1848 Public Health Act.¹¹⁹ The Improvement Act also incorporated sections from the 1847 Town Police Clauses Act concerning the maintenance of order within the town, giving the Commissioners powers to regulate rioters, drunks, performers, and stray animals.¹²⁰

The town was divided into five wards, each represented by six councillors. The 30 commissioners nominated by the 1852 Act were subject to re-election, with one third of their number standing in each year, beginning in 1853. Once elected a commissioner's term was to last three years, and there was no limit to how often a commissioner could seek re-election. The franchise was given to all ratepayers, both owners and occupiers, with up to six votes allocated according to the value of the property. Owners who were also occupiers could exercise their votes in both categories, giving a maximum of twelve votes to the wealthiest residents of the town. Owners who were not resident in the town were nevertheless eligible to cast votes.¹²¹

At their first meeting the commissioners chose James Agg Gardner, who was also lord of the manor, as their first chair.¹²² The commissioners subsequently appointed men to serve in the offices of surveyor, treasurer, two collectors, and inspectors of the rates, highways and nuisances (the last two held together, and supported by two assistant highway inspectors), and lodging houses (held by a surgeon).¹²³ The fire brigade was put under the authority of a superintendent, under whom were five captains and fifteen firemen.¹²⁴ The commissioners were empowered by the Act to appoint standing committees to manage their affairs, and committees were appointed to oversee baths and wash houses, bye-laws, elections, finances, nuisances and the fire brigade, local officers, sewerage and drainage, streets and highways, and trees.¹²⁵

Among the most pressing issues facing the Improvement Commissioners in 1852 were improving

11815 & 16 Vic., c. 50

11910 & 11 Vic., c. 34; 11 & 12 Vic., c. 63.

12010 & 11 Vic., c. 89.

121Septimus Pruen, *The Cheltenham Improvement Act 1852* (Cheltenham, 1853).

122GA, CBR B1/1/1, 1.

123GA, CBR B1/1/1, 11–13.

124GA, CBR B1/1/1, 11, 20; CBR B1/3/6.

125GA, CBR B2/1–11.

the sewerage system and water supply. They immediately entered into negotiations for the outright purchase of the Sewer Company,¹²⁶ and exercised their powers under the 1852 Act to lay down new sewers where they felt necessary.¹²⁷ The company was finally purchased in 1858 for £9,000,¹²⁸ bringing the total length of sewers under the authority of the commissioners to almost sixteen miles.¹²⁹ The Water Company offered to sell its waterworks to the town in 1854, after its efforts to obtain a new act of Parliament had met with considerable opposition. The offer was rejected, as was a similar offer in 1863. When the Water Company proposed to furnish the town with a new supply of water from the River Severn, opposition within the town was strong¹³⁰ and the Improvement Commissioners were urged to purchase the company as a means to prevent the scheme. After their counter offer was itself rejected,¹³¹ commissioners opposed efforts by the Water Company to acquire a new Act to enable the scheme.¹³²

After Robert Sole Lingwood, a local solicitor purchased the manor in 1862, he offered to sell the arcade, market house and tolls to the Improvement Commissioners for £10,000, but this offer was declined.¹³³ When Lingwood consequently sought to resurrect these tolls, he was challenged by a market trader, with the case eventually being settled in the Court of Exchequer.¹³⁴ Although Lingwood was ultimately successful in asserting his right to levy reasonable tolls on market traders, in 1867 he sold the market premises to Charles John Chesshyre (d. 1890), a solicitor and former political agent to Colonel Berkeley.¹³⁵ Chesshyre, who had represented the plaintiff in the Exchequer case, also bought the tolls two years later, with the intention of abolishing them, while he demolished the existing market arcade and used the site for a cattle market and mop fairs.¹³⁶ After complaints were made about the nuisance of these events, the market and tolls were compulsorily purchased by the Improvement Commissioners in 1874, and the site of the former Albion Brewery was purchased to house a new market place.¹³⁷

The Improvement Commissioners were created the urban sanitary district of Cheltenham, which was co-extensive with the parish, under the 1872 Public Health Act.¹³⁸ The first Medical Officer of Health was Dr Thomas Wright, a surgeon at the Cheltenham hospital. On taking up the position he was obliged to give up private practice, but was allowed to become medical officer for neighbouring sanitary districts.¹³⁹

Borough Council

The new borough was incorporated by charter in 1876.¹⁴⁰ The town was placed under the authority of an elected borough council, comprising a mayor, six aldermen and eighteen councillors, who

126GA, CBR B1/1/1, 41

127GA, CBR B1/1/1, 109, 111–12, 121.

128GA, CBR D1/1/1/1.

129Goding, 516.

130*Cheltenham Mercury*, 6 Feb. 1864; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 5 Apr. 1864; *Cheltenham Mercury*, 3 Dec. 1864.

131GA, CBR B2/14/1/2/2.

132GA, CBR B2/14/1/1/1.

133*Chelt. Chronicle*, 9 Dec. 1892 & 6 Jan. 1863.

134*Chelt. Chronicle*, 19 May 1868.

135*Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 Feb. 1890.

136*Chelt. Mercury*, 8 May 1869; *Chelt. Chronicle* 23 June 1874.

137*Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 June 1874.

138*Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 Sept. 1873.

139*Chelt. Examiner*, 15 Oct. 1873.

140Reproduced in the *Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 Sep. 1876.

were to govern the town according to the terms of the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. The town was divided into six wards, each to be represented by three councillors and one alderman. The franchise was restricted only to resident rate-payers, both owners and occupiers, who were each to receive a single vote, irrespective of the size of their estate within the town. One-third of the councillors were to leave office each year, beginning in 1877 with those councillors who had received the fewest votes in the first elections of 1876. Subsequently, councillors elected from 1877 onwards were to serve for terms of three years before having to leave office. After their first election, the councillors were to nominate the six aldermen from amongst themselves or by co-option of other burgesses of the town. Three of these first aldermen were to leave office after three years, and the other three after six years, and subsequently aldermen were to serve terms of six years. There was no restriction on the number of terms councillors and aldermen could serve. After each year's elections the council were to nominate one of their number to serve as a mayor for the following year.

The first election of 1876 was a success for the Liberals, who were triumphant in four of the six wards,¹⁴¹ and they subsequently nominated William Nash Skillicorne, who had initially been defeated in the election for the Middle Ward, to serve as an alderman and the first mayor of Cheltenham.¹⁴² A number of standing committees were appointed, to oversee finance, streets and highways, sewage and drainage, public health, gas, the watch, school attendance, and a general purposes committee, which was to have oversight over markets and fairs.¹⁴³ The Borough Council inherited the powers of the Improvement Commissioners as the local urban sanitary authority, and appointed a chief medical officer and an inspector of nuisances.¹⁴⁴

In 1878 the council purchased the Cheltenham Water Company under the provisions of the Cheltenham Waterworks Act,¹⁴⁵ taking possession of its reservoirs and waterworks in Cheltenham, Charlton Kings and Tewkesbury. Concerns over the pollution of the Severn from settlements above Tewkesbury led to the council threatening Worcester City Council with prosecution under the Prevention of River Pollution Act.¹⁴⁶ In 1883 the council resolved to purchase Barrett's Mill and the Upper and Lower Alstone mills, in order to remove the mill dams and improve the flow of the river Chelt.¹⁴⁷ Upper Alstone Mill was purchased later that year,¹⁴⁸ and Barrett's Mill in 1885.¹⁴⁹ Although Lower Alstone Mill was advertised for sale in 1888,¹⁵⁰ it was not purchased by the council, who following flooding on the Chelt obtained authorisation to purchase the mill from the Local Government board in 1891.¹⁵¹ The council seem not to have exercised this option, as the mill was offered for sale again in 1898.¹⁵² Lower Alstone Mill was described as disused in 1914.¹⁵³ The Cheltenham & Gloucester Joint Water Board was formed, when Gloucester's reservoirs proved

141*Chelt. Looker-On*, 18 Nov. 1876.

142*Chelt. Chronicle*, 21 Nov. 1876; GA, CBR/C2/1/1/1, 4–5.

143GA, CBR/C2/1/1/1, 6–7, 14–16, 25–26.

144GA, CBR/C2/1/1/1, 21–22.

14541 & 42 Vic., c. 203; GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 8–23.

146GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 79–83.

147GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 111.

148GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 141.

149GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 182.

150*Glos. Echo*, 22 Mar. 1888.

151GA, CBR/C2/2/1/4, 25 Feb. & 4 May 1891.

152*Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Oct. 1898.

153*Glouc. Journal*, 21 Mar. 1914.

inadequate and the city required to draw supplies from the Severn at Tewkesbury.¹⁵⁴ After a poll of the rate payers the Public Libraries Acts of 1855 and 1866 was adopted in Cheltenham in 1883.¹⁵⁵ In 1887 it was decided to take loans for the purpose of building a public library and public swimming baths in the town.¹⁵⁶ In 1888 the council was initially reluctant to become a subscriber to the new telephone exchange, but was persuaded by the Western Counties Telephone Company's offer of a year's free connection for the general hospital and fire station.¹⁵⁷ A new Improvement Act was acquired in 1889, enabling the Council to raise the money needed to purchase the Pittville estate.¹⁵⁸ A further Improvement Act was sought in 1899 to increase the council's ability to regulate the public health of the town, with greater powers relating to infectious diseases, lodging houses, and the supply of milk, and the compulsory adoption of all privately-owned sewers. Concerted opposition to the latter provision by the owners of private sewers led to the withdrawal of the Bill early in 1900.¹⁵⁹ A renewed effort in 1903¹⁶⁰ was defeated by a vote of the ratepayers.¹⁶¹

Despite a rise in population and the expansion of the borough in 1893, the number of councillors and wards remained unchanged until a Privy Council order in 1933 increased them to 24 and 8 respectively.¹⁶²

Second World War

An air raid authority was established in 1937 which comprised Cheltenham borough, Cheltenham rural district, Charlton Kings urban district, and Tewkesbury borough, presided over initially by the mayor of Cheltenham.¹⁶³ Auxiliary fire stations were established in Cheltenham and Charlton Kings, requiring the recruitment of 180 auxiliary firemen.¹⁶⁴ The public were encouraged to take precautions, and the air raid authority paid for the provision of a demonstration gas-proof room at the Health Week Exhibition held at the Cheltenham Town Hall in September 1937.¹⁶⁵ The Elms on Swindon Road, owned by the county council, was adopted as a first aid centre and local headquarters for the air raid wardens in 1938, employed for training volunteers and for storing the local stock of respirators.¹⁶⁶ During the international crisis of 1938 a number of shelter trenches were dug in Cheltenham.¹⁶⁷ A survey of buildings in the centre of town found only eight with basements suitable for conversion into public air raid shelters, which would provide shelter for only 500 people.¹⁶⁸ Consequently, an extension of shelter trenches was proposed in the following year, with those planned in Cheltenham borough sufficient to shelter almost 19,000 people.¹⁶⁹

15426 Geo. V, c.129; *Glos. Echo*, 8 Oct. 1937.

155GA, CBR/C2/1/1/1, 406–7.

156GA, CBR/C2/1/1/1, 586.

157GA, CBR/C2/2/1/1, 6 Feb., 7 Aug., 3 Sep., 1 Oct. & 9 Nov.

15852 & 53 Vic., c. 184.

159GA, CBR/C3/1/3/2/1/1–2.

160GA, CBR/C3/1/3/3/1/1–4; *Chelt. Examiner*, 19 Nov. 1902.

161*St James's Gazette*, 2 Feb. 1903.

162*Chelt. Chronicle*, 10 June 1933.

163GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 1.

164GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 8.

165GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 8.

166GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 17.

167GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 24.

168GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 17–18, 40–42, 45.

169GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 36, 42, 44.

Schools at Gloucester Road, Naunton Park, and Whaddon were designated to serve as improvised hospitals if extra hospital accommodation was required.¹⁷⁰ Community feeding centres, or British Restaurants, were established at the Grammar School, Montpellier, St Marks, and Whaddon.¹⁷¹ Cheltenham and its neighbouring settlements were subjected to seven bombing raids between August 1940 and July 1942.¹⁷² A particularly heavy raid in December 1940 saw the ironworks at Lansdown hit, and the demolition of the bridge where Old Bath Road crossed the railway at Lower Pilley.

Heightened fears concerning the threat of invasion in 1942 led to the formation of a defence committee for the borough, to coordinate preparations the defence of the area.¹⁷³ Although Cheltenham was not considered to have any military value, nevertheless it had importance as a road junction.¹⁷⁴ The committee organised a series of exercises during 1942 in the process of drawing up an invasion plan.¹⁷⁵ A questionnaire was circulated in 1942 to householders in the borough to ascertain what roles individuals might fill and what equipment might be made available in the event of an invasion.¹⁷⁶ A food executive officer had been appointed by the borough, with the power to requisition food from shops and restaurants at short notice in order to conserve food supplies within the town.¹⁷⁷

Public Services and Utilities

Sewerage and drainage

It was reported in 1849 that the Cheltenham Sewer Company had laid almost 6,000 yards of sewerage within the town, including a main sewer under the high street, but at that time the company's sewers only serviced 736 of Cheltenham's 6,541 houses. Other houses in the town had the benefit of private sewers, which drained into the river Chelt and so added to the pollution, but many had no drainage at all, and were considered a serious risk to public health.¹⁷⁸ In 1853 the Improvement Commissioners invited tenders for the completion and maintenance of the town's main sewers on the Chelt (3461 yds), Wymans Brook (1943 yds) and Hatherley Brook (1051 yds).¹⁷⁹ In 1857 there were 445 houses that could be potentially served by the existing sewers that remained unconnected and it was estimated that a proposed new branch sewer might serve a further 288 houses.¹⁸⁰ The Improvement Commissioners purchased the Sewer Company in 1858 and a contract was let for the new branch sewer.¹⁸¹ By 1870 the commissioners had acquired land at Hayden Elm in the neighbouring Boddington parish as a sewage farm.¹⁸² As the sewerage system

170GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 104.

171GA, CBR/C2/3/12/1, 66, 95, 107; CBR/C2/3/15/1/2.

172GA, D5027/3; CBR/C2/3/12/1, 134. July 1942, 19 houses destroyed, 14 seriously damaged, 11 killed:

CBR/C2/3/12/1, 134.

173GA, CBR/C2/3/15/1/1; CBR/C2/3/15/1/2.

174GA, CBR/C2/3/15/1/2.

175GA, CBR/C2/3/15/1/2.

176GA, CBR/C2/3/15/1/2.

177GA, CBR/C2/3/15/1/2.

178Edward Cresy, *Report to the General Board of Health on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage, and supply of water, and the sanitary condition of the inhabitants of the town of Cheltenham* (1849).

179*Glouc. Journal*, 9 Apr. 1853.

180GA, CBR B2/9/2/11.

181GA, CBR B2/9/2/11.

182GA, CBR/B2/9/2/21; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 7 June 1870.

developed, there were concerns that it was causing a drop in the level of water in the wells, on which the poorer districts of the town relied.¹⁸³ After a series of experiments with filtration and irrigation schemes, the commissioners expanded the use of Hayden sewage farm to deal with effluent.¹⁸⁴ Despite this in 1890 the well water at the workhouse was found to be 'very largely contaminated with sewage' and unfit for domestic use.¹⁸⁵ In 1908 silt tanks were built at Hayden Farm¹⁸⁶ and in 1911 a sewage purification works was developed there.¹⁸⁷

Water Works

In 1853 the town's surveyor observed that the sewers would create a greater risk of disease than the cesspools they were intended to replace without a plentiful supply of water to drain them. He reported that only a few of the main streets and thoroughfares within the town were being washed appropriately, and that the majority of streets in the poorer areas of town were never cleaned at all. He estimated that in order to supply the town with enough water to meet all of its needs – for drinking water, sewerage, street cleaning, supplying public baths and fountains, and the prevention of fire – a supply of 700,000 gallons of water a day was required, from all sources, including private wells.¹⁸⁸ In 1854 the Cheltenham Water Company supplied water to only 2,273 of Cheltenham's houses.¹⁸⁹ Two attempts in that year by the Water Company to obtain a new Act of Parliament to enable them to procure a better supply of water for the town were unsuccessful,¹⁹⁰ and their offer to sell the works to the Improvement Commissioners was rejected,¹⁹¹ as was a similar offer made in 1863.¹⁹² In 1854 the Water Company applied to Parliament for a new Act which would have given them the power to divert 1,000,000 gallons of water a day from the River Coln at Syreford, but they encountered considerable opposition.¹⁹³ Instead they elected to expand the existing reservoirs at Hewletts and in Leckhampton.¹⁹⁴ The first brick on a new 4a. reservoir at Hewletts was laid early in 1857.¹⁹⁵ Work in Sandford Mead in 1863 threatened the supply to the wells that the majority of the town's inhabitants relied upon.¹⁹⁶ The Company's proposal to increase the supply to the town by drawing water from the Severn was opposed over fears of pollution. A rival company, the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Waterworks Company, was proposed, which sought an Act of Parliament to enable it to supply water to Cheltenham from springs in the Cotswolds, but concerns were expressed about the risk to the supply of water to the Thames and the project was defeated.¹⁹⁷ The insistence by the Improvement Commissioners, that any supply to the town of water drawn from the Severn should be kept entirely separate from the existing supply of spring water, and not be provided for drinking, made the scheme uneconomic

183*Cheltenham Looker-On*, 17 July 1858.

184*Chelt. Examiner*, 24 Feb. & 6 Oct. 1869; *VCH Glos.* VIII, 89.

185GA, G/CH/32b.

186GA, CBR/C2/1/2/5, 47, 49, 159.

187GA, CBR/C2/1/2/8, 47, 189; *Glos. Echo*, 7 Oct. 1912.

188GA, CBR B1/1/1; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 7 July 1853.

189*Chelt. Chronicle*, 30 Mar. 1854.

190*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 7 Oct. 1856.

191GA, CBR B2/14/1/1/1.

192GA, CBR B2/14/1/1/1.

193*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 30 Mar. 1854; 7 Oct. 1856.

194*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 7 Oct. 1856.

195*Chelt. Examiner*, 21 Jan. 1857.

196GA, CBR B2/14/1/1/1.

197GA, D2025/Box138/Bundle12.

and it was dropped.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the Company proceeded with its plan to construct a water works near Tewkesbury to supply that town with water.¹⁹⁹

In 1878 the Council bought the privately owned water company under the provisions of the Cheltenham Corporation Waterworks Act and took over responsibility for the water supply.²⁰⁰ To address problems with the supply of water particularly to the poorer districts of the town,²⁰¹ the Dowdeswell reservoir in Andoversford was built between 1883 and 1886.²⁰² Despite the increased supply, in 1894 the local medical officer reported that there still around 3,000 houses or almost a third of the population in Cheltenham reliant on wells for their water.²⁰³ In the absence of an economic alternative for increasing the supply, the Corporation finally agreed to pump water from the Severn to the reservoir at Hewletts.²⁰⁴

Gas & Electricity

In 1856 the Gas Company acquired a new act of parliament, which allowed it to raise money to expand its works and the area supplied with gas.²⁰⁵ In 1856 there were 987 public lamps in Cheltenham; by 1865 the number had increased to 1,230. The Gas Company had reduced its charges to private customers in 1864 and was accused of making excess profits from the provision of public lamps. There were also concerns about the maintenance of the public lamps. In 1866 the Improvement Commissioners investigated the cost of erecting a new gasworks to supply the public lamps.²⁰⁶ In 1872 the Gas Company obtained a new Act²⁰⁷ against opposition from the Improvement Commissioners, enabling them to extend their limits of supply and to construct a siding from the Midland Railway line to their works.²⁰⁸ In response to pressure from the company's customers and the Improvement Commissioners, the company was limited to charge no more than 4s. per 1,000 feet, and the halothane of the gas was subjected to more stringent tests than previously.²⁰⁹ After continuing disputes over the quality of the gas,²¹⁰ its cost and the maintenance of the public lamps, the town council resolved to purchase the company in 1896,²¹¹ but a poll of the ratepayers opposed this move.²¹²

In 1888 the town council instituted an electric lighting committee to consider following the example of towns such as Taunton, Bath, Leamington Spa and Eastbourne by installing electric lights.²¹³ The council resolved to keep the necessary infrastructure under their own control and in 1889 gave notice of their intention to seek the authorisation of the Board of Trade to begin

¹⁹⁸*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 22 Aug. 1865.

¹⁹⁹*VCH Glos.* VIII, 150.

²⁰⁰41 & 42 Vict. cap. 203.

²⁰¹GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 68, 136.

²⁰²GA, CBR/C2/3/35/1, 93; *VCH Glos.* IX, 43-4.

²⁰³GA, CBR/C2/2/1/7, 7 May; *Chelt. Examiner*, 9 May 1894.

²⁰⁴*Chelt. Examiner*, 7 Feb. 1894.

²⁰⁵19 & 20 Vict. c 10.

²⁰⁶GA, CBR/B2/19/1/4/1.

²⁰⁷35 & 36 Vict. C 184.

²⁰⁸GA, CBR/B2/6/1/3.

²⁰⁹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 7 Jan. 1873.

²¹⁰GA, CBR/B2/6/1/3

²¹¹GA, CBR/C2/2/1/9, 12.

²¹²*Chelt. Chronicle*, 22 Feb. 1896.

²¹³GA, CBR/C2/2/1/1, 6; *Chelt. Looker-On*, 2 June 1888.

construction.²¹⁴ The works were completed in 1895²¹⁵ with the power station located alongside the railway in Arle.²¹⁶ In 1899 the Board of Trade authorised the borough council to supply electricity for public and private purposes.²¹⁷ In 1898 the public lighting in Cheltenham included 37 arc lamps; by 1904 this had increased to 388.²¹⁸ As the demand for electricity grew, a proposal for a joint power station Gloucester city council was rejected in 1926, because of the uncertainty caused by the setting up of the Central Electricity Board.²¹⁹ In 1928 the council reached an agreement with the Shropshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire Power Company for the supply of additional power when required.²²⁰ The Arle power station was decommissioned in the 1930s, with the 210 ft. chimney, erected in 1901, being demolished in May 1934.²²¹

Cemetery

The 1852 Improvement Act and a subsequent 1855 Order in Council restricted burials to the parish cemetery and the burial grounds of the Cheltenham, Wesleyan, Bethel, Unitarian and Mormonite Chapels. The reopening of family vaults was also regulated.²²² In 1864 a new cemetery was opened to the east of Bouncer's Lane just across the parish border in Prestbury.²²³ Non-denominational, it had two mortuary chapels, and was under the authority of a burial board of the Improvement Commissioners, later the borough council. It was enlarged in 1886.²²⁴ In 1935 the council decided to erect a crematorium adjoining the Non-Conformist chapel at the cemetery.²²⁵ The crematorium and adjoining garden of remembrance were officially opened in January 1938.²²⁶

Police & Justice

In 1857 the Clarence Hotel was acquired by the county constabulary for conversion into their headquarters.²²⁷ There was a courtroom for the daily petty sessions court on the first floor and a parade ground behind.²²⁸ A county court was built in Regent Street in 1870, where the judge sat on the first and third Fridays of each month except September.²²⁹ In that year there were a superintendent, two inspectors, three sergeants and 46 constables stationed at Cheltenham.²³⁰ By 1914 there were sub-stations at Tewkesbury Road, Gloucester Road and Pittville.²³¹ Following the First World War, the police headquarters was moved to the Lansdown Road, initially being housed in leased premises before moving to Holland House in 1921.²³²

²¹⁴*Chelt. Examiner*, 20 Nov. 1889.

²¹⁵GA, CBR/C3/3/1/1/3/6.

²¹⁶*Plan of Cheltenham* (1897)

²¹⁷*Chelt. Examiner*, 19 Apr. 1899.

²¹⁸*Glouc. Citizen*, 7 Nov. 1904.

²¹⁹*Glos. Echo*, 23 Feb. 1926.

²²⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 11 Feb. 1928.

²²¹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 May 1934.

²²²GA, CBR/C2/1/1/3, 10-11.

²²³GA, D2025/Box 48/Bundle 8; *VCH Glos.* VIII, 67, 68.

²²⁴*Glos. Echo*, 1 Dec. 1886.

²²⁵GA, CBR/C2/1/2/32, 211, 241, 285.

²²⁶*Glos. Echo*, 13 Jan. 1938.

²²⁷GA, C/DC/SJ/1/1; Q/AP/22/1.

²²⁸F.C.W., *A New Guide to Cheltenham* (1867), 47-8.

²²⁹*Cheltenham Annuaire* (1870), xxvii; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 242.

²³⁰*Cheltenham Annuaire* (1870), 67.

²³¹*Kelly's Directory* (1914), 74.

²³²Harry Thomas, *The History of the Gloucestershire Constabulary 1839-1985* (1987), 61.

Fire Brigade

In 1853 the fire brigade, based at the engine house in St George's Place, consisted of the chief, a resident fireman who slept in the engine house and looked after the engines, five captains and 15 men.²³³ Following an allegedly sluggish response to a fire at Earl Fitzhardinge's house, a number of measures were proposed. These included the replacement of the fire engine house bell, as the existing one was too close in sound to that of the Great Western railway; that the number of practices should be increased; and that all firemen should live within 1,000yds in a direct line of the engine house.²³⁴

In 1896 the operational equipment at the fire station included two manual fire engines, two hose carts, 500 yds of canvas hose, 100yds of leather hose and a 60ft. fire escape.²³⁵ The fire brigade were presented with a steam engine in 1904.²³⁶ A new fire station was build alongside the existing engine house in 1906.²³⁷ Despite the growth of the town, in 1914 the force of a superintendent, 20 men and one resident fireman matched that of 1853.²³⁸ A motor fire engine was acquired in 1924.²³⁹

²³³*Chelt. Examiner*, 19 Jan. 1853.

²³⁴*Chelt. Chronicle*, 10 Feb. 1853.

²³⁵GA, CBR/C2/2/1/9, 8.

²³⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 24 Seo. 1904.

²³⁷Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 265.

²³⁸*Kelly's Directory* (1914), 74.

²³⁹GA, CBR/C2/2/1/21, 19, 27.

Economic History

Sally Self & Jan Broadway

During this period Cheltenham developed from a seasonal spa town into a centre that provided shops, educational establishments, entertainment and culture throughout the year for a settled middle-class population. With very little major industry or agriculture in the town, the town's economic activity was driven by its professional and leisured inhabitants. Until the First World War employment was dominated by domestic and consumer services, small scale business and artisan crafts.²⁴⁰ To encourage growth, the town actively publicised itself as a healthy and agreeable place in which to reside, to be educated, to visit or to work.²⁴¹ In the inter-war years, in response to the lack of jobs, the Council encouraged light industry and promoted the town as a venue for trade fairs,²⁴² conferences²⁴³ and festivals.²⁴⁴ Working with various trade associations and the Chamber of Commerce, the Corporation set up advertising and floral sub-committees to publicise the amenities and to enhance the appearance of the public spaces.²⁴⁵

Agriculture and Market Gardens

Throughout the second half of the 19th century agriculture and market gardening represented a comparatively stable source of employment, occupying around 5% of the working population.²⁴⁶ In 1921 around 5.3% of the working population of the borough were employed in agriculture,²⁴⁷ dropping slightly to 4.2% in 1931.²⁴⁸ In 1945 there were still 45 market gardeners.²⁴⁹

By the 1850s most of the agricultural land was a mixture of small parcels of meadow or pasture, market garden and orchard, with only a small quantity of arable.²⁵⁰ Most of the market gardens and orchards lay along the Tewkesbury, Swindon and Whaddon roads. There were four farms within a mile of the centre with others around Fiddler's Green and at Oakley. Their fields were already compromised by the expansion of the road network and the railway company's land purchases.²⁵¹

In 1897 there were 10 farms within the municipal boundaries: Fiddler's Green, Harthurstfield, Bunhill and Hester's Way, Arle and Arle Court, with Six Chimneys Farm in Alstone lay to the west and Whaddon, Prior's and Oakley in the north-east.²⁵² Most of these farms, generally small, persisted throughout the period,²⁵³ although Whaddon farm was acquired for housing

²⁴⁰Census, 1861, 1881, 1911.

²⁴¹Rowe, *Illustrated Guide*; E. J. Burrow, *Cheltenham, The Midland Educational and Health Centre* (Cheltenham, 1897); *The Garden Town of England, Cheltenham, Illustrated* (published by Cheltenham Examiner, nd [1889]); *Cheltenham Traders' Association Handbook* (c.1916-1920); GA, CBR/C2/2/1/9, 81..

²⁴²GA, CBR/C2/1/2/16, 143; CBR/C2/1/2/17, 67.

²⁴³GA, CBR/C2/1/2/16, 72, 82, 98; CBR/C2/1/2/17, 62.

²⁴⁴*Glos. Echo*, 12 May 1939, 4.

²⁴⁵GA, D3710/1/3; *Glos. Echo*, 18 Mar. 1936; GA, CBR/C2/1/2/34, 133.

²⁴⁶Census, 1851, 1861, 1881.

²⁴⁷Census, 1921.

²⁴⁸Census, 1931.

²⁴⁹*Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory* (1945).

²⁵⁰GA, CBR/B2/9/5/1.

²⁵¹GA, D8285/Box3/Bundle3; D1518/Box49/Bundle1.

²⁵²*Plan of Cheltenham* (1897).

²⁵³OS 1:10,560 Gloucestershire XXVI, sections NW, NE, SE and SW (revised 1938).

development in the 1920s.²⁵⁴ Harthurstfield, when let in 1894, was advertised as having 99 acres;²⁵⁵ two farms at Arle, when sold earlier, comprised over 400 acres.²⁵⁶ By 1942, three-quarters of the agricultural land was permanent grassland, for rearing cattle and to a lesser extent sheep.²⁵⁷ The Market Gardeners' Association of Cheltenham held its first annual dinner in February 1903,²⁵⁸ a local association of dairymen was formed in 1906²⁵⁹ and Gloucestershire Farmers' Union inaugurated a Cheltenham branch in October 1909.²⁶⁰ In 1914 the council was approached to give its support to the creation of a co-operative marketing organisation for fruit and vegetables.²⁶¹ At that time much of the produce of the town's market gardens was being grown on commission, rather than passing through the local market.²⁶² In 1917 a factory to pulp fruit and vegetables was set up, aiming to deal with 30 tons of fruit and between 80 and 100 tons of vegetables, and employing 80 people at the height of the season.²⁶³ In 1918 there was a boycott of the fruit market by Cheltenham and District Market Gardeners' Fruit Growers' Association, Ltd.,²⁶⁴ which was eventually resolved by a lease of part of the site.²⁶⁵ Once the Gloucestershire Fruit and Vegetable Co-operative Marketing Society was established as a co-operative society in 1919, the gross turnover for its first six months trading in Cheltenham market was £38,954.²⁶⁶ A subsidiary section, the Cheltenham Egg Packing Station, were handling three million eggs a year in 1927. Eggs were collected from a 30-mile radius by seven vans.²⁶⁷

War time initiatives to maximise production on farms and in market gardens were directed in the county by the Gloucestershire War Agricultural Executive Committee.²⁶⁸ In the First World War, Cheltenham Allotment Holders' Association encouraged the production of potatoes and had a depot in Bennington Street in 1918.²⁶⁹ The 'Dig for Victory' campaign of 1939 was overseen by the Council's Allotment and Horticultural Committees, who issued 5000 pamphlets giving advice, allocated 70 additional plots²⁷⁰ and suspended the restriction on keeping pigs, poultry and rabbits.²⁷¹ Individuals were encouraged to produce vegetables and fruit,²⁷² with advice being issued through Farming in Gloucestershire,²⁷³ and in newspapers.²⁷⁴

254See Topography, Slum Clearance and Interwar Housing Expansion.

255*Chelt. Examiner*, 10 October 1894, 5

256GA, D1518/Box48/Bundle7 (part).

257A. Jones, *Cheltenham* (2010), 328-9; Land Utilisation Survey, 1:63360, sheets 92 & 93 (1942).

258*Chelt. Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1903..

259*Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Sep. 1906.

260*Chelt. Examiner*, 28 Oct. 1909.

261GA, CBR/C2/1/2/11, 97.

262G.H. Hollingworth, 'The Gloucestershire Fruit and Vegetable Co-operative Marketing Society', *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture* 31 (1924), 68-9.

263N. Mann, *Cheltenham in the Great War*, (Stroud, 2016), 63-7.

264GA, CBR/C2/1/2/15, 158-9.

265GA, CBR/C2/1/2/16, 125.

266Hollingworth, 'The Gloucestershire Fruit and Vegetable Co-operative Marketing Society', 69.

267GA, PQ21.6111Gs

268GA, D8613/4; GA, D9939/1, Women's Land Army.

269*Chelt. Chronicle*, 30 Mar. 1918.

270Cheltenham Borough Minute Book, Allotment and Horticultural Committees, 27 October 1939; 14 October 1940.

271Cheltenham Borough Minute Book, Housing Committee, 11 June 1940.

272Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic, 23 March 1940.

273Farming in Gloucestershire, Volume 2, number 4, January 1940.

274Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic, Supplement, number 2047, 23 March 1940.

Commerce, Shops and Service Industries

In 1852 the Improvement Commissioners investigated moving the market, but negotiations came to nothing.²⁷⁵ In 1869, having taking down the arcade and built on part of the site, Charles Chesshyre fitted the remaining market site with pens and established a fortnightly livestock auction, resulting in complaints from local residents.²⁷⁶ After court hearings and arbitration concerning the franchises, fairs and levies the Town Commissioners bought the market tolls²⁷⁷ and during 1875 opened a new market on what had been the Albion Brewery.²⁷⁸ Increasing regulation and the outbreak of swine fever in 1892 led to the closure of the cattle market,²⁷⁹ although it was revived during the First World War.²⁸⁰ In 1902 the council provided an open shed on the site at the request of the Cheltenham Market Gardeners' Association to enable a fruit and vegetable market to be held there.²⁸¹

The provision of accommodation remained an important source of revenue and employment throughout the period. In 1857 the leading hotels were the Belle Vue, the Fleece, the George, the Lansdown, the Plough, the Queens and the Royal.²⁸² In 1860 the George was acquired by Engall and Sanders as auction sale rooms.²⁸³ In 1868 there were 14 hotels and inns in the town and around 300 lodging or boarding houses.²⁸⁴ In 1897 the Queen's and the Plough remained the leading hotels, while the Royal, Lamb and Fleece were the principal commercial establishments.²⁸⁵ In the 20th century many of the 40 to 50 hotels differentiated themselves as family, commercial and temperance establishments.²⁸⁶ In the interwar period those engaged in giving personal services remained between 5,500 and nearly 6,000, the majority of them being women.²⁸⁷ Montpellier Baths continued to function, offering seven different types of bathing experiences.²⁸⁸ Continually needing enlargement and improvement the baths were bought by the town council in 1899.²⁸⁹ The Pittville estate was purchased by the council in 1889 and the renovations subsequently undertaken included the wells and pumping equipment.²⁹⁰ In 1893 the council commissioned an analysis of the spa water from Professor Thorpe of the Royal College of Science, South Kensington, as part of their promotion of the town as a health resort.²⁹¹ The new Town Hall, opened in 1906, incorporated the Central Spa, which dispensed waters drawn from the council's wells at Pittville and Montpellier.²⁹² The Montpellier baths, which continued to prove unprofitable, were closed in 1940.²⁹³

²⁷⁵See Local Government, Improvement Commissioners.

²⁷⁶*Chelt. Examiner*, 7 July 1869; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 June 1874.

²⁷⁷*Chelt. Examiner*, 19 Aug. 1874.

²⁷⁸*Chelt. Examiner*, 17 Mar. 1875; G. Hart, *A History of Cheltenham*, (Leicester, 1965), 346-7.

²⁷⁹GA, CBR/C2/2/1/5, 4 Jan. & 2 Aug.

²⁸⁰GA, CBR/C2/1/2/13, 115, 136, 203.

²⁸¹GA, CBR/C2/2/1/15, 5 Aug.

²⁸²Cheltenham Annuaire and Directory, 1857.

²⁸³*Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 May 1860.

²⁸⁴*Slater's Directory of Glos, Herefs, Mon, Shrops & Wales* (1868), 160-1, 168.

²⁸⁵*Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory* (1897), 64.

²⁸⁶*Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory* (1914); *ibid* (1934); *ibid* (1935).

²⁸⁷*Census*, 1921 & 1931.

²⁸⁸D12400/1, 537.

²⁸⁹GA, CBR/C2/2/1/12, 2 Jan. & 6 Mar.

²⁹⁰GA, CBR/C2/2/1/2, 18 Nov.; CRR/C2/2/1/5, 2 May, 3 Oct.

²⁹¹GA, CBR/C3/1/3/3/1/1.

²⁹²*London Evening Standard*, 21 June 1906.

²⁹³*Glos. Echo*, 2 July 1940.

Throughout this period the retail sector was important to Cheltenham's economy. In 1850 Rowe's *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* began its first route for visitors to the town in the High Street with its 'handsome shops, well stored with every variety of attractive merchandize' and drew attention to the increasing encroachment of trade into the fashionable residential areas of the Promenade, Montpellier and Bayshill.²⁹⁴ At Christmas 1892 the *Cheltenham Chronicle* described the town as being rightfully proud of its 'well-appointed shops, the windows of which are always tastefully dressed'.²⁹⁵ A shopping week and carnival was planned to coincide with the County Agricultural Show in June 1910, but was delayed until October after the death of Edward VII.²⁹⁶ During the First World War the local Traders' Association published a handbook publicising the excellence of the shopping facilities, claiming 'county families come regularly to satisfy their wants from places 40 and 50 miles distant'.²⁹⁷ A further shopping week in October 1921 was 'a concerted effort to prove to the surrounding districts' that Cheltenham was 'the great shopping centre of the Midlands'.²⁹⁸ In 1930 Cheltenham advertised itself as 'the shopping centre of the west'.²⁹⁹

While many shops in the High Street remained small with premises that only extended over the original burgage plots, others began to expand. In 1851 Debenham, Son & Freebody announced that they had made extensive alterations and additions to their Cavendish House premises on the Promenade.³⁰⁰ By 1872 the store housed 20 departments with workrooms and warehouses to the rear.³⁰¹ The store was extensively refurbished and extended in the 1930s by the Cheltenham architects Healing & Overbury³⁰², so that by 1938 the store covered 163,100 sq ft, had 974 ft. of glass frontage and employed 352 staff.³⁰³ By 1865 Shirer & Son (formerly Shirer & MacDougall), drapers, had spread from Imperial Circus into Clarence Street.³⁰⁴ In 1935 the premises of the by then Shirer & Haddon were demolished and rebuilt to provide additional frontage and extensive first floor showroom space over the adjacent ground floor shops.³⁰⁵ In 1851 Newman & Lance opened a drapers at 126 High Street.³⁰⁶ When John Lance took over the business alone in 1860, it had expanded to occupy nos 125 and 128³⁰⁷ and he acquired 127 in 1885.³⁰⁸ In 1936 Shirer's and Lance's merged, occupying the 33,600 sq. ft. of Shirer's expanded premises in the Promenade.³⁰⁹ In the 1870s the advent of co-operative stores was seen as a threat to middle-class tradesmen,³¹⁰ but despite opposition a co-operative supply store was established in the High Street.³¹¹ By 1897 the Gloucester Co-operative & Industrial Society occupied shops in two parts of the High Street

294Rowe, *Illustrated Guide*, 1, 11.

295*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 Dec. 1892.

296*Glos. Echo*, 9 Mar. 1910; *Chelt. Looker-On*, 14 May 1910; *Gloucester Journal*, 15 Oct. 1910.

297GA, D6987, Traders' Handbook c.1916-1920.

298*Glos. Echo*, 30 Aug. 1921.

299*The Beauty of Gloucestershire* (The Homeland Association Ltd., 1930), back cover.

300*Chelt. Looker-On*, 1 Nov. 1851.

301Glasgow University Archives, FRAS 1744/1; GA, D2216/Box14, uncatalogued, 1870-1928

302*Glos. Echo*, 28 Mar. 1929; GA, D5587/boxes 12646, 95608-9, 95611-13.

303*Glouc. Citizen*, 19 Sep. 1938.

304*Cheltenham Annuaire* (1865), 246.

305*Glos. Echo*, 18 Nov. 1935; GA, CBR/C5/6/2/27/2; CBR/C5/6/1/2/9.

306*Chelt. Looker-On*, 4 Oct. 1851.

307*Chelt. Examiner*, 5 Dec. 1860.

308*Chelt. Examiner*, 14 Oct. 1885.

309*Glos. Echo*, 4 Aug. 1936.

310*Chelt. Chronicle*, 31 Dec. 1872; *Chelt. Examiner*, 19 & 26 Feb. 1873.

311*Chelt. Examiner*, 23 Dec. 1874.

and in Great Norwood Street.³¹² During the 1890s Boots the chemists³¹³ and the Home & Colonial food stores established themselves in the High Street.³¹⁴ Marks and Spencers had arrived by 1914.³¹⁵

The inaugural meeting of the Cheltenham & Gloucestershire Building Society was held at the Belle Vue hotel in 1850, where the directors met for the next 20 years.³¹⁶ Premises at 7 Clarence Street were acquired in 1882 with the society's four staff members moving to 18 Clarence Street in 1898. In 1912 it took over the Cheltenham & East Gloucestershire Building Society, which had been established in 1852. The staff in Clarence Street having increased to 15, it purchased the adjoining Clarence Hotel to increase its office and strongroom capacity and let the remainder to Shirer and Haddon.³¹⁷

Manufacturing

Brewing and malting continued to be important to Cheltenham's economy, with the sites of 17 breweries being recorded in the 1850s, concentrated to the west and north of the town.³¹⁸ There was a gradual decline, with 12 breweries listed in 1870³¹⁹ and 7 in 1914.³²⁰ The largest producers of malt and beer was Gardner's brewery and malt house, situated on a two-acre site north of the High Street. The family owned the adjacent Fleece Hotel, the Royal and the Bell and controlled over 100 inns and public houses in Cheltenham and further premises throughout Gloucestershire.³²¹ The firm's average annual profits in the 1850s was £2368 with a turnover of 9,000 barrels a year.³²² In 1883 the site was valued at £395,000.³²³ The deterioration of the brewing equipment³²⁴ and fluctuating profits led to a major re-organisation in 1888, when the business was registered as the Cheltenham Original Brewery.³²⁵ A fire in 1897 destroyed some of the buildings,³²⁶ which were quickly rebuilt.³²⁷ The Cheltenham Original Brewery opened a mineral water department in 1899.³²⁸ They acquired the Stroud Brewery in 1886,³²⁹ Stibb's Steam Brewery, 1897,³³⁰ the Wintle brewery, 1930,³³¹ and the Hereford and Tredegar Breweries in 1946, all with their tied houses.³³² Initially the numbers employed were small, but as the capacity of the works was enlarged and the distribution area extended to the west country, the Midlands and south

312 Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory (1897), 89.

313 Chelt. Chronicle, 30 Nov. 1895.

314 Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory (1897), 84, 91.

315 Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory (1914), 101.

316 J. Mantle, C&G: The Story of Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society (1991), 13.

317 Chelt. Chronicle, 10 Oct. 1882; Chelt. Examiner, 22 Feb. 1912.

318 Old Town Survey (Cheltenham Local History Society, 2011).

319 Royal Cheltenham & District Directory (1870-1)

320 Kelly's Gloucestershire Directory (1914), 90-106.

321 GA, D2025/Box40/Bundle 2; D2025/Box38/Bundle 1.

322 GA, D2025/Box794/Bundle 2.

323 Chelt. Examiner, 21 Mar. 1888.

324 GA, D2025/Box794/Bundles 5, 14 & 19.

325 GA, D2025/Box729/Bundle 9; D2242/I/1/3; D3119/Box3518.

326 Glouc. Citizen, 28 June 1897; GA, D2242/I/1/3/Bundle 1.

327 GA, D2242/I/1/Bundle 1; Chelt. Examiner, 22 June & 5 Oct. 1898.

328 GA, D2242/I/1/3 (Bundle 1).

329 GA, D2025/Box798/Bundle 2.

330 GA, D2242/I/1/Bundle 1, Director's Report, December 1898.

331 GA, D2242/I/1/Bundle 1, Director's Report, November 1930.

332 GA, D2242/I/1/Bundle 1, Director's Report, November 1944.

Wales,³³³ by the 1940s it was estimated that they employed around 250.³³⁴

In December 1899 Worth's Food Syndicate of Cheltenham advertised a competition to name a new range of food.³³⁵ Cheltine Foods was launched the following month.³³⁶ A factory was established in Chester Walk.³³⁷ In 1908 the business was purchased by T. E. & H. Whitaker³³⁸, who moved their wholesale grocery business to the site. Thomas Whitaker was still proprietor at his death in 1940.³³⁹

In 1909 Harold Miller, a chemist who had recently moved to Cheltenham from Warrington, set up the United Chemists' Association Ltd. with colleagues in Nottingham, Hastings, Sheffield, Liverpool, Hull and Manchester and began to market drugs under the UCAL trademark.³⁴⁰ By 1913 the association's membership was approaching 900 and a factory had been established at Priory Court on the High Street near the General Hospital.³⁴¹ In 1914 it was granted sole rights by the council to evaporate and sell its mineral water, which it promoted as 'Chelspa, The Cheltenham Natural Aperient Water'.³⁴² By the 1940s the company employed around 300 people.³⁴³

From the mid-19th century Cheltenham became an important centre for monumental work in metal and stone with a number of businesses that employed skilled craftsmen.³⁴⁴ In 1874 Henry Herbert Martyn and Alfred Jeffrey Emms, both originally from Worcestershire, set up a works in Hales Road as architectural carvers in wood and stone.³⁴⁵ By 1881 they were employing 16 men and 3 boys.³⁴⁶ The partnership came to an end in 1888. Emms continued to work from the Hales Road site until his death in 1910,³⁴⁷ and the business continued under his son and grandson.³⁴⁸ H.H. Martyn set up a new works at Suningend, on the High Street corner of College Road.³⁴⁹ In 1894 he was responsible for the oak staircase and other wood and stonework on the new building at the Ladies College, while Letheren & Sons provided the ornamental metalwork.³⁵⁰ William Letheren was foreman at John Cormell's ironworks in Tivoli Place³⁵¹ in 1867, when he won a prize for hammered work from the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.³⁵² In 1866 the Cormell's Lansdown works were taken over by H.E. Mines.³⁵³ Letheren set up on his own at the Vulcan Iron Works on Gloucester Road, where he offered medieval and artistic metalwork in iron and brass, as well as his services as a gas and hot water engineer.³⁵⁴ His son

333GA, JF13.114.

334G. E. Payne, *Gloucestershire: A Physical, Social and Economic Survey and Plan* (Gloucester, [1944]), 139.

335Glos. *Echo*, 19 Dec. 1899.

336Glouc. *Citizen*, 25 Jan. 1900.

337GA, CBR/C5/6/2/3/1; CBR/C5/6/1/1/3.

338Glos. *Echo*, 11 Jan. 1908.

339Glos. *Echo*, 19 July 1940.

340Sheffield *Independent*, 28 Oct. 1909; Glos. *Echo*, 31 Dec. 1909.

341Glos. *Echo*, 1 Mar. 1913; O.S. Map, 1:10,560; Gloucestershire XXVI.NE (1924).

342Worthing *Gazette*, 31 July, 1918; *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 5 Apr. 1919.

343Payne, *Gloucestershire: A Physical, Social and Economic Survey and Plan*, 139

344A Chatwin, *Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork* (2nd edn., Cheltenham, 1984), 77.

345Chelt. *Chronicle*, 31 Mar. 1874.

346Census, 1881.

347Glos. *Echo*, 2 & 14 Feb. 1910.

348Kelly's *Gloucestershire Directory* (1914), 96; Glos. *Echo*, 3 Jan. 1920 & 12 Oct. 1942.

349Chelt. *Looker-On*, 14 Apr. 1888.

350Chelt. *Chronicle*, 31 Mar. 1894.

351Chelt. *Examiner*, 10 Dec. 1856.

352Glouc. *Journal*, 9 Feb. 1867; GA, CBR/B2/7/2/5.

353Chelt. *Looker-On*, 6 Oct. 1866.

354Chelt. *Examiner*, 27 July 1870 & 1 Dec. 1875.

Charles was designing exhibition quality metalwork alongside his father by 1884³⁵⁵ and became an associate of the London Society of Architects in 1894.³⁵⁶ The Vulcan Works were put up for sale in 1908.³⁵⁷

The Central ironworks alongside the railway north of Lansdown station was a substantial operation run by Vernon & Ewens. They were responsible for the roof of the Winter Gardens³⁵⁸ and undertook large contracts for pillars and girders for the railway companies.³⁵⁹ The problems over the completion of the Winter Gardens³⁶⁰ led to the collapse of the business³⁶¹ and despite efforts at restructuring it was liquidated and the site put up for sale in 1885.³⁶² In 1895 the Guildford firm of Weyman and Hitchcock transferred the manufacture of their 'Trusty' oil and gas engines to Cheltenham.³⁶³ As the result of an amalgamation with an Oxfordshire works, in 1900 the company became the Shillingford Engineering Company with production concentrated in Cheltenham.³⁶⁴ Having issued £15,000 worth of debentures to effect the amalgamation, the company was unable to meet its financial obligations and went into receivership with the site being put up for sale in 1904.³⁶⁵

By 1899 H.H. Martyn had premises in the High Street in addition to the Sunningend works on the corner of College Road.³⁶⁶ By 1900 the company was employing around 200 craftsmen.³⁶⁷ Over the next decade Martyn's diversified into decorative plaster work, joinery, cabinet making, wrought iron work and castings in bronze and gun metal, moving in 1908 into newly built premises on the former Trusty Engine site in Lansdown, which became the Sunningend Works.³⁶⁸ That autumn they were responsible for making the 40-ton wrought iron gates for Marble Arch.³⁶⁹ The company exported work to Spain and the USA³⁷⁰ and was known for fitting out with joinery, plasterwork and marble the first-class rooms of cruise liners, including the RMS Lusitania, SS Queen Elizabeth and SS Queen Mary.³⁷¹

During the First World War Martyn's began making wings and fuselages for the Hendon-based Aircraft Manufacturing Company (Airco).³⁷² In 1917 the Gloucestershire Aircraft Company was established as a limited company as a joint venture between Martyns and Airco.³⁷³ With over 750 employees, many of whom were women, by 1918 they could manufacture 45 aircraft a week.³⁷⁴ The Winter Gardens was used as a secondary worksite for the construction of aircraft wings and

355G. Wallis, *A Catalogue of Manufactures, Decorations and Designs* (1884), 24-7.

356*Chelt. Chronicle*, 30 June, 1894.

357*Glos. Echo*, 3 June 1908.

358*Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1878.

359O.S. Map, 1:10,560; Gloucestershire XXVI.NE (1885); *Chelt. Examiner*, 1 Jan. 1879; *Cornish Telegraph*, 19 Nov. 1879.

360See Social History, Leisure and Culture.

361*Chelt. Examiner*, 21 Dec. 1881.

362*Chelt. Chronicle*, 28 July 1885; *Glos. Chronicle*, 25 July 1885.

363*Engineering Magazine* 55 (1893), 863-5; 59 (1895), 6.

364*Berks & Oxon Advertiser*, 6 Oct. 1899; *Morning Post*, 19 Jan. 1900.

365*Glouc. Citizen*, 1 Mar. & 19 Apr. 1902; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 9 Jan. 1904.

366*Chelt. Looker-On*, 9 Dec. 1899.

367J. Whitaker, *The Best* (2nd ed., 1998) 2.

368*Chelt. Looker-On*, 1 Aug. 1908; GA, 63G338.76729CE.

369*Western Times*, 31 Dec. 1908.

370*Glos. Echo*, 5 Mar. 1908.

371Whitaker, *The Best*, 225-7; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 Apr. 1913.

372Whitaker, *The Best*, 22-3.

373*Glos. Echo*, 9 June 1917.

374Whitaker, *The Best*, 155-57; T Kershaw, *Jet Pioneers, Gloster and the Birth of the Jet Age* (Sutton, 2004), 3.

barrage balloons.³⁷⁵ After the war, the company designed and constructed a series of planes, which won aerial races and held British speed and climb records.³⁷⁶ The planes were increasingly referred to as Glosters, which was adopted as the name of the house journal and gradually of the company itself.³⁷⁷ During the 1920s production was gradually moved to Brockworth aerodrome, until the abandonment of Sunningend was announced in 1929.³⁷⁸ During the Second World War 18 sites across Cheltenham were used by the company for the dispersal of assembly, stores and other activities.³⁷⁹

Throughout this period H.H. Martyn continued its monumental and architectural work. The removal of the aircraft works to Brockworth enabled them to expand and in 1933, when they were employing 400 people, they entered into a joint venture with Maples, the London furniture firm.³⁸⁰ With the advent of the Second World War Sunningend again became the site of aircraft production.³⁸¹

In 1931 George Dowty, a draughtsman with the Gloster Aircraft Company specialising in undercarriage design, rented premises in Lansdown and set up a small factory as Aircraft Components Ltd. In 1935 A. W. Martyn became chairman and, following a significant investment of capital, a 100-acre site at Arle Court was acquired.³⁸² This site, by 1936, employed 59 engineers and mechanics.³⁸³ The works were extended in 1937 and 1938³⁸⁴ and for several years output was doubled each year.³⁸⁵ The company played a leading role during the Second World War, fitting components to 12,900 Hurricanes, and employed 3,000 workers from Cheltenham and elsewhere, half of who were women. During the war, the Cheltenham firm produced 87,786 undercarriages and around one million hydraulic units.³⁸⁶

In the early 20th century, in an effort to maintain full employment and to reverse the town's economic decline, the Council worked with the Chamber of Commerce³⁸⁷ and the Cheltenham Traders' Association³⁸⁸ to encourage the development of light industry.³⁸⁹ In 1931 the Council's Town and District Planning statement made provision for industrial sites provided that the designated sites did not attract heavy or chemical industry.³⁹⁰ In 1937 two engineering companies, Walker Crossweller and Co. and Spirax Manufacturing Co., moved from London to new premises in Whaddon.³⁹¹ Both companies made steam traps, thermostats, thermostatic mixing valves, gas flow and pressure recorders and each employed around 100 workers.³⁹²

Shackleford's Railway Carriages and Wagon works, established around 1854, had two sites, one on

375Whitaker, *The Best*, 153; *Chelt. Looker-On*, 17 Nov. 1917.

376*Flight*, 10 Aug. & 28 Dec. 1922 & 18 Oct. 1923.

377*Glos. Echo*, 30 June 1925; *Aeroplane*, 15 Dec. 1925.

378*Glouc. Citizen*, 1 Oct. 1929.

379Derek N. James, *Gloster Aircraft since 1917* (1971), Appendix B.

380*Chelt. Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1933.

381GA, CBR/C5/6/3/11.

382'Dowty Deeds', *Flight*, 30 May 1952.

383Whitaker, *The Best*, 31–2; GA, JF13.109.

384GA, CBR/C2/1/2/1/34, 318; CBR/C2/1/2/1/35, 216, 244.

385L. T. C. Rolt, *The Dowty Story* (1962), 47–8.

386Rolt, *The Dowty Story*, 48; GA, JF13.109.

387*Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 Sep. 1902.

388GA, D6987.

389CGA, CBR/C2/1/2/1/16, 123, 178.

390GA, 63G711CE.

391GA, CBR/C2/1/2/1/34, 291; *Glos. Echo*, 5 Oct. 1937.

392Payne, *Gloucestershire: A Physical, Social and Economic Survey and Plan*, 139.

Albion Street and the other adjacent to St James Station.³⁹³ In 1854, when the firm employed around 200 men, building carriages, trucks and horseboxes, the town commissioners unsuccessfully brought a case of nuisance against the Albion Street works.³⁹⁴ Later that year there was a serious fire at the works, when there were 6 GWR railway carriages and 18 luggage vans on the premises.³⁹⁵ The cost of the damage was estimated at over £2,000, workmen's tools were lost and the town started a fund for their replacement.³⁹⁶ A year later a protest concerning the length of the working day resulted in 70 workers being sacked.³⁹⁷ Following the death of William Shackelford in 1857, his wife's share in the business was taken by Ford's of Swansea.³⁹⁸ In 1864, during a further case concerning nuisance, the wage bill was stated to be £20,000 for 400 employees.³⁹⁹ In 1866 Shackelford, Ford & Co. was established, but the following year it was claimed that the company was already insolvent by that time.⁴⁰⁰ The company was restructured and changed its name to the Cheltenham and Swansea Railway Carriage and Wagon Co.⁴⁰¹ In 1869 both the company's sites in Cheltenham were closed.⁴⁰²

By 1881 Alfred Miles, a coach builder, was employing 4 men and 4 boys at his works in Albion Street.⁴⁰³ A showroom was opened in Winchcombe Street in 1885.⁴⁰⁴ In 1889 he advertised his patented 'Cross Cee Spring', adapted for use on two- or four-wheeled carriages and that he had exported carriages to India, the USA, Australia, Malta and Gibraltar.⁴⁰⁵ In 1897 he had a new large showroom, capable of displaying a 100 vehicles, erected in Winchcombe Street.⁴⁰⁶ In the 20th century the firm moved into the manufacture, servicing and hiring of cars, obtaining a licence to store petrol at the Winchcombe Street showroom and being assigned a vehicle registration mark in 1912.⁴⁰⁷ The firm was established as a limited company later that year⁴⁰⁸ and took over the George Hotel, which adjoined their existing site in Albion Street.⁴⁰⁹ In 1945 the company was acquired by L.H.D. Smith and J.P. Rees, who announced their intention to move the engineering work to Carlton Street, as soon as their garage premises there were de-requisitioned.⁴¹⁰

E.A. Stretton established a cycle depôt in Bath Road in 1890, where repairs were carried out by experienced Coventry workmen and held a patent for luggage carriers.⁴¹¹ Their own bicycles were sold under the 'Million' brand and they were agents for the leading Coventry manufacturers.⁴¹²

393*Old Town Survey* (CLHS, 2011).

394*Chelt. Examiner*, 2 Aug. 1854.

395*London Evening Standard*, 9 Oct. 1854.

396*Chelt. Examiner*, 4 October 1854 & 21 Aug. 1861, 4; *Chelt. Looker-On*, 30 Sep. 1854.

397*Chelt. Examiner*, 1 Aug. 1855.

398*Chelt. Examiner*, 23 Oct. 1867.

399*Chelt. Examiner*, 9 Mar. 1864.; GA, CBR/B2/7/2/6.

400*Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 3 May 1866; *Western Daily Press*, 18 June 1867.

401*Chelt. Examiner*, 5 May 1869.

402Cheltenham Looker-On, 8 December 1869

403*Census*, 1881.

404*Chelt. Examiner*, 23 September 1885, 4.

405*Chelt. Looker-On*, 26 Jan. 1889.

406*Chelt. Examiner*, 16 June 1897.

407GA, CBR/C2/1/2/1/9, 64; P. Barlow & M. Boothman, '*Conspicuously Marked*': *Vehicle Registration in Gloucestershire, 1903-13* (Gloucestershire Record Series 33, BGAS 2019), 337.

408*Glouc. Journal*, 26 Oct. 1912.

409*Glos. Echo*, 12 Jan. 1914.

410*Glos. Echo*, 4 July 1945.

411*Chelt. Chronicle*, 30 Aug. & 22 Nov. 1890.

412*Chelt. Looker-On*, 22 Apr. 1893.

They also established branches in Montpellier, at the Midland Station and on the London Road, where bicycles could be hired or repaired.⁴¹³ By 1902 they were also building motorcycles⁴¹⁴ and obtained a registration mark the following year.⁴¹⁵ The business closed after the death of E.A. Stretton in 1908, although his brother A.C. Stretton continued to run a garage in Gloucester.⁴¹⁶ By 1914 there were nine small workshops making cycles, and another 11 selling or carrying out repairs, while a further 12 businesses built or repaired motor cars.⁴¹⁷ From 1933 N.L. Siddall was selling caravans built at his works on the Old Bath Road.⁴¹⁸ Siddall's Caravans continued in business until 1958.⁴¹⁹

Brick-making continued on the outskirts of the town, with production in the hands of several small concerns.⁴²⁰ Alstone Brick and Tile Yard was sold in 1870, selling off its stock of 300,000 bricks and 86,000 drain pipes for £474 5s 6d.⁴²¹ The Alstone brickfield remained on the map in 1885.⁴²² Folly Lane, despite producing 35,000 bricks a week, closed around 1894.⁴²³ The Pilford brickworks supplied 120,000 pressed bricks for the workhouse in 1886.⁴²⁴ It closed around 1907.⁴²⁵ Both Folly Lane and Pilford were taken over by Battledown Brickworks.⁴²⁶ In 1897 the Hale's Road and Battledown estate covered 22 acres and the valuation prepared as part of the Webb Bros. prospectus for raising capital estimated that the existing pit could produce two million bricks a year for a century.⁴²⁷ The firm maintained their own railway wharf at Alstone.⁴²⁸ It was not a large employer, only 20 men and boys being required to produce 60,000 bricks a week.⁴²⁹ Mechanisation enabled the production of 10 million bricks a year.⁴³⁰ The works were closed between 1914 and 1920, with production switching to tiles when it reopened.⁴³¹ They met contracts for roofing housing estates in St Mark's and Whaddon Road, Cheltenham, barracks in South Cerney, estates in Leeds, the new garden cities and other towns in England and Scotland.⁴³² During the Second World War there was a demand for bricks to build air-raid shelters and dummy factories.⁴³³ They also provided thousands of tons of clay to bind the sub-soil at Cheltenham race course.⁴³⁴ Despite continuing modernisation the site closed in 1955-57.⁴³⁵

413Glos. *Echo*, 12 Apr. 1900.

414Glos. *Echo*, 21 Feb. 1902.

415Barlow & Boothman, '*Conspicuously Marked*', 337.

416Chelt. *Chronicle*, 16 Nov. 1918.

417Kelly's *Gloucestershire Directory* (1914).

418Glos. *Echo*, 26 & 31 May, 30 June 1933.

419London *Gazette*, 9 Nov. 1958, 5550.

420L. Richardson & R. J. Webb, 'Brickearths, Pottery and Brickmaking in Gloucestershire', *Proceedings of the Cheltenham Natural History Society*, 1 (1) (1909-10), 260-73; D A O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground* (2002), 6-10.

421GA, D6571/9.

422O.S. Map, 1:10,560; Gloucestershire XXVI.NE (1885).

423O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 8; Chelt. *Examiner*, 22 August 1894.

424E Miller, (2001), 21.

425O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 33.

426GA, D5907/7; D A O'Connor, (2002), 13.

427Chelt. *Examiner*, 20 Oct. 1897.

428GA, D5671/9.

429D. A. O'Connor, (2002), 24.

430O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 31-3; L. Richardson & R J Webb, (1909-10), 264-9.

431Battledown *Handmade Sand Faced Roofing Tiles* [promotional pamphlet, nd].

432O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 51.

433O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 59.

434O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 62

435O'Connor, *The Hole in the Ground*, 62-3, 66.

Social History

Alex Craven & Jan Broadway

Social Structure

Although the town's status as a fashionable spa resort declined in this period, it retained a reputation as a healthy, relatively inexpensive place to live with good leisure facilities. Individuals of private means constituted a significant proportion of the adult population⁴³⁶, consisting of retired colonial officers, mainly from East Bengal,⁴³⁷ military pensioners, those who received income from property, and annuitants. In 1892 the town's medical officer described its 'better class' as composed largely of 'Army and Navy retired Officers with their families, as well as of independent civilians, who have settled here for the special advantages offered by the Colleges for educating their children, or from the fact of the district being a pleasant one'.⁴³⁸ There was also a substantial representation of professional people in the working population.⁴³⁹

The high level of mainly female domestic servants in Cheltenham influenced the gender ratio of the population. From 1851 until after the end of the First World War females made up over 60% of the adult population,⁴⁴⁰ and still represented 57% at the outbreak of the Second World War.⁴⁴¹ In 1931 while the number of males in employment was roughly comparable, the female working population of Gloucester was only around two-thirds that of Cheltenham.⁴⁴²

The genteel poverty of many of the residents of Cheltenham's new streets and crescents was in stark contrast to the real material poverty of a significant proportion of its inhabitants. In 1856 it was reported that paupers represented 5.4% of the population of the town, compared to 4.8% nationally with only Liverpool having a higher level.⁴⁴³ In 1873 the proportion of paupers in the town had increased 1 in 16, compared to a national average of 1 in 23.⁴⁴⁴ In response to a Times of India article referring to the town's 'poetical' poverty, the Cheltenham Chronicle in 1900 referred to its extremes of wealth and poverty, where in the absence of industry the poor struggled for the crumbs that fell from the tables of the well-to-do residents.⁴⁴⁵ The lack of industry meant that the town's working class were to an extent cushioned against the effects of the 1930's economic downturn, with an unemployment rate among men in 1931 at 11.3%, compared to 18.25% in Gloucester.⁴⁴⁶

Leisure and Culture

By January 1857 the newly formed Imperial Club had 217 annual subscribers and took over the

436Census, 1861.

437GA, D2025/Box67; D2025/Box79; D2025/Box805; D2025/Box49337.

438GA, CBR/C2/2/1/5, 2 May.

439Census, 1861, 1881, 1921, 1931.

440Census, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1911, 1921.

441National Registration of United Kingdom and Ireland, 1939.

442Census, 1931.

443R. Beamish, *Statistical Notice of the Town and Parish of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, 1856), 58.

444Chelt. Examiner, 10 Sep. 1873.

445Chelt. Chronicle, 5 May 1900.

446Census, 1931.

former Imperial Hotel on the Promenade.⁴⁴⁷ In 1872, when the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Club's lease of the upper floor of the Assembly Rooms was nearing an end, a group of its members resolved to acquire a dedicated building for a club based on the London model.⁴⁴⁸ Of the 23 initial subscribers to the new club, 11 held a military or naval rank.⁴⁴⁹ The New Club opened its new premises at the junction of the Promenade and Imperial Square in late 1874⁴⁵⁰ and held its first ball at the Old Assembly Rooms in January 1875, by which time it had 352 members.⁴⁵¹ The transfer of subscribers to the New Club from the Imperial Club led to the latter's demise later that year,⁴⁵² while the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Club soldiered on for a few years before closing.⁴⁵³ In 1892 12 out of 15 members of the committee and over a third of the membership held a military rank.⁴⁵⁴ The membership and consequently the income from subscriptions remained stable, while costs increased. In 1924 subscriptions were increased in an attempt to address the deficit, but a motion to allow women to join was rejected in 1926.⁴⁵⁵ In 1922 a United Services Club for ex-servicemen was opened in the former Mount Pleasant Inn, Winchcombe Street.⁴⁵⁶ It subsequently moved to North Place, where a new skittle alley was opened in 1939.⁴⁵⁷

In 1861 the Literary and Philosophical Institution, having 'lingered' for many years, dissolved.⁴⁵⁸ The Cheltenham Library was established as a permanent, public institution with a subscription designed to allow access to 'all educated classes of the community'.⁴⁵⁹ It opened on the first floor of a building opposite the Post Office in Clarence Street in 1863 with around 200 subscribers and 1,300 books.⁴⁶⁰ By 1866 it had 2,000 books of its own, 2,200 lent by the trustees of the defunct Literary and Philosophical Institution and 1,200 lent by individuals.⁴⁶¹ The library moved to 5, Royal Crescent in May 1867.⁴⁶² The new, larger premises provided separate rooms for newspapers and periodicals, as well as a medical department to which separate subscriptions were available.⁴⁶³ By 1882 the fourth edition of the library catalogue, which excluded volumes on loan and relegated fiction to an appendix, listed over 11,000 volumes.⁴⁶⁴ In 1883 the Library Act was adopted by the Town Council and a free library was incorporated into a new building on Clarence Street, which was also home to the School of Art and the School of Science.⁴⁶⁵ At its official opening in April 1889 the library had a stock of 15,000 books and a large newspaper and periodicals room, which could accommodate over 250 people.⁴⁶⁶ In 1908, when the Royal Crescent library closed, 10,000 books

447*Chelt. Mercury*, 24 Jan. 1857; *The New Cheltenham Guide* (1863), 87.

448Neil Parrack, *The New Club at Imperial Square* (Cheltenham, 2012), 7-9.

449Parrack, *The New Club*, Appendix 1.

450GA, D2025/Box 7325/Bundle 3; *Chelt. Examiner*, 4 Nov. 1874.

451*Chelt. Looker-On*, 9 Jan. 1875; Parrack, *The New Club*, 12.

452*Chelt. Looker-On*, 17 Apr. 1875.

453*Chelt. Looker-On*, 6 Feb. 1875; *Royal Cheltenham & District Directory* (1878), 12.

454Parrack, *The New Club*, 28.

455Parrack, *The New Club*, 78-80; GA, D4084/40/12.

456*Chelt. Chronicle*, 29 July 1922.

457*Glos. Echo*, 17 Oct. 1939.

458*Glos. Chronicle*, 8 Sep. 1860 & 16 Apr. 1861.

459*Chelt. Journal*, 2 May 1863.

460*Chelt. Chronicle*, 13 Oct. 1863.

461*Chelt. Examiner*, 5 Sept. 1866.

462*Chelt. Examiner*, 22 May 1867.

463GA, D2025/Box 48/Bundle 6.

464Henry Basevi, *Catalogue of the Books in the Cheltenham Library* (Cheltenham, 1882).

465See Education.

466*Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 Apr. 1889.

were transferred to the library as a free gift to the town.⁴⁶⁷

At the instigation of Baron de Ferrieres, who offered a donation of £1,000, an art gallery was constructed alongside the public library.⁴⁶⁸ Opened at the end of 1899, it consisted of two rooms displaying paintings donated by de Ferrieres.⁴⁶⁹ In 1907 a museum opened in the space released by the departure of the Schools of Arts and Science with exhibits donated by local worthies and loaned cases from the Victoria & Albert museum, South Kensington.⁴⁷⁰ In 1935 and 1937 the art gallery courted controversy by staging exhibitions of Picassos lent by the collector Hugh Willoughby, whose family had lived in the town.⁴⁷¹

After the opening of the Pavilion Gardens at Buxton in 1871, other spa towns rapidly followed the Derbyshire resort's example in developing a Winter Garden to extend the season.⁴⁷² The Cheltenham Imperial Winter Garden and Skating Rink Company was established in the summer of 1876 and began the construction on what had been the gardens of the Imperial Spa between the Queen's Hotel to the south and the New Club to the north. While the new building was being constructed, a partially covered roller skating rink was opened to the public,⁴⁷³ while problems with the glass roof delayed the official opening of the main building until November 1878.⁴⁷⁴ The Winter Garden, built of red and white brick in a cruciform layout with iron and glass roofs and a dome, provided a floor area of 16,500 feet.⁴⁷⁵ The financial problems caused by the delays to the building led to the winding up of the company four months later.⁴⁷⁶ It was sold to investors from London⁴⁷⁷ and continued to provide roller skating, musical performances, flower shows, exhibitions, a space for meetings and lawn tennis in the grounds. In 1895 it was bought by the corporation.⁴⁷⁸

When it became known in 1889 that the site of the Theatre Royal at the Old Well had been acquired for the expansion of the Ladies College, the Town Improvement Commissioners rapidly summoned a meeting to discuss how the town could be provided with a replacement.⁴⁷⁹ The last performance at the Theatre Royal was in February 1890.⁴⁸⁰ An ambitious project put forward by the Cheltenham Assembly Rooms and Theatre Company failed to get sufficient public support.⁴⁸¹ The Cheltenham Theatre and Opera House Company secured a site in Regent Street and the services of the theatre architect Frank Matcham to provide the town with a new, purpose built theatre.⁴⁸² The Opera House opened in September 1891 with a performance by Lillie Langtry and her company from the Princess Theatre, London.⁴⁸³

In 1900 'animated pictures' from the Boer War were shown at various venues.⁴⁸⁴ In 1903 the Delhi

467GA, CBR/C2/1/2/5, 61.

468GA, CBR/C2/2/1/12, 2 Jan.

469*Western Daily Press*, 27 Oct. 1899.

470*Chelt. Looker-On*, 22 June 1907.

471*Glos. Echo*, 13 Aug. 1937.

472P. Hembry, *British Spas from 1815 to the Present* (1997), 180.

473*Chelt. Examiner*, 20 Dec. 1876; *Building News and Engineering Journal* 31 (1876), 1.

474*Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 Nov. 1878.

475*Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 Nov. 1878.

476*Chelt. Looker-On*, 22 Mar. 1879.

477*Chelt. Examiner*, 21 Jan. 1880.

478GA, CBR/C2/2/1/8, 1 Apr. & 2 May.

479*Chelt. Chronicle*, 17 Aug. 1889.

480*Chelt. Looker-On*, 15 Feb. 1890.

481GA, PX5.2GS; D2025/Box 96/Bundle 5; D2025/Box 811/Bundle 4; *Glos. Echo*, 28 July 1890.

482*Glos. Echo*, 25 Sep. 1890.

483*Glos. Echo*, 16 Sep. 1891.

484*Chelt. Examiner*, 28 Feb. 1900; *Glos. Echo*, 18 Oct. 1900.

Durbah was shown at the Winter Garden.⁴⁸⁵ In 1910 the Town Council issued licences under the Cinematograph Act 1909 to the Victoria Rooms in the High Street, the Albert Hall in North Street and the Winter Garden.⁴⁸⁶ A new theatre, The Hippodrome, was opened in the revamped former Conservative Club, Albion Street in 1913⁴⁸⁷ with a licence to show films.⁴⁸⁸ With a change of management in 1919 it was renamed the Coliseum.⁴⁸⁹ The town's first purpose-built cinema was the Daffodil,⁴⁹⁰ which opened in Suffolk Parade in 1922.⁴⁹¹ The talkies arrived in Cheltenham with shows at the Opera House and the Winter Garden in October 1929.⁴⁹² The Gaumont Palace cinema, newly built on the site of the old Highbury chapel in Winchcombe Street,⁴⁹³ opened in 1933.⁴⁹⁴ The Regal cinema opened in the Promenade on the site of the resited Sherborne Spa in 1939.⁴⁹⁵

In 1931, the existing lease of the Winter Garden having been terminated⁴⁹⁶ and with cinema taking priority over plays in the programme of the Opera House⁴⁹⁷, a proposal to convert part of the Winter Garden into a repertory theatre was considered by the council.⁴⁹⁸ Following a disagreement over the level of rent for the Winter Garden,⁴⁹⁹ Albert Hall in North Street was converted from a picture house to the Repertory Theatre instead.⁵⁰⁰ Following the closure of the North Street theatre in 1934⁵⁰¹, a new company opened a theatre in the north transept of the Winter Garden at the end of 1935.⁵⁰²

By the 1930s the Winter Garden was widely regarded as a white elephant. The glass roof made it too hot for use in summer, expensive to heat in the winter and required frequent repairs. The income generated by the building was insufficient to offset the associated costs.⁵⁰³ In 1932 the council approved a proposal, which would have provided an ice rink, swimming pool, squash courts, Palm Court and restaurant at no cost to ratepayers.⁵⁰⁴ This plan fell through and the search for an alternative was overtaken by the outbreak of war. By 1940 the roof was in a dangerous state and the building could not be used. When an offer to hand it over to the government was rejected, the decision was taken to demolish the Winter Garden.⁵⁰⁵ The former Montpellier Baths, which were owned by the corporation and had closed in 1940, opened as a civic playhouse 9 April 1945.⁵⁰⁶

485 *Glos. Echo*, 29 Jan. 1903.

486 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/7, 118, 119, 245.

487 *Chelt. Examiner*, 18 Sep. 1913; GA, CBR/C5/6/2/11/2; CBR/C5/6/1/2/4.

488 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/9, 82.

489 *The Stage*, 25 Dec. 1919.

490 Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* 2, 270; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 25 Mar. 1922.

491 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/19, 199.

492 *Glouc. Citizen*, 1 Oct. 1929.

493 See Religious History.

494 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/30, 82; *Glos. Echo*, 4 Mar. 1933.

495 *Glos. Echo*, 3 Jan. 1939.

496 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/28, 249.

497 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/28, 56, 81.

498 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/28, 249, 274.

499 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/28, 299.

500 *The Stage*, 26 Nov. 1931.

501 *Glos. Echo*, 4 Oct. 1934.

502 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/32, 302; *Glos. Echo*, 7 Dec. 1935.

503 *Chelt. Chronicle*, 21 Nov. 1936.

504 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/28, 101, 111, 145-6; D5587; *Glos. Echo*, 5 July 1932.

505 GA, CBR/C2/1/2/37, 17, 42, 67, 131, 147, 155, 191, 205, 223.

506 *Glos. Echo*, 2 July 1940 & 9 Mar. 1945.

Health and Welfare

Hospitals

In 1854 the general hospital reported an average occupancy of 47 patients, staying for 35 days. The number of outpatients was 4,247, of whom 1,982 had been cured and 92 had died.⁵⁰⁷ New casualty wards for male and female patients were opened in 1857.⁵⁰⁸ In 1883 the average number of patients was 52, and 2,807 outpatients were treated of whom 387 had been injured in accidents.⁵⁰⁹ In 1877 a fund was initiated for the enlargement of the hospital⁵¹⁰, and the new wing began to admit patients at the end of 1879.⁵¹¹ In 1894 the general hospital had 100 beds, and c. 5,000 in-patients and out-patients were treated by the hospital during the year.⁵¹² In 1910 the children's ward was extended and the number of beds in other wards increased.⁵¹³ In 1923 the hospital reported a deficit of over £2K for the preceding year,⁵¹⁴ despite a significant amount being raised by the workers contribution scheme.⁵¹⁵ The success of the scheme helped to overcome the deficit in following years, so that the hospital could expand. In 1929 a new wing was added to the hospital, providing 23 beds and a new outpatients department.⁵¹⁶

In 1858 the homeopathic dispensary, which had been established by Dr Hastings, adopted the Provident principle. A couple and their children under the age of 14 could receive medical attention for 2d. a week.⁵¹⁷ The Edinburgh-trained Dr Claudius Buchanan Ker (d. 1898), who was already active in the town, became the consultant physician for the dispensary, which operated from 1 Promenade Place.⁵¹⁸ It was still in existence in 1923.⁵¹⁹

In 1871 Susan Delancey bequeathed £5,000 towards the founding of a fever hospital in Cheltenham. The project was delayed and the gift diminished when the legality of the bequest was challenged. A site was acquired for the new hospital in Charlton Lane, Leckhampton.⁵²⁰ In 1873 smallpox broke out in the town. As the hospital was not finished, the improvement commissioners provided a temporary wooden building in the grounds, although it was apparently not required.⁵²¹ The Delancey Fever Hospital was opened in 1874.⁵²² The borough council became joint trustees of the hospital under the terms of the 1889 Cheltenham improvement act,⁵²³ Subsequently there were tensions between the town council and the hospital's management board over the town's financial contribution to a hospital which covered the entire district.⁵²⁴

⁵⁰⁷*Chelt. Chronicle*, 30 Jan. 1855.

⁵⁰⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 24 Nov. 1857.

⁵⁰⁹*Glouc. Citizen*, 30 Jan. 1884.

⁵¹⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 11 Dec. 1877.

⁵¹¹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1879.

⁵¹²*Kelly's Directory* (1894), 62.

⁵¹³*Glouc. Journal*, 5 Mar. 1910.

⁵¹⁴*Glos. Echo*, 26 Mar. 1923.

⁵¹⁵*Glouc. Journal*, 24 Mar. 1923.

⁵¹⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 3 Aug. 1929.

⁵¹⁷*Chelt. Examiner*, 24 Nov. 1858.

⁵¹⁸*British Homeopathic Review* 42 (1898), 373; *Homeopathic Directory of Great Britain and Ireland* (1874), 121.

⁵¹⁹*Glos. Echo*, 23 June 1923.

⁵²⁰GA, CBR C3/1/3.

⁵²¹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 22 Apr. 1899

⁵²²See Leckhampton, Social History.

⁵²³52 & 53 Vic. c. 184.

⁵²⁴*Chelt. Chronicle*, 7 & 14 June 1890, 19 Mar. 1892.

In 1876 a home for incurable children was established at Sherborne Villa, Sherborne Place.⁵²⁵ It moved to Belmont House, Winchcombe Street in 1878, becoming the Home for Sick Children.⁵²⁶ The home provided long-term care for chronically ill children, some of whom were transferred from the children's hospital in Kingsholm, Gloucester.⁵²⁷ In 1902, following a donation of £4,000 from Mrs Hay⁵²⁸, the hospital moved to a completely new building at Harp Hill, Battledown.⁵²⁹ The new Children's Hospital provided two wards, each accommodating 12 patients.⁵³⁰ The donation of £1,200 enabled further wards to be added in 1938.⁵³¹

An Ear, Eye and Throat Infirmary was established in North Place in 1889 for the treatment of the poor. In 1892 it treated 883 patients, and 194 operations were performed.⁵³² The infirmary was formally amalgamated with the general hospital in 1924⁵³³ and in the following decade it was provided with an additional building on the Sandford Road site, which was officially opened in 1938.⁵³⁴

There were 5 Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment hospitals in Cheltenham during the First World War, two of which moved location.⁵³⁵ After the end of the war St Martin's, which had opened in one of the boarding houses of the Ladies College in 1915 and moved to Lisle House, Clarence Square in 1918, remained open for the care of injured soldiers.⁵³⁶

Poor Relief

In 1850 the Poor Law Commissioners sanctioned a new arrangement for the district's medical officers and divided the town into five wards, each electing three guardians.⁵³⁷ Following the passing of an act to promote emigration, 240 paupers from the Cheltenham Union were provided with the funds to emigrate to Quebec in 1850,⁵³⁸ being sent on their way with a tea party in the Town Hall before sailing from Gloucester Docks.⁵³⁹

By 1864 the workhouse accommodation in Cheltenham was recognised as being inadequate, with the Poor Law Board ruling that it was fit to house no more than 321 residents with provision for 20 vagrants overnight.⁵⁴⁰ Plans to extend the existing building, adding an extra storey were approved, but not acted upon.⁵⁴¹ In 1872 the Guardians were offered the opportunity to purchase 'The Elms', a house and grounds adjoining the workhouse site, and a garden on the opposite side of Maidenhorn Lane, which they already leased.⁵⁴² They purchased the garden, where the Poor Law

⁵²⁵*Glouc. Journal*, 4 Nov. 1876.

⁵²⁶*Chelt. Looker-On*, 28 Sep. 1878.

⁵²⁷*Glouc. Journal*, 24 Mar. 1883.

⁵²⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 July 1901; See Charities for the Poor, Charities since 1900.

⁵²⁹GA, HO6; CBR/C5/6/2/3/4; CBR/C5/6/1/1/3.

⁵³⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 4 Oct. 1902.

⁵³¹*Glos. Echo*, 13 Apr. 1939.

⁵³²*Kelly's Directory* (1894), 62.

⁵³³*Glos. Echo*, 24 Mar. 1925.

⁵³⁴*Glos. Echo*, 24 Mar. 1938.

⁵³⁵*The Red Cross in Gloucestershire 1914-1919* (1919); *Chelt. Looker-On*, 24 May 1919.

⁵³⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 9 May 1925.

⁵³⁷*Chelt. Journal*, 11 Feb. 1850.

⁵³⁸12 and 13 Vic.c.103; GA, G/CH 8a/7, board of guardian minutes, March 1850.

⁵³⁹*Chelt. Examiner*, 10 April 1850

⁵⁴⁰*Chelt. Journal*, 19 Nov. 1864.

⁵⁴¹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 18 Mar. 1879.

⁵⁴²GA, G/CH/32a/2.

Board recommended erecting a temporary tramp ward.⁵⁴³ In 1874 an inquiry was held in the mismanagement of the workhouse by the master William Welch and his wife, as a result of which they were required to resign.⁵⁴⁴ By 1878 the local guardians were forced to accept that there was no way of extending the existing workhouse that would satisfy the Local Government Board.⁵⁴⁵ The Elms, which had been acquired by Charles Chesshyre in 1876, was eventually sold to the Guardians in 1882⁵⁴⁶ and the house given over to separate accommodation for the children.⁵⁴⁷ New tramp wards were opened in 1884⁵⁴⁸ and a new chapel in 1888.⁵⁴⁹ The workhouse was extensively rebuilt⁵⁵⁰ between 1887 and 1889.⁵⁵¹

The extended workhouse included test cells⁵⁵², where vagrants and able-bodied 'loafers' could be confined until they had completed the prescribed labour.⁵⁵³ In 1911 plans were drawn up for a further eight test cells.⁵⁵⁴

At the beginning of 1925 there were 83 men and 58 women in the workhouse and 42 men, 39 women and 13 children in the infirmary. The total available accommodation was 298 in the workhouse and 136 in the infirmary. The Elms Children's Home had 51 boys and 26 girls. This was less than the available accommodation, but that was designed for a lower ratio of boys to girls.⁵⁵⁵ Three years later there were 94 men and 58 women in the workhouse, 36 men, 60 women and 18 children in the infirmary, and 43 boys and 30 girls in The Elms.⁵⁵⁶

Following the abolition of the workhouse system in 1930, the workhouse was transformed into a Public Assistance Institution under the authority of the county council.⁵⁵⁷ It became the County Infirmary in 1945.⁵⁵⁸ The Elms continued as a county council children's home until it closed in 1938.⁵⁵⁹

543*Chelt. Chronicle*, 18 Mar. 1879.

544*Chelt. Chronicle*, 6 Oct. 1874.

545*Chelt. Chronicle*, 2 July 1878.

546GA, G/CH/32a/5.

547*Glouc. Journal*, 9 Sept. 1882.

548GA, CH/32b; *Chelt. Examiner*, 16 Apr. 1884.

549*Chelt. Chronicle*, 18 Feb. 1888.

550GA, CH/32b.

551*Glos. Echo*, 10 Aug. 1887; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 Jan. & 16 Mar. 1889.

552*Chelt. Examiner*, 14 Aug. 1889.

553*Western Daily Press*, 26 Nov. 1897.

554GA, G/CH/32b.

555GA, G/CH/3/2.

556GA, G/CH/3/3.

557GA, G/CH/4; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 19 Apr. 1930.

558*Chelt. Chronicle*, 31 mar. 1945.

559*Chelt. Chronicle*, 25 Dec. 1937.