

Introduction

The discovery in the early 18th century of mineral waters in a field south of the town had a fundamental influence on the subsequent history of Cheltenham. Initially modest, the spa facilities were greatly enhanced in the late 1730s. The spa's reputation grew steadily in the following decades. The five-week visit of the invalid George III and family in 1788 confirmed Cheltenham as one of the country's principal fashionable resorts. Other mineral wells were opened up and promoted in and around the town. Described in 1818 as the 'Montpelier of Britain',¹ Cheltenham's population increased tenfold between 1801 and 1841. The waters, and the servicing of their visitors, remained central to the prosperity of the town until the mid 19th century. By the outbreak of the First World War, their importance was marginal. In 2017 only one working mineral well remained, in municipal ownership.

For much of the period the focus of the town continued to be its high street, running approximately from east to west. Before the 19th century development was mainly to premises lining the existing roads. The inclosure of the common fields of Cheltenham township in 1806 freed up large amounts of potential building land, in particular to the north of the town, but during the first two decades of the century development was predominantly along the medieval burgages that lined the high street, and on the meadow land that lay between the town and the wells. Several new streets lined with genteel housing were laid out to the north and south of the high street, in particular at the more fashionable upper end, whilst large villas lined the verdant lanes and walks beyond the town. It was only after 1820 that large housing estates were laid out by speculative landowners to the north and south of the town, adding an important north-south axis to the town for fashionable society. Ambitious schemes were projected by developers, but a number of these ran into financial difficulties, and many of the projects were not realised according to their original plans. Nevertheless, during the first half of the 19th century the town expanded significantly and was established as one of principal towns of Gloucestershire.

Topography and Settlement

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Spas, Pumprooms and Baths

The presence of mineral waters in Cheltenham was first recognised in 1716, reportedly after pigeons were noticed pecking at salts which had formed around a slow spring on Bayshill, then farmland to the south of the High Street.² The site was acquired by William Mason (d. 1723), a hosier and substantial landowner.³ He had the spring railed in and a little shed erected over it in 1718,⁴ while a stone-lined well was formed in 1719.⁵ The first public note of visitors was in August

¹ Griffith, *General Guide*, 15.

² T. Short, *An Essay towards A Natural, Experimental and Medicinal History of the Principles of Mineral Waters* (Sheffield, 1740), 77.

³ *Manor Court Books*, 163.

⁴ Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 64.

⁵ Note by Thomas Robins on a scenic fan (held by The Wilson Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham).

1720, when the Earl of Chesterfield and his two sons came 'for the Benefit of the Waters'.⁶ In 1721 Mason leased the spa premises to Arthur Spencer, a local man, for £61 a year. As well as serving the needs of visitors, the lessee was responsible for bottling the waters for retail elsewhere, and evaporating them for salts.⁷ William Mason was succeeded by his son Joseph who died in 1727,⁸ leaving an indebted estate in the hands of incompetent trustees.⁹ Visitor numbers fell, prompting a town meeting followed by a press announcement in 1731 assuring would-be visitors to the 'Famous PURGING MINERAL WATER' of reasonably-priced accommodation and varied facilities.¹⁰

In 1732 William Mason's daughter Elizabeth married Henry Skillicorne, a retired Bristol sea captain.¹¹ Skillicorne moved to Cheltenham in the summer of 1738 and began to improve facilities at the Bayshill spa, adding a paved court around the well with a small brick roof standing on four brick arches, a pump in the form of an obelisk on one side of the courtyard and a pair of rooms on the other side.¹² He laid out gravel walks through what had hitherto been meadow to improve access, crossing the river Chelt by a wooden footbridge. New conveniences at the well included a coffee room, 'lately erected' in 1740. In making his improvements, Skillicorne was supported by contributions in cash and in kind from many local people.¹³ In 1740 Thomas Short praised Cheltenham 'for the Richness, Singularity, and success of her Waters'.¹⁴ A new lessee of the spa, John Cobbe, was installed in 1740, at a higher rent; on Cobbe's sudden death in 1741, Thomas Hughes of Abergavenny (Mons.) took over,¹⁵ and by 1743 was styling himself 'Master of the Wells'.¹⁶

After Henry Skillicorne's death in 1763, his son William (1737–1803) oversaw continued improvements.¹⁷ In 1775 Skillicorne and his lessee laid out a new long room opposite what was now termed the old room.¹⁸ The old room had allowed visitors simply to take the waters under shelter and in relative comfort, while the more ambitious long room was decorated with chandeliers and a musicians' gallery, to meet increasing demands of visitors to the spa for entertainment. Moreau complained in 1789 that the new room at the spa was so little used that there were only three or four public breakfasts each season,¹⁹ and the old room was being used as a library by 1793.²⁰ In 1803 ownership of the well passed to William Skillicorne's nephew the Revd

⁶ *Evening Post*, 20 Aug. 1720

⁷ Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 65.; TNA, C 11/2277/11.

⁸ TNA, RG 6/1537; TNA, PROB 11/616.

⁹ TNA, C 12/1117/34.

¹⁰ *Glouc. J.*, 9 Mar. 1731.

¹¹ *ODNB*, Henry Skillicorne (1678/9-1763).

¹² Short, *Natural History*, 77; Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 65. The structure built over the well was depicted on a medal struck to commemorate George III's visit in 1788: Moreau, *Tour to the Royal Spa* (1793), facing 1.

¹³ Goding, *Cheltenham*, 250.

¹⁴ Short, *Natural History*, 78. Short had analysed the waters in 1738.

¹⁵ TNA C 11/2277/11. This Thomas Hughes is to be distinguished from his son of the same name, an attorney.

¹⁶ *Daily Post*, 5 Nov. 1743

¹⁷ GA, D2010 Box 606; memorial inscription, church of St Mary, Cheltenham; *Manor Court Books*, 343.

¹⁸ Butler, *Guide*, 36-37.

¹⁹ Moreau, *Tour*, 32.

²⁰ *British Universal Library* (1793), 549.

Richard Nash Skillicorne (d. 1833).²¹ The reduced popularity of the original spa may have been the result of concerns over the efficacy of its waters, which were said to have diminished in quantity and quality for some years until, in 1808, the well was enlarged and dug deeper, and again in 1819.²² Although the water was afterwards reportedly clearer than it ever had been, it was prone to disturbance by heavy rain, and of insufficient flow to meet the increased demands.²³ The well was covered with wooden doors to protect the water from the air and water was served in the new room each morning.²⁴ The buildings on the opposite side of the courtyard continued to be used for the accommodation of the pump attendants and a warehouse for bottling water, while by 1818 the old room was used during the season as a shop for fine prints and goods.²⁵ In 1818 the old well was likened to 'a rude species of temple' to which carved pigeons had been added to symbolise the legend of its discovery.²⁶ In 1838 William Nash Skillicorne (1807-1887) sold the well to the Bays Hill Estate Company. In 1848 the Royal Well Pump Room was purchased by George Rowe and Samuel Onley, who rebuilt it in Corinthian style, opening in 1850 as a theatre and music hall as well as pump room.²⁷

During their visit to Cheltenham in 1788, the royal family resided at Bayshill Lodge,²⁸ built in 1780 to the west of the original spa for Henry Belasyse, 2nd Earl of Fauconberg.²⁹ Another well was dug here, reputedly at the command of the King, which was found to have the same properties as the old well.³⁰ The pump room built over this well became the Royal Spa.³¹ Initially so abundant that it was allegedly given to horses, the supply of water gradually failed until the well was shut c.1807.³² A new chalybeate spring was discovered to the east of Cambray mill in 1802. William Barrett, the proprietor of both, built a pump room on the site, reached by a short gravel walk from the high street.³³ It was still in operation in 1818, when it was said to have recently been improved.³⁴ Two more chalybeate springs were discovered near Cambray Cottage in 1804.³⁵ They apparently did not remain in use for long, but a new spring was discovered in Cambray by J. Fowler in 1807. By 1818 a large two-storey pump room had been built at the end of Cambray Parade, surrounded by gardens and walks.³⁶ A new well was discovered in 1803 in the middle of the Badgeworth road, and a new spa named after the lord of the manor was erected on the site. Opened to the public in 1804, Lord

²¹ GA, D2010 Box 606.

²² Griffith, *Historical Description*, 27.

²³ Williams, *New Guide*, 22-3.

²⁴ Williams, *New Guide*, 22; Griffith, *General Guide*, 86.

²⁵ Griffith, *General Guide*, 86; Williams, *New Guide*, 22.

²⁶ Griffith, *General Guide*, 85. The image of the well depicted on a medal commissioned by Moreau shortly after George III's visit shows urns standing at the four corners of the roof over the well, and not pigeons; Simeon Moreau, *Tour to the Royal Spa* (1789), following Account of the Royal Visit.

²⁷ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 153.

²⁸ Dibdin, *Cheltenham* 74.

²⁹ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 15.

³⁰ Moreau, *Tour*, xvi.

³¹ Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 74.

³² T. Jameson, *A Treatise on Cheltenham Waters and Bilious Diseases* (1809), xiii, 81.

³³ Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 103-4.

³⁴ Griffith, *General Guide*, 103-4

³⁵ C. Archer, *A Few Experiments* (Cheltenham, 1806); James, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters*, 98.

³⁶ Griffith, *General Guide*, 104-5.

Sherborne's Well initially provided an abundant source of water, but was said in 1809 to have few drinkers, following a relocation of the pump,³⁷ and it had closed by 1818.³⁸

In 1804 Henry Thompson, a merchant and underwriter of Tottenham High Cross, purchased part of the Delabere estate to the south of the river,³⁹ where he built a new spa in a large stone building called Hygeia House.⁴⁰ In 1807 Thompson acquired the majority of the remaining Delabere estate,⁴¹ including what was called by 1809 the Montpellier grounds.⁴² These bordered the Badgeworth road, and Thompson had two new wells dug in his field adjacent to Lord Sherborne's Well, which opened to the public in 1808. By 1809 the spa at Hygeia House was reported to be neglected by the public, but the new Montpellier wells proved so popular that Thompson had a large pump room built, with a music room above it.⁴³ Visitors were offered a choice of six types of mineral water drawn from 70 wells across the Montpellier estate.⁴⁴ An octagonal spa was built next to the Gothic Cottage.⁴⁵ The pump room was extended in 1817, with the addition of a long room fronted by a stone colonnade.⁴⁶ Following Thompson's death in 1820, further alterations were made by his son Pearson Thompson. These added further rooms on either side of the pump room and a monumental dome, from which the spa subsequently derived the name of the Montpellier Rotunda.⁴⁷

By 1809 the Revd Richard Nash Skillicorne had opened two wells to the west of the Badgeworth road, the Orchard Well and the Essex Well, both covered with small brick pump rooms.⁴⁸ The latter had fallen out of use by 1818,⁴⁹ but the Orchard Well was still in operation and is marked on the map in 1825.⁵⁰ Also in 1809 a well was opened next to Alstone Villa, at the western end of New Street, over which an octagonal pump room was constructed. In 1818 it too was surrounded by pleasure grounds and promenades.⁵¹ By 1840 Alstone Spa was described as having sunk into oblivion.⁵²

A new Sherborne Spa was erected close to the old well by 1818 at the end of a landscaped promenade leading to it from the high street and over the river. A large pump room built in a classical style was crowned with a dome on which stood a statue of the Greek goddess Hygeia.⁵³

³⁷ Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters*, xiv–xv, 82.

³⁸ Griffith, *General Guide*, p. 103.

³⁹ GA, D2216 Part 12 Box 1203.

⁴⁰ Hodsdon. Extant 2017, in Vittoria Walk.

⁴¹ Abstract of title, 1856: GA, D2216 Part 12 Box 1203.

⁴² D. Trinder, *Plan of the Town of Cheltenham* (1809), published in Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters*.

⁴³ Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters*, 84.

⁴⁴ Griffith, *General Guide*, 87–92.

⁴⁵ Williams, *New Guide*, 29.

⁴⁶ Griffith, *General Guide*, 213; Griffith, *Historical Description*, I, 28.

⁴⁷ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 13.

⁴⁸ Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters*, xvi, 78, 81–2.

⁴⁹ Griffith, *General Guide*, 85–8.

⁵⁰ Griffith, *General Guide*, 85–8; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 128.

⁵¹ Griffith, *General Guide*, 94.

⁵² Davies, *Visitor's Hand-book*, 70.

⁵³ Griffith, *General Guide*, 95–9.

Before 1832 the spa had been renamed the Imperial Spa, and it was by then under the management of Robert and Charles Jearrad, who has also acquired the Montpellier Spa.⁵⁴ Within a few years the spa's viability was ended by a fall in the water table. The Imperial Spa was removed in 1837 and re-erected on a new site on the Promenade close to the Chelt.⁵⁵ The Queen's Hotel was erected in its place.⁵⁶

The Pittville pump room was rerecited by Joseph Pitt as the focal point of his new estate. The laying of the first stone in 1825 was marked by a large procession of masonic lodges and crowds said to have numbered 18,000 or 20,000 people.⁵⁷ The large domed pump room, from the roof-top gallery of which visitors could view the Malvern hills and mountains of Wales, was opened to the public in 1830.⁵⁸ Like the established spas to the south of the town, it lay in the middle of landscaped grounds and gardens, distinguished by the large lake that was formed between the spa and the town, and was reached by a series of attractive private drives.⁵⁹ However, intended to be the crowning glory of Pitt's new town of Pittville, it stood at some distance from the high street (and technically within the parish of Prestbury), and struggled to attract sufficient custom after the failure of Pitt's development.

Although Cheltenham was predominantly a drinking spa, some facilities for bathing were developed alongside the spas. There was a cold bath near the Bayshill spa by 1740,⁶⁰ built alongside the Chelt and supplied with water from it. Although it was said to have been much resorted to for many years, by 1781 the bath was neglected and the buildings were in ruin.⁶¹ Weedon Butler referred in 1781 to a fine spring of cool, pure water in the close beyond the walks laid out to the south of the original well, and proposed it as a suitable place for the erection of a new cold bath for the use of visitors to the spa.⁶² Freeman's Baths, both hot and cold, were opened at the upper end of the high street in 1787,⁶³ and were still in operation in 1818.⁶⁴ Thompson's Baths, opened in 1806 near Cambray, contained six bathing pools, two cold and the other four tepid or hot; three of the pools were open to the elements and three were covered and illuminated by windows high above the water. Pipes brought water from mineral wells in the surrounding fields to enable bathing in saline water. Facilities enabled bathers to engage in therapeutic sweat baths or to administer saline enemas to themselves.⁶⁵ Three heated saline baths had been added to the facilities by 1818.⁶⁶ A third bathing establishment, called the Regent Baths, were opened in Regent Street before 1832,⁶⁷ but were said to have already been converted into a

⁵⁴ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 20–2.

⁵⁵ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 89.

⁵⁶ Davies, *Stranger's Guide Through Cheltenham* (1843), 18.

⁵⁷ Williams, *New Guide*, 113–15.

⁵⁸ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 25–6.

⁵⁹ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 26–7.

⁶⁰ Short, *Natural History*, 80.

⁶¹ Butler, *Guide*, 39.

⁶² Butler, *Guide*, 39–40.

⁶³ Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 106–7.

⁶⁴ Griffith, *General Guide*, 69.

⁶⁵ Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters*, 186–93.

⁶⁶ Griffith, *General Guide*, 69–70.

⁶⁷ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 48.

music room by 1834.⁶⁸

In 1841 Augustus Granville noted that Cheltenham had fallen out of favour as a spa, and that, although it remained 'a town of great resort and importance', 'the very tip-top of society' were now going to Leamington.⁶⁹ By the middle of the 19th century the spas of Cheltenham, so long the source of the town's prosperity, were in decline. The original well buildings had been razed and replaced by a building that also served as a concert hall. Spas continued to function at the Rotunda, Cambray and in Pittville, but the Imperial Spa had been demolished and replaced by the Queen's Hotel. Noting a decline in the number of visitors to take the waters during the summer months, a special committee was established in 1849 to promote the continued use of the spas.⁷⁰ Confidential approaches were made to the resident medical professionals, encouraging them to advocate the use of the Cheltenham waters for medicinal purposes during the summer months, to complement the popular winter season. Despite this, the spas continued to struggle, and the Rotunda and Pittville Spa changed hands several times in the 1850s.

Inclosure, suburban expansion and the built environment

A map of 1776 shows that the layout of the town had changed little since the early 18th century.⁷¹ The main settlement in the town lay along either side of the high street. Three lanes named for the Fleece, Greyhound and Bell inns left the high street northwards. To the south New Street ran from the high street west of Fleece Lane to Upper Alstone Mill, while Stills Lane lay to the west of the church. A back lane enabled travellers to avoid travelling through the town whilst traversing the parish. From Upper Alstone Mill the lane, described as a coachway, continued west across the common fields of Alstone and Arle to Arle Cross, where it joined Arle Street. This latter ran south towards Badgworth from its junction with the Gloucester road at Bedlam Bridge. Another lane called Tanhouse Lane ran east from Arle street towards Alstone, where it was called Alstone street, passing through Alstone Green and becoming Lads Lane as it continued eastwards past Galipot farm, in Westall, and crossed Sandford field to connect with the Bath road. Other lanes connected Alstone street with Lower Alstone Mill and the Tewkesbury road, Alstone Green with Upper Alstone Mill, and Galipot farm with Westall Green. There were pockets of settlement in Arle and Alstone, at Arle Cross, along Alstone street, the coachway and at Alstone Green, and a handful of cottages at the more remote Westall Green.

The distinction between the town of Cheltenham and its rural hinterland was formalised by the process of parliamentary inclosure. The act for the enclosure of the town passed in 1801,⁷² and the award enclosing 595 acres and 21 perches was agreed in 1806.⁷³ Joseph Pitt had acquired the tithes of the parish and glebe, comprising 105 a., when the inappropriate rectory was sold by the Earl of Essex in 1799.⁷⁴ In 1806 he was awarded allotments totalling c. 214 a. for his rectory estate,

⁶⁸ Davies, *Stranger's Guide Through Cheltenham* (1834), 69.

⁶⁹ A. B. Granville, *Spas of England and Principal Sea-Bathing Places, Vol. II: Midland and Southern Spas* (1841); J. Adams, *Healing with Water: English Spas and the Water Cure, 1840-1960* (Manchester, 2015), 66.

⁷⁰ GA, D1950/X6.

⁷¹ GA, Q/SRh/A1/1777.

⁷² 41 Geo. III, c. 108.

⁷³ GA, Q-RI-40.

⁷⁴ GA, D2025/Box 65/Bundle 2.

including c. 131 a. awarded in lieu of tithes.⁷⁵ A further act covering Arle and Alstone was passed in 1830⁷⁶, with the award enclosing 430 acres being agreed in 1835.⁷⁷

The high street was described as spacious and handsome in 1781, although impeded by the the market crosses and the blindhouse.⁷⁸ By 1783 the deep gutter which had run down the middle of the high street had been replaced by channels on either side of the street, parts of which had been paved.⁷⁹ In 1786 the newly appointed Paving and Lighting Commissioners⁸⁰ demolished the ancient market house, butter cross, blindhouse and prison⁸¹ and ordered further paving and the erection of lamps along the high street.⁸² Two years later Fanny Burney described it as 'extremely long, clean, and well paved'.⁸³ By 1789 the high street had been re-paved and lit, orders given to keep it cleaned, and the houses numbered.⁸⁴ The high street was re-numbered by 1807,⁸⁵ and boards with names of streets and passages were affixed to buildings in 1808.⁸⁶

The timber-framed houses of the earlier period had largely been replaced by houses built of brick by the early 1780s.⁸⁷ Moreau complained in 1783 that many of the houses and facilities within the town had been much neglected since the middle of the 18th century, but observed that the increase of visitors to Cheltenham in the 1770s and 1780s had encouraged some inhabitants to make improvements to their houses to serve as lodgings.⁸⁸ In 1789 Moreau estimated that there were 400 houses in Cheltenham, many of which had recently been converted in lodging houses for visitors to the spa. There were 710 houses within the parish in 1801, of which 65 were said to be uninhabited.⁸⁹ Another estimate, perhaps just for the town, put the number of dwelling houses in Cheltenham at 634 in 1804.⁹⁰ In 1803 the houses along the high street were described as mostly new, or new fronted.⁹¹ In 1832 a visitor noted that the buildings at the lower end of the high street were 'very shabby but they improve gradually', while there was a pleasing uniformity in the buildings on the adjoining streets⁹²

Powers Court was the only house in the town considered worthy of note by Atkyns in 1712.⁹³

⁷⁵ GA, Q/RI 40. Pitt had already entered into an agreement with other landholders to extinguish tithes in Cheltenham: GA, D2025/Box 138/2.

⁷⁶ 11 Geo. IV, c. 6.

⁷⁷ GA, Q-RI-41.

⁷⁸ Butler, *Guide*, 22–3.

⁷⁹ Moreau, *Tour*, 26.

⁸⁰ See below, Local Government.

⁸¹ GA, CBR/A1/1/1. See below, Economic History.

⁸² GA, CBR/A1/1/1.

⁸³ F. Burney, *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay* (1843), IV, 159.

⁸⁴ Moreau, *Tour to Cheltenham Spa* (1789), 27.

⁸⁵ GA, CBR A1/1/2, 3 Mar. 1807.

⁸⁶ GA, CBR A/1/1/2, 7 June 1808.

⁸⁷ Butler, *Guide*, 22.

⁸⁸ Moreau, *Tour*, 26.

⁸⁹ Census, 1801.

⁹⁰ Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters* (1814), 34.

⁹¹ H. Ruff, *History of Cheltenham* (1803), 21–2.

⁹² S. Blake, 'A Visitor to Cheltenham in 1832: the Diary of Sarah Sargent', *CLHS Jnl* 13 (1997), 16.

⁹³ Atkyns, *Glos.*, 333.

Following the death of Mitchell in 1727, the house passed first to his son John (d. 1730), and then to his daughter Mary,⁹⁴ the wife of Revd George Stokes.⁹⁵ An illustration of c. 1740 shows a substantial three-storey brick building, after a large ballroom known as the Assembly House had been built on the east side.⁹⁶ Mary Stokes sold Power's Court to John Delabere in 1776,⁹⁷ who sold it in turn to Thomas Hughes.⁹⁸ Hughes added a new ballroom and other rooms to the Assembly House, called the Lower Assembly Rooms by the time they passed to his son Thomas Bridges Hughes in 1794.⁹⁹ He sold the premises to his younger brother, Robert, in 1805.¹⁰⁰ Part of the old mansion house had been sublet to a collar maker during the 18th century, before being reoccupied by Robert Hughes. He built Rodney Lodge for himself to the south of the Assembly Rooms, and Power's Court was divided into three shops. The house was sold to Thomas Smith in 1820,¹⁰¹ and had been replaced by three separate tenements by 1885.¹⁰²

The principal lodging for early visitors to the spa was the Great House. Built on the site of the medieval court house by Lady Frances Stapleton, its rooms were used for balls and socialising by at least 1748.¹⁰³ After the death of Lady Frances in 1746, the estate was inherited by her daughter Catherine, who let the premises first to Thomas Pope, and then in 1760 to Mr and Mrs Field. The house provided accommodation for families and individuals, with a public dining room and a coffee room for the men.¹⁰⁴ Mrs Field's Assembly Room was enlarged in 1779.¹⁰⁵ After her death in 1784,¹⁰⁶ a larger building was built adjacent to the original house 1785.¹⁰⁷ The two buildings were later known respectively as Fisher's Hotel and Boarding House after the lessee, James Fisher. They had been renamed Clarence Hotel and Clarence Boarding House before 1827,¹⁰⁸ in honour of a visit by the Duke of Clarence.¹⁰⁹ By 1832 the general post office was in Clarence Street.¹¹⁰

As the number of visitors to the resort grew, increasing numbers of houses were made available as lodgings for them during the season. The 1786 Paving Act, made special provision for the rating of furnished houses that were used solely for letting during the 'Water-drinking Season',¹¹¹ and the Oxford Journal noted the many additional lodging houses that had opened and the extent of the

⁹⁴ *Manor Court Books*, 210.

⁹⁵ *Manor Court Books*, 234.

⁹⁶ A. Jones, *Cheltenham* (2010), 120.

⁹⁷ GA, D2202/2/8/9.

⁹⁸ GA, D245/IV/1.

⁹⁹ GA, D245/IV/1.

¹⁰⁰ GA, D245/IV/1.

¹⁰¹ GA, D245/IV/1.

¹⁰² OS Map, 6", 1st ed. (1885).

¹⁰³ GA, D153/1/96.

¹⁰⁴ *Whitehall Evening Post*, 15 May 1760, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 17 Apr. 1779, 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Bath Chronicle & Weekly Gazette*, 22 Apr. 1784, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Moreau, *Tour to the Royal Spa at Cheltenham* (1793), 43.

¹⁰⁸ GA, D181/Box96896/2.

¹⁰⁹ GA, D1388/Box9401/1.

¹¹⁰ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 116.

¹¹¹ A. Jones, *Cheltenham*, 178.

ongoing building.¹¹² Moreau later estimated that there had only been 33 lodging houses in the town in 1780, but that this had risen to 130 by the end of the decade,¹¹³ and 150 by 1797.¹¹⁴ A hotel was opened opposite the great house by one Mr Edwards in 1785, with a long room for dining.¹¹⁵ James Boles Watson's lodging house was built next to his theatre in 1786, on the north side of the high street opposite the Upper Assembly Rooms, and advertised in 1787. Available to be let by one or two families, it contained two parlours, two drawing rooms, two kitchens, and 14 bedrooms.¹¹⁶ As a result of the royal visit in 1788, lodging became difficult to find and more expensive.¹¹⁷ The *Universal British Directory* of 1793 listed 42 proprietors of lodgings in the town.¹¹⁸ The increase in visitors from 384 in 1780 to 1,700 in the 1790s put considerable strain on the accommodation available.¹¹⁹ By 1800, 76 people were listed as letting rooms, in addition to 19 inns.¹²⁰ The post, which arrived in Cheltenham three times a week in 1781¹²¹, was a daily service by 1803.¹²²

The development of the Old Well to the south of the church increased the value of the land between the high street and the river Chelt, particularly as further spa buildings were built to the south. Four substantial houses were built c. 1788 along the eastern side of the ancient route of Still's Lane, which was rechristened St George's Place soon after.¹²³ In 1793 the Paving and Lighting Commissioners ordered that the paving was to be continued down St George's Place,¹²⁴ reflecting its importance as the location of the Great House, and it was ordered to be widened and made more commodious in 1808.¹²⁵ Following the royal visit the building of a colonnaded row of shops to the east of the church was commenced, which was intended to stretch south from the high street as far as the Old Well.¹²⁶ Although completion was expected within two years, only six buildings had been completed by 1794, and the planned colonnade was never finished. The route remained 'a useless lane' down to the river until c. 1818, when a carriage road and gravelled walks were laid out to connect the Colonnade and high street with the Sherborne (later Imperial) Spa.¹²⁷ Initially called the Sherborne Walk, it was later known as the Sherborne or Imperial Promenade, and now simply the Promenade.¹²⁸ A plank bridge was replaced with a culverted crossing wide

¹¹²*Oxford Journal*, 26 Aug. 1786, 3.

¹¹³Moreau, *Tour to the Royal Spa at Cheltenham* (1789), 27.

¹¹⁴Moreau, *Tour to the Royal Spa at Cheltenham* (1797), 37.

¹¹⁵Moreau, *Tour to the Royal Spa at Cheltenham* (1789), 30.

¹¹⁶*Hereford Journal*, 13 Sep. 1787, 3.

¹¹⁷Griffith, *Historical Description*, I, 11.

¹¹⁸*Universal British Directory* (1793), 550–51.

¹¹⁹H. Ruff, *A History of Cheltenham and its Environs*, (1803), 124.

¹²⁰J. Shenton, *Cheltenham Directory*, (1800), 5-17.

¹²¹Butler, *Guide*, 96.

¹²²Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 345.

¹²³*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 156.

¹²⁴GA, CBR/A1/1/1.

¹²⁵GA, CBR/A1/1/2.

¹²⁶*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 43.

¹²⁷Griffith, *General Guide*, 95–6; GA, D2025/Box 93/Bundle 4..

¹²⁸*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 141-2.

enough for carriages, and the marshy ground on the other side was planted with shrubs and trees.¹²⁹

By 1795 Bell Lane had become Winchcombe Street, following the turnpiking in 1792 of the Prestbury and Winchcombe road which it became beyond the back road.¹³⁰ Greyhound Lane, also known as North Street by 1800, and Fleece Lane, renamed Henrietta Street by c. 1820, ran into lanes that led towards the common fields and the Marsh respectively.¹³¹ White Hart Lane, at the very western end of the high street, remained largely undeveloped c. 1800.¹³² By 1811 six new tenements had been erected along it,¹³³ and a map of 1820 shows buildings lining almost the whole of its western length.¹³⁴

Attention had been drawn in 1793 to the long gardens behind the houses that lined Cheltenham's single street,¹³⁵ and it was along these that some of the earliest new streets of the 19th century were laid out. At the upper end of the high street, St James' Street and Gyde's Terrace were under construction by 1806.¹³⁶ At the lower end of the high street, Milsom Street and King Street were laid out on the north side, Ambrose Street and Devonshire Street on the south side, all along land belonging to Corpus Christi College.¹³⁷ New roads were also constructed to the north of the back road, later renamed Albion Street and St Margaret's Road respectively to the east and west of North Street.¹³⁸ One of the earliest of these was Portland Street, laid out and partly built by c. 1806.¹³⁹ After 1810 a new turnpike road to Evesham was constructed along a more direct route between Portland Street and Bishops Cleeve.¹⁴⁰ More streets, such as Gloucester Place, Sherborne Place and Sherborne Street, were developed to the east of Portland Street. The weight of new settlement in the area to the north of Albion Street is evidenced by the selection of Portland Street for the site Holy Trinity church in 1823.¹⁴¹ To the west of Fleece Lane, Rutland Street was laid out c. 1807,¹⁴² although it was still somewhat isolated in 1820.¹⁴³

While the upper or eastern end of the high street soon became associated with fashionable society, the lower end of the high street was increasingly home to the poor. In 1818 a guide referred to the menial cottages on the lower high street that disfigured the western extremity of the town.¹⁴⁴ In 1826 Fosbroke described the 'inferior' streets as dense and crowded, largely due to

¹²⁹Griffith, *Historical Description*, I, 31.

¹³⁰*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 195; Glos. Roads Act, 32 Geo. III, c. 146.

¹³¹*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 64, 73; GA, D2025/Map/49033/6; E. Cossen, *Plan of Cheltenham* (1820).

¹³²GA, D2025/Map/49033/6.

¹³³*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 193-4.

¹³⁴E. Cossen, *Plan of Cheltenham* (1820).

¹³⁵*Universal British Directory* (1793), 549.

¹³⁶GA, D245/III/18; D245/IV/5.

¹³⁷*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 6, 52, 94, 113. GA, D2172/1/16.

¹³⁸*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 3, 159.

¹³⁹*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 138.

¹⁴⁰GA, D444/Z9; D1302/2/2; *VCH Glos. VIII*, 7.

¹⁴¹See below, Religious History.

¹⁴²GA, D182/III/63.

¹⁴³Cossen, *Plan of Cheltenham*.

¹⁴⁴Griffith, *General Guide*, 17.

the subdivision of houses into lodgings.¹⁴⁵ A report by the vestry into the state of the town's bye-roads found several of the side streets at the lower end of the town in need of cleaning and repairs, in particular New Street, which had been filthy for some time. However, its strongest condemnation was reserved for Rutland Street, to the north of the back road, the disgraceful state of which was said to be a danger to the health of the town.¹⁴⁶ During 1832 the local board of health found numerous crowded streets within the town, contaminated by stagnant water, privies and pig-sties, and lacking ventilation or drainage.¹⁴⁷

South of the river Chelt lay the tithing of Westal, Naunton and Sandford, which had always been the least populated tithing in the parish. John Delabere had purchased Gallipot Lodge with c. 160 a. of land in 1756.¹⁴⁸ This was augmented by the purchase of land belonging to the rectory in the tithing with all of the tithes in 1779.¹⁴⁹ After his death in 1793 the estate passed to his son, Revd John Delabere, and in 1799 the estate comprised c. 469 a. ¹⁵⁰ Much of the tithing thus comprised agricultural land belonging to Gallipot farm and a 1756 map of the estate reveals only a small cluster of cottages around Westall Green.¹⁵¹ Between 1804 and 1807 Henry Thompson acquired much of this land,¹⁵² for the development of his spas and baths.¹⁵³ A new road to Bath was laid out on the eastern edge of Thompson's estate after 1813.¹⁵⁴

By 1850 the built area of Cheltenham stretched continuously north to south from the boundary with Prestbury to the new housing estates across the boundary with Leckhampton. The town had also continued to grow on the eastern and western fringes, with new streets being built on either side of London Road, although the expansion was much less pronounced than to the north and south. To the west a number of wharves for coal and stone grew up around the terminus of the railroad. By 1820 the Albion brewery stood to the south of these¹⁵⁵ and the gasworks was built to the west.¹⁵⁶ The development of Somers Town north of the high street commenced around 1833, when 'numerous respectable cottages' were described as about to be built on Townsend Street (previously marking the westward extent of the high street) in the field facing the gasometer.¹⁵⁷ By 1844 Russell Street had 8 residents, there were 19 houses in Cleaveland Street and Albert 'late Baker Street' (now Charles Street) had 38.¹⁵⁸ Between Somers Town and Maud's Elm a number of streets were built along former burgage plots between the high street and the back road, now called Swindon Road, from the late 1820s.¹⁵⁹ North of Swindon Road, a new working class district

¹⁴⁵T.D. Fosbroke, *A picturesque and topographical account of Cheltenham and its vicinity* (1826).

¹⁴⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 1 Dec. 1821.

¹⁴⁷*The Lancet*, 10 Nov. 1832, 210–11.

¹⁴⁸*Manor Court Books*, 321.

¹⁴⁹GA, D2216, Part 12, Box 1204.

¹⁵⁰GA, D2216, Part 12, Box 1203.

¹⁵¹GA, D8244/1.

¹⁵²GA, D2216 Part 12 Box 1201, 1203; D245/I/75.

¹⁵³*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 181; D. Trinder, *Plan of the Town* from Jameson, *A Treatise on Cheltenham Waters* (1809)

¹⁵⁴*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 14; updated plan from Jameson, *A Treatise on Cheltenham Waters* (1814).

¹⁵⁵See Economic History, Urban Trades.

¹⁵⁶See Local Government, Public Services and Utilities.

¹⁵⁷*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 168, 181.

¹⁵⁸*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 2, 40, 154.

¹⁵⁹*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 108, 144.

grew up around the free church of St Paul's.¹⁶⁰ By 1835 80 new houses had been built in St Paul's Street north, leading to the church, while St Paul's Street South had 16 houses by 1844.¹⁶¹ South of the high street the development Lansdown area led to the provision of a church for the area in 1837,¹⁶² while Queen's Road was built as a grand approach to Lansdown railway station at the western edge of the developed area in the 1840s.¹⁶³ At the eastern end of the town a number of streets were developed beyond Hewletts Road between 1820 and 1840, whilst there had been less intensive development of the land between Hewletts Road and Pittville, although Berkeley Street was built to the south of St John's church.¹⁶⁴ Development had also begun north along the road to Hewletts on the agricultural land that had previously been Cheltenham Upper Field.¹⁶⁵ There were fewer developments on the south side of London Road, although construction of Corpus Street had begun on land owned by Corpus Christi College by 1822.¹⁶⁶ By 1834 new streets had been laid out in the previously undeveloped areas of Sandford and Naunton in the vicinity of Thirlestaine House.¹⁶⁷ From 1843 the presence of the College on Bath Road encouraged further development of this area.¹⁶⁸

Major Housing Developments

Although the pressure on accommodation in Cheltenham was acute from the 1780s, it was only following enclosure that major housing developments began. In 1805 Joseph Pitt employed the Bath architect Charles Harcourt Master to design the Crescent, later called the Royal Crescent, the first significant residential development within the town.¹⁶⁹ Situated on Church Meadow, between the parish church and the old well, the Crescent was intended to dominate the vista of the daily visitors to the spa. Nevertheless, progress was slow, and it was not completed until c. 1825.¹⁷⁰ Master was also employed to design St James' Square, to the west of the Crescent.¹⁷¹ Intended as a scheme of 65 houses surrounding central pleasure grounds, no more than three houses were built to Master's plan, perhaps because of the bankruptcy of the developers Thomas and William Read.¹⁷² In 1832 it was still in 'a very incomplete state', and a nursery occupied the site intended for the pleasure grounds.¹⁷³ At the upper end of the high street, a less grandiose development promoted by Pitt was Cambray Place, initiated as a 21-year tontine for the building of 12 houses, largely completed by 1819, and subsequently added to by 1825.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁰See Religious History.

¹⁶¹*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 160.

¹⁶²See below: Religious History.

¹⁶³*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 145.

¹⁶⁴*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 10, 130, 141. see below: Religious History.

¹⁶⁵GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundles 7, 11; D245/III/20.

¹⁶⁶GA, D245/III/16.

¹⁶⁷*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 178.

¹⁶⁸Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 249.

¹⁶⁹Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 260.

¹⁷⁰*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 152.

¹⁷¹Bath R.O., Bath Plan 111.

¹⁷²Oliver Bradbury, 'St James's Square, Cheltenham: an Unfulfilled Commission by Charles Harcourt Masters of Bath', *Architectural History*, XLII (1999), 349–53.

¹⁷³Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 126.

¹⁷⁴*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 30.

A number of villas were built as part of Henry Thompson's development of the land to the east of Montpellier Spa, and Montpellier Parade on the eastern side of Trafalgar field was under construction by 1812.¹⁷⁵ Following Thompson's death, the development was continued by his son Pearson Thompson¹⁷⁶ and Trafalgar field, separated from the Rotunda by the grand walk which ran along its western edge, was transformed into Montpellier Gardens.¹⁷⁷ Montpellier Terrace to the north of the gardens, Montpellier Spa Road to the south, and Montpellier Villas, running parallel to the Bath Road, were all developed in the 1820s.¹⁷⁸ Lansdown Crescent to the west of Montpellier Spa was laid out for Pearson Thompson by J.B. Papworth in 1824-5.¹⁷⁹ By 1830 there was a terrace of 14 houses in Lansdown Place, but only the first pair of the intended semi-detached villas set in a circle. The second section of Lansdown Place was completed by R.W. Jearrad by the mid-1830s. Jearrad replaced the villa plan with Lansdown Crescent, a convex terrace of 23 houses completed by 1838.¹⁸⁰

In the disposal of the Delabere estate John Howard, 15th Earl of Suffolk had acquired Gallipot Hall with 24 a. of adjacent land lying to the south of Montpellier Gardens.¹⁸¹ Following his death in 1820 it was sold to James Fisher, a boarding house proprietor.¹⁸² The land adjoining Gallipot Hall, now renamed Suffolk House, was divided into building lots arranged around the newly laid-out Suffolk Square by 1824.¹⁸³ Construction of the terraces lining Suffolk Square was undertaken in stages, as individual building plots were sold on mortgage to a number of builders and architects, subject to covenants to build houses according to Fisher's strictly uniform plan. The final buildings were to be worth a minimum of £1,000, and the subsequent owners were prohibited from carrying out any business, trade, or to use the buildings as a hotel.¹⁸⁴ Suffolk Square was still not complete by 1849.¹⁸⁵ On the north-east corner of the square, the new church of St James', named for Fisher, was begun in 1825.¹⁸⁶ To the west of Suffolk Square, Fisher laid out Suffolk Lawn in c. 1826,¹⁸⁷ and Lypiatt Terrace in c. 1847.¹⁸⁸ In 1831 Pearson Thompson sold Marybone Park to the south of Suffolk Lawn to a partnership of Thomas Henney, John Brown and Thomas Griffiths. They laid out a 40ft wide road and sold off most of the land for development in 50ft frontages. The area was known as Tivoli by 1835 and was later described by George Rowe as a fashionable suburb, many of the houses being let to visitors.¹⁸⁹ From one of the least populated areas of the parish, in 1842 the

¹⁷⁵ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 116.

¹⁷⁶ GA, D2216, Part 12, Box 1203.

¹⁷⁷ Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 61–62.

¹⁷⁸ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 116-17; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 268-71.

¹⁷⁹ GA, D2025/Box 92/Bundles 2–3.

¹⁸⁰ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 98-9; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 275-6.

¹⁸¹ Wilts. R.O., 88/5/46/6; GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundle 10.

¹⁸² GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundles 4, 9.

¹⁸³ GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundle 6.

¹⁸⁴ GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundle 6.

¹⁸⁵ GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundle 7.

¹⁸⁶ GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundle 9.

¹⁸⁷ *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 172.

¹⁸⁸ GA, D2025/Box 32/Bundle 8.

¹⁸⁹ J. Barlow, 'Victorian Tivoli Road', *CLHS Journal* 23 (2007), 62-4; G. Rowe, *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* (1850?), 82.

tithing of Westal, Naunton and Sandford had 1,281 houses and a population of 6,109.¹⁹⁰

The most ambitious building development was Joseph Pitt's plan to create a new town, called Pittville, stretching north from Albion Street to the Withy Brook and across the parish boundary into Prestbury.¹⁹¹ Work began in 1824. The plan was for an estate of almost 100 a., of which 82 a. lay within the parish of Cheltenham, occupying two allotments made to Pitt by the inclosure commissioners in 1806.¹⁹² Pitt's intention was to create a series of elegant streets lined by rows of uniform terraces, comprising 500 to 600 houses in all, with landscaped pleasure gardens at the heart of the estate.¹⁹³ Initially greeted with enthusiasm, with local builders and speculators contracting to purchase all of the building plots, the scheme fell prey to a banking crisis in 1825. By 1830 only 19 houses had been erected. Building work resumed during the recovery of the 1830s, with 158 houses being built between 1831 and the death of Pitt in 1842.¹⁹⁴ The sale of Pitt's heavily indebted estate between 1843 and 1845 removed the guiding hand behind the design of Pittville was removed, and the planned uniformity of the estate was only partially achieved. Much of the estate remained undeveloped by the end of the 1850s.¹⁹⁵

The development of Imperial Square around the Imperial Spa nursery garden began in the 1830s, with 20 houses being in progress in 1834.¹⁹⁶ The area around the Old Well between the river and the new building at Lansdown remained undeveloped, until it was inherited by William Skillicorne.¹⁹⁷ In 1837 he and his mother Anna Maria Skillicorne laid out c. 37 a. of land for sale as building plots and set up the Bays Hill Estate Company to develop it.¹⁹⁸ Certificates for 15 houses were issued by May 1840 and development continued fitfully into the 1850s, but the original plan was not fully realised.¹⁹⁹

Population Growth [Anthea Jones]

Despite the popularity of the Cheltenham season, the permanent population of the town increased only at a slow rate during the 18th century. Samuel Rudder stated that the population of Cheltenham, perhaps meaning the town and not the parish, was 1433 in 1779,²⁰⁰ whilst another author estimated Cheltenham's population to be 2000 in 1781.²⁰¹ The increase of the population in the early years of the 19th century was startling, as the town experienced the same rapid expansion that was enjoyed at a number of leading resorts during the period.²⁰² The number of visitors to the town had been increasingly rapidly even before the visit of George III in 1788,²⁰³ and

¹⁹⁰Davies, *Stranger's Guide* (1843), 25.

¹⁹¹S. Blake, *Pittville 1824-1860* (1988).

¹⁹²GA, Q/RI 40, map.

¹⁹³Griffith, *Historical Description*, II, facing 45; reproduced in Blake, *Pittville*, 10.

¹⁹⁴ Blake, *Pittville*, 57-76.

¹⁹⁵Blake, *Pittville*, 45-6.

¹⁹⁶*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 89.

¹⁹⁷GA, D2010 Box 606, abstract of title c. 1858.

¹⁹⁸GA, D245/III/27; D2025/Box 11.

¹⁹⁹*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 16.

²⁰⁰Rudder, *Glos.* (1779), 337.

²⁰¹Butler, *Cheltenham Guide* (1781), 28.

²⁰²Penny Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982), 64.

²⁰³See above, Development of the Spa.

the popularity of the spas encouraged the permanent settlement of increasing numbers of genteel families and tradespeople in the town. The population of the parish was given as 3,076 in the 1801 census,²⁰⁴ whilst a separate estimate of 2,639 at that time might represent the population of the town itself.²⁰⁵ The population was said to have risen to 5,000 by 1804,²⁰⁶ and the 1811 census returned a population of 8,325 for the parish.²⁰⁷ The influx of visitors in the season greatly increased the population. Between 1739 and 1749, annual visitor numbers varied with the weather, but averaged just over 500 per summer season.²⁰⁸ The number of visitors was reported to have been 2,038 in 1802,²⁰⁹ was estimated at 6,000 in 1813,²¹⁰ and it was said, fancifully, to exceed 32,000 in 1818.²¹¹

The rate of population increase halved during the Regency, although it was still substantial. By 1821 the population of the parish was 13,396. In the following decade it increased again to around 70%, reaching 22,942 in 1831. The rate of increase halved again in the 1830s, with the population standing at 31,411 in 1841. During the 1840s the rate of increase as recorded by the census was less than a third of that in the previous decade and less than that of neighbouring Gloucester for the first time. In 1851 the population of the parish was 35,051.²¹²

Public Gardens and Open Space

The development of the spa provided Cheltenham with an abundance of attractive walks and gardens. The gravelled walk to the Old Well was 20 feet wide and lined with elms, while beyond the Well the Serpentine Walk continued south among lime trees.²¹³ Although described by Moreau as public walks, this was the preserve of spa visitors and the wealthier local inhabitants, as visually emphasised by the gates and enclosing wall. In 1788 Fanny Burney was unimpressed by the walks, which were 'straight, clay, and sided by common trees, without any rich foliage, or one beautiful opening'.²¹⁴ From 1818 Sherborne Walk (now the Promenade) provided a similarly straight, but wider, tree-lined access to the Sherborne (Imperial) Spa.²¹⁵ Visitors to the Montpellier Spa could enjoy the walks and rides around the 10 a. Trafalgar field to its west, from which Trafalgar Lane and Vittoria Walk led down to those laid out to the south of Thompson's Laboratory and Baths.²¹⁶

The gardens created to enhance the surroundings of the different spas were distinctly segregated. The gardens of the Sherborne Spa were accessible only to subscribers. These were laid out to the

²⁰⁴Census, 1801.

²⁰⁵Jameson, *Treatise* (1814), 34.

²⁰⁶Jameson, *Treatise* (1814), p. 34.

²⁰⁷Census, 1811.

²⁰⁸Goding, *Cheltenham*, 250.

²⁰⁹Ruff, *History of Cheltenham* (1803), 124.

²¹⁰Jameson, *Treatise* (1814), p. 34.

²¹¹Griffith, *General Guide*, 41.

²¹²Census, 1821, 1831, 1841, 1851. For Gloucester, see *VCH Glos.* IV, 125, 171.

²¹³Moreau, *Tour*, 34-5.

²¹⁴Burney, *Diary*, 177.

²¹⁵*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 141-2.

²¹⁶E. Cossons, *Plan of Cheltenham* (1820); *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 181, 187.

north of the spa when it was built, and included fruit trees, flower beds and four hothouses to accommodate more exotic plants.²¹⁷ Within a few years a conservatory had been constructed adjoining the hothouses.²¹⁸ In 1830 Trafalgar field was transformed into Montpellier Gardens, a landscaped site which contained an extensive range of hot houses and green houses at the north-west corner.²¹⁹ These gardens too were accessible only to subscribers.²²⁰

In the 1820s Charles Hale Jessop established a nursery garden, covering around 20 acres between St James's Square and the river.²²¹ Part of the gardens were laid out botanically, but in 1826 there was also a fish-filled pond, rockwork with a fountain and glass aviaries.²²² In the following decades the pleasure garden aspects of the nursery were further developed, to include exotic birds and animals and a variety of buildings, including the pagoda purchased from the town's failed Zoological Gardens.²²³ By 1850 the gardens were being advertised as Jessop's 'far-famed Botanical, Horticultural, and Zoological Gardens', but entrance remained free 'as though they were public property'.²²⁴

The Pittville estate included two garden squares to the south east, two large rectangular gardens between the main terraces of houses and a further garden before the crescent to the east. In addition a pleasure ground was laid out at the northern end of Pittville, across the parish boundary, with a lake to the south and the new Pittville Pump Room to the north. The grounds were landscaped by Richard Ware, a nurseryman who in 1826 was leasing the Sherborne Spa gardens.²²⁵ As the Imperial Nursery the gardens outlived the spa as a tourist attraction and in 1841 the Photographic Institution opened there.²²⁶ In 1828 Ware purchased land at the south-west corner of Wellington Square, which he developed into a botanic garden. The site remained in use as a nursery until 1855.²²⁷

²¹⁷Griffith, *General Guide*, 96–7.

²¹⁸Williams, *New Guide*, 30.

²¹⁹*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 116; Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 61–62.

²²⁰Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 79–81.

²²¹C. Greet, 'An ornament to the town': Jessop's Gardens', *CLHS Journal* 11 (1994–5), 6.

²²²Griffith, *Historical Description*, 82; Williams, *New Guide*, 192.

²²³See below, Social History.

²²⁴Rowe's *Illustrated Guide to Cheltenham* (1850), xix, 97–100.

²²⁵Griffith, *Historical Description*, 31; Blake, *Pittville*, 13.

²²⁶*Chelt. Examiner*, 8 Sep. 1841; GA, D2202/5/1.

²²⁷A.J. Campbell, 'Pittville Nursery Garden and the Ware Mortgage', *CLHS Journal* 8 (1990–1), 11–18.

Economic Activity

Jan Broadway

with Sally Self & Sue Brown

Agriculture and Rural Trades

The development of Cheltenham as a spa and its consequently increased population influenced both the extent and the nature of surrounding agricultural land. Gallipot farm, acquired by John Delabere in 1756²²⁸, became under his ownership a 325 a. mixed farm with arable, dairy cattle and sheep.²²⁹ Following his death, much of the land was sold for development.²³⁰ The Old Farm, a dairy farm with 30 long-horned cattle in 1829, was similarly swallowed up by the development of St George's Place.²³¹

Piecemeal enclosure continued throughout the 18th century and consolidation of holdings was further stimulated by parliamentary inclosure. In 1726 Jesus College, Oxford, acquired over 100a. of land in Alstone, of which c. 30a. was uninclosed arable with a further 19a. in Alstone meadow.²³² By 1793 this Six Chimneys farm was estimated at 122a.²³³ and when offered for sale in 1809 was described as including 30a. of meadow, 46a. inclosed arable and 42a. in the common fields. In 1793 Hester's Way farm in Arle combined 11a. of pasture, including a well-stocked orchard, with 28a. of enclosed arable land and 35a. in the common fields.²³⁴ In the following decades it expanded to around 145 acres of mixed arable and pasture.²³⁵ In 1801 the main crops grown in the vicinity were wheat, barley and beans.²³⁶ By 1843 in addition to Six Chimneys Farm, there were just three farmers listed in Arle and one in Lower Alstone.²³⁷

As the spa developed, smaller pieces of land were increasingly acquired by market gardeners and nurserymen to supply the growing market for plants and produce. Robert Hibbard and his stepson Thomas Yatman, gardeners acquired a ½ a. plot north of the marsh in 1749.²³⁸ Thomas Yatman subsequently acquired 4 ½ a. in the common fields in 1763²³⁹ and 6a. along with two houses and orchards north of the high street in 1773.²⁴⁰ John Willis acquired 9a. known as the Doctor's Piece in 1799.²⁴¹ Thomas Tovey developed a nursery specialising in fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs at

²²⁸GA, D2025/Box 98/Bundle 5.

²²⁹*Gloucs. Journal*, 12 May 1794 & 12 July 1802.

²³⁰See Topography and Settlement.

²³¹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 Mar. 1829; *Chelt. Gazetteer*, 126.

²³²*Manor Court Books*, 196; GA, D8285/Box 3/Bundle 1 & 4.

²³³GA, D8285/Box 3/Bundle 3.

²³⁴*Gloucs. Journal*, 2 Sept. 1793.

²³⁵GA, D1388/SL/4/26.

²³⁶1801 Parish Acreage Returns, transcribed by Michael Turner (www.visionofbritain.org.uk).

²³⁷*Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, 1843).

²³⁸*Manor Court Books*, 291.

²³⁹*Manor Court Books*, 346.

²⁴⁰*Manor Court Books*, 372.

²⁴¹*Manor Court Books*, 478.

Gratton cottage²⁴², until its proximity to Thompson's spa made an alternative use more lucrative.²⁴³ John Ballinger, a gardener variously described as a seedsman and a fruiterer, traded from his house near the church,²⁴⁴ while leasing land in the Marsh to grow his crops.²⁴⁵ Thomas Cooper, yeoman, built two cottages on his land in Arle and, having sold them with 4 ½ acres of land in 1836, became a market gardener and subsequently a milkman.²⁴⁶

In 1801 only 9% of the population of Cheltenham was recorded as chiefly employed in agriculture, as opposed to 15% in trade and manufacturing.²⁴⁷ The 1811 census recorded 21% of families as chiefly employed in agriculture and 41% in trade.²⁴⁸ In 1821 there were only 6% fewer families engaged in agriculture, but as a result of the increase in population they represented only 13% of families in the town. In comparison the number of families engaged in trade had more than doubled and represented 64% of all families.²⁴⁹ By 1831 the number of families engaged in agriculture had more than halved and represented only 3% of the families in the town.²⁵⁰ In 1841 there were 38 farmers, 6 farm bailiffs and 253 agricultural labourers in Cheltenham with a further 12 nurserymen and 253 gardeners.²⁵¹ By 1843 just one market gardener was listed in Upper Alstone, which had been absorbed by the expansion of the town and the development of the railway. There were 18 market gardeners listed under Arle, Lower Alstone, Rowerfield [Rowanfield], Sandfield and Maud's Elm.²⁵²

When offered for sale the mills on the Chelt were invariably described as enjoying a never failing supply of water,²⁵³ despite the controversy over the right of the town to divert water from the river.²⁵⁴ In addition to the five mills on the Chelt, there was a flour mill at the west end of the Marle Hill lake,²⁵⁵ which was offered for sale as part of the Marle Hill estate in 1830.²⁵⁶ In 1841 there were 9 millers in Cheltenham.²⁵⁷

In 1841 the benefits of imported guano manure were being extolled to Gloucestershire's farmers and market gardeners²⁵⁸ and from 1843 growers in Cheltenham could buy it from a local agent.²⁵⁹ By the spring of 1846 the short-lived Gloucestershire Manure Company had set up a factory in

²⁴²*Gloucs. Journal*, 5 Nov. 1810 & 23 Dec. 1811.

²⁴³*Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 June 1811.

²⁴⁴*Manor Court Books*, 454, 461, 490-1; Shenton, *Cheltenham Directory* (1801), 15; GA, D2025/Box 87/Bundle 1.

²⁴⁵GA, D2025/Box 99/Bundle 1.

²⁴⁶GA, D2025/Box 26/Bundle 1.

²⁴⁷Census, 1801.

²⁴⁸Census, 1811.

²⁴⁹Census, 1821.

²⁵⁰Census, 1831.

²⁵¹Census, 1841.

²⁵²*Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (1843), passim.

²⁵³*Glouc. Journal*, 17 May 1802; *Glouc. Chronicle*, 9 Nov. 1833 & 14 June 1834.

²⁵⁴See Local Government.

²⁵⁵*Old Town Survey*.

²⁵⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 20 May 1830.

²⁵⁷Census, 1841.

²⁵⁸*Gloucs. Chronicle*, 24 Dec. 1841.

²⁵⁹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 19 Jan. 1843.

Cheltenham to produce Dr Albert's Patent Animalized Manure²⁶⁰ and chemically-prepared nightsoil,²⁶¹ coinciding with the rejection of the recommendations of a report into the town's sanitary conditions.²⁶²

Market and Fairs, Commerce and Shops

Cheltenham continued its role as a market town to the local rural hinterland.²⁶³ As the spa developed and the population increased, the existing market facilities proved inadequate.²⁶⁴ The market day was Thursday, but the increase in visitors meant that produce was brought in nearly every day during the season.²⁶⁵ The provision of adequate market facilities was an important part of the remit of the paving and lighting commissioners.²⁶⁶ At the auction of stalls in the new Market-house, 18 were taken, 14 for butchers and 4 for fishmongers.²⁶⁷ The old markethouse, despite its dilapidated state, remained in use until it collapsed in 1811.²⁶⁸ Three-quarters of the stalls in the market square were allocated to butchers when it opened in 1823, inside space was used for poultry and eggs, while greengrocers occupied the rear.²⁶⁹ In the 1830s tradesmen increasingly moved from market stalls into shops. In 1830 8 butchers, 6 poulterers and 3 fishmongers were operating in the market, all of whom had gone by 1838.²⁷⁰

By 1759 the Ascension and St James's day (5 August) fairs had been supplemented by another on the second Thursday in August.²⁷¹ Thirty years later there were two further fairs, on the second Thursday in September and the third Thursday in December. There were also two statute or mop fairs on the Thursdays either side of Michaelmas.²⁷² The August fair was particularly for lambs²⁷³ and the December for cheese.²⁷⁴ In 1767 there were complaints of farmers being unable to buy stock, because middlemen had monopolised the market.²⁷⁵ By 1808 the cattle market had moved to a site near the Knapp toll gate.²⁷⁶ In 1845 it was reported that the Cheltenham livestock fairs

²⁶⁰Patent 9442, 1842.

²⁶¹*Chelt. Examiner*, 18 Mar. 1846.

²⁶²See Local Government, Public Services and Utilities.

²⁶³*Slater's Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of Berkshire, Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Somersetshire, Wiltshire and South Wales*, (1852-3), 93.

²⁶⁴Revd. Weedon Butler the elder, *The Cheltenham Guide; or Useful Companion in a Journey of Health and Pleasure to the Cheltenham Spa*, (1781), 23

²⁶⁵Moreau, *Tour* (1786), 27

²⁶⁶See Local Government, Market Houses and Public Buildings.

²⁶⁷GA, CBR/A1/1/2, 4 May 1809.

²⁶⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 24 Jan. 1811.

²⁶⁹Griffiths, *General Guide*, (1826), 22; S. Blake, 'A Visitor to Cheltenham in 1832: the Diary of Sarah Sargent', *CLHS Journal* 13, (1997), 108-21

²⁷⁰*Pigot & Co.'s Directory of Gloucestershire*, (1830)); H. Davies, *The Cheltenham Annuaire and Directory of the Resident Gentry and Tradespeople*, (1838).

²⁷¹B. Martin, *The Natural History of England* (1759), 361.

²⁷²Moreau, *Guide*, 29.

²⁷³Butler, *Guide*, 24-5

²⁷⁴Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 25-6.

²⁷⁵*Salisbury & Wilts Journal*, 20 Apr. 1767.

²⁷⁶GA, Q/RUm/26.

were diminishing in utility each year.²⁷⁷ Despite some residents regarding their presence in the high street to be a nuisance²⁷⁸, the mop fairs continued in the centre of town throughout this period.²⁷⁹

The influence of the spa on the town's commerce is apparent from the listing of 12 shoemakers, 14 tailors, linen drapers or mercers, 6 mantua and fancy dress makers, 5 hatters or milliners, 3 peruke makers and 2 breeches and glove makers in the 1801 directory.²⁸⁰ It is apparent that initially the favoured locations for such shops, to which visitors would go in person, were in the central section of the high street, between Winchcombe Street and North Street. The premises of Edmund Turner, hatmaker, to the west of North Street were just beyond this favoured section.²⁸¹ In 1814, claiming to be the only hatmaker in Cheltenham, he described his premises as near the Fleece inn.²⁸² In 1819 J.J. Abbott set up a rival hat manufactory near the Colonnade.²⁸³ Possibly in response Turner moved his business to the south side of the high street by St George's Square, where it subsequently traded as the Cheltenham Original Hat Manufactory under Edward Lomax Plant (d. 1837) and his widow Sarah²⁸⁴, before Turner's son William took it over in 1839.²⁸⁵ The opening of the arcade of leading to the market place²⁸⁶ created a new focus for shops selling fancy goods and gourmet foods.²⁸⁷

The 1801 directory shows that in addition to the lodging houses built for the purpose²⁸⁸, many of Cheltenham's shopkeepers and tradesmen supplemented their income by letting lodgings. In 1797 the advertisement for the sale of the house and the shop of Edmund Smith, grocer and ironmonger who also ran the stamp office, on the north side of the street adjacent to Post Office Lane stated that the lodgings had been let in the summer season for nearly £50.²⁸⁹ A visitor in 1814 recorded that lodgings were available at every shop in the town and many houses on the outskirts.²⁹⁰ The increase in hotels and boarding houses as the town grew²⁹¹ presumably reduced such supplementary income. In 1843 around 40% of the properties in Imperial Square, Oxford Parade, Oxford Street, Oxford Buildings and Royal Well Terrace were listed as lodging houses.²⁹²

Most of the lodgings were let unfurnished, creating a seasonal demand for furniture and other household goods and employment for cabinet makers, upholsterers, furniture brokers and china dealers. There were eight bankruptcies involving cabinet-makers or upholsterers in Cheltenham

²⁷⁷ *Worcs. Journal*, 14 Aug. 1845.

²⁷⁸ J. Lee, *A New Guide to Cheltenham* [1837], 227.

²⁷⁹ *Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Oct. 1842; *Chelt. Journal*, 15 Oct. 1849.

²⁸⁰ J. Shenton, *Cheltenham Directory for the Year 1801*.

²⁸¹ Shenton, *Cheltenham Directory 1801*, 11.

²⁸² *Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 June 1814.

²⁸³ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 24 June 1819.

²⁸⁴ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 5 Apr. 1838.

²⁸⁵ *Chelt. Examiner*, 7 Aug. 1839.

²⁸⁶ See Local Government: Market Houses and Public Buildings.

²⁸⁷ *Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, 1843), 63; *Chelt. Journal*, 5 May & 1 Aug. 1828; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 14 & 16 Aug. 1827.

²⁸⁸ See Topography, Inclosure, suburban expansion and the built environment.

²⁸⁹ *Gloucs. Journal*, 4 Dec. 1797; Shenton, *Directory*, 9.

²⁹⁰ R. Gard (ed.), *The Observant Traveller*, (1989), 25; Northumb. Arch. ZRI.32/3/8

²⁹¹ S. Bettison, *A New Guide to Cheltenham* [1822], 188-92.

²⁹² *Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (1843).

between 1822 and 1841,²⁹³ while in 1841 there were 152 men and 27 women employed in these trades.²⁹⁴ A directory of 1843 listed 60 cabinet-makers, 11 furniture brokers, 5 china dealers and 8 upholsterers dispersed throughout the town.²⁹⁵ Auction sales of London paper hangings occurred regularly before the season started²⁹⁶, while by 1832 J.J. Jackson was making wallpaper locally.²⁹⁷ James Honiss, a house decorator in Winchcombe Street, moved from selling wallpaper in 1840²⁹⁸ to making it in a workshop onsite.²⁹⁹ In 1847 he suffered a heavy loss when a fire in the adjoining workshops of the cabinetmaker John Alder destroyed much of his stock.³⁰⁰ Alder's manufactory and house in Albion Street were separated from his warehouse by Pate's almshouses, which enabled him to continue to trade after the fire. His property was also well-insured.³⁰¹ However, the fire had destroyed the tools and workplace of 40 workmen employed by him, in support of whom a subscription was raised, while Honiss was forced to move to temporary premises.³⁰² In March 1849 Honiss moved to Clarence Street,³⁰³ where a sale of his stock was held in August³⁰⁴ following his bankruptcy.³⁰⁵

Many of the shops and businesses catering to visitors operated only during the season. Crump's universal auction room, in the former upper ballroom, disposed of household furniture and stock in trade for departing visitors and tradesmen.³⁰⁶ Mrs Langdon, a milliner, had premises in both Bath and Cheltenham.³⁰⁷ Initially in the high street close to Ruff's library, she moved to Norfolk House in Well Walk in 1817.³⁰⁸ In 1829 she advertised either her Cheltenham or her Milsom Street, Bath business for sale, intending to settle in one place.³⁰⁹ In 1833 she was in Imperial Circus³¹⁰ and in 1836 Clarence Street.³¹¹ In 1837 she sold her stock in Cheltenham and left the town³¹², although she continued to visit from Bath for the season.³¹³ As the Montpellier and Sherborne spas developed,³¹⁴ the focus of the fashionable shopping area shifted from the high street to the

²⁹³G. Elwick, *The Bankrupt Directory* (1843), passim.

²⁹⁴*Census*, 1841.

²⁹⁵*Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (1843), passim.

²⁹⁶*Chelt. Journal*, 31 Mar. 1828; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 9 Apr. 1829 & 8 Apr. 1830.

²⁹⁷*Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 Mar. 1832.

²⁹⁸*Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Aug. 1840.

²⁹⁹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 22 May 1845.

³⁰⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 May 1847.

³⁰¹GA, D2025/Box 7308/Bundle 2.

³⁰²*Chelt. Chronicle*, 17 June 1847.

³⁰³*Chelt. Looker-On*, 31 Mar. 1849.

³⁰⁴*Chelt. Journal*, 6 Aug. 1849.

³⁰⁵*London Gazette*, 17 Aug. & 2 Nov. 1849.

³⁰⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 5 Oct. 1805.

³⁰⁷*Chelt. Chronicle*, 25 May 1809.

³⁰⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 31 July 1817.

³⁰⁹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 18 June 1829.

³¹⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 26 Aug. 1833.

³¹¹*Chelt. Journal*, 8 Feb. 1836.

³¹²*Chelt. Journal*, 8 May 1837.

³¹³*Chelt. Journal*, 4 May 1840.

³¹⁴See Topography: Spas, Pumprooms and Baths.

Promenade. The Bath optician Jacob Abraham took premises in Cheltenham each season. In 1807 he was in the high street, but later he moved to the Montpellier spa and in 1840 to Queen's Circus adjacent to the Queen's hotel.³¹⁵ In 1830 Joseph Yates moved his china and glass warehouse from the high street to Clarence Street, facing the Post Office.³¹⁶ The jeweller Samuel Martin similarly had premises in Bath and Cheltenham, establishing himself in two high street shops during the 1820s.³¹⁷ In 1833 he was made bankrupt,³¹⁸ but rapidly re-established his business in partnership with Thomas Baskett, trading from 4 Imperial Circus at the northern end of the Promenade, where Martin & Co. remain in 2019.³¹⁹ In 1851 Martin, Baskett & Martin were among the exhibitors at the Great Exhibition.³²⁰ In 1827 the drapers Clark and Debenham arrived in Cheltenham and established Cavendish House in the Promenade where they also remain in 2019, the name deriving from the location of their London store.³²¹ The Scottish drapers Alexander Shirer and Donald MacDougall were established in Imperial Circus by 1833.³²² In 1836 George Bennett (d. 1838), late of Cavendish House, and his brother Charles set up a rival drapers across the Promenade in Belfast House, adjoining the Literary and Philosophical Institute.³²³ In 1850 the business was taken over by Lang & Hewlett.³²⁴ In the autumn of 1838 shoemaker John Stroud was selling his new stock at his premises in Montpellier Avenue, adjoining the Queen's hotel, while the spring stock was sold at discount in his high street shop.³²⁵ The development of Pittville also attracted traders such as the drapers Thomas & Bulgin and Smith & Sons and the wallpaper shop of Thomas Turner to Pittville Street.³²⁶

Sedan chairmen were employed in the town by the 1740s.³²⁷ From 1806 they were regulated by the paving and lighting commissioners.³²⁸ In 1827 the fly-, wheel- and sedan-chairmen combined to make a stand against revised regulations.³²⁹ Although chairman does not appear as an occupation in the 1841 census, there were 31 wheel-chairmen listed in a 1843 directory indicating the continuing importance of its status as a health resort to the town.³³⁰ The directory also listed two wheelchair makers.³³¹ The needs of visitors arriving, departing and enjoying excursions by carriage led to the employment of 71 grooms and ostlers and 77 coachmen, coach guards and postboys in

³¹⁵*Gloucs. Journal*, 27 July 1807 & 27 Aug. 1840.

³¹⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 4 Feb. 1830; GA, D2025/Box 46/Bundle 2.

³¹⁷GA, D2202/3/78/102/2 & D2202/3/78/152; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 16 July 1829.

³¹⁸G. Elwick, *The Bankrupt Directory* (1843), 274.

³¹⁹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 27 Dec. 1838; GA, D2202/5/1.

³²⁰*Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition* (1851), 121.

³²¹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1827.

³²²*Chelt. Journal*, 15 Apr. 1833; GA, D2025/Box 46/Bundle 2.

³²³*Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 Dec. 1836; GA, D2025/Box 46/Bundle 2.

³²⁴*Chelt. Examiner*, 16 Oct. 1850.

³²⁵*Chelt. Chronicle*, 13 Sep. 1838; GA, D2025/Box 46/Bundle 2.

³²⁶*Chelt. Journal*, 7 Jan. 1833; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 24 Mar. 1836 & 29 June 1837.

³²⁷GA, D2002/14/1.

³²⁸See Local Government, Town Government and Local Politics.

³²⁹*Chelt. Chronicle*, 14 June 1827.

³³⁰*Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (1843), passim.

³³¹*Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (1843), 84, 88.

1841.³³²

In 1841 the majority of employed women who were not in domestic service were involved in the making or selling of clothes (721), shoes (82) and hats (60). The other occupations involving substantial numbers of women were laundress (392), charwomen (105), schoolmistress (86), lodging housekeeper (59) and nurse (51). While substantial numbers of men were employed as shoemakers (405) and tailors (312), the provision of food was also important with bakers (144), butchers (132) and grocers (111) being well-represented.³³³

Urban Trades, Manufacturing and Service Industries

Advertisements for the sale of Cheltenham water from Henry Skillicorne's spa by London retailers first appeared in 1740;³³⁴ they were said to be sent continuously to the capital.³³⁵ The waters were bottled and packed in a warehouse on-site and by 1743 were being marketed in London, Chester, Nantwich (Ches.), Whitchurch (Salop.), Penkridge (Staffs.), Oxford, Worcester, Bristol, Bath, and Gloucester.³³⁶ The Gloucester port books record a shipment of 2 hampers to Swansea in 1747 and three shipments of 4, 6 and 16 hampers to Bristol in 1758.³³⁷ From Bristol Cheltenham water was shipped to Ireland.³³⁸

Henry Thompson built a laboratory in 1806 adjoining his Baths, to distil the salts from the waters³³⁹ for which he obtained a patent in 1807.³⁴⁰ Having purchased much of the land to the south of Cheltenham, Thompson ensured that he retained a monopoly over the commercial rights to all of the mineral water found on his land, and used access to the private roads he laid out around his estate to prevent other developers from exploiting mineral water on their estates. Thompson had over 70 wells sunk across his estate, and transported the water to his laboratory through underground pipes.³⁴¹ Advertisements for Thompson's 'real Cheltenham salts' appear between 1811 and 1839.³⁴² In 1817 the Cheltenham chemist John Griffiths Beavan joined forces with Captain Matthews of the Original Spa to set up a laboratory for making salts in competition with Thompson. The salts were on sale by 1819 and advertisements continued until 1834.³⁴³

In 1786 malting was described as 'formerly very important but now inconsiderable',³⁴⁴ although this may reflect a relocation rather than actual decrease. As the number of visitors increased, the malthouses close to the centre of high street could be put to more profitable use. One in Coffee

³³²*Census*, 1841.

³³³*Census*, 1841.

³³⁴*Daily Post*, 7 Apr. 1740.

³³⁵*Daily Post*, 24 Sep. 1741.

³³⁶*General Advertiser*, 20 Mar. 1744, 1.

³³⁷*The Gloucester Port Books Database, 1575-1765* (CD ROM, 1998). The hamper was a non-standard container for bottles.

³³⁸*Saunders's News-Letter*, 21 June, 1775; Sylvia McIntyre, 'The Mineral Water Trade in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Transport History*, 11 (1973), 1–20.

³³⁹Jameson, *Treatise on Cheltenham Waters* (1809), 186–93.

³⁴⁰*Annual Register for 1807* (1809), 860.

³⁴¹Williams, *New Guide to Cheltenham* (1825), 66.

³⁴²*Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 May 1811; *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 24 Aug. 1839.

³⁴³*Chelt. Chronicle*, 20 May 1819; *Worcester Herald*, 16 Aug. 1834.

³⁴⁴Moreau, *Cheltenham Guide* (1786) 28.

House Yard became a theatre in 1758³⁴⁵, another was used for housing development in 1786³⁴⁶ and by 1791 a third had been converted to offices.³⁴⁷ The malthouse on a divided burgage plot in the Bull backside on the north of the high street, remained in 1794.³⁴⁸ By 1801 the only two maltsters listed on the high street, Priscilla Liffully, widow and Mr Hobbins, were at the extreme west.³⁴⁹ John Liffully (d. 1799) was a baker³⁵⁰, who had an interest in the Nag's Head next to his malthouse.³⁵¹ In addition Thomas Gardner (d. 1776), who also combined the professions of maltster and baker,³⁵² owned the Fleece Inn with its brewery and malt house and the neighbouring house,³⁵³ on a plot stretching from the High Street to the back road between Fleece Lane and the grammar school.³⁵⁴ In 1841 17 maltsters were recorded in the census.³⁵⁵ The list of maltsters in Hunt & Co's directory for 1847 shows that only the (now) Agg-Gardner business had high street premises.³⁵⁶

The earliest common brewery in Cheltenham, as opposed to a brewhouse attached to an inn, was established in around 1783 by Robert Wynne,³⁵⁷ who had been an excise officer.³⁵⁸ In 1791 John Gardner (d. 1835) was described as a common brewer,³⁵⁹ two years before he was admitted to his grandfather's Fleece Lane property.³⁶⁰ In 1800 he also acquired the Greyhound on North Street with its brewery.³⁶¹ On his death the business was continued by his widow Mary and his nephew James Agg, who took the surname Agg-Gardner.³⁶² The Albion brewery on the Gloucester Road was established by Benjamin Newmarch, common brewer, and Theodore Gwinnett, attorney, whose partnership was dissolved in 1811.³⁶³ In 1826 it was run by Richard Masters³⁶⁴, who came from a family of brewers in Cirencester.³⁶⁵ His partnership with Baynham Jones esq. ended in 1828.³⁶⁶ Baynham Jones retained his interest in partnership with the brewer Joseph George Thomas

³⁴⁵Goding, *Cheltenham*, 161.

³⁴⁶*Manor Court Books*, nos. 3052, 3107a.

³⁴⁷*Manor Court Books*, no. 3231.

³⁴⁸*Manor Court Books*, nos. 2239, 2851. D2025/Box 27/Bundle 2 (part).

³⁴⁹Shenton, *Directory*, 12-13.

³⁵⁰GA, Wills 1800/11; GA, K706/1.

³⁵¹D2025/Box 13/Bundle 1.

³⁵²GA, P78/VE 2/1; *Manor Court Books*, no. 2223.

³⁵³GA, Wills 1776/182.

³⁵⁴Greet, C., and Hodsdon, J., *Cheltenham Revealed, 'Town and Tithing Plan c1800'*, (CLHS, 2012)

³⁵⁵*Census*, 1841.

³⁵⁶*Hunt & Co. Directory* (1847), 87.

³⁵⁷Moreau, *Tour*, 29.

³⁵⁸*Manor Court Books*, no. 2885; GA, D2025/Box 36/Bundle 3.

³⁵⁹GA, D2025/Box 784/Bundle 6.

³⁶⁰*Manor Court Books*, no. 3311.

³⁶¹*Manor Court Books*, no. 3643.

³⁶²GA, D2025/Box 38/Bundle 2; *Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide for Cheltenham* (1843), 54.

³⁶³*London Gazette* (1811), 1230.

³⁶⁴Griffiths, *Guide*, 83.

³⁶⁵GA, D2957/79/14.

³⁶⁶*London Gazette* (1829), 10.

Harris,³⁶⁷ until succeeded by James Leighton in 1847.³⁶⁸ Between 1829 and 1843 five brewers were declared bankrupt³⁶⁹, but demand was such that the sector employed 56 men in 1841³⁷⁰ and there were nine breweries listed in 1847.³⁷¹

The town had a limited connection to the county's woollen cloth industry. A woolcomber, Giles Ashmead junior, appears in the Manor Court rolls in 1765³⁷² and Stroud clothiers employed poor women and children from Cheltenham to sort, comb and spin woollen yarn.³⁷³ Weaving was carried on throughout the period, with the Potter family of weavers featuring in the records between 1742³⁷⁴ and 1800.³⁷⁵ The age profile of the resident cloth workers and weavers in 1851 suggests that the town's involvement with this industry had almost ceased, only two of the 15 people listed being under sixty years old.³⁷⁶ In 1781 the making of white cotton stockings was stated to be the only manufacture taking place in the town, while poor women and children combed and span wool for the clothiers of the Stroud valleys.³⁷⁷ In 1841 only a handful of people were employed in stocking making, weaving or spinning.³⁷⁸ The manufacture of lace and fancy knitting grew to meet the demand for visitors and resident gentry. Dixon & Co. are listed as lace manufacturers in 1825 and Eleanor Gater as a lace maker in 1830.³⁷⁹ The 1851 census included 5 people engaged in lace manufacture and 4 as knitters or fancy knitters, all were under forty years old.³⁸⁰ Tanning continued outside the confines of the town in Arle,³⁸¹ but only employed 7 men in 1841.³⁸²

The development of the spa and the expansion of the town meant that there was a high demand for builders and allied trades, such as bricklayers, plasterers, glaziers and plumbers. Around 10% of all bankruptcies in Cheltenham between 1821 and 1843 involved builders, with 5 builders failing in 1826, while a further 11% of bankruptcies involved trades related to construction.³⁸³ The difficult environment for builders was noted by the hostile William Cobbett in September 1826, when he found the town looking 'delightfully dull' and reported that houses were selling at a third of their former prices.³⁸⁴ The suitability of the local clay encouraged the development of brickmaking on

³⁶⁷Ibid, (1847), 94.

³⁶⁸GA, D2025/Box 45/ Bundle 6; *Hunt & Co. Directory* (1847), 69.

³⁶⁹G. Elwick, *The Bankrupt Directory* (1843), passim.

³⁷⁰Census, 1841.

³⁷¹*Hunt & Co. Directory* (1847), 69.

³⁷²*Manor Court Books*, 345.

³⁷³Butler, *Guide*, 25

³⁷⁴*Manor Court Books*, 266, 432.

³⁷⁵J. Shenton, *Cheltenham Directory*, (1800), 11,12

³⁷⁶Census, 1851.

³⁷⁷Butler, *Guide*, 25.

³⁷⁸Census, 1841.

³⁷⁹S. Bettison, *History of Cheltenham and Visitors' Guide*, (1825), 101; Pigot & Co, *National and Commercial Directory of England and Wales*, (1830).

³⁸⁰Census, 1851.

³⁸¹GA, D2025/Box26/Bundle1

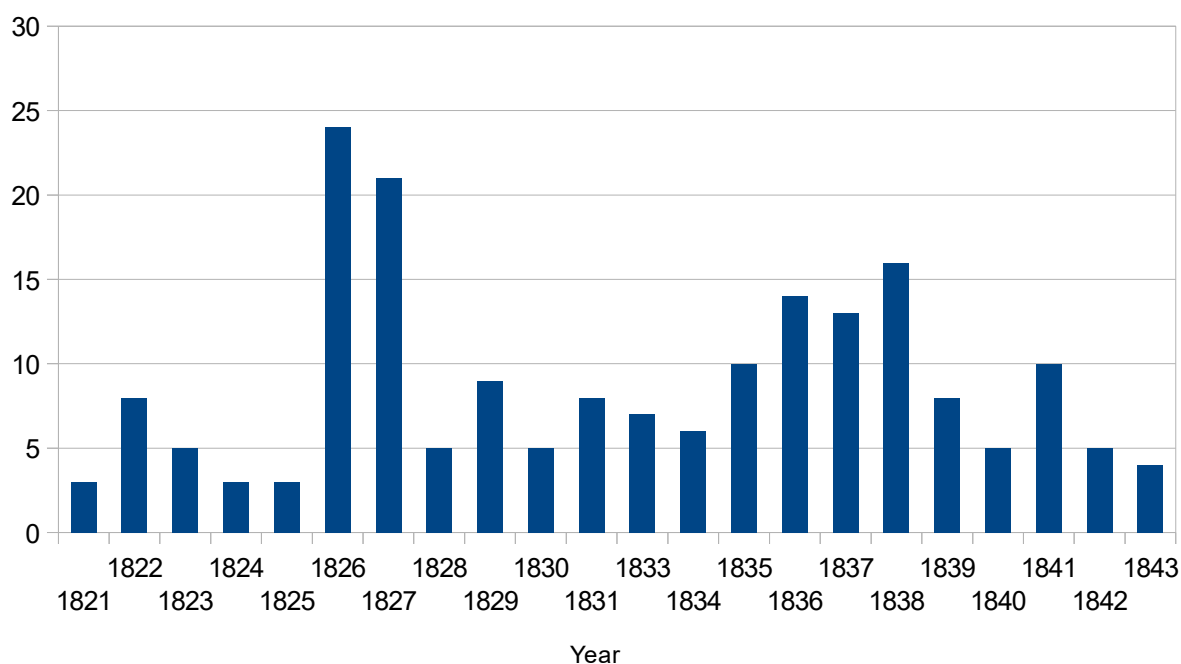
³⁸²Census, 1841.

³⁸³G. Elwick, *The Bankrupt Directory* (1843), passim.

³⁸⁴William Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (1830), 523-4.

the fringes of the town. Four brickmakers became bankrupt between 1827 and 1843³⁸⁵, while nine were operating in 1847.³⁸⁶ In 1841 there were 354 carpenters, 218 painters, plumbers and glaziers, 147 masons, 121 plasterers and 107 bricklayers.³⁸⁷

Bankruptcies 1821-1843



Cheltenham's development also attracted coachbuilders, such as William Powell who moved his business from Gloucester in 1811³⁸⁸ and William Shackleford of Oxford.³⁸⁹ Powell, who established premises in Winchcombe Street³⁹⁰, was bankrupted in 1829.³⁹¹ Benjamin Fagg (d. 1841), who had built a livery stables in St George's Place,³⁹² also set up a coachbuilding workshop there. He assured customers that his London-trained workforce could produce carriages as fine as those on sale in the capital.³⁹³ In 1834 George Acklam, one of these workmen, took over the coachbuilding business.³⁹⁴ Complaints to the paving and lighting commissioners concerning his forge led to an

³⁸⁵Elwick, *Bankrupt Directory*, passim.

³⁸⁶Hunt & Co. *Directory* (1847), 69.

³⁸⁷Census, 1841.

³⁸⁸Gloucs. *Journal*, 6 May 1811.

³⁸⁹Oxford *Chronicle & Reading Gazette*, 2 Dec. 1837.

³⁹⁰Chelt. *Journal*, 30 Mar. 1829.

³⁹¹Elwick, *Bankrupt Directory*, 330.

³⁹²Chelt. *Gazetteer*, 60.

³⁹³Chelt. *Chronicle*, 27 Feb. 1834.

³⁹⁴Chelt. *Chronicle*, 13 Nov. 1834.

order to remove it from the site.³⁹⁵ Acklam was made bankrupt the following year.³⁹⁶ William Green took over the workshop in St George's Place³⁹⁷, while Fagg sold carriages in Clarence Street.³⁹⁸ In 1840 the St George's Place property was sold³⁹⁹, when Benjamin Fagg fell into debt⁴⁰⁰, and William Green was made bankrupt the following year.⁴⁰¹ In contrast to Fagg's business the Shackleford coachbuilding work in Albion Street to the east of Sherborne Place flourished. In addition to making carriages for horses,⁴⁰² they diversified into building railway carriages.⁴⁰³ In 1841 there were 46 men and 1 woman employed in some form of coach building.⁴⁰⁴

Other manufacturers were also attracted by the commercial opportunities in Cheltenham. John Lewis, a stonemason in Gloucester, had acquired additional premises in Cheltenham by 1812.⁴⁰⁵ In 1828 the company moved from the high street to Pittville Street,⁴⁰⁶ before returning to a high street site opposite St George's Square in 1830⁴⁰⁷ and moving to North Street in 1837.⁴⁰⁸ George Lewis became known as a notable sculptor, enjoyed royal patronage, and was responsible for numerous funeral monuments and memorial tablets in Cheltenham and beyond.⁴⁰⁹ By 1849 he was in Clarence Street, from where he offered to export commissions to British colonies throughout the world.⁴¹⁰ The native Cheltonian sculptor William Montague Gardner, who was responsible for the statue commemorating the coronation of William IV now in Montpellier Gardens, also had premises in the high street,⁴¹¹ but was less commercially successful⁴¹² and eventually moved to Leamington Spa.⁴¹³ In 1821 Richard Eede Marshall from London took over the business of Oliver Watts, furnishing ironmonger, manufacturing smith and oil colourman in the high street.⁴¹⁴ In 1829 he moved to premises in Clarence Street⁴¹⁵, which had to be rebuilt in 1838 after a fire.⁴¹⁶ By 1841 he was manufacturing the Arnott thermometer stove⁴¹⁷ and in 1848 he registered a designed for a

³⁹⁵GA, CBR/A1/4/1/5; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 8 Jan. 1835.

³⁹⁶Elwick, *Bankrupt Directory*, 2; *Chelt. Journal*, 5 Aug. 1837.

³⁹⁷*Chelt. Examiner*, 23 Sept. 1840.

³⁹⁸*Chelt. Looker-On*, 10 Feb. 1838.

³⁹⁹*Chelt. Examiner*, 3 June 1840.

⁴⁰⁰GA, Q/RID/2; *Gloucs. Chronicle*, 27 June 1840.

⁴⁰¹Elwick, *Bankrupt Directory*, 171.

⁴⁰²*Chelt. Chronicle*, 10 Aug. 1848.

⁴⁰³*Gloucs. Chronicle*, 6 June 1840.

⁴⁰⁴*Census*, 1841.

⁴⁰⁵*Gloucester Journal*, 13 Aug., 1804; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 6 Feb. 1812;

⁴⁰⁶*Chelt. Chronicle*, 24 Apr. 1828.

⁴⁰⁷*Chelt. Chronicle*, 29 July 1830.

⁴⁰⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 19 Oct. 1837.

⁴⁰⁹GA, D2025/Box 46/Bundle 13 & D2025/Box 76/Bundle 7; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 23 July, 1829, 3 Jan. 1840, 6 May 1847.

⁴¹⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 12 July 1849.

⁴¹¹GA, D2202//3/78/102/9.

⁴¹²GA, Q/RID/2; *Gloucs. Chronicle*, 29 June 1839; *Chelt. Journal*, 20 Oct. 1845.

⁴¹³*Leamington Spa Chronicle*, 25 Oct. 1873.

⁴¹⁴*Chelt. Chronicle*, 17 May 1821.

⁴¹⁵*Chelt. Journal*, 15 June 1829.

⁴¹⁶*Chelt. Looker-On*, 2 June 1838.

⁴¹⁷*Chelt. Chronicle*, 16 Dec. 1841; D. Bogue, *Manual of Domestic Economy* (1847), 13.

clip and file for holding letters, papers and pamphlets.⁴¹⁸ He later developed the business further in partnership with two of his sons as R.E. & C. Marshall.

Local Government

Alex Craven & Jan Broadway

Until 1786 Cheltenham remained under the control of the manor court and parish vestry. From the early 18th century, the manor court was little more than a court of record for property transactions within the manor.⁴¹⁹ The homage continued to meet and tithingmen were appointed for each tithing in the hundred until at least 1775, although no aleasters were appointed after 1765.⁴²⁰ As the reputation and popularity of the spa increased concerns were expressed about the state of the town, and paving and lighting commissioners were appointed by Act of Parliament in 1786.⁴²¹

Town Government and Local Politics

The Act appointed 58 commissioners, who were to have an estate worth at least £20 a year or personal property worth £400, and were to appoint new commissioners to fill vacancies. The Act empowered the commissioners to levy a rate upon property within the town and to borrow against the credit of the rates.⁴²² Twelve commissioners attended the first meeting at the Plough, with John de la Bere taking the chair.⁴²³ Edward Timbrell, who had been active in support of the Act⁴²⁴, was appointed treasurer. The other salaried position, as clerk and collector, was taken by De la Bere's clerk Henry (Harry) Rooke.⁴²⁵ Attendance at meetings was low, even among the active commissioners. For the 24 meetings held in the first year, the usual attendance was between 6 and 8 commissioners, with one meeting being abandoned as only two commissioners arrived. From March 1787 the meetings were held at the George Inn⁴²⁶. In 1794 it was reported that many householders had failed to pay the rate and considerable arrears were due.⁴²⁷ Opposition to the commissioners is suggested by the offer of a reward to anyone identifying those who were breaking the street lamps.⁴²⁸ In September 1797 five new commissioners were elected to replace those that had died.⁴²⁹ The minute book records only one meeting over the next six years, attended by four commissioners.⁴³⁰ At the next meeting in July 1803 Harry Rooke was appointed

⁴¹⁸TNA, BT 45/9/1647.

⁴¹⁹*Manor Court Books*, xix.

⁴²⁰TNA, C 116/140.

⁴²¹26 Geo. III, c. 116.

⁴²²26 Geo. III, c. 116.

⁴²³GA, CBR A1/1/1, 26 June 1786.

⁴²⁴*Commons Journals* 1786 (1803), 735.

⁴²⁵GA, D181/box 98092/7 & 8.

⁴²⁶GA, CBR A1/1/1, 26 Mar. 1787.

⁴²⁷GA, CBR A1/1/1, 2 July 1794.

⁴²⁸GA, CBR A1/1/1, 27 July 1795.

⁴²⁹GA, CBR A1/1/1, 12 Sep. 1797.

⁴³⁰GA, CBR A1/1/1, 17 Mar. 1800.

treasurer in place of Edward Timbrell, who had died three years before.⁴³¹ At the following meeting 20 more commissioners were appointed to replace those who had died, but two subsequent meetings had to be adjourned for want of attendees.⁴³²

A new Act was passed in 1806, which appointed 72 commissioners.⁴³³ The commissioners had the power to appoint others to join them, who were to be qualified by an estate worth £50 or personal property worth £1,000. In July 1806 26 commissioners met at the George Hotel under the chairmanship of the banker Sir Robert Herries, with Harry Rooke being appointed treasurer, assessor and collector (he resigned in November), and Theodore Gwinnett clerk. It was agreed that there should be fixed, special meetings on the first Tuesday of February, May, August and October each year.⁴³⁴ They set the boundaries of the town at some distance to the north and south of the high street, ensuring that much of the future development of the town would be brought under their jurisdiction once completed.⁴³⁵ The commissioners assumed a greater responsibility for regulating the town, ordering the surveyor to prevent horses and carriages from using footpaths,⁴³⁶ the constables to prevent children from playing in the street,⁴³⁷ and a private householder to remove gunpowder from his premises.⁴³⁸ The commissioners also began to regulate sedan chairs: 14 men were licensed as chairmen, a new rate of fares was introduced, and the surveyor was ordered to supervise their conduct.⁴³⁹ At the start of 1807 permission was received from the magistrates to increase the number of commissioners,⁴⁴⁰ but by July 1808 a further increase was sought as a number of meetings had lacked attendees.⁴⁴¹ From 1809 the commissioners met in a public office upstairs in the new market house.⁴⁴² The following year it was reported that several people were in arrears with the rate and refused to pay.⁴⁴³ In December 1811 a meeting was held to elect 12 new commissioners to replace those who had died.⁴⁴⁴

A new Act of 1821 repealed the previous two Acts and appointed 125 new commissioners.⁴⁴⁵ Resistance to the commissioners and their officers is suggested by the inclusion of penalties for assaulting or impeding the officers in the course of their work. The commissioners' meetings transferred to the Fleece inn, although the public office above the old market hall was used as a venue for petty sessions by local magistrates until the 1830s.⁴⁴⁶

⁴³¹GA, CBR A1/1/1, 22 July 1803; *Gloucs. Journal*, 17 Mar. 1800.

⁴³²GA, CBR A1/1/1, 9 Aug., 24. Aug. & 9 Sep. 1803.

⁴³³46 Geo. III, c. 117.

⁴³⁴GA, CBR A1/1/2, 29 July & 4 Nov. 1806.

⁴³⁵GA, CBR A1/1/2, 11 Nov. 1806.

⁴³⁶GA, CBR A1/1/2, 6 Aug. 1808.

⁴³⁷GA, CBR A1/1/2, 4 Oct. 1808.

⁴³⁸GA, CBR A1/1/2, 1 Nov. 1808.

⁴³⁹GA, CBR A1/1/2, 26 Aug. 1806, 2 Jun. 1807, 16 Feb. 1808.

⁴⁴⁰GA, CBR A1/1/2, 17 Jan. 1807.

⁴⁴¹GA, CBR A1/1/2, 12 July 1808.

⁴⁴²Griffith, *General Guide*, 25–26.

⁴⁴³GA, CBR A1/1/2, 11 Dec. 1810.

⁴⁴⁴GA, CBR A1/1/2, 24 Dec. 1811.

⁴⁴⁵1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 121.

⁴⁴⁶Davies, *Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham* (1832), 109.

Although the commissioners assumed many of their functions within the town, the vestry remained responsible for the administration of the poor law and the maintenance of unadopted roads. The open vestry involved a wider and more diverse section of the town than the oligarchic paving and lighting commissioners and in 1822 the parish voted not to adopt a select vestry.⁴⁴⁷ In 1832 a committee of the vestry proposed that a clause should be added to the proposed Sewer Company Act of Parliament, providing for the election of commissioners for administering the affairs of the town. They proposed that commissioners should hereafter be chosen exclusively by the rate-payers, that none should be eligible unless they owned sufficient property in Cheltenham and also resided in the town, and that one-fifth of the commissioners should be elected each year.⁴⁴⁸ In 1833, moved by proposals to reform urban corporations, the vestry petitioned the House of Commons to introduce elections wherever possible. Contrasting their newly-won right to elect an MP with the oligarchic nature of the commissioners, they called for the repeal of the 1821 Act and a new Act establishing elections for the commissioners.⁴⁴⁹

The nature of the open vestry led to divisions and some issues being determined by slender margins and dissenters in particular objecting to paying towards Anglican worship. The allocation of votes, according to the value of property on which church rates were paid, gave greater weight to larger landowners.⁴⁵⁰ Polls were required in 1831 to elect an assistant overseer⁴⁵¹, in 1833 over the payment of expenses such as the salary of the organist and the lighting of the church with gas from the church rates,⁴⁵² and in 1834 to elect the parish churchwarden and the surgeon.⁴⁵³ In 1834 the vestry resolved to hold its meetings in the infant school rather than in the body of the church.⁴⁵⁴ After it was determined that the parish was responsible for the maintenance of St Paul's church, a sizeable minority sought a six month postponement.⁴⁵⁵

There was inevitably confusion over the respective responsibilities of the vestry and the paving commissioners, particularly with regard to the maintenance of the roads.⁴⁵⁶ In 1839 a new Paving and Lighting Bill was sought by the commissioners, but opposed by the vestry.⁴⁵⁷ At the same time objections were raised by a number of Pittville householders that they should be exempt from the commissioners' rates as their houses stood on private roads. After a protracted dispute, it was determined by arbitration that inhabitants who lived on private roads derived benefit from nearby public roads and should be rated.⁴⁵⁸ In March 1840 a meeting of the commissioners at the Fleece to hear appeals against the rate attracted an angry crowd and six of those deemed responsible for the ensuing disorder were arrested for riot.⁴⁵⁹ Philip Strickland, one

⁴⁴⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 26 Dec. 1822.

⁴⁴⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 Jan. 1832.

⁴⁴⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 15 Mar. 1832.

⁴⁵⁰59 Geo. III c. 12.

⁴⁵¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 23 June 1831.

⁴⁵²GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 Dec. 1833.

⁴⁵³GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 1 Apr. 1834.

⁴⁵⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 27 Feb. 1834.

⁴⁵⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 9 Aug. 1838.

⁴⁵⁶S. Pruen, *The Cheltenham Improvement Act 1852* (1853), 71.

⁴⁵⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 17 Jan. 1839.

⁴⁵⁸GA, CBR A2/3/2/1.

⁴⁵⁹GA, CBR A2/3/3/4/1; A. Courtenay, 'Philip Strickland and the Fleece Riot of 1840', *CLHS Journal* 6 (1988), 36-41.

of the four defendants subsequently found not guilty at the assizes, had his appeal against the rate upheld by the magistrates at the quarter sessions in April 1840, challenging the commissioners' ability to levy rates and leaving them without an income.⁴⁶⁰ In the face of considerable local opposition to the proposed extension of the commissioners' powers and a lack of support from Craven Berkeley, the town's MP, the parliamentary bill failed to progress.⁴⁶¹ The decision of the magistrates in the Strickland case was overturned by a Queen's Bench ruling in May 1841, confirming the commissioners ability to set a rate.⁴⁶²

Between 1840 and 1842 motions against setting the church rate were repeatedly defeated by a minority of voters wielding a majority of the votes.⁴⁶³ Motions to replace the rate with voluntary subscriptions were defeated in 1843⁴⁶⁴ and 1844.⁴⁶⁵ In 1845 the churchwardens were forced to summon a number of parishioners who had refused to pay the church rates.⁴⁶⁶ In 1848 a proposal by opponents that the church rate should only cover compulsory charges was carried after a poll.⁴⁶⁷ In 1849 the churchwardens successfully secured support for the payment of salaries to the organist and the churchyard beadle, after the opposition was defeated by a show of hands.⁴⁶⁸ In April 1851, faced with unusually heavy costs for repairs to the church, the vestry adopted a proposal that voluntary donations should be sought from the congregation before levying a church rate.⁴⁶⁹ From June 1851 the church rate was limited to funding repairs to the church.⁴⁷⁰ Inhabitants who lived on glebe land were exempt from the payment of church rates and from 1845 it was the practice not to levy church rates on any household assessed at under £8 a year for the poor rate. Consequently there were over 2,000 more houses assessed for the poor rate than for church rates in 1851.⁴⁷¹

The Functions of the Paving and Lighting Commissioners

Paving, Lighting and Drainage

Under the terms of the 1786 Act, proprietors were to pave or pitch before their properties, under the direction of the commissioners, laying a flat stone footpath on either side of the high street. The commissioners were also empowered to erect lamps in the public streets and contract for the lighting of them, and to employ a scavenger to clean the streets.⁴⁷² Householders were ordered to remove posts and railings in front of their houses in the high street and to divert spouting water into pipes.⁴⁷³ The old market house and buttercross were demolished, removing a significant

⁴⁶⁰GA, CBR A2/3/3/1.

⁴⁶¹*Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1840.

⁴⁶²*Law Reports* n.s. X part II (1841), 99-103.

⁴⁶³GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 16 July 1840, 7 Aug. 1841 & 21 July 1842.

⁴⁶⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 1 June 1843.

⁴⁶⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 6 June 1844.

⁴⁶⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 30 Oct. 1845.

⁴⁶⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 28 Sep. 1848.

⁴⁶⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 13 Dec. 1849.

⁴⁶⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 22 Apr. 1851.

⁴⁷⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 20 June 1851; *Accounts and Papers of the House of Commons* 48 (1856), 52.

⁴⁷¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 May 1851.

⁴⁷²26 Geo. III, c. 116.

⁴⁷³GA, CBR A1/1/1, 18 July 1786.

obstruction from the street.⁴⁷⁴ Paving contractors and a surveyor were appointed in September 1786,⁴⁷⁵ but progress was delayed by a disagreement among the commissioners over the scheduling of work during the summer season.⁴⁷⁶ Agreement that the high street began at the stile leading into the field at the top of the town was reached in March 1788.⁴⁷⁷ The paving remained incomplete at the beginning of 1792,⁴⁷⁸ but in the following years the paving was gradually extended to lanes and footpaths leading off the main street.⁴⁷⁹ Scavengers were appointed in November 1786, when it was also agreed to order 120 lamps.⁴⁸⁰ The lamps were to be erected at 25 yard intervals on each side of the high street and a lamplighter was appointed.⁴⁸¹

In 1788 the court leet jury presented that the water from Cambray Mill was not being diverted along the high street as it should be.⁴⁸² In 1803 the commissioners noted that it was absolutely necessary that the high street should be watered more effectively, although there is no evidence that any action was taken.⁴⁸³ Following the clarification of their powers and responsibilities by the 1806 Act,⁴⁸⁴ the commissioners approached the mill owners about the supply of water. An agreement was reached with William Barrett of Cambray Mill to allow the water to run down the street three times a week, provided he was indemnified against claims by the owners of the downstream mills.⁴⁸⁵ The practice of diverting the water through sluices from the mill pond of Cambray Mill continued for several years, but in 1813 William Barrett was given notice about the opening of the sluices and the surveyor instructed to ensure they were in working order.⁴⁸⁶ Faced with threats of legal action by other mill owners on the river, the commissioners erected a number of pumps around the town in order to supply it with water for washing the streets and in case of fire, and allowed the practice to cease.⁴⁸⁷ However, in 1830 the commissioners expressed concerns about the greater risk of fire and the increased need to cleanse the streets due to the great increase in population, and renewed again the town's claims upon the water from the mill.⁴⁸⁸

Having established the southern boundary of the town, in 1806 the commissioners ordered that a carriageway be built to connect the town with the spa, determining that the Colonnade should be extended.⁴⁸⁹ In 1809 they acquired the right to extend Colonnade Road to connect with Henry Thompson's rides, although these were subsequently relinquished when the carriageway which

⁴⁷⁴GA, CBR A1/1/1, 25 July & 8 Nov. 1786.

⁴⁷⁵GA, CBR A1/1/1, 5 & 13 Sep. 1786.

⁴⁷⁶GA, CBR A1/1/1, 2 & 16 Jan. 1787.

⁴⁷⁷GA, CBR A1/1/1, 7 Mar. 1788.

⁴⁷⁸GA, CBR A1/1/1, 27 Jan. 1792.

⁴⁷⁹GA, CBR 1/1/1, 22 Feb. 1793, 2 July 1794.

⁴⁸⁰GA, CBR A1/1/1, 8 Nov. 1786.

⁴⁸¹GA, CBR A1/1/1, 16 Jan & 7 Aug. 1787.

⁴⁸²GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 9.

⁴⁸³GA CBR A1/1/1, 22 July 1803.

⁴⁸⁴46 Geo. III, c. 117.

⁴⁸⁵CBR, A1/1/2, 12 May 1807; D2025/Box 138/Bundle 9.

⁴⁸⁶GA, CBR A1/1/2, 1 June 1813.

⁴⁸⁷GA, CBR A1/1/3, 2 & 9 June, 6 Dec. 1819.

⁴⁸⁸GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 9.

⁴⁸⁹GA, CBR A1/1/2, 6 Aug. 1806.

eventually became the Promenade was developed.⁴⁹⁰

The 1821 Act gave the commissioners the power to impose regulations upon the builders of private roads, before adopting them as public highways once completed.⁴⁹¹ The limits of the town were set at one and a half miles from the parish church, but restrictions were placed upon the rating of premises until adjacent streets had been paved. In 1821 the vestry appointed a committee to enquire into the state of the bye-roads not under the charge of the commissioners. Finding a number of them to be unclean and in need of repairs, they resolved that the proprietors of private roads should be made to remedy these defects, or the paving commissioners should be induced to take them into their charge.⁴⁹²

The vestry maintained the power to adopt private roads as public highways, under the charge of the surveyors of the highways.⁴⁹³ In 1833 two surveyors of the highways were appointed for the town, one of whom was to serve as bye-road surveyor and as surveyor of the common sewer according to the new Sewer Company Act. Two more surveyors were appointed, one each for the tithings of Alstone and Westall,⁴⁹⁴ and later in 1833 a salaried assistant surveyor for Alstone was also appointed.⁴⁹⁵ When James Fisher's proposal to dedicate the road running around Suffolk Square as a public highway was accepted, a protest was recorded in the vestry books that the road was to the benefit of a few and not to the advantage of the many.⁴⁹⁶ Gradually a number of other private roads were brought under the supervision of the surveyors of the highways.⁴⁹⁷ The parish resisted the adoption of Hatherley Lane in 1834.⁴⁹⁸ In 1836 the vestry nominated 15 men to serve as a board for the highways. The vestry also appointed three surveyors, for Arle, Alstone, and Westall, Naunton and Sandford.⁴⁹⁹ Concerns were expressed about the heavy expenditure and poor accounting of the latter, and the vestry appointed a committee to superintend the management of the roads in Westall, Naunton and Sandford.⁵⁰⁰ The Promenade, Imperial Square, and the footpath between Suffolk Lawn and Tivoli were all made public roads in 1840.⁵⁰¹ In the 1840s the legality of the highways board was disputed.⁵⁰² Although counsel advised that the board was legally constituted and had control of all of the roads in Cheltenham township for which the paving commissioners were not liable,⁵⁰³ in 1846 the board was dissolved and a surveyor of highways appointed.⁵⁰⁴ At the same time an account was prepared for the commissioners of the

⁴⁹⁰*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 43, 141-2.

⁴⁹¹1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 121.

⁴⁹²GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 1 Dec. 1821.

⁴⁹³eg. GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 1 Nov. 1827, 8 Nov. 1827.

⁴⁹⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 23 Sep. 1833.

⁴⁹⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 10 Oct. 1833.

⁴⁹⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 26 Sep. 1833.

⁴⁹⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 23 Jan. 1834.

⁴⁹⁸Gloucestershire Chronicle, 22 Mar. 1834

⁴⁹⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 25 Mar. 1836.

⁵⁰⁰Cheltenham Chronicle, 28 Mar. 1839.

⁵⁰¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 12 Mar. 1840.

⁵⁰²*Cheltenham Examiner*, 13 Nov. 1844; GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 24 June 1845.

⁵⁰³GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 26 June 1845.

⁵⁰⁴*Cheltenham Examiner*, 29 July 1846.

extent of their responsibilities.⁵⁰⁵ The vestry recognised the importance of maintaining and improving the major routes into and surrounding the town as it expanded, to provide both effective communications and attractive drives for visitors. In 1849 the vestry successfully negotiated with landowners to widen Sandford Road and Thirlstaine Road.⁵⁰⁶

Market Houses and Public Buildings

By 1781 the 17th century market house and the earlier booth hall were dilapidated and inconveniently placed within the high street.⁵⁰⁷ They were demolished in 1786 on the orders of the newly appointed paving commissioners⁵⁰⁸ and replaced by a new market house on the site of the old blind house and prison.⁵⁰⁹ By 1803 this building was found to be too small for the needs of the expanding town⁵¹⁰ and in 1805 there was a complaint against William Stiles, fruiterer, for erecting a stall in the street.⁵¹¹ Following the passing of a new Improvement Act in 1806, it was agreed that a new market house was required.⁵¹² The commissioners leased the tolls of the market from the lord of the manor, Lord Sherborne for 21 years and a new market house was built in 1808-9 on the south side of the high street with a shambles behind.⁵¹³

By 1816 the new market house was proving inadequate and the commissioners proposed to move the fruit and vegetable sellers to a new site on Rose and Crown Passage to the north of the high street.⁵¹⁴ In order to sell the existing market building and build a new one, the Commissioners required a new parliamentary act and the permission of Lord Sherborne.⁵¹⁵ Although the necessary powers were obtained by the 1821 Act, the commissioners chose to relinquish their rights to the property and market tolls, in exchange for Lord Sherborne paying two-thirds of the cost of the Act and £500 per annum for the remainder of the existing lease.⁵¹⁶ A new market house built by Lord Sherborne opened in 1823 on Rose and Crown Passage.⁵¹⁷ It measured 84 by 42 feet and stood in the centre of a spacious square and was entered from the high street through an elegant arcade of shops.⁵¹⁸

Public Services and Utilities

When the prison site in the high street was required for the market, the commissioners directed that it should be removed to the location of the pound, with a new pound being made on the

⁵⁰⁵*Cheltenham Examiner*, 3 Nov. 1847.

⁵⁰⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 25 Jan. 1849.

⁵⁰⁷Butler, *Guide*, 23; Carolyn Greet, 'Cheltenham's Early Market Buildings', *CLHS Journal* 24 (2008), 15-27.

⁵⁰⁸GA, CBR A1/1/1, 18 & 25 July 1786.

⁵⁰⁹*Manor Court Books*, 440; GA, CBR A1/1/1, 27 Sep. 1786.

⁵¹⁰Dibdin, *Cheltenham*, 25.

⁵¹¹GA, CBR A1/1/1, 19 Aug. 1805.

⁵¹²GA, CBR A1/1/2, 16 Sep. 1806.

⁵¹³Griffith, *General Guide*, 25-26; GA, CBR A1/1/1, 16 September, 1806; GA, CBR A1/1/2, 2 May 1809.

⁵¹⁴C. Greet, 'Cheltenham's Early Market Buildings', *Cheltenham Local Hist. Soc. Jnl.* 24, (2008), 25; CBR A1/1/1, 4 Dec. 1815; *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 June 1816

⁵¹⁵GA, CBR A1/1/3, 4 Nov. 1818.

⁵¹⁶C. Greet, 'Cheltenham's Early Market Buildings', *Cheltenham Local Hist. Soc. Jnl.* 24, (2008), 26

⁵¹⁷*Chelt. Gazetteer*, 150-1.

⁵¹⁸Griffiths, *Historical Description*, 15.

Marsh.⁵¹⁹ In 1788 they ordered that a new stone prison should be built in Fleece Lane.⁵²⁰ In 1811 the clerk was instructed by the commissioners to get an estimate for a new prison on the same plan as that recently erected in Cirencester.⁵²¹ A keeper for the new prison was appointed in October 1813.⁵²² In March 1814 the commissioners advertised a contract for the pulling down and rebuilding of the new prison using the old materials.⁵²³ A single cell was available for use by July 1814.⁵²⁴

Following a number of attempted burglaries, the commissioners decided to appoint night watchmen in the spring of 1809,⁵²⁵ and the Cheltenham Association for prosecuting felons was established in the autumn.⁵²⁶ The vestry proposed a permanent police force be set up in 1811, but the measure was set aside due to the need to acquire a royal charter.⁵²⁷ Three liveried beadles were appointed by the parish in the spring of 1817, and increased to four by the end of the year.⁵²⁸ Initially, the beadles were to be paid by the visitor of the poor, and to receive a donation from the parishioners at Christmas.⁵²⁹ Besides their duties in the parish at large, the beadles were to attend church services and to open pews for parishioners, and they were to be allowed to receive up to 1s. for doing so.⁵³⁰ In 1819 it was ordered that they were to receive a salary of £4 a year, on condition that they appear in church in their livery as they had done previously.⁵³¹ In 1823 the beadles' right to receive money for showing people to their pews was rescinded, it having been found that they treated the voluntary arrangement as a fee.⁵³²

An order for the erection of stocks was made by the commissioners in 1815,⁵³³ which in 1818 were moved to the prison yard.⁵³⁴ The petty sessions held in the public office increased from once a week in 1818⁵³⁵ to three times by 1826.⁵³⁶ A Cheltenham Guardian Society was established in 1829 to offer rewards for the detection and prosecution of criminals, supported by annual subscriptions.⁵³⁷ There were apparently no stocks in the parish in 1834 when the justices required their setting up, prompting the vestry to express its strong feeling against such a mode of

⁵¹⁹GA, CBR A1/1/1, 27 Sep. 1786.

⁵²⁰GA, CBR A1/1/1, 7 Apr. 1788.

⁵²¹GA, CBR A1/1/2, 5 Mar. 1811.

⁵²²GA, CBR A1/1/2, 5 Oct. 1813.

⁵²³*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 17 Mar. 1814.

⁵²⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 21 Jul. 1814.

⁵²⁵GA, CBR A1/1/2, 7 & 10 Mar. & 4 Apr. 1809.

⁵²⁶*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 28 Sep. 1809.

⁵²⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 28 Feb. 1811.

⁵²⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 8 Apr. 1817, 9 Dec. 1817.

⁵²⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 8 Apr. 1817.

⁵³⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 9 Dec. 1817.

⁵³¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 13 Apr. 1819.

⁵³²GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 June 1823.

⁵³³GA, CBR A1/1/3, 3 May 1815.

⁵³⁴GA, CBR A1/1/3, 4 Mar. 1818.

⁵³⁵Griffith, *General Cheltenham Guide* (1818), 214.

⁵³⁶Griffith, *New Historical Description of Cheltenham* (1826), I, 115.

⁵³⁷*Cheltenham Journal*, 25 May 1829; Davies, *Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham* (1832), 111–12.

punishment.⁵³⁸

A police force was established under the authority of the paving commissioners in the winter of 1831–2. A station was erected near St George's Square, and the town was divided into ten districts. Twenty constables were employed to patrol the town at day and at night, under the command of the chief constable, G. Russell.⁵³⁹ After the establishment of the police force, the vestry continued to employ beadles until 1845.⁵⁴⁰ In 1840 the police force consisted of a superintendent, an inspector, a clerk, three sergeants, and 20 constables.⁵⁴¹ After the commissioners' right to levy rates upon the town was called into question in 1840, they could no longer finance a local police force, and the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire was requested to direct the rural Police to operate in Cheltenham.⁵⁴² In 1842 the justices instructed the parish to nominate 40 men to serve as parish constables under the terms of the recent Act.⁵⁴³ The vestry's objection, that they already paid a rate towards policing to the paving commissioners,⁵⁴⁴ was unsuccessful and they were required to contribute to the county rate.⁵⁴⁵

In 1788 the vestry paid £1 5s. a year to maintain the parish's fire engines.⁵⁴⁶ Following the 1806 act the paving commissioners took responsibility for the town's fire engines and sought help from the insurance companies towards the cost of an engine house.⁵⁴⁷ In 1812 the surveyor reported that he had found the fire engines unfit for use on inspection and recommended the appointment of ten regular firemen with keys to the engine house.⁵⁴⁸ In 1839 a new fire engine house was built at a cost of £1,000, and a fire brigade was created under the supervision of the paving commissioners.⁵⁴⁹ When the neighbouring parishes refused to contribute to the costs, the commissioners restricted the use of the fire brigade to the limits of the town.⁵⁵⁰

In 1806 there was a sewer in St George's Place, to which Dr Jenner requested permission to open a drain from his house.⁵⁵¹ In 1808 the commissioners set up a committee to consider the setting up of a common sewer for the whole town.⁵⁵² In 1811 the sewer from St George's Place to the brook was adopted as a common sewer⁵⁵³, but despite repeated proposals the perceived cost hampered further progress.⁵⁵⁴ In 1831 a proposal was made by the vestry to build a common sewer under the

⁵³⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 3 July 1834.

⁵³⁹Davies, *Stranger's Guide to Cheltenham* (1832), 111.

⁵⁴⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, Easter 1838, 9 Apr. 1844, 30 Oct. & 20 Nov. 1845.

⁵⁴¹GA, CBR A2/3/3/1.

⁵⁴²GA, CBR A2/3/3/1.

⁵⁴³5 & 6 Vic. c. 109.

⁵⁴⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 29 Sep. 1842.

⁵⁴⁵*Cheltenham Journal*, 9 Dec. 1844.

⁵⁴⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 9 June 1788.

⁵⁴⁷GA, CBR A1/1/2, 16 Sep. 1806 & 16 Jun. 1807.

⁵⁴⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 10 Dec. 1812.

⁵⁴⁹*Chelt. Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1840; Verey & Brooks, *Glos.* II, 265.

⁵⁵⁰*Chelt. Chronicle*, 10 Dec. 1846.

⁵⁵¹GA, CBR A1/1/2, 9 Dec. 1806.

⁵⁵²GA, CBR A1/1/2, 5 Jan. 1808.

⁵⁵³GA, CBR A1/1/2. 2 July 1811.

⁵⁵⁴*Chelt. Chronicle*, 16 Apr. 1812 & 16 Dec. 1819.

high street and other streets of the town,⁵⁵⁵ which was supported by the majority of the affected householders.⁵⁵⁶ The Cheltenham Sewers Company was established by an Act of 1833, with the power to create a main sewer under the length of the high street.⁵⁵⁷ A report into the sanitary state of the town was submitted to the Board of Guardians in 1846, but its proposals were rejected.⁵⁵⁸ In 1849 the proposals of the inspector regarding improvements needed to ensure public health met with considerable opposition from the ratepayers.⁵⁵⁹ Despite the creation of the company, when the report was compiled there were still only 736 of 6,451 houses in the town connected to its sewers, and the remainder had to use cesspools or private sewers, many of which emptied into the river Chelt.⁵⁶⁰

By an Act of 1824 a company was formed to provide Cheltenham with a better supply of water.⁵⁶¹ The company were to create a reservoir at Northfield farm in Charlton Kings parish. Individual householders could connect their homes to the mains water supply at a rate of 5% of the value of the house, with a minimum rate of 12s. Another Act of 1839 enabled an enlargement of the water works, with the acquisition of new sources of water in Charlton Kings and Dowdswell,⁵⁶² and a new reservoir was built in Charlton Kings.⁵⁶³ The company was given the power to extend the supply of water to the neighbouring parishes of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury, and Swindon. The high cost of the rates charged by the company was criticised in 1847, when it was observed that many houses in poorer districts were poorly supplied with water and had inadequate sewerage. The company observed that their lowest rates, at 8s., were lower than those mandated by the original Act, and that landlords of poorer homes would not pay for water supply or sewers.⁵⁶⁴ A new Act enabling the company to raise money for a further reservoir was passed in 1847.⁵⁶⁵

In December 1817 a proposal was made to the commissioners that the town's lighting should be converted to gas.⁵⁶⁶ The commissioners were agreeable provided there was no outlay required, but opposed the seeking of a parliamentary act as a threat to their own authority.⁵⁶⁷ The Cheltenham Gas Light and Coke Company was established⁵⁶⁸ and incorporated in 1819.⁵⁶⁹ A gas works was built on the south side of the Tewkesbury road, to the west of the old Gloucester road and the first gas lamps operated in the high street by the autumn of 1818.⁵⁷⁰ Unusually the gas works used brick

⁵⁵⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 8 Dec. 1831.

⁵⁵⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 Jan. 1832.

⁵⁵⁷3 & 4 Wil. IV, c. 33; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 10 Dec. 1812.

⁵⁵⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1847.

⁵⁵⁹Cresy, Edward, *Report to the General Board of Health on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage [etc.] of Cheltenham* (1849); *Chelt. Chronicle*, 29 Dec. 1849.

⁵⁶⁰Goding, *History of Cheltenham*, 512.

⁵⁶¹5 Geo. IV, c. 132.

⁵⁶²2 Vic., c. 25.

⁵⁶³Goding, *History of Cheltenham*, 523.

⁵⁶⁴GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 12.

⁵⁶⁵10 Vic., c. 8; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 28 Jan. 1847.

⁵⁶⁶GA, CBR A1/1/3, 3 Dec. 1817.

⁵⁶⁷GA, CBR A1/1/3, 19 Jan. & 10 Feb. 1818.

⁵⁶⁸*Chelt. Chronicle*, 5 Nov. 1818.

⁵⁶⁹59 Geo. III, c. 17.

⁵⁷⁰*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 8 Oct. 1818.

rather than iron for the retort, which required a greater supply of fuel and combined with the high cost of labour, limited market for the coke produced as a by-product and exceptionally high ratio of public to private consumption made the gas comparatively expensive.⁵⁷¹

Poor Relief

In the early 18th century the vestry appointed five overseers for the parish, two for the town and one for each tithing within the parish.⁵⁷² It was later reported that the two men appointed for the town were the overseers of the poor for the parish, and the three men from the hamlets were appointed 'for their ease' as collectors.⁵⁷³ In 1743 and 1744 the justices appointed the overseers. The men appointed for Arle and Alstone refused to serve, whilst the man appointed for Westal, Naunton and Sandford paid the money he levied to the two overseers of Cheltenham, who maintained the poor of the whole parish. Around 1751 several individuals in Arle refused to pay their poor rates, objecting that the overseers of the town had no right to act within the other tithings, and wanting to maintain their poor separately from the rest of the parish. In 1779 the parish appointed a vestry clerk, with responsibility for overseeing the poor for his salary of 20 guineas.⁵⁷⁴ An assistant overseer was appointed in 1821, to have a salary of 6d. in every pound collected by him.⁵⁷⁵ In 1825 the assistant overseer was dismissed,⁵⁷⁶ and the office remained suspended for two years.⁵⁷⁷ In 1833 the vestry selected twelve men to be presented to the justices, from whom they were to appoint four men to serve as overseers.⁵⁷⁸

In 1752 the poor rate for the whole parish amounted to £38 9s. 8¾d., of which £18 19s. 7d. was due from Cheltenham tithing, 39 1s. 4½d. from Arle, £4 18s. ¼d. from Alstone, and £5 10s. 9d. from Westal, Naunton and Sandford.⁵⁷⁹ In 1757 the vestry ordered that nobody was to be relieved out of the workhouses except in extraordinary circumstances,⁵⁸⁰ but within six years the vestry was again paying the rents of paupers within the parish.⁵⁸¹ The deficit between the poor rate collected and expended⁵⁸² led the vestry to consider the sale of the poor's grounds in 1776.⁵⁸³ Total expenditure averaged £644 a year between Easter 1783 and Easter 1785, while poor rate during the same period raised an average of £677.⁵⁸⁴

In 1803 annual expenditure on the poor was over £1551. In that year 36 people were maintained in the workhouse and 139 received out-relief, including 19 who were aged or disabled. A further

⁵⁷¹S. Hughes, *A Treatise on Gas-Works* (1853), 87-8.

⁵⁷²See above, Local Government 1540-1738.

⁵⁷³GA, D2025/Box 5/Bundle 4.

⁵⁷⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 6 Apr. 1779.

⁵⁷⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 13 Dec. 1821.

⁵⁷⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 18 Aug. 1825, 1 Sep. 1825, 22 Sep. 1825.

⁵⁷⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 10 May 1827.

⁵⁷⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 15 Mar. 1833.

⁵⁷⁹GA, D2025/Box 5/Bundle 4.

⁵⁸⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 10 Oct. 1757.

⁵⁸¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 14 Nov. 1763.

⁵⁸²*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 175 (1804), I, 146.

⁵⁸³GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 15 Apr. 1776.

⁵⁸⁴*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, I, 174.

44 people were occasionally in need of out-relief.⁵⁸⁵ Following the accumulation of a considerable debt, a new poor rate assessment was made of property in 1811,⁵⁸⁶ and the parish adopted the provisions of the 1782 poor law amendment act, appointing a guardian and a visitor of the poor.⁵⁸⁷ An order was made in 1812 to sell four houses and a plot of land belonging to the parish to help defray the costs of building the new workhouse.⁵⁸⁸ Expenditure upon the poor totalled £2,572 in the year 1812–3, but had fallen to £1,953 two years later.⁵⁸⁹ In 1814–5 there were 46 people relieved in the workhouse, 193 received relief in their homes, and another 130 were occasionally in receipt of relief from the overseers.⁵⁹⁰ The cost of the poor rate continued to rise, totalling £2,401 in 1819–20,⁵⁹¹ and £2,860 in 1824–5.⁵⁹² In 1827 it was resolved by the vestry that the poor rates of properties let for terms less than a year would be paid by the owners and not the occupiers.⁵⁹³ The poor rate totalled £3,686 in 1828–9,⁵⁹⁴ and peaked at £4557 in 1832–3, although it had fallen to £3,411 in the following year.⁵⁹⁵

In 1849 the overseers were directed to raise a fund of £250 to defray the expenses of poor parishioners who were willing to emigrate.⁵⁹⁶ In 1851 the vestry recommended that the Guardians should raise £2,000 by loan to defray the expenses of parishioners who were willing to emigrate.⁵⁹⁷ A committee appointed by the vestry in 1849 to enquire into the poor's ground found that they contained c. 18 a. and were let for £63 pa. The profits amounted to £53 a year, a sum which was disbursed by the churchwardens each year on St Thomas' Day to individuals who were not in receipt of poor relief from the Poor Law Union, in the form of tickets which could be exchanged within the town for food or clothing. The committee proposed a scheme to divide the land into a number of small allotments for the use of the labouring working classes, but the project was abandoned when the churchwardens were advised that they had no legal power to make such changes.⁵⁹⁸

The Royal Oak inn, on the south side of the high street at the lower end of the town, was converted into a workhouse in about 1730.⁵⁹⁹ After the workhouse burned down c. 1778,⁶⁰⁰ a meeting of the vestry decided to purchase a new house.⁶⁰¹ This decision was overturned at a subsequent meeting, when it was claimed that the previous meeting had not been properly

⁵⁸⁵ *Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, I, 175.

⁵⁸⁶ GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 8 Apr. 1811.

⁵⁸⁷ GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 23 Apr. 1811, 14 Jan. 1812; 22 Geo. III c. 83.

⁵⁸⁸ GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 14 Jan. 1812.

⁵⁸⁹ *Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 82 (1818), XVI, p. 146.

⁵⁹⁰ *Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 82 (1818), XVI, p. 147.

⁵⁹¹ *Poor Rate Returns 1816–21, 1822* (556), p. 56.

⁵⁹² *Poor Rate Returns 1825–9, 1830–1* (83), p. 67.

⁵⁹³ GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 16 Aug. 1827.

⁵⁹⁴ *Poor Rate Returns 1825–9, 1830–1* (83), p. 67.

⁵⁹⁵ *Poor Rate Returns 1830–4, 1835* (444), p. 65.

⁵⁹⁶ GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 28 June 1849.

⁵⁹⁷ GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 6 Mar. 1851.

⁵⁹⁸ GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 28 June 1849, 16 Nov. 1849.

⁵⁹⁹ GA, D2025/Box 5/Bundle 4; D2024/1.

⁶⁰⁰ GA, D2024/1.

⁶⁰¹ GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 15 Dec. 1778.

advertised, and that the cost would be a great burden to tenants on rack rents.⁶⁰² Consequently it was agreed to lease rather than purchase a house.⁶⁰³ In 1786 the workhouse occupied a leased house in Day Lane,⁶⁰⁴ but in 1789 the parish leased land to build a new workhouse with a large work room on the ground floor and accommodation on the floor above.⁶⁰⁵ In 1797 the vestry resolved that the poor of the workhouse would be employed in the pin trade.⁶⁰⁶ By 1808 the workhouse was inadequate, and new premises were built near the Knapp.⁶⁰⁷ A small asylum for the insane was added in 1810.⁶⁰⁸ Four cottages in the corner of the churchyard were also used to accommodate poor elderly women of the parish.⁶⁰⁹ They were ordered to be demolished in 1815, and the tenants were to be placed in more comfortable houses.⁶¹⁰ The workhouse was purchased outright in 1821.⁶¹¹ It was ordered to be sold in 1841, after the building of the new Union workhouse,⁶¹² but no buyer was found. The premises were still in the possession of the parish in 1852, when the London, Dean Forest, and South Wales Coal Company enquired about buying them.⁶¹³

The master of the workhouse appointed in 1755 was to have an annual salary of £8, plus 1s. 4d. for each inmate within the house and the profits of their work. He was to act as the collector for the overseers, keeping 6d. in the pound of every rate levied, and would also be paid for every vagrant taken before the magistrates and convicted. Other parishes could also use the workhouse upon payment of 10s. to the master.⁶¹⁴ In 1756 the master was allowed £40 from the poor rates for one year in order to employ the poor.⁶¹⁵ In 1790 the salary of the master was 20 guineas.⁶¹⁶ In April 1799 the parish signed an agreement with John Dobbins by which he was paid £775 in instalments to take possession of the rented workhouse and its contents and to 'keep the children and other poor persons for the time being residing in the said workhouse in habits of industry'.⁶¹⁷ This arrangement was renewed in the following year,⁶¹⁸ but in 1801 the master was paid a salary of 24 guineas,⁶¹⁹ reduced by 1804 to 20 guineas.⁶²⁰ By 1822 the salary of the governor was £40 a year.⁶²¹

⁶⁰²GA, P 78/1 VE 2/1, 30 Apr. 1779.

⁶⁰³GA, P 78/1 VE 2/1, 12 Oct. 1779.

⁶⁰⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, Mar. 1786.

⁶⁰⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 24 Nov. 1789.

⁶⁰⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 25 July 1797.

⁶⁰⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 23 Aug. 1808.

⁶⁰⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 23 Jan. 1810.

⁶⁰⁹Williams, *New Guide to Cheltenham* (1825), p. 14.

⁶¹⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 5 Aug. 1813.

⁶¹¹GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 10.

⁶¹²GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 2 Dec. 1841.

⁶¹³GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 10.

⁶¹⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 1 Apr. 1755.

⁶¹⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 1 June 1756.

⁶¹⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 6 Apr. 1790.

⁶¹⁷GA, P78/1 OV 9/2, 29 April 1799.

⁶¹⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 21 Apr. 1800.

⁶¹⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 7 Apr. 1801.

⁶²⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 6 Apr. 1804.

⁶²¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 1 Apr. 1823.

The Cheltenham Poor Law Union was formed in 1835, comprising Cheltenham and eleven other neighbouring parishes.⁶²² A new workhouse was built in Swindon Lane in 1841.⁶²³ In 1847 the vestry complained that the effect of the Poor Removals Act⁶²⁴ had been to greatly increase the burden of poor relief in large towns like Cheltenham. There was a great increase in the number of applicants for relief, many of whom would previously have belonged to other districts, requiring four workhouses to be run. In the period 1842–44 the expenditure of Cheltenham on the relief of the poor had averaged £6,549 from a total for the Union of £8,796; in 1846 the parish had contributed 80% of a total Union expenditure of £11,643. Remedying the situation had proved difficult because of resistance from guardians representing the rural parishes, many of whom served ex officio and rarely attended meetings. The vestry petitioned the House of Commons, requesting an increase of the number of elected guardians for Cheltenham in recognition of the increased population of the town since 1835.⁶²⁵ As a result the Poor Law commissioners proposed increasing the number of guardians for Cheltenham, and dividing the parish into wards. Whilst the parishioners welcomed the prospect of a full and fair representation on the board of guardians, they considered the division inadvisable.⁶²⁶

Social History

Alex Craven

with Jan Broadway

Social Structure

Before the discovery of the spa, Cheltenham was a small provincial market town, and its social structure reflected this. A scattering of minor gentlemen and a handful of professional gentlemen, principally attorneys, resided on the outskirts of the town, whilst shopkeepers provided goods and services to the rural hinterland. The principal occupation in the village remained agriculture. The commercial exploitation of the spa from 1738 gradually transformed the social structure of the town, although towards the end of the 18th century it was still described by one native as ‘little more than a good farming village’.⁶²⁷

The spa was first noticed by Defoe in the 1742 edition of his *Tour thro’ Great Britain*,⁶²⁸ and had apparently been visited by five peers of the realm and ‘an abundance of Persons of Distinction’ by 1743.⁶²⁹ The quality of visitor accommodation was notably improved in the early 1740s when Lady Frances Stapleton (?1679–1746), heiress to West Indian sugar estates, built what was known as the Great House, on a site convenient for both town and spa.⁶³⁰ The number of visitors to the spa

⁶²²GA, G/CH 8a/1

⁶²³*Chelt. Examiner*, 3 Nov. 1841.

⁶²⁴9 & 10 Vic. c. 66.

⁶²⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 Feb. 1847.

⁶²⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 15 June 1847.

⁶²⁷GA, D729/1.

⁶²⁸Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain*, ed. Samuel Richardson, 4 vols. (3rd ed., 1742); facsimile reprint as *A Tour Thro’ Great Britain 1742* (1975), II, 284–86.

⁶²⁹*County Curiosities*, printed by J. Sketchley and S. Warren ([Bristol], 1757), 60.

⁶³⁰See, Topography and Settlement.

increased throughout the 18th century, aided by improved communications to the town. Newspapers began to list genteel arrivals at the spa in the late 1750s.⁶³¹ The spa became a focus not only for invalids in search of a cure but also for a great number of society visitors, and by 1781 a Cheltenham summer season had developed.⁶³²

The popularity of the spa was demonstrated by the publication of new guides to the town such as Weedon Butler's *Cheltenham Guide or Useful Companion* (1781) and Simeon Moreau's *Tour to Cheltenham Spa* (1789). Whilst advocating the medicinal qualities of Cheltenham's waters, the purpose of both guides was to promote Cheltenham as a fashionable resort, extolling its amusements and providing itineraries for local excursions. The number of visitors continued generally to increase, albeit with fluctuations. There were 374 visitors in 1780, and 1,320 in 1787.⁶³³ The visit of George III to take the waters in 1788, and possibly a preference for inland spas during wartime⁶³⁴, increased Cheltenham's popularity as a resort. During the royal visit, the number of visitors totalled 1,550, and although this was not matched in the immediately following years, numbers returned to a similar level in 1792.⁶³⁵

The social spaces of Cheltenham were strictly demarcated, with areas such as the gardens of Montpellier and Pittville prohibited to servants, and the assembly rooms prohibited to clerks or tradesmen.⁶³⁶ The high street represented a liminal space, where genteel visitors to the spa could stroll among the booths of the fair or market, their ears accosted by the organ-grinders, hurdy-gurdy players, fiddlers and tambourines,⁶³⁷ and their wallets prey to pick-pockets.⁶³⁸ The contrast between 'the intolerable Croud' attending the annual fair, and the quiet airiness of the genteel resort to the south of the town was particularly striking to one visitor in 1788.⁶³⁹ In 1818, after the considerable expansion of the town, Griffith was still able to draw attention to the 'amusing sight' of 'the mixture of London elegance with Gloucestershire fashion... the crowding together of rustic lads and Bond Street beaux, of rural lasses and Westminster belles.'⁶⁴⁰

The growth of Cheltenham as a spa town encouraged remarkable levels of immigration, as the town's population boomed. In 1841 over a third of the population had been born outside of Gloucestershire.⁶⁴¹ Most of these were from other counties in England, but there were almost 941 Irish and 267 Scots resident within the hundred of Cheltenham, as well as 8 people born in the colonies, and c. 200 foreigners or Britons born in foreign countries.⁶⁴² Of Cheltenham residents in 1851 born outside Gloucestershire, many had come from the neighbouring counties. However, there were 1,131 from Ireland, 373 from Scotland, 553 from the colonies, and 148 foreigners

⁶³¹*Oxford Journal*, 15 July 1758, 3.

⁶³²Butler, *Guide*, 31

⁶³³Moreau, *Tour*, 27.

⁶³⁴P. Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560-1815: A Social History* (1990), 186

⁶³⁵Moreau, *Tour*, 40.

⁶³⁶Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 61, 65.

⁶³⁷Ruff, *History of Cheltenham* (1803), 60.

⁶³⁸*Reading Mercury*, 7 Apr. 1788.

⁶³⁹Herts. Archives, D/EBk/C24/1.

⁶⁴⁰Griffith, *General Guide*, 26–7.

⁶⁴¹Census, 1841.

⁶⁴²Census, 1841.

resident in the town.⁶⁴³

The largest single occupational category in the town was domestic service, which employed 916 males and 3,599 females in 1841 (13% and 66% respectively of the employed population). While only 165 people were listed as almspeople, pensioners, paupers, or beggars, the 14% of male workers described as labourers indicate a substantial section of the population living in poverty. At the same time, almost 2,500 individuals were described as being of independent means in 1841, of whom 202 were minors and 1,716 were adult women.⁶⁴⁴ Although the rate of increase slowed, Cheltenham's population continued to grow over the 1840s. Cheltenham's reputation as a spa town continued to prove popular as a destination for unmarried women, and 6,510 women resident in Cheltenham in 1851 were spinsters, representing 41% of the total, together with Bath the highest proportion of any district in England.⁶⁴⁵ In that year, there were 3,474 women over the age of 20 employed in domestic service,⁶⁴⁶ and another 1,039 women of independent means resident in Cheltenham.⁶⁴⁷

Social Context

In the mid-18th century Cheltenham was one of numerous small spas, competing for the custom of those seeking medical treatment in pleasant surroundings with genteel company. It benefited from proximity to Bath, providing a more salubrious environment than that congested city during the summer months.⁶⁴⁸ Its comparative inaccessibility⁶⁴⁹ compared to Epsom, the Bristol Hotwells or Tunbridge Wells constrained its rapid development, but also gave it a social exclusiveness for those who enjoyed their own transport. A letter to the *Morning Post* in 1743 stressed the wealth and gentility of the visitors, giving a list headed by the Duke and Duchess of Argyll.⁶⁵⁰ The complaints that its inns and taverns were less comfortable and more expensive than those of the Hotwells⁶⁵¹ was less significant to those who stayed with their own servants in lodgings. In the 1740s the number of subscribers varied between 451 and 667, although it is not known how many of these came from the immediate vicinity.⁶⁵² This was less than a tenth of the numbers who flocked to Bath.⁶⁵³

The accessibility of Cheltenham from both London and Windsor by carriage made it a suitable place for the courtier Lord Fauconberg to take the waters. The apparent benefit of the water for his scorbutic condition, the availability of suitable land, the potential of the town for further development and the stationing of his regiment of Yorkshire volunteers near the south coast all contributed to Fauconberg's decision to have his own house built.⁶⁵⁴ In 1788 he lent this to George

⁶⁴³Census, 1851.

⁶⁴⁴Census, 1841.

⁶⁴⁵Census, 1851.

⁶⁴⁶Census, 1851.

⁶⁴⁷Census, 1851.

⁶⁴⁸Phyllis Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560-1815: A Social History*, 311.

⁶⁴⁹See Communication: Road Traffic.

⁶⁵⁰Goding, *Cheltenham*, 256.

⁶⁵¹*Bath Chronicle*, 28 Oct. 1784.

⁶⁵²Goding, *Cheltenham*, 250.

⁶⁵³Hembry, *The English Spa*, 114, 155.

⁶⁵⁴Sir N. W. Wraxall, *Posthumous Memoirs of His Own Time* (1836), 421; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 27 Nov. 1780.

III for his five week sojourn in Cheltenham, the only visit to an English spa by a ruling Hanoverian monarch. Bath's expectation that the king would visit that summer was not realised.⁶⁵⁵ In 1789 Lord Fauconberg's house was extended and additional lodging houses prepared against the expectation of a further royal visit, although it was rumoured this was a ruse to counter suggestions that the water had not relieved the king's condition.⁶⁵⁶ Fauconberg's patronage continued to be important to the spa until his death in 1802.⁶⁵⁷ While Bath suffered a decline in the 1790s, visitors to Cheltenham increased in number and became more aristocratic.⁶⁵⁸

In 1816 Cheltenham's reputation as a health spa received a further boost, when the Duke of Wellington visited to take the waters on his return to England.⁶⁵⁹ In the subsequent decades the town attracted increasing numbers of retired military and naval officers and former colonial civil servants, many of whom became permanent residents.⁶⁶⁰ There are 21 memorials to officers who served with Wellington at Waterloo in the town.⁶⁶¹

Cultural Life

The season at Cheltenham lasted from May until October, although the busiest period was between June and early September.⁶⁶² This summer season ensured that the spa was not in direct competition with the spring and autumn seasons of Bath.⁶⁶³ Balls and concerts were staged at Powers Court⁶⁶⁴ and the Great House⁶⁶⁵ from the 1740s. Jane Edwards of Redland, Bristol attended 'the assembly' three times in ten days during a stay in the town in August 1745 en route to visit her nephew at Batsford.⁶⁶⁶ In 1758 there were balls on Mondays and Thursdays during the season with card assemblies on the other days apart from Sundays.⁶⁶⁷ Public breakfasts were introduced at the old spa on Monday mornings during the season in 1763,⁶⁶⁸ From 1775 the Monday morning public breakfasts were moved to the new long room, where balls were also held on Monday evenings, when the old room was used for card parties and the playing of billiards.⁶⁶⁹

Simeon Moreau (d. 1801) had tried and failed to be elected Master of Ceremonies at Bath in

⁶⁵⁵*Bath Chronicle*, 10 July 1788.

⁶⁵⁶*Bath Chronicle*, 2 Apr. 1789; *Derby Mercury*, 7 May 1789.

⁶⁵⁷*Bath Chronicle*, 4 Apr. 1799.

⁶⁵⁸Hembry, *The English Spa*, 193.

⁶⁵⁹G.N. Wright, *Life and Campaigns of Arthur, Duke of Wellington* vol. 4 (1841), 70.

⁶⁶⁰Stuart Fraser, 'Exiled from Glory': Anglo-Indian Settlement in Nineteenth-Century Britain, with special reference to Cheltenham' (University of Gloucestershire, PhD, 2003).

⁶⁶¹J. & D. Bromley, *Wellington's Men Remembered* 2 vols. (2015), passim.

⁶⁶²Butler, *Guide*, 39.

⁶⁶³Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770* (Oxford, 1991), 141

⁶⁶⁴GA, D245/IV/13.

⁶⁶⁵D153/1/96.

⁶⁶⁶D2002/14/1.

⁶⁶⁷*Gloucster Journal*, 25 July 1758.

⁶⁶⁸*Oxford Journal*, 23 July 1763.

⁶⁶⁹Butler, *Guide*, 38–39.

1777.⁶⁷⁰ Transferring to Cheltenham in 1780, he apparently appointed himself to the office⁶⁷¹ with the support of the lessee of the Town Rooms, exacerbating divisions between the patrons of Cheltenham's rival establishments.⁶⁷² Once established, he presided over the cultural life of the spa until his death and from 1783 promoted it to a wider audience through successive editions of his guidebook. After the visit of George III to the spa in 1788 Moreau had a special gold medal struck to commemorate the occasion, and account of which appeared in his guide.⁶⁷³ After the purchase of Powers Court by Thomas Hughes, the old ballroom or Town Rooms was demolished and replaced by a new assembly room in 1784.⁶⁷⁴ In the same year, William Miller, the lessee of the old well, opened an assembly room opposite the theatre in Cambray. Later known respectively as the Lower and Upper Assembly Rooms,⁶⁷⁵ balls and other entertainments alternated between these two venues each week under the direction of Moreau,⁶⁷⁶ whilst the rooms at the Great House were used for cards, dancing, and tea-drinking.⁶⁷⁷

As a result of the building of the rival assembly rooms in the high street, the long room at the well, called the Spa Room, was said to be little attended by 1793.⁶⁷⁸ By 1803 the management of both assembly rooms were in the same hands, Hughes' tenant at the Lower Assembly Rooms, Henry Rooke, having purchased the Upper Assembly Rooms from Miller.⁶⁷⁹ The Lower Assembly Rooms were replaced with larger and more impressive building in 1816.⁶⁸⁰ The premises comprised a capacious ballroom, billiard room, tea room, was the venue for the Gloucestershire and Cheltenham Club,⁶⁸¹ and housed a library and an auction room.⁶⁸²

At the old well entertainment was provided by a band of musicians who depended upon donations from visitors.⁶⁸³ In 1818 they played every morning and evening 'above' the well,⁶⁸⁴ but following its enclosure they played in the new room every morning.⁶⁸⁵ The old well celebrated its centenary in 1838 with a public breakfast and an evening fête, and a deputation from the town presented a commemorative medal to Queen Victoria.⁶⁸⁶ It continued to function into the 1840s, with music performances in the mornings and afternoons, and occasional fireworks displays in the evenings.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁷⁰B. Little, 'The Gloucestershire Spas: an eighteenth-century parallel', *Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History*, ed. P. McGrath and J. Cannon (Bristol, 1976), 188.

⁶⁷¹D. Souden ed., *Byng's Tours* (1991), 10; Moreau, *Tour*, 31.

⁶⁷²Souden, *Byng's Tours*, 30.

⁶⁷³Moreau, *Tour* (1797), 9.

⁶⁷⁴GA, D245/IV/13.

⁶⁷⁵Ruff, *History of Cheltenham* (1803), 46.

⁶⁷⁶Moreau, *Tour* (1793), 43.

⁶⁷⁷Butler, *Cheltenham Guide* (1781), 31.

⁶⁷⁸Moreau, *Tour* (1793), 44.

⁶⁷⁹Ruff, *History of Cheltenham* (1803), p. 46.

⁶⁸⁰Griffith, *General Guide*, 144.

⁶⁸¹Griffith, *General Guide*, 145.

⁶⁸²Griffith, *Historical Description I*, 68.

⁶⁸³Griffith, *General Guide*, 86.

⁶⁸⁴Griffith, *General Guide*, 86.

⁶⁸⁵Williams, *New Guide*, 22.

⁶⁸⁶Goding, *Cheltenham*, 381–2.

⁶⁸⁷Davies, *Stranger's Guide Through Cheltenham* (1843), 61–2.

Moreau was succeeded by James King, who was also MC at the Lower Rooms in Bath,⁶⁸⁸ and who held the office at Cheltenham until his death in 1816.⁶⁸⁹ Following King's appointment winter amusements were established,⁶⁹⁰ which in 1818 comprised balls once a fortnight and a ladies' promenade and card assembly on the alternate week.⁶⁹¹ King was succeeded by A. Fotheringham, who died in 1819.⁶⁹² The selection of Charles Henry Marshall as Master of Ceremonies was described as 'the most severe contest ever known'.⁶⁹³ By 1826 the number of permanent residents had increased to such an extent that the winter season was almost as significant as the summer season.⁶⁹⁴ The Cheltenham season was said to begin in October and last until April, when in 1849 a committee of the town sought to revive the summer season.⁶⁹⁵

By the 1830s the Assembly Rooms had been surpassed by the Montpellier Rotunda as the principal venue for fashionable society at the spa. Here, musical promenades were held in the gardens or the pump room several evenings a week, with a ball once a week. On fair evenings the Rotunda, pump room and walks were all lit.⁶⁹⁶ The Assembly Rooms with its balls and concerts remained the principal venue for the winter season.⁶⁹⁷

As the spa developed, Cheltenham featured on the itinerary of touring theatre companies.⁶⁹⁸ The first dedicated theatre was established in a converted malt house in Coffee House Yard⁶⁹⁹. In 1758 Mr Williams's Company of Comedians performed three times a week during the season.⁷⁰⁰ A visitor to Cheltenham in 1776 described the venue a 'inconvenient, cold, and dirty'.⁷⁰¹ The actress Sarah Siddons came to wider notice whilst acting at Cheltenham as part of a touring company.⁷⁰² By 1780 John Boles Watson, manager of the Cheltenham Company of Comedians, had made a number of improvements, but the venue still proved too small.⁷⁰³ In 1782 Watson opened Cheltenham's first purpose-built theatre in York Passage, near the upper High Street.⁷⁰⁴ In 1805 Watson opened a new, larger theatre⁷⁰⁵, built on 5 a. of Cambray Mead purchased from Joseph Pitt.⁷⁰⁶

⁶⁸⁸Ruff, *History of Cheltenham*, 48.

⁶⁸⁹Williams, *New Guide*, 97.

⁶⁹⁰Ruff, *History of Cheltenham*, 48.

⁶⁹¹Griffith, *General Guide*, 145.

⁶⁹²Williams, *New Guide*, 97.

⁶⁹³Williams, *New Guide*, 97; Griffith, Griffith, *Historical Description I*, p. 62.

⁶⁹⁴Griffith, *Historical Description I*, 63.

⁶⁹⁵GA, D1950/X6.

⁶⁹⁶Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 58–9, 62–3.

⁶⁹⁷Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 66–8.

⁶⁹⁸*Cirencester Flying Post*, 6 Aug. 1744.

⁶⁹⁹Goding, *History*, 333.

⁷⁰⁰*Gloucester Journal*, 25 July 1758.

⁷⁰¹Edward Pigott, Diary, I, article 457, Beinecke Library, Yale, quoted in Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770* (Oxford, 1991), 146–7.

⁷⁰²ODNB, Sarah Siddons.

⁷⁰³ODNB, John Boles Watson; Butler, *Cheltenham Guide* (1781), 94; *Oxford Journal*, 21 Sep. 1782.

⁷⁰⁴*Oxford Journal*, 27 Apr. & 22 June 1782.

⁷⁰⁵*Gloucester Journal*, 4 Feb. 1805.

⁷⁰⁶GA, C/DC/F 55; D2025/Box 73/Bundle 16.

A circulating library had been established in Cheltenham by Samuel Harward by 1783,⁷⁰⁷ who converted the old pump room at the old well into a reading room shortly afterwards.⁷⁰⁸ By 1803 Harward had relocated his library to the Colonnade, and also owned a bookshop in the High Street where patrons could read the daily newspapers. Two other libraries were located in the High Street, both near the Colonnade.⁷⁰⁹ By 1818 there were five libraries in the High Street, of which Bettison's Library and Williams' Library, on the corner of the Lower Assembly Rooms, were the largest and most significant.⁷¹⁰ A literary saloon, originally intended to be used as an assembly room, was opened in 1822.⁷¹¹ The Montpellier Library was established at the Montpellier Rotunda before 1832.⁷¹² In 1843 Henry Davies listed four libraries of note: the Montpellier Library, William's Library, Lee's (formerly Bettison's), and Lovesy's Library, in the Colonnade.⁷¹³

In 1817 the Foundation Lodge of the freemasons moved from Abingdon (Oxon.) to Cheltenham in 1817, where it met at Sheldon's Hotel until 1823 when it moved to the Portland Street hall.⁷¹⁴ A second lodge, the Royal Union Lodge, moved from Cirencester to Cheltenham in 1822.⁷¹⁵ It met in a variety of hotels until also moving to Portland Street in 1854. A large masonic procession of lodges from Cheltenham and elsewhere in the county preceded the laying of the first stone of the Pittville Pump Room.⁷¹⁶

Samuel Harward leased musical instruments such as harpsichords and piano fortes from the 1780s⁷¹⁷ and a musical library had been established by 1803.⁷¹⁸ In 1818 a large repository of musical instruments adjoining the Plough supplied a wide range of musical instruments for sale or hire, and also comprised a musical library, whilst another repository of instruments and music was located next to the Vittoria Hotel; Williams' Library, on the corner of the Lower Assembly Rooms, also stocked music and let piano fortes.⁷¹⁹ An 1825 guide could list three teachers of music, two teachers of art, one teaching of dancing, and five teachers of French or Italian.⁷²⁰

One Mr Arden gave a philosophical lecture every morning in 1781.⁷²¹ A Literary and Philosophical Institute was founded in 1814 by Edward Jenner, meeting at the Assembly Rooms, but it but it did not long survive his retirement to Berkeley in 1815.⁷²² A museum dedicated to the study of

⁷⁰⁷Moreau, *Tour*, 32.

⁷⁰⁸Moreau, *Tour* (1789), 24.

⁷⁰⁹Ruff, *History of Cheltenham*, 55–8.

⁷¹⁰Griffith, *General Guide*, 149–51.

⁷¹¹Griffith, *Historical Description I*, 73.

⁷¹²Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 74.

⁷¹³H. Davies, *View of Cheltenham* (1843), 120.

⁷¹⁴J. Lane, *Masonic Records, 1717-1894* (1895), 98; GA, D9764/1/1.

⁷¹⁵Lane, *Masonic Records*, 207.

⁷¹⁶*Morning Post*, 14 May 1825.

⁷¹⁷Moreau, *Tour*, 32; Moreau, *Tour* (1793), 46.

⁷¹⁸Ruff, *History of Cheltenham*, 58.

⁷¹⁹Griffith, *General Guide*, 151–2.

⁷²⁰Williams, *New Guide*, 198.

⁷²¹*Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, 2 Aug. 1781.

⁷²²J. Baron, *Life of Edward Jenner* (1838), II, 217–18.

minerals and chemistry was erected near Montpellier Spa.⁷²³ A museum of natural history was established at the Cheltenham dispensary in the high street before 1832.⁷²⁴ A new Literary and Philosophical Institute was founded in 1833,⁷²⁵ moving into premises built in a Classical Greek style in the Promenade in 1836.⁷²⁶ A Mechanics' Institute was founded in Albion Street in 1834, and the Cheltenham Athenaeum was founded in Portland Street in the following year.⁷²⁷ Revd Francis Close founded a Church of England Working Men's Association in 1839, for the provision of reading rooms and public lectures at its premises in St George's Place.⁷²⁸ Another organisation, called the People's Institute, met in Regent Street and published its own magazine called the *British Controversialist*.⁷²⁹

In 1798 the Friendly Society with 61 members meeting at the Fleece Inn voted to give £40 from their stock for the defence of the country.⁷³⁰ In 1803 there were three friendly societies in Cheltenham, with a combined membership of 225.⁷³¹ By Easter 1815 there were 442 members of friendly societies in Cheltenham.⁷³² In 1843 there were 5 Odd Fellows lodges in the town.⁷³³

Five newspapers were founded in Cheltenham in the first half of the 19th century: *Cheltenham Chronicle* (Conservative, 1809), *Cheltenham Journal* (Conservative, 1824), *Cheltenham Looker-On* (Conservative, 1833), *Cheltenham Free Press* (Radical, 1834), and *Cheltenham Examiner* (Liberal, 1839).⁷³⁴

The Bull inn had become a coffee house by 1748.⁷³⁵ The first guide to Cheltenham noted four inns in 1781: the Plough, the Swan, the George, and the Fleece.⁷³⁶ The Swan had apparently closed by 1793.⁷³⁷ In 1803 the Plough, George and Fleece had been joined by the Crown and the Lamb.⁷³⁸ In 1827 the Duke and Duchess stayed at the hotel run by Richard Liddell, which was subsequently renamed the Royal Clarence hotel.⁷³⁹ Liddell subsequently opened the Queen's hotel on the site of the former imperial spa in 1838.⁷⁴⁰ A directory of 1847 listed 16 premises under the heading 'inns and hotels', of which 5 were posting inns, and 62 under the heading 'inns and public houses'.⁷⁴¹

⁷²³GA, D2202/2/8/2; Griffith, *General Guide*, 93–4.

⁷²⁴Davies, *Stranger's Guide*, 96.

⁷²⁵Davies, *View of Cheltenham*, 113; GA, D1950/27.

⁷²⁶W.E. Adams, *Memoirs of a Social Atom* (1903), I, 113–14; Davies, *View of Cheltenham*, 113.

⁷²⁷Davies, *View of Cheltenham*, 212.

⁷²⁸Davies, *View of Cheltenham*, 114

⁷²⁹Adams, *Memoirs*, I, 116–17.

⁷³⁰*Gloucester Journal*, 5 Mar. 1798.

⁷³¹*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 175 (1804), I, 175.

⁷³²*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 82 (1818), XVI, 147.

⁷³³*Harper's Commercial and Fashionable Guide of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham, 1843), 39.

⁷³⁴*Cheltenham Annuaire* (1864), xxi.

⁷³⁵Hodsdon, *Cheltenham Manor Court Books*, 290; GA, D2025/Box 63/Bundle 5.

⁷³⁶Butler, *Cheltenham Guide* (1781), p. 24.

⁷³⁷Moreau, *Tour* (1793), 43.

⁷³⁸Ruff, *History of Cheltenham*, 42.

⁷³⁹*Morning Post*, 4 Oct. 1827.

⁷⁴⁰*Cheltenham Journal*, 16 July 1838.

⁷⁴¹*Hunt & Co.'s City of Gloucester and Cheltenham Directory* (1847), 82-3.

Health and Welfare

As a spa town Cheltenham became a centre for the medical profession. The Yorkshire-born doctor Boulter Tomlinson had moved to Cheltenham by 1743⁷⁴², while Edmund Smith, surgeon and man-midwife, died in the town the following year.⁷⁴³ John Iremonger, surgeon was preparing and selling Hyde purging mineral salts in Cheltenham in 1758,⁷⁴⁴ while in 1769 Anthony Clarke, surgeon of Cheltenham was accosted by a highwayman.⁷⁴⁵ Moreau recorded the presence of three apothecaries in the town in 1793, and an Oxford Professor of Geometry who also worked as a physician and who resided in Cheltenham during the summer.⁷⁴⁶ Edward Jenner practised in the town between 1795 and his retirement to Berkeley in 1815.⁷⁴⁷ In 1818 six physicians, eight surgeons, and four chemists practised in the town.⁷⁴⁸ In 1830 there were 15 physicians, 22 surgeons, 5 dentists, and 11 chemists resident in Cheltenham.⁷⁴⁹ At the time of the 1841 census there were 51 surgeons, 5 physicians, and 40 chemists.⁷⁵⁰

There was an outbreak of smallpox in the town in 1770, when the parish paid for a doctor to attend to the poor.⁷⁵¹ In 1787 the parish agreed to pay a subscription of £4 a year to the Gloucester Infirmary.⁷⁵² In 1793 the parish appointed a doctor, with a salary of eighteen guineas, to attend to the poor of the parish, except for those suffering from broken bones or small pox, and women in labour,⁷⁵³ and the vestry continued to appoint a parochial doctor each year. The vestry resolved that poor parishioners were to be inoculated immediately in 1794.⁷⁵⁴

A smallpox epidemic in 1816 was believed to have started in one of the narrow lanes leading out of the high street.⁷⁵⁵ A board of health was appointed for Cheltenham in 1832, £50 being granted to it by the vestry,⁷⁵⁶ and a house in the high street was converted into a cholera hospital.⁷⁵⁷ When the board demanded additional funding to equip the hospital with iron beds, and to cleanse parts of the town, the vestry complained to the privy council.⁷⁵⁸ The privy council confirmed the authority of the board of health, and empowered it to apply to the justices of the peace for the money instead.⁷⁵⁹ During the 1832 national cholera epidemic constables were said to have turned

⁷⁴²GA, D2957/73A/31; Hodsdon, *Cheltenham Manor Court Books*, 263, 269; *Almuni Cantab. To 1751*, Tomlinson, Boulter.

⁷⁴³*Penny London Morning Advertiser*, 25 Jan. 1744.

⁷⁴⁴*Oxford Journal*, 29 Jul. 1758.

⁷⁴⁵*Kentish Gazette*, 19 Dec. 1769.

⁷⁴⁶Moreau, *Tour to Royal Cheltenham* (1793), 61.

⁷⁴⁷P. Sanders, *Edward Jenner: The Cheltenham Years* (1982).

⁷⁴⁸Griffith, *General Cheltenham Guide* (1818), 106.

⁷⁴⁹*Pigot's Directory* (1830).

⁷⁵⁰Census, 1841.

⁷⁵¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 27 Nov. 1770.

⁷⁵²GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 4 July 1787.

⁷⁵³GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 3 May 1793.

⁷⁵⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 23 Dec. 1794.

⁷⁵⁵John Baron, *The Life of Edward Jenner*, II, 188, 265.

⁷⁵⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 13 Apr. 1832.

⁷⁵⁷*The Lancet*, 10 Nov. 1832, pp. 210–11.

⁷⁵⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 9 & 23 Aug. 1832.

⁷⁵⁹*London Gazette*, 17 Aug. 1832, pp. 1881–2.

away and escorted around the town some 2,000 vagrants. In a number of places the board of health found crowded streets made noisome by pools of stagnant water, poor ventilation, overcrowding, and the presence of privies and pig-sties. Many of these streets, and over 700 houses, were cleaned and purified with lime, and a number of drains and water courses were constructed to carry waste water away in the future. Through these measures Cheltenham avoided cholera and a long-standing outbreak of typhus in one of the most populous neighbourhoods of the town was abated.⁷⁶⁰ The Committee of Health observed in 1847 that the poorer districts still suffered from open sewers and poor drainage.⁷⁶¹

A charitable dispensary was founded in 1813, initially based in premises on the high street.⁷⁶² Supported by subscriptions and charitable donations, it provided access to medical advice for those who could not afford to pay for it themselves. Six doctors and six surgeons served the needs of the hospital in rotation, providing care on a daily basis, whilst there was also a pharmacist permanently on site. A casualty ward was established in 1819.⁷⁶³ In 1834 an appeal was launched for a general hospital,⁷⁶⁴ with the new building opening in 1837.⁷⁶⁵ The hospital was relocated to its current site in Sandford field in 1849.⁷⁶⁶

Poor Relief

In the early 18th century the vestry appointed five overseers for the parish, two for the town and one each for the other three tithings within the parish.⁷⁶⁷ It was later reported that the two men appointed for the town were the overseers of the poor for the parish, and the three men from the hamlets were appointed 'for their ease' as collectors.⁷⁶⁸ In 1743 and 1744 the justices appointed two overseers for Cheltenham and one for each of the other tithings within the parish. The men appointed for Arle and Alstone refused to serve, whilst the man appointed for Westal, Naunton and Sandford paid the money he levied to the two overseers of Cheltenham, who maintained the poor of the whole parish. The practice was discontinued by the justices, but in c. 1751 several individuals in Arle refused to pay their poor rates, objecting that the overseers of the town had no right to act within the other tithings, and hoping that they might maintain their poor separately from the rest of the parish. In 1779 the parish appointed a vestry clerk, who was also to do the whole business of the overseers of the poor, with a salary of twenty guineas.⁷⁶⁹ An assistant overseer was appointed in 1821, to have a salary of 6d. in every pound collected by him.⁷⁷⁰ In 1825 the assistant overseer was dismissed,⁷⁷¹ and the office remained suspended for two years.⁷⁷² In

⁷⁶⁰*The Lancet*, 10 Nov. 1832, pp. 210–11.

⁷⁶¹GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 12. Above, Public Services and Utilities.

⁷⁶²Williams, *New Guide*, 85.

⁷⁶³*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 Feb. 1820.

⁷⁶⁴*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 Feb. 1834.

⁷⁶⁵*Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1837.

⁷⁶⁶*Cheltenham Journal*, 16 Apr. 1849.

⁷⁶⁷See, Local Government 1540-1738.

⁷⁶⁸GA, D2025/Box 5/Bundle 4.

⁷⁶⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 6 Apr. 1779.

⁷⁷⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 13 Dec. 1821.

⁷⁷¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 18 Aug. 1825, 1 Sep. 1825, 22 Sep. 1825.

⁷⁷²GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 10 May 1827.

1833 the vestry selected twelve men to be presented to the justices, from whom they were to appoint four men to serve as overseers.⁷⁷³

In 1752 the poor rate for the whole parish amounted to £38 9s. 8¾d., of which £18 19s. 7d. was due from Cheltenham tithing, 39 1s. 4½d. from Arle, £4 18s. ¼d. from Alstone, and £5 10s. 9d. from Westal, Naunton and Sandford.⁷⁷⁴ In 1757 the vestry ordered that nobody was to be relieved out of the workhouses except in extraordinary circumstances.⁷⁷⁵ However, within six years the vestry had again agreed to pay the rents of paupers within the parish.⁷⁷⁶ In 1776 more than £253 was levied from the parish for the poor rates, but the total expenditure on the poor exceeded £357,⁷⁷⁷ prompting the vestry to order the sale of the poors' grounds later in that year.⁷⁷⁸ Total expenditure had risen to an average of £644 a year between Easter 1783 and Easter 1785, but the average sum raised by the poor rate during the same three years was £677.⁷⁷⁹

By 1803 annual expenditure on the poor was over £1,551, when 36 people were maintained in the workhouse and 139 received out-relief, including 19 who were aged or disabled. A further 44 people were occasionally in need of out-relief.⁷⁸⁰ In 1810 the vestry noted that a considerable debt had been accruing to the parish for two or three years. An unspecified acreage of the poors' grounds was subsequently advertised for sale.⁷⁸¹ A committee found that successive overseers had failed to collect the full sums owed for the poor rates, allowing considerable arrears to grow. Measures were taken to bring the situation under control. A new assessment was made of property in 1811,⁷⁸² and the parish decided to adopt the provisions of the 1782 poor law amendment act, appointing a guardian and a visitor of the poor.⁷⁸³ An order was made in 1812 to sell four houses and a plot of land belonging to the parish to help defray the costs of building the new workhouse.⁷⁸⁴ Expenditure upon the poor totalled £2,572 in the year 1812–3, but had fallen to £1,953 two years later.⁷⁸⁵ In 1814–5 there were 46 people relieved in the workhouse, 193 received relief in their homes, and another 130 were occasionally in receipt of relief from the overseers.⁷⁸⁶ The cost of the poor rate continued to rise, totalling £2,401 in 1819–20,⁷⁸⁷ and £2,860 in 1824–5.⁷⁸⁸ In 1827 it was resolved by the vestry that the poor rates of properties let for terms less than a year would be paid by the owners and not the occupiers.⁷⁸⁹ The poor rate totalled

⁷⁷³GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 15 Mar. 1833.

⁷⁷⁴GA, D2025/Box 5/Bundle 4.

⁷⁷⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 10 Oct. 1757.

⁷⁷⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 14 Nov. 1763.

⁷⁷⁷*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 175 (1804), I, 146.

⁷⁷⁸GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 15 Apr. 1776.

⁷⁷⁹*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 175 (1804), I, 174.

⁷⁸⁰*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 175 (1804), I, 175.

⁷⁸¹*Cheltenham Chronicle*, 13 Dec. 1810.

⁷⁸²GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 8 Apr. 1811.

⁷⁸³GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 23 Apr. 1811, 14 Jan. 1812; 22 Geo. III c. 83.

⁷⁸⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 14 Jan. 1812.

⁷⁸⁵*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 82 (1818), XVI, 146.

⁷⁸⁶*Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor*, H.C. 82 (1818), XVI, 147.

⁷⁸⁷*Poor Rate Returns 1816–21, 1822* (556), 56.

⁷⁸⁸*Poor Rate Returns 1825–9, 1830–1* (83), 67.

⁷⁸⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 16 Aug. 1827.

£3,686 in 1828–9,⁷⁹⁰ and peaked at £4,557 in 1832–3, although it had fallen to £3,411 in the following year.⁷⁹¹

In 1849 the overseers were directed to raise a fund of £250 to defray the expenses of poor parishioners who were willing to emigrate.⁷⁹² In 1851 the vestry recommended that the Guardians should raise £2,000 by loan to defray the expenses of parishioners who were willing to emigrate.⁷⁹³ In 1849 the remaining poors' grounds, containing c. 18 a., were let for £63 pa. The profits amounted to £53 a year, a sum which was disbursed by the churchwardens each year on St Thomas' Day to individuals who were not in receipt of poor relief from the Poor Law Union, in the form of tickets which could be exchanged within the town for food or clothing. The committee proposed a scheme to divide the land into a number of small allotments for the use of the labouring working classes, but the project was abandoned when the churchwardens were advised that they had no legal power to make such changes.⁷⁹⁴

The Royal Oak inn, on the south side of the high street at the lower end of the town, was converted into a workhouse in about 1730.⁷⁹⁵ The workhouse burned down c. 1778,⁷⁹⁶ when a decision was taken by the vestry to purchase a new house.⁷⁹⁷ This decision was overturned early in the following year by a meeting of the vestry, who claimed that the previous meeting had not been properly advertised, and objected that the cost of the purchase was a great burden to tenants on rack rents.⁷⁹⁸ In 1786 a house in Day Lane was leased.⁷⁹⁹ Three years later the parish leased a new plot on which to build a workhouse, incorporating a large work room on the ground floor with accommodation above.⁸⁰⁰ In 1797 the vestry resolved that the poor of the workhouse would be employed in the pin trade.⁸⁰¹ By 1808 the workhouse had proved inadequate, and new premises were built near the Knapp.⁸⁰² A small asylum for the insane was added in 1810.⁸⁰³ Four cottages in the corner of the churchyard were also used to accommodate poor elderly women of the parish.⁸⁰⁴ In 1815 they were ordered to be demolished and the tenants placed in more comfortable houses.⁸⁰⁵ The workhouse was purchased outright in 1821.⁸⁰⁶ Its sale was ordered to be sold in 1841, after the building of the new Union workhouse.⁸⁰⁷ A buyer was not found, and the premises

⁷⁹⁰*Poor Rate Returns 1825–9, 1830–1* (83), 67.

⁷⁹¹*Poor Rate Returns 1830–4, 1835* (444), 65.

⁷⁹²GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 28 June 1849.

⁷⁹³GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 6 Mar. 1851.

⁷⁹⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 28 June 1849, 16 Nov. 1849.

⁷⁹⁵GA, D2025/Box 5/Bundle 4; D2024/1.

⁷⁹⁶GA, D2024/1.

⁷⁹⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 15 Dec. 1778.

⁷⁹⁸GA, P 78/1 VE 2/1, 30 Apr. 1779.

⁷⁹⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, Mar. 1786.

⁸⁰⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 24 Nov. 1789.

⁸⁰¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 25 July 1797.

⁸⁰²GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 23 Aug. 1808.

⁸⁰³GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 23 Jan. 1810.

⁸⁰⁴Williams, *New Guide to Cheltenham* (1825), 14.

⁸⁰⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 5 Aug. 1813.

⁸⁰⁶GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 10.

⁸⁰⁷GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 2 Dec. 1841.

stood empty until converted to a school in 1855.⁸⁰⁸

The master of the workhouse appointed in 1755 was to have an annual salary of £8, plus 1s. 4d. for each inmate within the house, and he could have the profits of their work. He was to act as the collector for the overseers, keeping 6d. in the pound of every rate levied, and would also be paid for every vagrant taken before the magistrates and convicted. Other parishes could also use the workhouse upon payment of 10s. to the master.⁸⁰⁹ In 1756 the master was allowed £40 from the poor rates for one year in order to employ the poor.⁸¹⁰ In 1790 the salary of the master was 20 guineas.⁸¹¹ In 1799 the vestry agreed to farm the poor for £850,⁸¹² an arrangement that was renewed in the following year.⁸¹³ In 1801 the master of the workhouse was paid a salary of 24 guineas,⁸¹⁴ reduced by 1804 to 20 guineas.⁸¹⁵ By 1822 the salary of the governor was £40 a year.⁸¹⁶

The Cheltenham Poor Law Union was formed in 1835, comprising Cheltenham and eleven other neighbouring parishes.⁸¹⁷ A new workhouse was built in Swindon Lane in 1841.⁸¹⁸ In 1847 the vestry complained that the Poor Removals Act,⁸¹⁹ whilst removing a means to harass and oppress the poor, had greatly increased the burden of poor relief in large towns like Cheltenham. A great increase in the number of applicants for relief, many of whom would previously have belonged to other districts, had swollen the expenditure on the poor. Paupers were being housed in four workhouses, increasing the expense. In the three years 1842–44, the expenditure of Cheltenham on the relief of the poor had averaged £6,549 from a total for the Union of £8,796; in 1846 the parish had contributed 80% of a total Union expenditure of £11,643. Remedying the situation was hampered by the resistance of guardians from the rural parishes, many of whom served ex officio and rarely attended meetings. The vestry petitioned the House of Commons for an increase in the number of elected guardians for Cheltenham to reflect the town's increased population since 1835.⁸²⁰ The Poor Law commissioners proposed increasing the number of guardians for Cheltenham, combined with a division of the parish into wards. The proposed division led to considerable opposition from the parish.⁸²¹

⁸⁰⁸GA, D2025/Box 138/Bundle 10; *Cheltenham Examiner*, 23 May 1855.

⁸⁰⁹GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 1 Apr. 1755.

⁸¹⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 1 June 1756.

⁸¹¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/1, 6 Apr. 1790.

⁸¹²GA, P78/1 OV 9/2, 29 Apr. 1799.

⁸¹³GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 24 Apr. 1800.

⁸¹⁴GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 7 Apr. 1801.

⁸¹⁵GA, P78/1 VE 2/2, 6 Apr. 1804.

⁸¹⁶GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 1 Apr. 1823.

⁸¹⁷GA, G/CH/8a/1.

⁸¹⁸*Cheltenham Examiner*, 3 Nov. 1841.

⁸¹⁹9 & 10 Vic. c. 66.

⁸²⁰GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 19 Feb. 1847.

⁸²¹GA, P78/1 VE 2/3, 15 June 1847; *Chelt. Journal*, 5 Feb. 1849.