

Report from the Trust

VCH Central Office

Angus Winchester's time in charge of the VCH Central Office ended in November, when he completed his all-too-brief one-year contract. His reform and improvement recommendations, mentioned in the last Newsletter, now rest in the in-tray of the incoming Director of the Institute of Historical Research, Professor Jo Fox, in post at the start of 2018. She comes to London from the Department of History at Durham. She has already had conversations with the central office staff, and sounds determined to restore momentum. I am hoping to meet up with her this month (wearing my Chair of the VCH Advisory Board hat), to help get relations between her and the active counties off on the right foot.

Festivals

Having put our toe in the water at the Gloucester History Festival in 2016, we needed little encouragement to take part again in September 2017, especially as it was all in the wonderful Blackfriars complex. John Chandler devised a history 'tag' session, with eight consecutive talks

Welcome from the Editor

Welcome to our eighth newsletter, keeping you in touch with the work of the County History Trust.

It contains all the news of the latest developments as our editors and volunteers continue to research our three areas of activity: the Sodburys, Cheltenham and Cirencester. As you will read in James Hodsdon's report, we say goodbye to two of our hard-working editors: John Chandler, our Consultant Editor, who has been with the Trust since its inception, and Francis Boorman, who has contributed so much as editor of the Cirencester volume. As you will read below, John is not completely severing his links with the Trust and Francis continues until the end of March but we thank them both for their exceptional contributions to the success of the Trust in continuing the work of the VCH. As we bid them farewell, we also say welcome to Katy Layton-Jones who introduces herself later in this newsletter.

The Trust continues to be grateful for the financial report it receives from so many different sources. Our treasurer Jonathan Comber explains the importance of regular standing order donations which we know many of you generously give to the Trust. If you would like to set up a standing order Jonathan gives you the details. Once again, my thanks go to Jonathan for collecting the various contributions, to John Chandler for the excellent production and to all the contributors. We hope you find it interesting and informative. If you have any comments or further ideas, please let me know: dhaldred@btinternet.com.

David Aldred
Editor



A full house at the Scriptorium Tag (James Hodsdon)

VCH Gloucestershire

Newsletter 8 January 2018

on aspects of Gloucestershire history from earliest times – as captured in place-names -- through to the 20th century. The idea was each new speaker picked up from the last sentence of the preceding piece, and amazingly it worked. The audience came and went during the course of the day, the time-keeping was excellent, the VCH was mentioned at least once per talk, and we all learned something about new subjects. Meanwhile Heather Forbes, our County Archivist and a Trustee, was upstairs in the friars' scriptorium, the best possible setting for her well-attended palaeography taster session.

John was to the fore once again at the Cheltenham Literature Festival in October, where on the first day we ran a sell-out talk promoting the Cheltenham before the Spa paperback. Despite pleading with the organisers, we weren't able to move the talk to a bigger venue, so our apologies if you were disappointed on that occasion. There is every intention to run the talk again once the book is issued.

The Cheltenham Paperback

Speaking of which, we were too optimistic in thinking the 'Short' book on pre-1740 Cheltenham would appear by the end of 2017. But we're getting very close. The text is complete, and has been broadly OK'd by the central office. The final time-consuming tasks have been to sort out some fifty illustrations, get permissions, write captions, and so forth; and then once it has all been put together, there will be indexing and final checks, here and in London. So, 'Spring 2018' is our best guess at present. It's very heartening that we've already had over 100 advance orders [see the last page for a further opportunity to register interest at the pre-publication price] – and we welcome many new readers of this newsletter who signed up as a result of the Cheltenham before the Spa publicity.

Hail and Farewell

Much as we'd like to keep him, Francis Boorman has signalled his intention to take up work much closer to his home in London, but this cloud has a double silver lining – he'll still be very much in the VCH family, working on London/Middlesex topics, and he doesn't actually leave us till the end of March. By this point, Cirencester town and parish will be substantially complete, and Francis will have made

good inroads into Stratton, the first of the neighbour parishes that will be included in the Cirencester Big Red Book (Vol. 16). Even better, this arrangement gives a good overlap with our new appointment, Dr Katy Layton-Jones, [who introduces herself elsewhere], who starts this month. Katy comes to us with excellent recommendations, and her broad experience as a historian should make for a smooth transition on the Cirencester work, and a significant strengthening of our editorial team (no pressure, then...).

Funding

We were able to move swiftly in recruiting Katy because of recent excellent progress in fundraising for the Cirencester work. In the summer, we had news of a significant cheque from the Bathurst Estate Trustees, and then the really welcome news that the Winstone Charitable Trust, who first placed their confidence in us back in 2012, were happy to support us for a further period. And then in November, we had word that the Summerfield Charitable Trust, who operate across Gloucestershire but happen to have their office in Cirencester, were also prepared to put significant money towards work on the Vol. 16 parishes. In round terms, these latest grants will pay for at least two more years of research, putting us within sight of completing Vol. 16. This positive news for Cirencester means that for 2018 the funding efforts can focus more squarely on Cheltenham – while contriving at the same time to keep everything ticking over on Vol. 14, where, as you'll read elsewhere, Alex Craven is picking up the Sodbury parishes, and Beth Hartland has delivered the first medieval sections on Dodington (before adroitly turning her attention to the Cirencester villages).

Just to sum up, 2017 went pretty well, and the challenge is for us to do even better in 2018. I renew my warm thanks to all our supporters and volunteers, and of course to our friends and colleagues at the Gloucestershire Archives, who have enabled the VCHers to keep meeting and working during the major development works at Alvin Street.

James Hodsdon
Chairman GCHT

From our County Co-ordinator

Learning about Prints at the Bingham Gallery

In September the Academy (our VCH volunteers and editors) met in Cirencester for a fascinating session on prints and print-making led by Helen Brown, who showed us examples of different techniques both from the Bingham Gallery collection and her own personal archive from her student days. We were also able to explore the gallery's exhibition on the Abbey House and in the afternoon were given a guided tour of the Abbey Grounds themselves. Our thanks to Helen and to Linda Viner, who organised the awayday, and to all the Cirencester members who made the rest of us feel so welcome. As time in the Archives is so precious at the moment and the session on prints completed the outstanding list of topics for Academy days, it was decided to have a break while building work continues. We shall review the situation, once we are back in the main building in the spring.

Making Sense of the Hearth Tax

In the past I have made occasional references to entries in the Hearth Tax to indicate the size of an individual's house or their comparative wealth. VCH editors also frequently use this valuable source. It is only now that I'm preparing the Gloucestershire Hearth Tax for publication online, that I am beginning to appreciate that it is a more complex source than I previously imagined. This is brought home to me as I compare the entries for the same places made in the two surviving returns for 1672, compiled for the Lady Day (TNA E179/247/13) and Michaelmas (E179/247/14) collections of the tax. Some differences are immediately obvious. In the Lady Day return Little Badminton includes a list of poor people who were exempted by certificate and states that the many poor people who received alms had been omitted. Six months later the return is silent concerning Little Badminton's poor inhabitants. Some differences are more subtle. The earlier return for Chipping Sodbury has William Nash assessed for six hearths in two houses. The later return also assesses William Nash for six hearths, but omits the information that this was for more than one property. Trying to capture the richness of the two comparable sources in a way that will not completely confuse the user of the online edition is proving to be an interesting problem.

I also hope to be able to develop some case studies around particular places, using the returns in

conjunction with other sources to provide a deeper context. So far this is proving more difficult than I anticipated. Take for example Tewkesbury. When I received my copy of *The Account Book of the Giles Geast Charity, Tewkesbury 1558-1891* edited by Dan Beaver (BGAS Record Series 31), I hoped to be able to link the list of people paying rent to the charity for their houses with the entries for the Church Street area in the return. Unfortunately only 20% of the charity's tenants appear in the Michaelmas Hearth Tax assessment, suggesting that the majority of the properties were sublet. Large numbers of inventories have been transcribed by volunteers for VCH Gloucestershire, which provides me with another important resource. Here, too, there seem to be as many questions as answers. You might assume that the Joseph Barnes listed in the Hearth Tax for Old Sodbury in 1672 was the same person as the Joseph Barnes of Old Sodbury whose probate inventory was compiled in December 1676. Except that it seems strange that someone exempted by certificate should own six horses and be in a position to have lent out over £50 four years later!

Fortunately, as with the VCH, I am able to draw on the experience of researchers who have worked on similar returns from across the country. Once the online edition is available in beta test form next year, I also hope to benefit from the deep knowledge of local historians across Gloucestershire.

Jan Broadway

From our Consultant Editor

Writing this note for the newsletter, just before going away for Christmas, is my last task as Consultant Editor, as from 1 January I turn into the odd job man so far as VCH Glos is concerned. I intend to remain part of the team, nonetheless, and to continue to haunt Alvin Street. And I'm looking forward to knuckling down to some proper research again there once the new search room is functioning, if not before.

My main activities for VCH Glos over the last six months have been described elsewhere. Uppermost has been editorial work on Cheltenham before the Spa, our paperback to be published early in 2018, and commenting on draft text submitted by our editors. It has been a great pleasure in particular

to watch from the sidelines as Francis has steered the history of Cirencester to completion, and I can see that our whole endeavour is turning into a three-horse race, with the Cheltenham, Cirencester and Sodbury volumes all neck-and-neck, and heading for the finishing line a couple of years off.

The other perk of the job, for one who enjoys standing up in front of an audience, was involvement in the festivals at Gloucester and Cheltenham. Grateful thanks to the team who, like an extended 'Just a Minute' (actually just a half-hour) spoke without hesitation, repetition, or too much deviation, on Gloucestershire history subjects in a joined-up kind of way, beneath the Blackfriars' cavernous scriptorium as part of Gloucester History Festival. And then to be treated as a celebrity for a few hours at the Cheltenham Literature Festival, when I plugged our forthcoming paperback to a sell-out hall (how did that happen?), and was allowed free coffee before, and alcohol afterwards, in the 'Writer's Room' (a very large tent), alongside the likes of Andrew Marr and Alexander McCall Smith.

As my involvement in VCH Glos reduces so my work for VCH Wilts is increasing, and I'm able to put into practice some of the lessons I've learnt in Gloucester. I have been dealing with contracted editors and trustees, am about to begin a volunteer group, and I have been researching and writing text (6,500 words just submitted – and loads of footnotes!). I am responsible for work on a little place in south Wiltshire, next to where I used to live; and also for steering progress on a much larger place in north Wiltshire. By a mere substitution of three letters my attention is focusing away from Cheltenham and towards Chippenham. But you haven't seen the last of me.

John Chandler

From our Treasurer

As you will have noted from the Chairman's piece, we have had a number of recent fundraising successes which will enable us to continue work in the Cirencester area. However for us to commission editors to work on completion of not only this volume but also the volumes covering Cheltenham area and the Yate, Sodbury and surrounding parishes, further significant funds will be required. Our current reserves together with pledges only

just cover amounts that will be payable on these contracts with very little leeway.

I would like to thank all those people who have given us money in 2017, not just those charities mentioned by James but also our regular Standing Order contributors who between them, with their associated gift aid donations, raise nearly £10,000 a year. Putting this into perspective, this amount is nearly enough to pay for half an editor for a year, and gives us a means to maintain momentum across all three volumes. I would also like to thank those people who donate their fees for giving talks to local societies as well as the smaller one-off donations we get from individuals and local history societies.

If you or any of your friends would like to set up a Standing Order in favour of the Trust, please let me know and I will send you a Standing Order form. Equally cheques of any amount are most welcome. The Trustees are always looking for new charities to approach so if you know of any charity that you think might be willing to support what we do, please let either myself or James Hodsdon know.

I now maintain an e-mail list for those people who would like to receive this newsletter electronically when it is published, so if you wish to receive it in future, please let me know and I will add your name to the list.

Finally just a reminder that I still have copies of the Yate 'Short' available for sale at £12, and the following VCH Glos Red Books: Volume 2 covering Ecclesiastical History, Religious Houses, Social and Economic History, Industries, Agriculture, Forestry, Sport and Schools; Vol. 4 (Gloucester), Vol. 7 (the Churn, Coln and Leach Valleys), Vol. 8 (Tewkesbury and the Northern Vale), Vol. 10 (Westbury and Whitstone Hundreds) and Vol. 12 (Newent and May Hill) all at £28 – generally cheaper than you will find on the internet - with the most recent volume (Vol. 13) at £72.50. I can be contacted at Jonathan.Comber@easynet.co.uk or by post to 49 Old Hollow Malvern WR14 4NP

Jonathan Comber

Hello from our newly-appointed Contracted Editor

My name is Katy Layton-Jones and I have already begun working on the post-Reformation histories of a number of parishes around Cirencester. I gained my PhD in British modern history from the



University of Cambridge in 2006 and thereafter moved to the University of Liverpool where I began a decade's work on the history of public parks. I've conducted research for a number of heritage organisations including English Heritage, Historic England, The Gardens Trust and the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. I have lectured at the University of Leicester, Goldsmiths, and the Open University. In 2016 I published my monograph titled *Beyond the Metropolis* with Manchester University Press (it's a typically expensive monograph, so please get in touch if you would like to read any of it!). I have a website if you are interested in any of my work where there is also a contact form so it's very easy to get in touch with me. I look forward to meeting everyone working for the VCH in the New Year.

Best wishes.

Katy

<http://www.katylaytonjones.com/>

Updates from our Contracted Editors

Cheltenham

The latest draft of the history of Cheltenham, completing the town's story up to the end of the Second World War, was finished in the Autumn. The period between the middle of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th century was critical for the town, with the incorporation of the borough, the erection of a number of substantial public buildings, and the foundation of the town's numerous educational establishments. At the same time,

new housing estates were constructed as the town expanded beyond its historic boundaries, served by new elementary schools and parish churches. Besides my own research and writing, the draft history of the period 1852–1945 includes substantial contributions by a number of volunteers.

The Sodburys

Now, after three years of working on the history of Cheltenham, I am engaged on a new project, researching the modern history of the three Sodbury parishes, the medieval history of which has already been researched by Beth Hartland. The three parishes are quite different in character. Old Sodbury, the largest of the three, was divided between a number of manors and estates which over time were acquired by the nobility of neighbouring parishes, such as the Dukes of Beaufort in Badminton and the Codringtons of Dodington. Much of the north of the parish was covered by the large open commons it shared with the adjoining parishes. The smaller parish of Little Sodbury is most notable for the impressive Tudor mansion which still stands there, where the prominent Protestant reformer William Tyndale was resident as a tutor for a time in the early 1520s. The borough of Chipping Sodbury was originally a chapelry of Old Sodbury, and it was surrounded by that parish. It was never a large town, but it lay along an important route which connected Bristol and the south-west with the midlands via Cirencester and the Cotswolds.

We think of Chipping Sodbury now as a charming market town that has retained its quaint character despite the modern expansion of its neighbour, Yate. However, reading the manorial court records exposes a much less harmonious community during the early modern period. At the time the town was not incorporated, and it remained under the authority of the medieval court leet, overseen by a steward (appointed by the lord of the manor), and administered by a bailiff and a constable, appointed each year from among the inhabitants. An order of the leet jury of 1589 reveals that the bailiff of the borough was then required to provide an annual breakfast 'for mutual love and increasing of friendship' within the town, but these events were apparently being invaded by 'many disordered and uncivil persons' causing the 'disquieting' of the town. Subsequently these

breakfasts were to be restricted only to the burgesses and heads of households 'according to ancient custom' (GA, D2071/B4).

There is then a long gap in the records of manor courts, until the years immediately after the Restoration, which reveal the town still to be riven with strife and discord (GA, D2071/M1). In 1663 a woman called Elizabeth Nash was presented by the court jury for spitting in the face of one John Burford. The document is damaged, but she was probably presented for being a 'common scold', a woman who challenged the perceived norms of gendered behaviour, by being quarrelsome or by challenging the authority of men. The constable was ordered to 'cuck' her - that is to dunk her in the river on a ducking stool - but in the following year the jury presented that he had 'not well & truly executed his office for the Cuckinge of the scolds'. The jury ordered that Elizabeth and two other women accused of being scolds should be cucked before the following midsummer's day.

Although we hear no more about these women's fate, we learn of numerous other challenges to authority within the small town during the 1660s. In 1665 a man was presented for having abused the bailiff and the steward in the execution of their offices, and for having called into the question the authority of the court. In the following year, another man drew blood in an affray as he broke open the common pound (where stray animals were impounded until a fine was paid for their recovery).

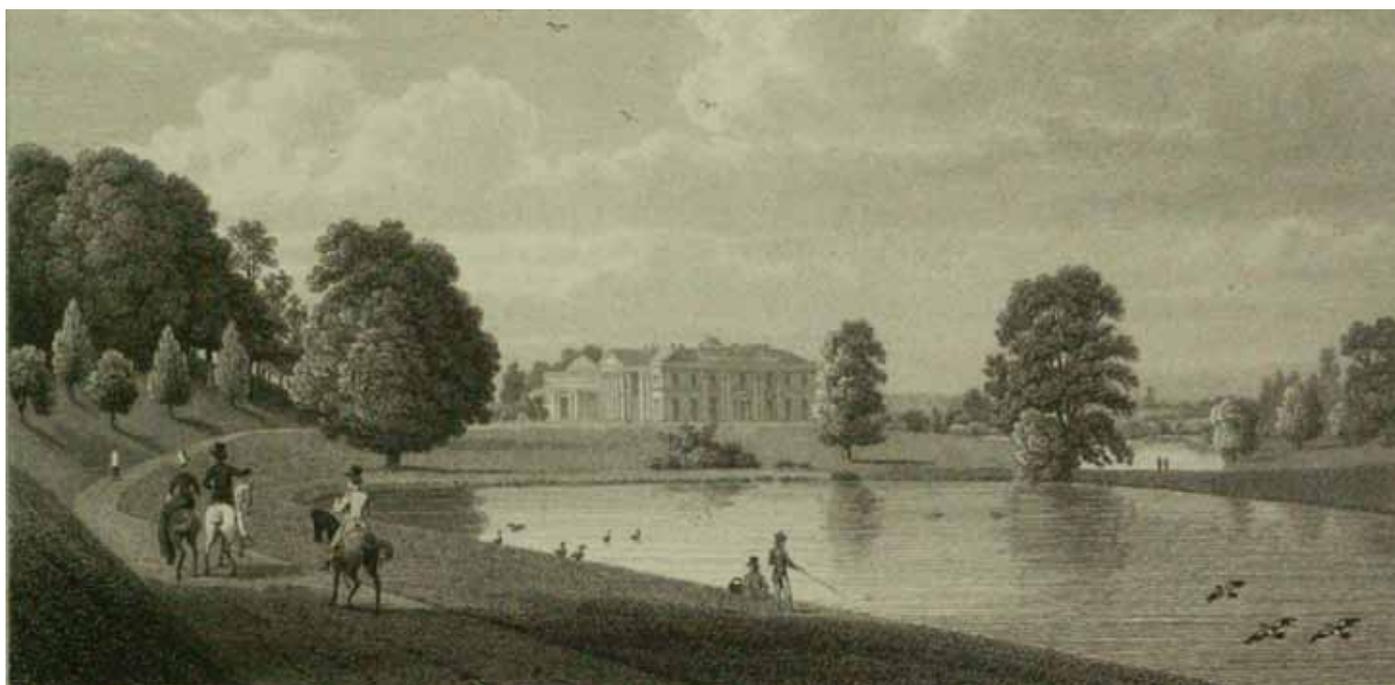
In 1667 the out-going constable himself was fined the hefty sum of 40 shillings (£2) for having refused the orders of the justices and the steward to keep the peace, instead allowing a tumult to continue within the court. Two more men were presented for tumultuous behaviour in the following year although, unless the annual court at Chipping Sodbury was a particularly violent event, this was presumably the same incident. George Aldin the shoemaker was presented for making a disturbance in the court by coming in drunk and striking the individuals that stood near him. Another man, John Butt the butcher, was also presented for drunken misbehaviour, in his case 'giving ill language in the court'. Although the court records do not survive after 1669, we have some further suggestion of the friction with the town with a note in a jury presentment of 1681 that the town's stocks, pillory and cucking stool all stood in good repair.

The town seems to have been much less disordered by the 19th century, although the jury of 1855 complained that a number of residents were guilty of 'the pernicious practice' of letting off fireworks at night, to the disturbance and endangerment of the town (GA, D2700/MD1/1). Perhaps some things never change.

Alex Craven

Dodington

Last year I took the opportunity of the newsletter to comment on two Sodbury documents that would not be used in the VCH parish history. Since then



Dodington House in 1825

I have been engaged in researching the medieval parish of Dodington – a process that sadly has not turned up any extraneous documents. Moreover, the promise of a fifteenth-century court roll fragment in the Bodleian Library was a false one due to an error of cataloguing (though a good reminder that none of us are immune from errors).

After the documentary riches of medieval Cheltenham and Cirencester, Dodington has been a different experience – its finest hour in the VCH account will belong to a later period. Looking to the future, I leave Vol. 14 alone for a while, and in this New Year return my attention to Vol. 16 where, I am glad to say, the medieval pickings look good. I am very much looking forward to working on the remaining Vol.16 parishes and sharing the fruits of that labour with you all.

Beth Hartland

Cirencester

My work on Cirencester is coming to a close. I am currently finishing off work on the very modern history of the town, from 1945 right up to the present day. The post-war history of Cirencester is one of growth and rebuilding, as new developments sprang up around the town and slums were cleared in its historic centre. During this period, Cirencester's population more than doubled to over 20,000 people.

Changes in the town have brought some new topics into focus, most obviously with the popularisation of different technologies. Car parking has reared its ugly head, particularly with the construction of the Forum car park during the 1960s. Increasing car use also necessitated the construction of a ring road around Cirencester. These are the glamorous areas of research for the modern historian!

You will be pleased to hear that my latest findings aren't just about tarmac. The wave of new construction in Cirencester paradoxically opened up the ancient past of the town, as the opportunity (and necessity) for archaeological research came about. Thus dual carriageways and housing estates become mingled with amphitheatres and basilicas. This was particularly true when looking at the 'golden age' of archaeology in Cirencester, from 1960 to 1974, when the annual summer excavation was a much-visited attraction in the town.

A lot of the fun has been in the variety. I have turned my hand to topics ranging from agricultural statistics (I confess I had to Google the 'mangold') to



*Alan McWhirr, directing excavations at The Beeches, for Cirencester Excavation Committee, in 1972. Alan is standing in the bath suite complex of building XII.1, the same building which produced the Hare mosaic.
(Linda Viner)*

polo. I have found myself researching the histories of amateur dramatic groups, Malaysian loudspeaker manufacturers, pubs, ballet clubs, bacon factories, libraries, cattle markets and parks. I have delved into the origins of the venerable Women's Institutes in Cirencester and discovered that the first Hindu immigrant to Gloucestershire, Ramjibhai Popat, arrived in Cirencester in 1951.

I have also had to get to grips with some very different source materials to the many deeds and vestry minutes in sometimes challenging secretary hand that were the mainstay of the early modern period. Council documents have been a joy for their clear presentation, but occasionally trickier for their vocabulary of 'conflicting facets', 'strategic spatial strategy' and the 'sustainability matrix'.

I have been using an interesting range of maps, from those available on the Know Your Place website, through the historic satellite imagery available on Google Earth, to a number of Ordnance Survey maps spread across the second half of the 20th century and obtained from ebay.

I must surely be one of a very select group of people who have read (or at least skimmed) the Cirencester Parish Magazine through its entire available run, beginning in the late 19th century and still going strong today. In the latter decades the incumbents of Cirencester have been struggling with a broad range of challenges for the church, including the fear of impending nuclear war, the ordination of

From the Archives

Cade Key or Cade Key? (GA D2025/Box8443/1)

women and most challenging of all, their first parish computer.

I have certainly not been doing all the hard work. I have received fascinating pieces from the volunteers, on charities by John Loosley, railways by Nigel Bray, and the Thames and Severn Canal by Linda Viner, with more to come. Some of the illustrious VCH volunteers themselves figure in the recent(ish) history of Cirencester. Linda Viner has been found hard at work for the Cirencester Excavation Committee and Michael Ralston's father was noted as a long-serving churchwarden.

It has been fascinating and a real privilege to take such a long view of a single town. It has been possible to see the pattern of development over centuries, with expansion kept in check for so long by the Bathurst and Master estates to the east and west of the town. These main families of the town, along with others including the Cripps and the Bowllys, are remarkable not just for their imprint on the town but also for the length of their connection with the area. Charting the changing fortunes of a family name across several hundred years has been a really interesting way to look at the relative fortunes of different social classes and occupational groups. Examples in Cirencester would be the rise to political and economic prominence of middle class families like the Cripps, but also their turning away from the collapsing woollen industry.

I hope these brief observations pique your interest and encourage readers of the drafts that have already been posted on the VCH website and the post-1945 chapters that will follow. Comments, complaints, suggestions and general feedback will make for a more interesting, accurate and comprehensive publication when it comes, so please send it all my way.

As you know, I will be moving on in 2018 to work on the parish of St George, Hanover Square, London. But before I go I have a project to complete that will not take me quite so far from Cirencester; in fact, it is only 1.5 miles from St John the Baptist church in Cirencester to St Peter's, the parish church of Stratton.

Francis Boorman

A recent discovery made while cataloguing at the Archives has intrigued several of us. A large iron key was found under documents that apparently had little relevance. The key has a wooden tag attached, noting that it belonged to the Cade



*'Key to the Cade Family Vault under Greenwich Church'
(Sally Self and Gloucestershire Archives)*

family and was for the family vault. Showing the key to others elicited various suggestions. 'They will have had to send for a locksmith', 'they would have needed a large hacksaw' to 'they won't have been able to bury anyone' and 'explosives might be necessary.'

When browsing for information on the 'Cade' family up sprung the words 'Cade Key'. So, thought I, others have been there before me! Seemingly the family name was not 'Cade' but 'Cade Key' – I must have read the wooden tag incorrectly. Back to the key itself – but no it did indeed say 'Key to the Cade Family Vault under Greenwich Church'.

More research was needed. The 'Cade' family is of ancient Yorkshire lineage, probably pre-Conquest, with a coat of arms – I can buy a mug and/or a key ring embossed with their shield. The surname may derive from the word for a barrel or cask, possibly used as the sign for an ale house. There was of course Jack Cade of the Kent Revolt, 1450 and Shakespeare uses it in 'stealing a cade of herrings'. According to family history sites, both the Cade and Cade Key family are now widely spread around the world, particularly in America and Australia.

The Cade Key family vault is in Hampstead, where they lived in the early 19th century, William being nominated as a possible Sheriff for London, but he died in Bath in 1823. Further research into the families would have taken days and would probably not have shed any further light on 'our' key.

So to the 'Greenwich Church'. The most likely church is St Alfege of Greenwich, dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was martyred on the site in 1012. The medieval church of 1290 collapsed in a storm of 1710 and the present church was designed by Hawksmoor. If indeed the Cades are buried there, then they have illustrious company – Thomas Tallis, General James Wolfe, Henry Kelsey, an English-born explorer of Canada, the actress Lavinia Fenton and others – unfortunately no Cades are acknowledged!

So one is left to wonder – did they have to break into their vault? If anyone is at Greenwich and has time to visit the church, perhaps they could find the answer!

Sally Self

The Parents' National Educational Union (PNEU) in Cirencester Schools 1918-36 Part Two

In May 1927 the four-day national PNEU Conference took place in Cirencester, the main venue being the Bingham Hall, and attendance exceeding 900. The Wilts and Glos Standard of 14 May 1927 reports on the proceedings in detail. It quotes Household's speech to Conference stating that in 1917 a group of five Gloucestershire schools took the scheme up to 'give a liberal education to the worker's child under the inspiration of Charlotte Mason'. By 1927, 270 of the 422 county schools were affiliated.

When asked about the cost of the scheme, Household pointed out that organising pupils into small groups meant that each can be dealing with a different book, thus saving on whole-class sets. He claimed that the average cost per child for books and stationery was 6s 3d in Gloucestershire as against 5s 6d elsewhere. The Conference included contributions from the headteachers of two Gloucestershire schools: on 'The Method of Narration and its Purposes', and 'The Group Method of Organisation in the PUS'.

As part of the Conference, delegates visited local PNEU elementary schools. The logbook entry for Powells Boys' Department on May 12 reads, 'Members attending the PNEU Conference attended

the School this morning'. Mr Household and his colleagues often recommended that teachers from other schools visit to observe methods.

Infant school 1922: Miss Young and her assistant from Bream, Glos visited on Oct 24/25. She was particularly pleased in her visit here, and intends taking up the Mason Scheme.

Infant school 10 Nov 1930: Miss Cox and Miss Brown, Hd Mistress and assistant from Long Newton have spent the day here (at Mr Household's suggestion). Their school has lately been taken into Gloucestershire. They came to observe PNEU methods. Miss Brown has asked to spend a week here later.

Mixed school 27 June 1930: The Head Master and 4 of the staff of Cadbury Heath School, Bristol, visited the school today to observe PNEU methods.

In 1931 the Headmaster recorded eight sets of visitors. While most were from Gloucestershire, there are examples from other authorities.

Adoption of the scheme was not an automatic recipe for success, however. In 1930 Household commented that at Watermoor Girls' school, too much of the work for the Ambleside exam had been omitted and the work was by no means the quality he had expected. In contrast, the County Girls' School showed immense improvement 'the Ambleside marks for the Xmas exam amply confirm my own impression'.

An influence of the scheme may be the number of extra-curricular activities to which pupils had access. At Powells, these included visits to local events and exhibitions, and performing in 'entertainments' and productions. As transport became easier, trips ventured further afield. In 1933, 63 children (and only two teachers) went to Stratford to see 'Macbeth' and visit Shakespeare's birthplace and the Grammar School, while in 1935 the trip was to Windsor Castle.

Mr Household left the LEA in 1936 and was replaced by Mr Watkin. The last mention of the PNEU exams is in December. A legacy of the scheme may be seen in Powells 1938 HMI Report '.... the training is broad, so that by the time the pupils reach the Senior Forms, they are able to work unattended when necessary and they show a gratifying degree of independence and a power of concentration'.

(There was a small private PNEU school in Cirencester 1957-2007 (Ingleside) but I can find little information about it. PNEU methods and

materials are today used in a few schools and by 'homeschoolers' across the world.)

(This article is based on Powells School logbooks, Household's notebooks in Gloucestershire Archives, Wilts and Glos Standard 14 May 1927 and web research on Charlotte Mason).

Pam Morris

Gloucestershire County History Trust

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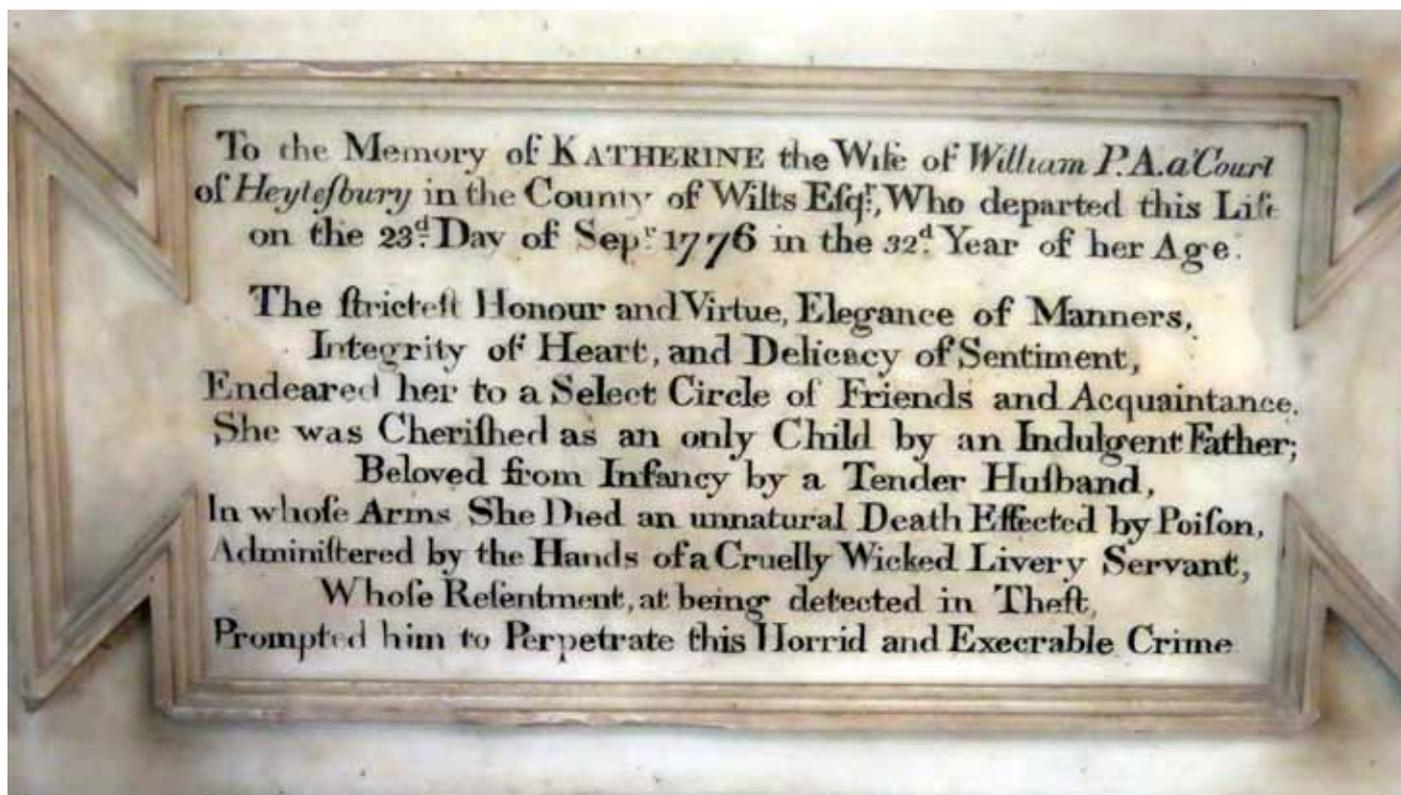
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Website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/gloucestershire>
Gloucestershire County History Trust

Seen in St Mary's, Cheltenham



Seen in St Mary's minster, Cheltenham. An illustration we shan't be using in the Cheltenham Short – but maybe a good starting point for an historical novel? (James Hodsdon)

Coming soon . . .

CHELTENHAM BEFORE THE SPA

Beth Hartland and Alex Craven



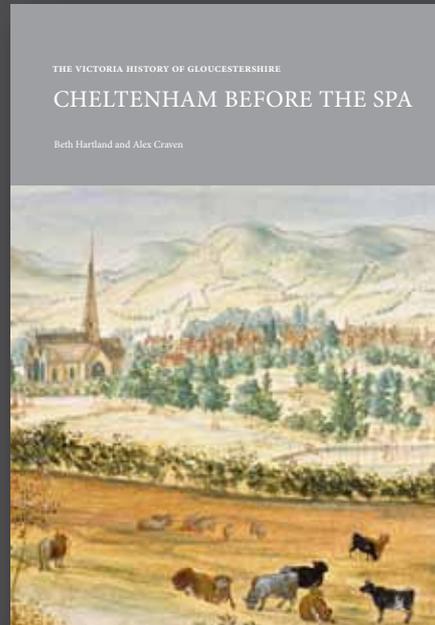
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England's greatest local history community project is working in Gloucestershire to foster public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history and heritage of the county.

Image courtesy of Cheltenham Borough Council and the Cheltenham Trust



The familiar image of Cheltenham, a large and prosperous former spa town, world-famous on account of its Georgian and Regency architecture, its festivals and educational establishments, masks an earlier history. Although numerous descriptions of the town have been published, most say little about the centuries before the 1740s, when it began to develop into a fashionable resort. This is the fullest account ever attempted to chronicle those centuries, from the late Saxon period until the 18th century. In this period Cheltenham developed into a successful small town, ranged along a single main street, with a market and trades serving not only its own needs but also those of the surrounding countryside. This new study draws on a range of documentary sources preserved in local and national archives, many of them never examined in detail before. It therefore helps to explain the foundations upon which present-day Cheltenham was constructed.



25% DISCOUNT OFFER. *Cheltenham before the Spa will be published in early 2018 by the Victoria County History, and will be a substantial illustrated paperback, ISBN 978-1-908857-51-4. When published it will retail at £12, but if you register your interest in purchasing it (without commitment) you will be entitled to a discounted price of £9 per copy. Or you can email us to register your interest, to vchglos@btinternet.com.*

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