

Topography and the Built Environment

Francis Boorman

The Effects of the Dissolution

The manor of Cirencester passed from the abbey into the hands of the crown on 19 December 1539.¹ The dissolution led to the dispersal of the abbey's authority and its physical fabric amongst local notables. The buildings were divided into those considered superfluous, such as the church and chapels, and those preserved as potentially useful for a new tenant, including the abbot's residence and baking, brewing and malting houses.² Custodianship of the manor house and grounds of the abbey was granted to Richard Basing, a wine merchant, inadvertently leading to his imprisonment in Seville.³ The crown retained the use of the roof lead, steeple and other fixtures and fittings of the church which had been removed and melted down by 1541, as well as the abbot's former residence.⁴ The total amount of lead eventually gathered by the crown was estimated at 123 fothers (a cartload, equivalent to c. 1 tonne).⁵ The steeple and surplus houses of the abbey were sold to Sir Anthony Hungerford and Robert Strange, Hungerford's relation by marriage and bailiff to the late abbot. This separate sale caused some friction with Basing who was apparently interfering with their removal of building materials.⁶ Basing also later claimed that a servant of the Duke of Chandos had carried off some lead pipes.⁷ Strange, who had been appointed shortly before the dissolution,⁸ remained as bailiff for nearly fifty years, and led a small group of local men who took over the mantle of authority from the retired abbot.⁹

Several pensions were assigned after the abbey was surrendered, including £200 to Blake, and various pensions to a further 15 monks: £13 6s. 8d. to the prior Richard Woodall, £8 to the cellarer William Warbot and £6 13s. 4d to 12 canons.¹⁰ One monk, William Phelippes (Phelps) did not receive a pension as he was made vicar of the parish church, with all the associated tithes (excepting wheat and sheaves, which went to the crown) and profits, for an annual rent of 53s. 4d.¹¹ He had to supply wine and wax at his own expense and find three chaplains.¹² Lay annuities continued to be paid to Sir Anthony Kingston and Thomas Edgar.¹³

Some of the demesne lands of the abbey were granted in farm for 21 years to the auditor William

¹ Hockaday Abs. CLV.

² See Cirencester Abbey, Dissolution.

³ R. Reece, 'The Abbey of St Mary, Cirencester', *Trans. BGAS* 81 (1962), 201.

⁴ Hockaday Abs. CLV, 19 Dec 1539 and 13 July 1541; TNA E 117/14/28.

⁵ A.K.B. Evans, 'Cirencester Abbey: From Heyday to Dissolution', *TBGAS* 111 (1993), 135.

⁶ TNA E 321/17/48; R. Reece, 'The Abbey of St Mary, Cirencester', *TBGAS* 81 (1962), 201-2.

⁷ Hockaday Abs. XXXIX, 1557.

⁸ Rev. E.A. Fuller, 'Cirencester: the manor and the town', *Trans. BGAS* 9 (1884-5), 340.

⁹ D. Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth: the People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge, 2011), 99.

¹⁰ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XIV, 255-62, 705; Hockaday Abs. CLV, 12 Feb. 1540.

¹¹ Hockaday Abs. CLV, 12 Feb. 1540; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XV, pp.29-55, 139.

¹² W. St. Clair Baddeley, *A History of Cirencester* (Cirencester, 1924), 224.

¹³ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVIII, 254-72.; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XIX, 235-61.; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XX, 262-78; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XXI, 305-34.; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XXI, 388-453.

Berners on 1 May 1540, consisting of Oakley manor with pasture and woodland at £22 10s. a year and Barton Grange with arable land, pasture and meadow at £14 13s. 2d.¹⁴ Spital and Almery granges, along with the abbey's lands in Minety (Glos., later Wilts) and arable, meadow and pasture land were leased to Roger Basing on 12 May 1540, also for 21 years, for £32 10s. 10d. annually, with the crown retaining use of all big trees and woods.¹⁵ Although the abbey's lands in Cirencester no longer included the value of customary labour from tenants, the Minety lease explicitly transferred this service to Basing.¹⁶ The manors of Latton and Eisey (both Wilts) which the abbey owned were sold to Sir Anthony Hungerford.¹⁷ Thomas Weldon was granted the manor of Canon Courte and the rectory and advowson of the vicarage of Cookham (Berks.), also properties of the abbey, in 1541.¹⁸ Further lands were sold in Oxfordshire,¹⁹ Berkshire, Gloucestershire,²⁰ Dorset and Somerset.²¹

Also previously owned by the abbey, 152 messuages in the town of Cirencester were granted to John Pollard and William Birt in 1545, along with three shops beneath 'le Bothelhall', ten unoccupied shops in Chepyng Street, the Ram Inn on Gosditch Street, and various other messuages, shops and pieces of void ground.²² In 1780 the 152 messuages were still held by custom of the manor of Cirencester, with chief rents of less than 5s. and proprietorship changing hands at the court halimote.²³ A farm in Cirencester previously held by Bradenstoke Priory (Wilts.) was granted to John Pope in 1545.²⁴ Mary's Mill and Barton Mill were granted to James Woodford and Thomas Woodford in 1559/60.²⁵

The chantries and services at Cirencester, worth £83 annually, were also dissolved and their assets were sold.²⁶ However, Nottingham's foundation, which distributed £6 18s. 8d. to four poor weavers was continued as a charge upon his lands and the £7 payable to the priest of the Lady Chapel was transferred to the master of the grammar school.²⁷ In 1548 Anthony Bouchier was granted the St Andrew and St Mary chantries.²⁸ In 1549 Thomas Horton and Richard Billet of Wiltshire bought the land of the Alice Avening service.²⁹ The St Mary chantry was granted to Daniel and Alexander Pert of Tewkesbury in 1553.³⁰ John Thynne and Thomas Throckmorton purchased the Holy Trinity

¹⁴ Hockaday Abs. CLV; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XIV, 255–62, 705.

¹⁵ Hockaday Abs. CLV; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVI, 696–730.

¹⁶ Rev. E.A. Fuller, 'Tenures of land, by the customary tenants, in Cirencester', *Trans. BGAS* 2 (1877-8), 318-9.

¹⁷ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XV, 445–81, 942.

¹⁸ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVI, 229–46, 503.

¹⁹ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVII, 153–68, 285.

²⁰ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVII, 618–43, 1154.; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVIII, 227–44, 449.

²¹ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVIII, 510–44, 981.

²² Hockaday Abs., CLV; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XX, 278–329.

²³ S. Rudder, *The History of the Town of Cirencester* (Cirencester, 1800), 111-2.

²⁴ Hockaday Abs., CLV, July 1545.

²⁵ K.J. Beecham, *History of Cirencester and the Roman City of Corinium* (Dursley, 1978), 82.

²⁶ For the chantries and services to 1548, see *Medieval Cirencester*, 64-71 and Rev. E.A. Fuller, *The Parish Church of St. John Baptist, Cirencester* (Cirencester, 1882), 10-16.

²⁷ E.A. Fuller, *The Parish Church of St. John Baptist, Cirencester* (Cirencester, 1882), 14.

²⁸ Hockaday Abs CLV, 21 Dec. 1548.

²⁹ Hockaday Abs CLV, 12 Feb. 1549.

³⁰ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 17 Apr. 1553.

chantry, and Sylvester Leigh and Leonard Bale, both of Yorkshire, purchased Robert Richard's (or Ricard's) chantry.³¹ As a single priest served Cirencester's 1,825 communicants following the dissolution of the chantries. the Gloucestershire commissioners recommended another be employed.³²

COMMUNICATIONS

Roads [by David Viner]

Cirencester was included among the 23 Gloucestershire towns on Jacob van Langeren's 1635 triangular distance table for travellers³³ and appeared on Ogilby's strip map of the route from Bristol to Banbury (Oxon.).³⁴ Abel Wantner's late 17th century description of the county's roads linked Cirencester with Gloucester, Winchcombe, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham, Chipping Camden, Northleach, Lechlade, Fairford, Tetbury, Minchinhampton and Stroud.³⁵

In 1800 Rudder described the town as a great thoroughfare, from which seven turnpike roads diverged.³⁶ Two roads to the east provided alternative routes to London via Burford or Lechlade; to the south, to Southampton via Cricklade; to the west, either Bath or Devizes; to the north-west, Minchinhampton and Stroud; to the north, Gloucester and Cheltenham; and to the north-east the Midlands, via Stow-on-the-Wold.

The first turnpike trust was established under an act of 1727, which permitted tolls to be levied for repairing and widening the road from Cirencester to London through Fairford to St. John's Bridge at Lechlade³⁷ as the existing road had been damaged by heavy traffic. Lechlade, ten miles to the east of Cirencester, was the westernmost navigable point on the River Thames, and an important point of transshipment for trade in cloth and cheese to London.³⁸ The Cirencester to Tetbury and Bath road was turnpiked in 1743 as far as the monument to Sir Bevil Grenville on Lansdown Hill.³⁹ The road from Cirencester to Gloucester via Birdlip was turnpiked in 1747, on the line of Ermin Street, via Spirringate and Whiteway to Baunton.⁴⁰ Cirencester, via Sapperton, Minchinhampton and Rodborough to Stroud, with a branch to Bisley, was turnpiked in 1751-2.⁴¹ Cirencester to Oxford, through Bibury, was turnpiked in 1753.⁴² This was the route was taken by the stagecoach between Bath and Bristol to London, through Oxford and Abingdon.⁴³ Cirencester to Stow-on-the-Wold via Northleach (the Fosse Way,) was turnpiked in 1755.⁴⁴ Cirencester to Cricklade was turnpiked in

³¹ Hockaday Abs., CLV, 19 May 1549 ; Hockaday Abs., CLVI, 1 August 1550.

³² C. Lizenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997), 64.

³³ T. Chubb, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Printed Maps of Gloucestershire, 1577-1911* (1912), 20--23.

³⁴ J. Ogilby, *Britannia* (1675), pl. 55.

³⁵ Bodleian, MS Top.Glouc.2, f.94v, f.96r, f.97r, f.97v, f.98v, f.99r.

³⁶ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 142-8.

³⁷ 13 Geo.I, c.11.

³⁸ VCH *Glos* VII, 106.

³⁹ Cirencester Roads Act, 16 Geo.II, c.22. [GA JF9.33GS]; VCH *Glos* .XI, Cherington, 166-7; VCH *Glos* XI, Rodmarton, 234-5.

⁴⁰ 20 Geo. II, c.23.

⁴¹ 25 Geo.II, c.13.

⁴² 26 Geo.II, c.70.

⁴³ Rudder, *Glos.*, 344.

⁴⁴ 28 Geo.II, c.47.

1758 following the line of Ermin Street to the south of the town.⁴⁵

The Cirencester to Wootton Bassett road, through Siddington, Ashton Keynes and Minety, was turnpiked in 1810⁴⁶, and there was a significant amendment to the Cirencester to Stroud road via Cowcombe Hill (diverted from Minchinhampton) in 1814.⁴⁷

Links between Cirencester and Stroud depended upon a road which left the town at Cecily Hill before diverging to give alternative routes via either Bisley or Minchinhampton. This was a main route for carrying Gloucestershire cloth up to the London market, much of it by packhorse, until the middle of the 18th century.⁴⁸ The road was referred to in a turnpike Act of 1751-2, which set up milestones.⁴⁹ It entered Cirencester Park from Cecily Hill and diverged at the Ewe Pens turnpike gate,⁵⁰ with the path to Bisley following the parish boundary and medieval park pale while that to Stroud turned south-west.⁵¹ Both routes were abandoned by 1813-14.⁵²

Further amendments within Cirencester Park in 1824 diverted the former turnpike road further to the north to create the private farm accommodation road from Barton Farm to Ewe Pens.⁵³ The more southerly road to Stroud via Minchinhampton or Chalford was created at the sole expense of Earl Bathurst by upgrading farm tracks to create the present line of the Stroud road from its junction with the Tetbury Road at a newly configured toll house, The Octagon, and skirting the southern edge of the park as far as Hermitage Bottom at Quakers Gate.⁵⁴ In 2019 the tollhouse remained to the north of line of the modern road.

The realignment of the Whiteway in 1822 from its junction with Grove Lane at the Norman Arch to a point one mile to the north-east allowed the Master family of The Abbey to extend the woodland setting of Hare Bushes and create a private drive to the Stow road.⁵⁵

Coaching and Carriers

A stagecoach to London was established in 1696⁵⁶ and one was running in 1726.⁵⁷ The town's strategic position to serve the cloth-making towns of Tetbury, Stroud, Minchinhampton and Wootton-under-Edge gave it an advantage and by the mid-18th century regular coaching services had been established. Edward Biggs, successor to Richard Scruton at the King's Head, advertised his services as proprietor of the Cirencester and Hampton Stage-Coach destined for the Bell Savage Inn, Ludgate Hill.⁵⁸ By 1791 a daily mail coach, replacing mounted mail-carriers, was in operation on the route from Bristol and Bath through Tetbury and Cirencester to Oxford. The London stagecoach from the Swan inn ran three return journeys a week and there were weekly wagons to

⁴⁵ 31 Geo.II, c.61.

⁴⁶ 50 Geo.III, c.174.

⁴⁷ 54 Geo.III, c.80.

⁴⁸ N. Herbert *Road Travel and Transport in Georgian Gloucestershire* (2009), 13.

⁴⁹ 25 Geo.II, c.13.

⁵⁰ GA, D2525/P121.; GA, D2525/P29; GA, D2525/P32.

⁵¹ Rudder, *Glos.*, map.

⁵² 54 Geo.III, c.80; 58 Geo.III, c.23.

⁵³ GA, Q/SRh/1821/A/1

⁵⁴ GA, Q/RUm/51, 1813.

⁵⁵ GA, Q/SRh/1822/D/4, 1822.

⁵⁶ *London Gazette*, 11-14 May 1696.

⁵⁷ *Glouc. J.*, 29 Mar. 1726.

⁵⁸ *Glouc. J.*, 20 June 1765.

London, Bristol, and Gloucester.⁵⁹ From Cirencester the stage coach travelled on to either Tetbury or Stroud.⁶⁰ The Swan inn service was run by the Masters family⁶¹, and by 1801 was operating as Willan, Masters and Co.⁶² In 1807 Stroudwater Union Coaches set up in competition on the same route⁶³, but failed in 1809⁶⁴. By 1822 coaches ran to London and Gloucester from the Crown or the Ram three times a week, with an additional service from the Ram on three mornings which arrived in the capital on the same day. Services to Bath and Oxford three days a week were also available from the King's Head.⁶⁵ An alternative daily service from London through Abingdon, Faringdon, and Lechlade to Cirencester, and on alternate weekdays through to Tetbury and Stroud proved less successful.⁶⁶ In 1809 the Masters family and partners established a London mail through to Stroud, with a branch coach from Cirencester to Hunter's Hall at Kingscote.⁶⁷ In August 1827 the first Royal Mail Coach from London to Chepstow via Stroud was greeted by about 200 people in Cirencester during its 106 mile, 12 hour journey.⁶⁸

Packhorses and carriers' wagons were used to transport goods and in 1608 two carriers are recorded in the town: Thomas Mayor, St Lawrence St., and William Pyrry, Instrope St., both ideally sited to the north and west of the town in Gloucester Street and Cecily Hill respectively.⁶⁹ In the 18th century, a separate branch of the Masters family was dominant in the London carrier's trade, operating from stables at the Beeches on the London Road.⁷⁰ They provided links to Tetbury, Minchinhampton and Wotton-under Edge in 1763⁷¹; and Tetbury, Malmesbury and Chipping Sodbury in 1808.⁷² The Beeches, and the Masters' business, was owned from 1818 by A.K. Baylis, of the firm of Tanner & Baylis.⁷³ The improvement in the roads enabled 'flying wagons' to be introduced into service, reducing the journey to London to two days.⁷⁴

By 1822 there were 5 companies in Cirencester offering long distance and local carrying and haulage.⁷⁵

Thames & Severn Canal [by David Viner]

The ambitious scheme to link the rivers Thames and Severn by building an artificial navigation was first mooted as early as the beginning of the 17th century with a number of potential routes

⁵⁹ *Universal British Directory*, II (1791), 563.

⁶⁰ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 146.

⁶¹ *Glouc. J.*, 4 Apr. 1774, 14 Nov. 1796.

⁶² *Glouc. J.*, 25 May 1801.

⁶³ *Glouc. J.*, 8 Jun. 1807.

⁶⁴ *Chelt. Chronicle*, 15 Jun. 1809.

⁶⁵ *Pigot's Directory* (1822-3), Cirencester.

⁶⁶ Herbert, *Road Travel and Transport in Georgian Gloucestershire*, 120, plate 36, *Glouc. J.*, 14 Nov. 1785.

⁶⁷ Herbert, *Road Travel and Transport in Georgian Gloucestershire*, 121.

⁶⁸ *Chelt. Journal*, 3 Sep. 1827.

⁶⁹ John Smyth, *Men and Armour* (1608), 239-43.

⁷⁰ *Glouc. J.*, 7 May 1745; 16, 30 Sept. 1799; 7 Oct. 1816.

⁷¹ *Glouc. J.*, 14 Mar. 1763.

⁷² *Glouc. J.*, 4 July 1808.

⁷³ Herbert *Road Travel and Transport in Georgian Gloucestershire*, plate 42, 138, 150; GA D846/III/7.

⁷⁴ *Glouc. J.*, 20 Aug. 1821.

⁷⁵ *Pigot's Directory* (1822-23), Cirencester.

proposed and surveyed.⁷⁶ In 1641 John Taylor, the water poet, attempted to cross by boat from the River Thames at Lechlade to the River Severn, but lack of water at Cirencester forced him to transport his boat overland to the Frome valley. He argued that making the passage navigable would promote inland trade.⁷⁷ In 1722 the poet Alexander Pope described Earl Bathurst's dream of bringing the Thames and Severn together.⁷⁸

The first stage of a navigable waterway to unite the two rivers through the Stroud Valley, the Stroudwater canal from the Severn as far as Stroud, opened in 1779.⁷⁹ Following a meeting at the King's Head in 1781, Robert Whitworth was commissioned to survey the line from Lechlade to Stroud.⁸⁰ Following the passing of the necessary act,⁸¹ a plan detailing land ownership and engineering requirements was prepared by John Doyley.⁸² A collateral cut linking Cirencester to the canal at Siddington provided much-needed access to water drawn from the Daglingworth Brook and the River Churn to augment the long summit level. Lengthy negotiations with Earl Bathurst concluded with the construction of a canal feeder from Barton Mill to the canal wharf at the bottom of Quern's Hill in 1786, and the canal company agreeing to pay compensation to mill owners when water was drawn off.⁸³ John Pickston was the principal contractor, cutting and wheeling clay to line the canal on the Cirencester feeder and branch from October 1787 to May 1788.⁸⁴ James Jackson, as mason, was responsible for digging stone from the lower end of the basin field, and for stone lining the basin and building walls around the basin and along the towpath to Siddington.⁸⁵ A wharhouse with living accommodation, crane, and moorings for narrow boats or Thames barges completed the terminus.⁸⁶

The canal feeder from Barton Mill to Siddington enabled Cirencester to benefit from the canal trade. The arrival of four coal barges in April 178 was greeted by a large crowd of spectators.⁸⁷ By 1820 four coal merchants gave business addresses at the Wharf and the Gas Works were sited with direct access to the canal bank in Watermoor.⁸⁸

Urban Development [by Antonia Catchpole]

The Dissolution had little impact on the development of Cirencester as the large estates to the west and east remained intact, constraining any outward expansion of the town to areas north and south of the medieval core. Land to the north along Gloucester Street had already been colonised, while land to the south of Querns Lane and Lewis Lane, which was common land until 1825, was

⁷⁶ H. Household, *The Thames & Severn Canal* (1969), 11-22.

⁷⁷ J. Chandler ed., *Travels through Tudor Britain* (Stroud, 1999), 192-3.

⁷⁸ Household, *Thames & Severn Canal*, 19.

⁷⁹ VCH Glos. VII, 17.

⁸⁰ *Glouc. J.*, 17 Sept. 1781; GA, TS/175/1; GA TS/182/2.

⁸¹ 23 Geo.III c.38 (1783), GA, TS/176/1.

⁸² GA, TS/182/5.

⁸³ GA, TS/193/5; TS/175/16/45; GA D2525/P5; D. Viner, 'The Thames and Severn Canal in Cirencester', in McWhirr *Cirencester*, 131, 135, fig. 9.2.

⁸⁴ GA, TS/129, f.30, f.136.

⁸⁵ GA, TS/101; Viner, 'The Thames and Severn Canal in Cirencester', 129-130.

⁸⁶ Household (1969), chapter 5; Viner (1976), 135-6, fig. 9.3.

⁸⁷ *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 11 May 1789.

⁸⁸ *Gell & Bradshaw Directory* (1820), 172.

not developed until the 1850s, leaving the inhabitants cramped within the medieval town bounds.⁸⁹

In 1608 Dyer Street was emerging as one of the better parts of town, home to several gentlemen, a large wine merchants', and with two barber surgeons and an apothecary occupying properties at the Market Place end of the street.⁹⁰ Castle Street was home to artisans and craftsmen, while Instrope Street was occupied by labourers, manual workmen and a pedlar.⁹¹ A similar social division appears in the late 17th century: the poorer areas lay along the north-south axis of Ermin Street in the St Lawrence and Cricklade Wards, with Instrope Ward also housing poorer people. Dollar Ward had more large houses, while Dyer Street and Gosditch Street appear to have been the most affluent areas of Cirencester, with over 70% of the inhabitants paying taxes.⁹²

There appears to have been much rebuilding of the town after the Civil War, including the replacement of buildings in stone. But even in 1800 the town was confined to the boundaries of the medieval borough, with a small extension north beyond the Roman walled area. The land outside the built up area was almost entirely devoted to the great parks and mansions of the leading families. The Chesterton tithing map of 1807 shows few buildings along Watermoor Road, while the Stepstairs Lane area is empty apart from a few barns.⁹³ Any expansion before the 19th century was thus confined to the building of courts and cottages in the backs of existing plots, increasing building density without extending the occupied area. Such courts and alleys were generally overcrowded and insanitary, and home to the working and poorer classes.⁹⁴ Almost all additional housing in the first half of the 19th century had to be absorbed within the built up area by means of front access, courtyard development of burgage plots.⁹⁵ A few new buildings did appear in the late 18th and early 19th century, including the Tontine Buildings (Nos. 4-30 Cecily Hill) built by Lord Bathurst in 1802, although once again these were within the already inhabited area.⁹⁶ Even the creation of back lanes and tail end derivative plots was prevented by the nature of the town plan.⁹⁷ The only exception was The Waterloo, a small back lane laid out on the north side of Dyer Street in the early 19th century.⁹⁸

For men of substance, however, there was the option of the suburban villa, a number of which were built on open ground around Cirencester between 1800 and 1830. These were concentrated to the south-west of the town, where land was available outside the ownership of the great estates, and were often enlarged by piecemeal addition. Chesterton House was built for Devereaux Bowley in 1813 on land he assembled from six separate landowners.⁹⁹ In 1824 Joseph Randolph

⁸⁹ B. Hawkins, *Taming the Phoenix: Cirencester and the Quakers 1642–1686* (York, 1998), 2; GA, D674b/P48; J. Wood, *Plan of Cirencester* (1835); D2525/P7, *Map of the Borough of Cirencester* (1837).

⁹⁰ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 239.

⁹¹ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 240.

⁹² TNA, E179/247/14, 2v -3v.

⁹³ GA, PC/960 (N).

⁹⁴ T. Slater 'The Cirencester Improved Dwellings Company 1880–1914' McWhirr, *Cirencester*, 171.

⁹⁵ GA, PC/594; PC/948 (N).

⁹⁶ Verey and Brooks, *Glos I*, 273.

⁹⁷ T. Slater, 'Estate Ownership and Nineteenth Century Urban Development' in A. McWhirr (ed.), 'Archaeology and history of Cirencester', *BAR* 30 (1976), 152.

⁹⁸ GA, PC/948 (N).

⁹⁹ T. Slater, 'Family, society and the ornamental villa on the fringes of English country towns', 4:2 (1978), 137; GA, D2050/17.

Mullings began work on Watermoor House on land later known as Carrot Close donated by his father-in-law, the nurseryman William Gregory, between the nursery and the Cricklade turnpike.¹⁰⁰ Also in 1824, Charles Lawrence persuaded Lord Bathurst to allow him to use part of the Querns to build a cottage, which by August 1825 had developed into a substantial villa complete with a park, lodge and walled kitchen garden.¹⁰¹ These, and other villas built in the same period, formed an early 19th century fringe belt marking the extent of the town.

Rural Settlement

The rural settlements surrounding Cirencester from the mid-16th century consisted of scattered farm and mill houses, formerly owned by the abbey. These were Barton, Almerly and Spyringate (or Sperringate) Granges, and New, Barton and Langley's Mills.¹⁰² At the time of the Dissolution those to the east were mostly acquired by the Masters (Abbey estate), while from the early 18th century the Bathursts (Cirencester Park) acquired those to the west. The manors of Chesterton and Wiggold also had associated farmhouses.¹⁰³ Another farm, initially called New Farm, was established in the 16th century in the abbey estate to the east of the Churn. This became Golden Hill farm, part of the Master estate.¹⁰⁴ The farmhouse still stands in 2017 as the Golden Farm Inn.¹⁰⁵

Very little development took place around Cirencester in the 17th and 18th centuries surrounded as it was by the two private estates, neither of which were inclined to allow their land to be developed. There were only three buildings located in the west of Chesterton tithing on a map of 1777, with no other buildings shown.¹⁰⁶ An 1807 map of Chesterton tithing shows how sparsely populated it remained. Several buildings can be seen close to the town, particularly along the south side of Lewis Lane, with another small cluster west of the turnpike road, which led south to Watermoor House. A building called the Mount lay on a road running north-west from Watermoor Common and the only other cluster of buildings appears to have been the farm in the midst of fields in the west of the tithing.¹⁰⁷ In 1837 the hamlet of Wiggold consisted of two clusters of around five buildings, separated by Wiggold Mead.¹⁰⁸

The Beeches

A house called Greyes was at the Beeches on the Abbey estate from at least 1659.¹⁰⁹ A cottage called the Beeches existed from at least 1680 although it is not clear whether this was the same as the earlier building.¹¹⁰ The building that formed the nucleus of the modern Beeches was built sometime in the late 18th century.¹¹¹ In 1801 Henry Tipper leased the two messuages or tenements called the Beeches adjoining the new bridge from Thomas Master. They were

¹⁰⁰ Slater 'Estate Ownership', 149.

¹⁰¹ GA, D2525/C10; D2525/E156; GA D181/III/T27.

¹⁰² See effects of the dissolution, agriculture and manufacturing.

¹⁰³ See other manors and estates.

¹⁰⁴ GA, D674b/T26; D674b/T15; D674b/E44; D674b/E14.

¹⁰⁵ Verey and Brooks, *Glos I*, 265.

¹⁰⁶ GA, D2525/P25.

¹⁰⁷ GA, D2525/P26.

¹⁰⁸ GA, D674b/P25.

¹⁰⁹ GA, D674b/T39, f.12.

¹¹⁰ GA, D674b/T27.

¹¹¹ Verey and Brooks, *Glos I*, 265.

previously occupied by Edmund Beare, then Thomas Pearce, then Tipper and William Paish.¹¹²

Manors and Estates

Francis Boorman

Cirencester Abbey

The site of the former abbey of Cirencester was leased to Roger Basing, first in 1540 and for a further 21 years in 1546, at a yearly rent of £25 13s. 10½d. Basing was to have sufficient firebote, ploughbote and cartebote, and 20 cartloads of hedgebote yearly, for repairs to the premises.¹¹³ Ownership passed to Thomas Seymour in 1547 and on his attainder, to Sir Anthony Kingston in 1552.¹¹⁴ Basing rented the site to Thomas Marshall, presumably the curate of Cirencester, in 1559 for £80 a year for the remainder of the 21 years. After his daughter married William Chadderton, Basing rented some of the estate to his son-in-law. Elizabeth I granted her physician Richard Master the reversion of the site in 1568 for £590 and he bought out tenancies from Basing, Marshall and Chadderton, and Thomas Parry's interest in the estate for £400.¹¹⁵ Master died in 1588 and his Cirencester estate passed to his son George and thence to George's eldest son Sir William.¹¹⁶ According to Parsons, it was George Master that settled the family at the abbey,¹¹⁷ in a square five-bay house of stone with a three-storey porch.¹¹⁸

During the civil war, Princes Rupert and Maurice quartered with Sir William Master at the Abbey House in 1643 before the sack of Cirencester, and the king stayed there for a night in 1644. Sir William was also on several royalist administrative committees.¹¹⁹ The abbey estates were sequestered and by 1648 had fallen in value from £600 to £200.¹²⁰ Sir William compounded for his estates for £1,200 in 1650, paying an extra £282 for undervaluations in 1652.¹²¹

The estate passed to Sir William's eldest son Thomas (d.1680) and then another two generations of Thomas Masters (d.1710 and 1769).¹²² The fourth Thomas Master married Elizabeth Chester in 1742, but having died in 1749 was outlived by his father. Following the death of Thomas Master III in 1769, the Abbey estate passed to his grandson, also Thomas Master.¹²³ He immediately began replacing the old house. The new house was designed by architect William Donn who was paid £40 for drawing up plans.¹²⁴ A painting from around 1775 shows a three-storey house, five bays across

¹¹² GA D674b/T34.

¹¹³ Hockaday Abs. CLV, 11 Feb. 1546.

¹¹⁴ Hockaday Abs. CLV; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw. VI*, IV, 411–12.

¹¹⁵ GA, D674b/E73.

¹¹⁶ TNA, PROB 11/72/428; *ODNB*, Master, Richard (d. 1587/8); TNA, PROB 11/104/611.

¹¹⁷ J. Fendley ed., *Notes on the Diocese of Gloucester by Chancellor Richard Parsons* (BGAS R.S. 19, 2005), 61.

¹¹⁸ Atkyns, *Glos.*, plate following 346.

¹¹⁹ *ODNB*, Master, William (bap. 1627, d. 1684).

¹²⁰ *Cal. Cttee For Compounding*, I, 85.

¹²¹ *ODNB*, Master, William (bap. 1627, d. 1684).

¹²² TNA, PROB 11/310/262; GA, D674b/T27; TNA, PROB 11/364/396; PROB 11/519/215.

¹²³ TNA, PROB 11/955/118; GA, D674b/E73.

¹²⁴ GA, D1571/E356.

and a semi-circular bow entrance.¹²⁵ A ground plan of 1772 shows a D-shaped hall leading to a square staircase, and flanked by a dining room and drawing room, with a library and dressing room for Thomas Master behind. An L-shaped passage from the back of the house led to servants' quarters and a kitchen.¹²⁶ A plan of Thomas Master's estate in Cirencester and the surrounding area from 1774 shows the new Abbey House and grounds laid out in the style of Capability Brown.¹²⁷

Between 1817 and 1825 the bow entrance was extended on the ground floor, enlarging the D-shaped hall.¹²⁸ Jane Master was Thomas Master's eldest daughter and inherited his estates, including the Abbey House, when he died in 1823.¹²⁹

Archibalds

Archibalds manor house was situated on Dyer Street. Robert Osmunde let Archibalds to Robert Strange in 1538.¹³⁰ William and John Child bought the mansion house and lands from Richard Smyth of Hanford and his wife Mary in 1563, then let the estate to Christopher George. Richard Master purchased the estate in 1566.¹³¹ Archibalds was passed down by the Master family along with the rest of the Abbey Estate.¹³²

Sir William Master continued to let Archibalds in 1622 when it had recently been inhabited by Robert George.¹³³ Archibalds remained in the Master family in 1685 along with 420 a. of pasture in Cirencester belonging to the manor.¹³⁴ The building itself had been demolished by 1712, when Thomas Master leased the site to Bridgett Small, who agreed to build one large messuage or tenement there.¹³⁵

A new tenement or messuage had been erected in part of the site of Archibalds in 1768, which Thomas Master leased to John Brown.¹³⁶ In 1809 Thomas Master leased Ann Gegg a plot of land on the site with a 20ft. frontage on Dyer Street and extending back 180ft.¹³⁷

Chesterton

John Strange owned land in Upper and Lower Turkdean as well as the manor of Chesterton, all of which passed to his son and heir Anthony, upon his death in 1536.¹³⁸ Anthony died in 1542 and Chesterton was inherited by his son John, then a minor, and rented by Thomas Arundell. At this time Chesterton included 13 messuages and gardens, 800 a. of land, 200 a. of meadow, 300 a. of

¹²⁵ N. Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire 2* (Chichester, 1992), 45.

¹²⁶ GA, D674b/P21; Kingsley, *Country Houses of Gloucestershire 2*, 44.

¹²⁷ GA, D674b/P44.

¹²⁸ GA, D674b/P22; Historic England Archive, CC57/00095.

¹²⁹ TNA, PROB 11/1676/281.

¹³⁰ GA, D674b/T19.

¹³¹ GA, D674b/T21.

¹³² GA, D674b/E73.

¹³³ GA, D674b/T21.

¹³⁴ GA, D674b/T27.

¹³⁵ GA, D674b/E6.

¹³⁶ GA, D1388/III/113.

¹³⁷ GA, D674b/T34.

¹³⁸ VCH *Glos.* IX, 217–33.

pasture and 2 a. of wood.¹³⁹ John Strange II died in 1559 and Chesterton passed to his brother Thomas Strange (d.1594) and then Anthony Strange (d.1596).¹⁴⁰ William Arundell relinquished any right in the estate in 1579, when Thomas Strange rented it to Edward Cressy and Anthony West.¹⁴¹

In 1599 Thomas Strange sold Chesterton to Michael Strange for £1000, including three messuages and gardens and 400 a. of land, with various smaller parcels of meadow, wood etc. When Michael Strange died in 1613, he was succeeded by his son Robert Strange. Robert died in 1655 and his lands were partitioned. Chesterton was inherited by Sir Robert Jocelyn who was husband to Jane, one of Strange's four sisters. Sir Robert died in 1712 and Chesterton passed to Sir Strange Jocelyn. Chesterton was described as a 'reputed' manor in 1714, when Sir Strange sold it to Allen Lord Bathurst in for £4,351 (payable to several heirs of Robert Jocelyn who still had an interest in Chesterton) and still including a farm, the Antelope (also known as the Boothhall) and the King's Head.¹⁴² By 1800 Earl Bathurst was impropiator of the tithing of Chesterton, having purchased it from Sir John Nelthrop and the largest estates in the tithing were owned by Earl Bathurst, Thomas Master and Robert Sandford.¹⁴³

Oakley Wood [by Jan Broadway]

Oakley Wood was part of the estate in Cirencester granted to Thomas Seymour in 1547 and after his attainder it was granted to John, duke of Northumberland. Elizabeth I granted it to Sir Thomas Parry (d. 1560), whose son sold it to Sir John Danvers (d. 1594).¹⁴⁴ It was among the manors that Sir Henry Poole (d. 1616) bought from the Danvers family shortly before his death.¹⁴⁵ Oakley Wood passed to Sir Henry's son, also Sir Henry (d. 1645) and grandson, Sir William Poole (d. 1651), an ardent Royalist. As a result of the fines paid by Sir William before his death, the estate was heavily mortgaged.¹⁴⁶ In 1661 Oakley Wood passed from Sir William's son Sir Henry to the mortgagee Sir Walter Walker of Doctor's Commons. This led to a Chancery suit, which reserved £120 p.a. from Oakley Wood to his step-grandmother, Lady Anne Poole (d. 1682). In 1676 Sir Walter's son George sold Oakley Wood to Sir Robert Atkyns.¹⁴⁷ Following Sir Robert's death the wood was sold with other lands to Allen, lord Bathurst.¹⁴⁸

Wiggold

John Whittington of Pauntley sold his rights in the manor of Wiggold, with the manor and advowson of Coates, in 1488 to Richard Pole, and it descended in his family to William Pole of Noveton [perhaps Nuneaton] (Warws.) until 1549, when William or his son John sold it to George Prater of Latton (Wilts).¹⁴⁹ Richard Prater (possibly George's son) of Easton Hastings (Berks.), sold it

¹³⁹ GA, D2525/E143; D2525/T213.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, PROB 11/83/415; PROB 11/88/3.

¹⁴¹ GA, D2525/E143; D2525/T213.

¹⁴² GA, D2525/E143; D2525/T213.

¹⁴³ S. Rudder, *The History of the Town of Cirencester* 2nd edn. (Cirencester, 1800), 234.

¹⁴⁴ Sir ThomSir Atkyns, *Glos.*, 348-9.

¹⁴⁵ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Poole, Sir Henry (c. 1541-1616).

¹⁴⁶ VCH Glos., XI, 91.

¹⁴⁷ GA, D2525/T192/1.

¹⁴⁸ See Chesterton.

¹⁴⁹ Lancs. R.O., DDT0 P5; DDT0 O (5)/3, /5, /6, /7 and /8.

in 1577 to William Kemble of Widhill (in Purton, Wilts).¹⁵⁰ Kemble died in 1600 and in his will left the manor of Wiggold in moieties to his sons John and Michael.¹⁵¹ Michael Kemble's moiety was sold in 1638 by his son George and George's son Richard (both of Pembridge, Herefs.) to John, Henry and Charles Milborne of Wonastow (Mons.), although Richard must have retained an interest in the property.¹⁵² In 1666-7, by two transactions, this moiety was sold by its residual owners to Thomas Talbott (d. 1686) of Longford (Salop), younger son of the earl of Shrewsbury.¹⁵³ It descended to his son, John Talbott, who was the owner in 1717. The lessees at this period were Richard Molder and his family.¹⁵⁴

As part of the marriage settlement between John Talbot and Katherine Belasyse in 1692, the moiety of Wiggold was granted as dower for the support of various of her relatives.¹⁵⁵ They having died without issue by 1739, John Talbot conferred the moiety of Wiggold on his kinsman Peregrine Widdrington. Following a case in Chancery, Widdrington granted interests in a farm and around 250 a. of land in Wiggold to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and Sir Walter Wagstaff Baggot as trustees in 1744. His will of 1747 granted his share of Wiggold to firstly his nephew William Tempest Widdrington and heirs, then to another nephew, John Towneley (b.1731 of Towneley near Accrington, Lancs.). William Tempest Widdrington died in 1753 without any sons and so Wiggold passed to Towneley. Lord William Bagot was the surviving trustee of the farm at Wiggold and he was bought out by Towneley and his son Peregrine Edward in 1784.¹⁵⁶ The Towneleys mortgaged it for £1000.¹⁵⁷ This was presumably in preparation for the sale of the moiety of Wiggold to Hester Cripps (widow of Joseph Cripps) and William Hall for payments of the £1000 and a further £1900 in 1785. It had previously been rented to Joseph Cripps, deceased. The purchase was made for the benefit of Joseph Cripps II following his 21st birthday and was part of his marriage settlement with Elizabeth Harrison later that year. When Joseph Cripps II died in 1847 he divided the moiety of Wiggold between his five children by his first wife, Elizabeth Harrison (Joseph, Henry, Charles, Elizabeth and Charlotte). The shares were then consolidated amongst the family and bought by Frederick Cripps.¹⁵⁸ Deeds were drafted to partition Wiggold by arbitrators, giving four-fifths to Frederick and one fifth to Charles, but they were not used. These contain schedules listing the 189 a. to go to Frederick and 73 a. to go to Charles.¹⁵⁹

It seems that John Kemble's moiety was at some point purchased by the Talbots as Sir Charles Henry Talbot owned fields to the north and east of Wiggold totalling just over 257 a. shown on a plan of c.1780.¹⁶⁰ Sir Charles Henry Talbot (1720-1798) was succeeded by his son Sir Charles Talbot (1751-1812), who was succeeded by his brother Sir George Talbot (1761-1850).

¹⁵⁰ Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5.

¹⁵¹ Lancs. R.O., DDTO O (5)/9.

¹⁵² Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5.

¹⁵³ Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5; 6 Geo. I c. 29.

¹⁵⁴ Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5.

¹⁵⁵ Staffs. R. O., D5378/1/2-3.

¹⁵⁶ GA, D1388/box9348/1 part.

¹⁵⁷ LA, DDTO P5.

¹⁵⁸ GA, D1388/box9398/11.

¹⁵⁹ GA, D1388/box9348/1 part.

¹⁶⁰ GA, D646/1.

Local Government

Francis Boorman

Borough Administration

From 1540 administration in the town was dominated by Robert Strange, the bailiff appointed by the outgoing abbot in 1539.¹⁶¹ Strange remained as bailiff through the ownership of Thomas Seymour, Anthony Kingston and Sir John Danvers, all courtiers and largely aloof from the affairs of the town. He used an aggressive, bullying style to maintain his supremacy.¹⁶² In 1571 Strange reported to the privy council that watch had been kept in Cirencester and the seven Hundreds with nothing to report, capturing the role of the manor in keeping the peace on behalf of the national government.¹⁶³

Numerous public appointments relating to the old abbey manor reflect Strange's influence. In 1544, Richard Pate was made under-steward of the old abbey estate and steward of the associated courts, with Anthony Straunge as his deputy.¹⁶⁴ Governance of the town instituted by the abbey remained largely unaffected as a small group of interconnected families took up the majority of manorial positions and leased many of its old estates.¹⁶⁵ Thomas Webbe, a carpenter who leased some of the abbey lands, was made serjeant of Cirencester at the request of Sir Anthony Kingston in 1544.¹⁶⁶ In 1547 there were two swains or sub-bailiffs for the town who received 12s. each a year and five sub-bailiffs for the seven hundreds who received 6s. 8d. each a year. Their total expenses came to 23s. 4d.¹⁶⁷

Depositions relating to a power struggle between manor and town described the office of bailiff and other functionaries of the borough in some detail: 'The bailiff appointed by the lord of the manor is the head officer under the steward of the town, with two serjeants attending upon him bearing maces before him upon great occasions and all festival days, and the bailiff and those who have served the office of bailiff, with their wives, are wont to wear scarlet gowns on Sundays and festival days. There are also two constables, two 'cardeners', two ale-tasters, two searchers of hides and tallow, two sealers of leather, and two water-bailiffs, besides two wardsmen in each of the streets, or wards. The bailiff and constable associated with some of the best part of the town, have sometimes called a hall and heard and determined causes there, and did govern and rule the town in good sort and civil manner'.¹⁶⁸

The functions of these various offices are partly detailed in the Cirencester court rolls, accounts of the views of frankpledge held in the vill of Cirencester, which was now in the purview of the manor in place of the abbey. Views of frankpledge were held every six months, although few of the 16th century court rolls still survive. The seven wards of the town of Cirencester were (with spelling

¹⁶¹ See Social: Influential Townspeople.

¹⁶² D. Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth: the People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge, 2011), 95, 99-100.

¹⁶³ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1547-80, 419.

¹⁶⁴ *L&P Hen.* VIII, XIX (1), p.643.

¹⁶⁵ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 100-102.

¹⁶⁶ The source in fact refers to Sir William Kingston, presumably in error, as he died in 1540. *L&P Hen.* VIII, XIX (1), 646.

¹⁶⁷ *Hockaday Abs.* CLV.

¹⁶⁸ TNA, E 178/959; Quoted in Rev. E.A. Fuller, 'Cirencester: the manor and the town', *Trans. BGAS* 9 (1884-5), 342.

variations from the 1550-1 court rolls in brackets) St Lawrence (Saint Laurence Strete), Castle Street (Castellstrete), Chepinge Street (Chepyngstrete), Instropp Street (Inkstropstrete), Cricklade Street (Crykeladestret), Gosdich Street (Gosdichstrete) and Dolers Street (Dolerstrete). Courts were also held for the seven Hundreds of Cirencester.¹⁶⁹

At a view of frankpledge for the town in 1550 a tithingman presented the cases from each ward, mostly relating to the vending of products including meat, fish, beer and candles, or providing services such as inns or stabling, without the permission of the manor. Fines were 4d. or 6d. The wards with the greatest total fines were Cheping Street with 7s. 6d. and Gosdich Street with 6s. 10d. Transgressors presented by the searchers of leather and conservators of the water, included six glovers fined 2d. Each for putting hides in the river. The level of fines was set by two affeerers, and the total of fines taken was 29s. 8d. Finally, two constables were elected.¹⁷⁰ In 1559 offences included taking undertenants, which was against the ordinances of the town, while the rector of Stratton was fined 6d. for throwing manure from his cart into the street..¹⁷¹ In 1572 the searchers of hides and skins Thomas Man and William Vinor presented that John Smith of Cricklade was a common butcher who sold meat at market day, but did not bring the hides and skins as ordered. Smith was fined 6d. Robert Rowly of St Lawrence ward was fined 2s for selling ale without a licence. John Chapperleyn of Chepinge Street was fined 6d for keeping an inn without a sign.¹⁷²

Low levels of public disorder were addressed at the view of frankpledge, such as obstructing the highway with anything from pigs to a wooden beam. In 1572 Elizabeth Webb, widow of Chepinge Street, was fined 6d. for suffering her family to throw dirt in the highway, 'to the injury of her neighbours'.¹⁷³ The conservators of water fined several men 3-4d. for putting hides in the river and Edward Clerk 12d. for throwing dung in the water. In 1573, the tasters were in attendance and eight common tranterers (carriers) were fined 4d. each for not giving notification that they were selling ale that needed to be tasted.¹⁷⁴ The level of total fines was £4 1s. 8d. in 1572, a substantial increase from the 1550s.

Cirencester manor also held a court of halimote every three weeks. The keeper of the court was the bailiff of the manor. In the early 1570s Sir Giles Poole was bailiff, but in practice the court was held by his deputy, then Richard Bird.¹⁷⁵ Most of the business related to pleas of debt and freemen paying suit of court, or paying to be excused attendance. In 1550 the fines totalled 21s. 6d. More occasional business related to letting or transfer of property, which was held by copy of the court roll. In 1551 Robert Straunge and his wife Joan paid 20d. to let their property called 'le Antelope' to John Chappleyn for 21 years.¹⁷⁶ Change of copyhold involved surrender into the hands of the steward who presided at the court, and payment of a fine.¹⁷⁷ In May 1551, a messuage changed hands for a fine of 5s.¹⁷⁸ Business in the halimote court was very similar in the early 1570s,

¹⁶⁹ See GA, D1375/208, translation in D1375/504 and D1375/496-502.

¹⁷⁰ GA, D1375/495.

¹⁷¹ GA, D1375/496.

¹⁷² GA, D1375/208 m.1, translation in D1375/504.

¹⁷³ GA, D1375/208 m.1.

¹⁷⁴ GA, D1375/208 m.2.

¹⁷⁵ GA, P86/1/MI/1.

¹⁷⁶ GA, D1375/495.

¹⁷⁷ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 111.

¹⁷⁸ GA, D1375/495.

although occasional disputes concerning land were heard. A disagreement over a hedge next to the Fosseway between Christopher George and Giles Selwyn was first heard in May 1572. A reminder in 1573 that surrenders made out of court had to be brought to the next court for enrolment suggests customary court procedure was not always being followed.¹⁷⁹ Property transactions in the court of halimote continued through the 17th and 18th centuries.¹⁸⁰

Cirencester changed hands several times during the civil war. In 1643 the town was taken by Royalist forces. After Prince Rupert had extracted £3,000 from the county for raising and garrisoning troops and a further £4,000 a month for their maintenance, Cirencester was left in the governance of Prince Maurice.¹⁸¹ Essex briefly retook the town for Parliament, raiding horses and provisions, but did not attempt to hold it. The King subsequently left Cirencester in the hands of Sir Jacob Astley.¹⁸² When the Parliamentary generals including Thomas Fairfax passed through the town in 1646, they were received with rejoicing.¹⁸³

There was little change to the operation of the manorial courts during the 18th century, excepting occasional interventions when they were not seen to be functioning smoothly. Lord Bathurst himself was apparently presented at the court leet in 1745 for not maintaining the pillory and ducking stool and amerced £120.¹⁸⁴ In 1736 the customs and fines for transfers of copyhold at the halimote court were set out in full, presumably because they were not being adhered to. At the same time it was found that the three weeks court for small debts (the view of frankpledge for the seven Hundreds) had not been meeting at the prescribed interval and a plea was made for it to be convened with greater regularity.¹⁸⁵

In 1792 the inhabitants petitioned Parliament requesting legislation to promote the expeditious recovery of small debts and the town's MPs, Lord Apsley and Richard Master, were tasked with preparing a bill.¹⁸⁶ This resultant Act¹⁸⁷ established a court of requests with jurisdiction over debts of under 40s. with the steward, bailiff and serjeant of the court appointed by lord of the manor and seven Hundreds, Earl Bathurst.¹⁸⁸ A list of commissioners was appointed with any three making a quorum that could hold the court.¹⁸⁹ In 1800 the court was held every second Thursday at the town hall. Samuel Rudder considered it a great success, calling for its jurisdiction to be extended to debts of up to £5.¹⁹⁰

¹⁷⁹ GA, P86/1/MI/1.

¹⁸⁰ GA, D10820/C6-1-a

¹⁸¹ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1641–3, 442; Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 249.

¹⁸² Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 254.

¹⁸³ J. Washbourn, *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis* (1825), cxc.

¹⁸⁴ *Cirencester Parish Magazine*, 21 (Sept. 1890).

¹⁸⁵ GA, D2050/M3, f. 197–8.

¹⁸⁶ *CJ* 47, 640.

¹⁸⁷ *CJ* 47, 804.

¹⁸⁸ Courts of request. Abstract of returns to an address of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 15 August 1838; for, returns of the number of causes, officers, jurisdiction and committals of the Courts of Requests (Parl. Papers 1839 (338-I) xliii), p. 172–3.

¹⁸⁹ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 182–204.

¹⁹⁰ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 204–5.

Guild and Trade Companies

Guild merchant

In 1582 an attempt was made by the townsmen to re-establish the guild merchant granted by Henry IV, but subsequently annulled after the intervention of the abbot.¹⁹¹ The lord of the manor Sir John Danvers resisted the move in the Court of Exchequer, complaining that the petitioners were causing unrest in the Seven Hundreds.¹⁹² Danvers claimed that the bailiff and other manorial officers were not only prevented from carrying out their duties, but were even put in physical danger by the insurrectionary populace. The townsmen attempting to establish the validity Henry IV's charter were led by Giles Selwyn.¹⁹³

An inquisition held at Cirencester to gather evidence about the custom of the manor and governance of the town, upheld Danvers' manorial rights.¹⁹⁴ Selwyn and the townspeople were forced to give up the guild-charter and publicly submit to Danvers, as well as paying him a fine of 20 marks.¹⁹⁵ A further attempt by the townsmen to re-establish the guild merchant in 1595,¹⁹⁶ was overturned by the Court of Exchequer which upheld the decree of 1583.¹⁹⁷

Weavers' Company

The Weavers' Company of Cirencester, which had regulated the trade since around 1400, was granted a charter during the reign of Philip and Mary. This was confirmed by Elizabeth in an *inspeximus* of 1558.¹⁹⁸ The charter provided for an annual meeting of the weavers on St. Katherine's Day, to elect two masters or wardens for the period of one year and to inspect the previous year's accounts. Any weaver present in the town who did not attend the meeting had to pay a fine of 3s. 4d., while a warden who failed to pass on the records and accounts of the company was fined 20s. No weaver could take an apprentice without a licence from the wardens, who also enforced the indentures of apprenticeship. No-one could set up a loom in the town unless they observed the customs of the company, had the approval of the wardens, and were worth £5 or owned property worth 20s. annually. The same regulations applied to 'foreigners' who wished to weave in the town. Journeymen weavers who had not been apprenticed in Cirencester also had to be licensed by the wardens. If any members of the company failed to pay a fine as set out in the charter, the wardens could seize possessions from their house to force payment. The wardens could also deny work to apprentices or journeymen if they repeatedly misbehaved.¹⁹⁹ A similar set of regulations was set out for journeymen weavers in 1559.²⁰⁰

In 1605 the Weavers' Company leased the upper room or loft of St Thomas' Hospital from the almsmen. The lease was renewed in 1638 for 2s. per year and again in 1688, 1708 and 1717. In

¹⁹¹ See Medieval Cirencester: Economic, Trade.

¹⁹² TNA, E 178/884.

¹⁹³ Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 236; Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 134.

¹⁹⁴ E.A. Fuller, 'Cirencester: the manor and the town', *Trans. BGAS* 9 (1884-5), 341.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, E 123/10, Hilary 23 Eliz.

¹⁹⁶ Fuller, 'Cirencester: the manor and the town', 343.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, E 123/23, Michaelmas 38 Eliz.

¹⁹⁸ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 163-4.

¹⁹⁹ GA, D4590/1/1.

²⁰⁰ GA, D4590/1/3.

1792 it was stated that 'there is no lease now nor is it worthwhile to have one'.²⁰¹

The regulations of the Weavers' Company were renewed in 1640, confirming practices which had been developed since at least the early 16th century.²⁰² By this time common stock accumulated by the Company was distributed to members. Anyone setting up a loom in the town without the wardens' permission had to pay £10 and for a 'breakfast' for the company. The weavers were active in parish life and the wardens and Company were obliged to take up the weavers' seats in the church. Members had to serve as beadle of the company. Further rules were set out to protect the trade and fines for various misdemeanours were increased.²⁰³ From 1672 the Weavers' Hall was used as a Presbyterian meeting place.²⁰⁴

The Weavers' Company felt that its authority was being challenged in 1737, during the deliberations over the future of the Blue School.²⁰⁵ The weavers believed a decree of the Lord Chancellor ran contrary to their charter, which they emphasised they had exercised regularly²⁰⁶ and took legal advice about whether the charter covered weaving 'stockings, silks, stuffs or bags' and even considered applying for a new charter.²⁰⁷ Eventually the wardens petitioned Benjamin Bathurst, MP for Cirencester, but the petition failed and the Company had to rely on their charter as it stood to maintain their monopoly.²⁰⁸

In 1800, the Company continued to meet, but with the collapse of the weaving trade their purpose was increasingly convivial and members were not required to have a connection to weaving.²⁰⁹ Their only continuing responsibilities were charitable, providing four tenements in St Thomas' Hospital and distributing the rent of an estate in the parish of Berkeley to poor members, bequeathed by Sir William Nottingham in 1483.²¹⁰ Meetings were rarely held more than once a year and functionaries such as the beadle and keykeeper were elected more sporadically in the late 18th century.²¹¹ The Weavers' Company continued to meet annually throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and administer its rather slender revenue, with legacies helping to maintain its almshouses.²¹² The members of the Company donated an inscribed Credence Table for use in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity in the parish church in 1975.²¹³

Parochial Administration

The first 'accompte' in the vestry book is dated July 1613. From 1612 two churchwardens were listed and a complete list of them has been compiled from the earliest named until 1912.²¹⁴ From

²⁰¹ GA, D4590/3/3.

²⁰² GA, D4590/2/1.

²⁰³ GA, D4590/1/4.

²⁰⁴ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1671–2, 341 and 343; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1672, 43.

²⁰⁵ See Social: Education, Charity Schools.

²⁰⁶ GA, D4590/6/1.

²⁰⁷ GA, D4590/6/2.

²⁰⁸ GA, D4590/6/3 and /4.

²⁰⁹ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 170–1.

²¹⁰ GA, D4590/3/5; See Medieval: Religion, Nottingham's Service.

²¹¹ GA, D4590/2/1.

²¹² GA, D4590/8/1, *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 10 May 1884; H.J. Legg, *Cirencester Weavers' Company, 1918–1976* (1976).

²¹³ Legg, *Cirencester Weavers' Company*, 3.

²¹⁴ *Wilts and Glos Standard*, 30 Dec. 1911; reprint at GA, RV79.1GS.

1618 the appointment of four waymen or surveyors of the highways was recorded. The appointment of four sidesmen, who were assistants to the churchwardens and constables for the tithings, were detailed in the vestry book, and from 1624 four overseers of the poor.²¹⁵ Most appointments were initially made on Easter Monday, which was the only meeting recorded in the vestry book for long periods and was generally used to conduct the most important vestry business. Activities of the vestry were funded by taxes on householders, or rates. There was a rate for mending the church, relieving the poor, policing the parish (the constables' rate) and for fixing the roads (the surveyors' rate).²¹⁶

From 1647 a general meeting of the inhabitants was ordered to be held on the first Thursday of every month.²¹⁷ A venue for the meeting was secured in 1671, when a grant was made by the bishop of Gloucester, William Nicholson, to the minister and churchwardens to make public use of the church house or 'vise', which became the town hall.²¹⁸ In October 1736, the vestry decided to meet quarterly, with the first meeting at Easter and the other three on the quarter days, unless there was exceptionally urgent business.²¹⁹

A committee was appointed to conduct vestry affairs in September 1741, including Earl Bathurst, Thomas Master, the curate Joseph Harrison, appointees such as the constables and churchwardens and other leading figures, creating a closed vestry. Seven men had to be present to make a quorum. They would report their decisions back to the parish in 'full vestry' and Timbrell the town clerk was also clerk to the committee.²²⁰ In 1742 the quorum was reduced to five.²²¹ By 1750 the vestry was meeting on a monthly basis.²²² Following bitter disagreements between the minister and vestry in the mid-1750s, all inhabitant householders were involved in electing one of the churchwardens and far fewer vestry meetings were recorded, often only one a year.

Treasurers

There were two treasurers of the church, who were chosen from among the leading men of the town, including Richard Danvers, John Coxwell and Robert George in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, who either did not serve for a specific term or the same men were consistently re-elected.²²³ From 1614 one treasurer was elected each year to join the incumbent.²²⁴ It seems likely that that they were a lay continuation of the system of treasurers established for the abbey in 1378, but were certainly appointed from at least the early 16th century.²²⁵ In all matters relating to church property and the appointment of the schoolmaster, the minister was joined in his decisions by the churchwardens and the treasurers. The treasurers also agreed the orders for the churchwardens issued in 1615, checked their accounts before the parishioners to avoid contention

²¹⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.46.

²¹⁶ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.140–2.

²¹⁷ GA, P86a/CW/2/1, f.11; GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.64.

²¹⁸ GA, P86a/CW/2/1, f.1; P86/1/VE/2/1, f.223.

²¹⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.120.

²²⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.126.

²²¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.128.

²²² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.143.

²²³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, ff.25–6, 44–6.

²²⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.44; P86/1/IN/6/3, f.142.

²²⁵ See Cirencester Abbey: Internal Structure and Management; E.A. Fuller, *The Parish Church of St. John Baptist, Cirencester* (Cirencester, 1882), 16.

and gave consent to leases issued by the churchwardens.²²⁶ At some point after 1624, when the treasurers stop being mentioned in the church accounts, only one treasurer served at a time.²²⁷ A treasurer was still included in an agreement of 1719.²²⁸

Churchwardens

Churchwardens often served for two, sometimes three years consecutively. Their responsibilities, which included the numerous charitable trusts of the town and the property associated with them and such contentious duties as the assignment of seats in the church were set out in an agreement of 1615. Charitable donations were received by the churchwardens and had to be registered with the treasurers and six principal men of the town. Their accounts had to be checked by the church treasurers, with money spent on the church and taken for renting seats recorded in detail. A list of money and leases given for the maintenance of the church poor was to be drawn up and read at every accompte to stir the generosity of others.²²⁹ A memorandum listed additional duties. All tenants of church land and tenements were to bring their leases and have them enrolled in the parish register. Forthwith, no lease was to be granted for longer than 21 years or three lives and a clause would be inserted whereby any payments that were more than 21 days late would result in the lease being terminated. One of the treasurers and a churchwarden were to survey the state of all premises annually and present any problems of poor conditions or abuse of properties at the accompte. Finally the church was to be repaired and storage arranged for leases and accounts.²³⁰ All these duties are reflected in the churchwardens' accounts.²³¹ The churchwardens' business occasionally took them to London: Edward King was reimbursed for his journey in 1647 and offered expenses if parish business kept him in London longer than he needed in 1651.²³²

Following a gap in the accounts beginning in 1668, from 1700 the two churchwardens' accounts were listed separately, with one taking rents and making payments relating to the church and the other receiving and disbursing monies related to the parish charities.²³³ Receipt of briefs was accounted for by both men. In 1717 new rules for auditing the churchwardens' accounts were introduced. Henceforth they would have to provide receipts for all money paid out of the church rents, they were banned from giving church money to the poor, they were told to keep a closer check on paid seating in the church and limits were placed on what they could claim for various fees and expenses.²³⁴

The divisions in the town over the parliamentary election in 1754 led to the appointment by mandamus of James Croome as the warden for the poor and Benjamin Bathurst and John Timbrell as joint wardens for the church²³⁵ and prevented a satisfactory audit of the churchwardens' accounts for 1754 and 1755, when John Cripps was the warden for the poor and Thomas Parsons

²²⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.43 and 57.

²²⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.46; P86/1/IN/6/4, f.129.

²²⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.35.

²²⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.43; GA, D10820/L3-1-b, S.E. Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century* (1914), 10–11.

²³⁰ Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century*, 11.

²³¹ GA, P86a/CW/2/1.

²³² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.63 and 67.

²³³ GA, P86a/CW/2/1, ff.109–17.

²³⁴ GA, P86a/CW/2/1, f.201.

²³⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, f.6; See Parliamentary Representation.

and John Timbrell were joint wardens for the church.²³⁶ A case was heard at Gloucester assizes with Charles Coxe as plaintiff and the recently appointed minister Samuel Johnson as defendant, over the established procedure of the outgoing postholders nominating four eligible men, from whom the minister chose one and the parishioners elected the other.²³⁷

In March 1755 the great chest in the vestry room was broken open and £467 0s. 1d. was stolen in cash and bonds, an incident possibly related to the recent troubles.²³⁸ In the same month John Cripps was elected churchwarden with his majority of 86 recorded for the first time.²³⁹ A compromise was reached in 1756 when one churchwarden was chosen by the minister and the other elected by the parishioners, although this process was not to affect their customary rights.²⁴⁰ This method continued in the following years.²⁴¹ The minister used his appointment of a churchwarden for 1776, 1777 and 1778 to aid him in his struggle with the vestry, who then stopped attending the vestry and failed to hand in his accounts in 1778, meaning a rate could not be set for the year.²⁴² In many years the election of the churchwarden was not contested but in 1793 Edward Cripps was elected churchwarden ahead of Daniel Masters, by a majority of 141.²⁴³

Overseers of the poor

The vestry chose their overseers of the poor but occasional interventions in their decisions were necessary, as in 1703 when the justices of the peace replaced two of the elected overseers, John Cleaveland and Phillipp Painter, with their own choice of candidates.²⁴⁴ The rejected men were then appointed overseers by the magistrates in 1704. Their intervention became more pronounced, perhaps because they had repeatedly rejected one candidate for overseer, Thomas Browne, and in 1707 also John Browne. In 1708 they rejected all four elected overseers and made the appointments themselves.²⁴⁵ From 1708 onwards, all overseers of the poor were appointed by the magistrates.²⁴⁶ In October 1742 the vestry agreed to use the poor rates to appeal a decision at the quarter sessions regarding the inequality of poor rates paid by Lord Bathurst, his tenants and the inhabitants of the town.²⁴⁷

Surveyors of the highways

There is little early evidence relating to the role of the waymen or supervisors of the highways, but it would appear that their major responsibility was to inspect the roads, bridges and walls around the town and to ensure that residents were maintaining those adjacent to their own land.²⁴⁸ From 1704 the surveyors of the highways were elected and then confirmed by the magistrates, at

²³⁶ GA, P86a/CW/2/1.

²³⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, f.3.

²³⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.152.

²³⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.152.

²⁴⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.154.

²⁴¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.155.

²⁴² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.169–70, f.176; P86a/VE/5/4; P86/1/VE/2/1, f.175–8.

²⁴³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.193.

²⁴⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.105.

²⁴⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.107.

²⁴⁶ for other appointments relating to poor relief, below: ???

²⁴⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.128.

²⁴⁸ Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century*, 16–7; GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.97.

Christmas and in January instead of Easter.²⁴⁹ In November 1739 a new rate of 6d. in the pound was collected by the vestry for repair of the highways, which they agreed would be paid for even in cases where those people who were customarily responsible refused to carry out repairs.²⁵⁰ In 1746 four men were made supervisors of the hundred. Thomas Hughes was paid £3 3s. for collecting the rate for repairing the highways.²⁵¹ In January 1766 a rate of 3d. was made for repairing the highways which was proportional to the poor rate.²⁵² The supervisors of the highway were asked to make a rate of 6d. in the pound in 1776 and to make any repairs necessary within the hundred.²⁵³ James Pincott, mason was contracted by the vestry to pitch, repair and amend the highways in the hundred for seven years from 1779, with a salary of £70.²⁵⁴ With the arrival of a turnpike road in Castle Ward in 1783, Pincott's salary was reduced to £30.²⁵⁵

Vestry Clerk and Sexton

The terms vestry, town and parish clerk were used interchangeably throughout the period. Reference was first made in 1551 to the late clerk Richard Blake, who was threatened with legal action if he failed to return the ledger books.²⁵⁶ The role of clerk was twinned with that of the keepers of the church clock and chimes, and their long years of service were a rare source of stability amid the religious turbulence of the 16th century. The first recorded keeper of the clock and chimes was William Chapman, who lived in the porch house. Next was Thomas Farington, who held the position for 27 years and was also made church clerk. He died in the time of the plague in 1578.²⁵⁷ He was succeeded by John Baker, who was clock-keeper and clerk and also rented the porch house to tenants.²⁵⁸ By 1621 Baker was also the sexton, the first mention of the role.²⁵⁹ Baker died in 1631, having been clerk for nearly 53 years.²⁶⁰ Thomas Moore was clerk in 1639, when an order was made for him to be paid 20s. annually for attending vestry meetings and keeping the ledger book.²⁶¹ He died in 1672, aged 92.²⁶²

A general meeting was held in 1647, when the churchwardens and constables were asked to decide what was due to the sexton and what to the parish clerk, as William Webbe and Walter Portlock held the offices together.²⁶³ At another general meeting in 1648 Webbe was designated as keeper of the bells and chimes, and was required to account for the graves dug and to keep the church, chapel and porch clean. Portlock was made the clerk and had to attend upon the

²⁴⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.106.

²⁵⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.125.

²⁵¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.137.

²⁵² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.162.

²⁵³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.173.

²⁵⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.180.

²⁵⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.185.

²⁵⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.65

²⁵⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.27; 18thC transcriptions in GA, P86/1/IN/6/1.

²⁵⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.27 and f.39.

²⁵⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.7; P86/1/IN/6/1 f.6.

²⁶⁰ GA, P86/1/IN/6/1, f.1.

²⁶¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.57.

²⁶² GA, D10820/L3-1-b, Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century*, 8.

²⁶³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.63–4; GA, P86/1/IN/6/1.

minister.²⁶⁴ Webbe and Portlock were put in joint charge of the register for christenings, weddings and burials.²⁶⁵ William Webbe died in 1664 and the office of sexton passed to his brother John and his widow Edith.²⁶⁶ In 1672 at a public vestry meeting, John Webb's son, also John, was made town clerk in place of Thomas Moore, who died aged 92. Edith Webb died in the same year and John Webb the younger was elected sexton.²⁶⁷

In 1684 an extensive agreement was made between the sexton Henry Belcher and the vestry. Belcher was given the job for life on condition of good behaviour and was granted the house in the church porch, which the vestry agreed to repair as it was in a ruinous state. Belcher was also made town clerk with a wage of 20s. for attending vestry and other public meetings, and could retain the profits he earned from any other writing commissions.²⁶⁸ He was leased a house by the churchwardens with £2 rent in 1686.²⁶⁹ Belcher died and was replaced by Henry Timbrell as sexton, town clerk and register in 1710.²⁷⁰ The next appointment was of Thomas Hughes in 1745.²⁷¹ From 1753 the sexton was entitled to charge a 1s. fee for searches in the parish register.²⁷² In 1775 the sexton's salary was £5 and the duties of an under sexton were listed, mainly involving bell ringing and cleaning.²⁷³

Thomas Hughes resigned in 1775, when the vestry chose Timothy Stevens, who had been assisting with his duties for ten years, to replace him.²⁷⁴ The minister chose an alternative candidate called John Fisher.²⁷⁵ In the ensuing struggle, the minister went so far as to order the gravedigger Barton to change the locks on the church. Fisher resigned, but the minister and churchwardens appointed Thomas Lediard in his place. This led to a protracted legal dispute.²⁷⁶ Following a poll, which Stevens won with 155 votes to 60 for Lediard,²⁷⁷ Stevens was appointed without the consent of the minister and churchwardens.²⁷⁸ Following several years of disputes and a change of minister, articles of agreement were finally drawn up for Stevens.²⁷⁹

Stevens kept detailed accounts from 1775 of money taken for burials and more intermittently for ringing of the church bells.²⁸⁰ He paid a deputy Thomas Haines for jobs including dressing the church and cleaning the chancel.²⁸¹ The Stevens family made the position of clerk almost

²⁶⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.65a.

²⁶⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.72b.

²⁶⁶ GA, P86/1/IN/1/2; P86/1/VE/2/1, f.75 and f.77

²⁶⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/1 f.2 and P86/1/VE/2/1, f.80.

²⁶⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.91–2 and P86/1/IN/6/1 f.3.

²⁶⁹ GA, P86a/CW/2/1, f.9.

²⁷⁰ GA, P86/1/IN/6/1 f.4 and P86/1/VE/3/5.

²⁷¹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/1 f.4.

²⁷² GA, P86a/VE/5/3

²⁷³ GA, P86a/VE/4/1.

²⁷⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.171.

²⁷⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/6/1 f.4.

²⁷⁶ GA, P86a/VE/5/4.

²⁷⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.172.

²⁷⁸ GA, P86/1/IN/6/1 f.6.

²⁷⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/3/5.

²⁸⁰ GA, P86a/VE/4/1 and P86a/VE/4/2.

²⁸¹ GA, P86a/VE/4/2.

hereditary. Timothy was son of an earlier parish clerk for 40 years called Joseph, and was succeeded by his son.²⁸² However, after Stevens died in 1816 the vestry, no doubt mindful of their earlier difficulties, separated the offices of clerk and sexton. Stevens's son, also Timothy Stevens, succeeded him as clerk, while John Smith became sexton.²⁸³ Stevens had a rival for the office of clerk, Joseph Mountain. Both men began canvassing for votes and had handbills printed declaring their candidacies but Mountain conceded.²⁸⁴ The younger Timothy Stevens and Smith were still in office in 1825.

Gravedigger or under sexton

Fees were set out in 1661 for 'he that digs the graves', but without mention of any particular appointee.²⁸⁵ A gravedigger, William Jones, appointed in 1666, was asked to walk around the church during sermons and keep order among the boys.²⁸⁶ The post of gravedigger became a point of contention after the incumbent of 18 years John Paul was removed by the minister Joseph Harrison and the churchwardens for not voting as they wished at an election. Thomas Gardiner was appointed in his place. Harrison died in 1753 and the new minister Samuel Johnson with the two churchwardens reappointed John Paul. This led to a legal dispute when a father with his dead child was faced with two graves dug by the two diggers and an ultimatum from the minister that no burial would take place in Gardiner's grave.²⁸⁷

Organist

In 1684 the sexton had to pay the organist (at that time Charles Badham) £10 annually from his perquisites, continuing in 1710.²⁸⁸ In January 1730 the vestry met to elect a new organist, following the death of the previous incumbent, George Glanvill. He was replaced by his son of the same name.²⁸⁹ However, the younger Glanvill was suspended in March 1733 until he had carried out a penance imposed by an ecclesiastical court for begetting a bastard, having already been found guilty in a civil court of adultery with his wife's servant. In the meantime, the churchwardens sought out a temporary replacement who would receive Glanvill's salary.²⁹⁰ Glanvill denied the charge and as the mother had fled without presenting the child at an archdeacon's visitation to Cirencester, the evidence available was thought to be insufficient to prove Glanvill's guilt. The curate Joseph Harrison agreed that it was not worth proceeding any further against Glanvill.²⁹¹ Glanvill's avoidance of punishment was not well received by the members of the vestry to whom he had already admitted his guilt, and in October 1733 he was replaced as organist by Charles Smith.²⁹²

In January 1750 George Saxon was appointed organist on the same terms following the death of

²⁸² Jan Fergus, *Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2006), 23–4.

²⁸³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.225.

²⁸⁴ GA, P86a/VE/5/5.

²⁸⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.73.

²⁸⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.76.

²⁸⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, f.5.

²⁸⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.95; P86/1/IN/6/1 f.4; *Cirencester Parish Magazine*, 89 (May 1896).

²⁸⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.114.

²⁹⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.115.

²⁹¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.116.

²⁹² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.116.

Smith.²⁹³ Saxon became delirious in March 1753 and showed no signs of recovery by May, so the vestry replaced him with George Whatley, who was made a member of the King's band of music in 1774.²⁹⁴ He was allowed a salary of £25, with £10 from the sexton, £2 from the churchwardens and £13 from a parishioners' subscription.²⁹⁵ Following his death he was replaced by his son, also George in 1799.²⁹⁶ The appointment of a new organist in 1817 was postponed for six months at the request of David Whatley, a relative of the previous incumbent, so that he could train Caroline Whatley to take up the role. He also undertook to make a temporary appointment within a year. When George Whatley died that year, he was replaced by Arnold Merrick.²⁹⁷

Public Services

Fire Brigade

Fighting fires was a haphazard affair relying on voluntary efforts, but the parish did take the lead in supplying equipment. The earliest church inventory of 1614 listed a ladder with 29 rungs and a town crook 'for adventure of fire'.²⁹⁸ The church continued accumulating firefighting equipment through the 17th century. An inventory of 1633 listed two crooks, two ladders and 18 leather buckets.²⁹⁹ In 1662 it was stipulated that anyone renting land or houses from the church had to supply a bucket as well as the money they owed.³⁰⁰ Some leases demanded two or even three buckets.³⁰¹ Mr Master donated 12 buckets in 1665 and a further 20 buckets were purchased by the churchwardens in 1672.³⁰² The church also continued to keep ladders which it rented out.³⁰³

From the 18th century private donations of equipment and advances in technology improved the town's ability to fight fires. A large fire engine was given to the town by Sir Benjamin Bathurst around the beginning of the 18th century and a Newsham engine was purchased by the town's MPs, Henry Bathurst and Thomas Master, during the 1730s or 1740s.³⁰⁴ In September 1760 the parish paid for the repair of the engines.³⁰⁵ A vestry meeting was held in 1780 to agree the purchase of a new fire engine and the maintenance of the old ones twice a year, which would be the responsibility of the overseers.³⁰⁶

Policing

The manorial administration continued to provide the town with a system of policing from 1540. Two constables were elected at the view of frankpledge. There was also a tithingman for each of

²⁹³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.144.

²⁹⁴ GA, D3439/1/157, Hockaday Abs. CLVII.

²⁹⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.149.

²⁹⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.201.

²⁹⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.227.

²⁹⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.42.

²⁹⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.51.

³⁰⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.74.

³⁰¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.76 and 80.

³⁰² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.80.

³⁰³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.76.

³⁰⁴ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.5.

³⁰⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.158.

³⁰⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.182.

the town's seven wards. Either the constables or tithingmen brought offences such as insults, affray or harbouring vagrants before the 12 jurors who sat at the view of frankpledge. At a view of frankpledge for the town on 8 October 1550, a tithingman presented several low-level public order offences including an insult, a fight and an insult and affray committed by Robert Major, 'to the effusion of blood, upon Agnes Deetlezey', which commanded fines of 6d. and 9d. Roger Saunders and John Bromhyll were elected to the office of constable.³⁰⁷

The same court roll described a busier view of frankpledge on 23 April 1553, which detailed further offences, including the failure of Thomas Syndlehurst to clean the pavement opposite his house, which carried a fine of 12d., and several men who allowed their pigs to roam free in public places. John Roberts and Richard Saundye of 'Instropp Street' were fined for harbouring 'wandering women' with no occupation and 'vagrant and vagabond men'. This view received 41s. 4d. of amerancements..³⁰⁸

A view of frankpledge held in May 1559 fined three people 12d. for harbouring 'upright men', a notorious criminal caste in Elizabethan England. In October 1559, two officers of the tithing were sworn for each ward, with some also said to be elected, and thereafter this appears to have become standard practice.³⁰⁹ At the view of frankpledge in May 1572, the constables, John Staunton and John Webley, presented more serious crimes, including several assaults with daggers, and in one case a 'candelabre'. There were more cases of violent behaviour in 1572 than were recorded in the 1550s.³¹⁰

The bailiff for the manor, Robert Strange, reported to the Privy Council in 1571 that 'watch and ward had been made for rogues and vagabonds in Cirencester and the seven adjacent hundreds, but no suspected persons found.'³¹¹ There are mentions of a gaol in 1545 and a 'gaile' in Cirencester in 1574.³¹² A gaol or bridewell was in Dyer Street next to the Bear Inn from at least the end of the 17th century until it fell out of use around 1840.³¹³ The County Quarter Sessions were occasionally held in Cirencester.³¹⁴

During the 17th century the parish also made efforts to tackle vagrancy in the town. A 'biddle (beadle) of beggars' was appointed in 1618 with 12 orders for describing his work and conduct. These included keeping strange beggars out of the town; reporting any idleness, drunkenness or theft committed by those in receipt of alms (or if they were able to work) to the officers of the town; preventing the poor from begging; inquiring if anyone was poor due to sickness; keeping noisy babies away from church; warning alehouse keepers not to suffer the poor drinking too much; ensuring the poor behaved and begged in an orderly manner; keeping children over seven from loitering, setting them to work as appropriate; informing the justices if anyone said they lacked work; and ensuring nobody fouled the streets, that residents kept the streets in front of

³⁰⁷ GA, D1375/495.

³⁰⁸ GA, D1375/495.

³⁰⁹ GA, D1375/496.

³¹⁰ GA, D1375/208, m.2.

³¹¹ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1547–80, 424.

³¹² *L&P Hen. VIII*, XX (1), p.300; F.D. Price (ed.), *The Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes Within the Dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester, 1574* (1972), 74.

³¹³ GA, P86/1/CH/12/2.

³¹⁴ GA, D8887/3

their house clean; and keeping the streets clear of pigs.³¹⁵

The post of beadle seems to have lapsed repeatedly and was recommenced in 1641, 1666 and 1705.³¹⁶ Richard Harris was reappointed in 1641 with £8 a year wages and provided with a coat and staff.³¹⁷ In 1666 a resolution was made to appoint another beadle under the same terms as earlier in the century.³¹⁸ James Viner was beadle in 1667 and was to be paid monthly by the overseers.³¹⁹ A new rate was introduced in 1705 for a 'Belman Beedle', to perform a variety of customary duties at the usual salary.³²⁰

From the 18th century the two high constables for Cirencester were appointed by the justices at the quarter sessions and their responsibilities were set out in full.³²¹ The town very occasionally cooperated with the surrounding area. In 1749 the vestry set a rate of half a penny for repaying the constables of the hundred for carrying prisoners to gaol.³²² An association for the prosecution of felons was established in Cirencester in 1774.³²³ It seems that a lock-up was present in the town well before 1804, when a new one was constructed on Gloucester Street.³²⁴

Health and hospitals [with Louise Ryland-Epton]

Medical provision for the poor in the parish developed alongside the workhouse. In 1740 Thomas Coleman was employed as apothecary to the workhouse at a salary of £40.³²⁵ Similar medical appointments were made until 1784.³²⁶ William Lawrence the apothecary was also hired as town doctor in 1776 with a salary of £15 a year, and instructions to treat anyone in the workhouse or in receipt of poor relief.³²⁷ Joseph Cullurme was hired as apothecary and surgeon to the town in 1784 with a salary of £20.³²⁸ Subsequently the post of surgeon and apothecary was selected annually.³²⁹ Between 1818 and 1830 the post was annually rotated between three surgeons, John Bedwell, Daniel Sparkes and Charles Warner in every year except one. In 1819 the vestry agreed that the apothecary need not treat anyone further than three miles from the town.³³⁰ From 1823 apothecaries could not be elected unless they had been living and practising in the town for at least a year.³³¹

Between 1732 and 1762 various attempts were also made to provide a pest house for the use of

³¹⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, ff.45–6.

³¹⁶ Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century*, 14.

³¹⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.61.

³¹⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.76.

³¹⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.77.

³²⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.106.

³²¹ GA Q/SN/1; B. Jerrard, 'Early policing methods in Gloucestershire', *Trans. BGAS*, 100 (1982), 223–4.

³²² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.142.

³²³ Jerrard, 'Early policing methods in Gloucestershire', 228; K.J. Beecham, *History of Cirencester and the Roman City of Corinium* (Dursley, 1978), 161–2.

³²⁴ GA, D2525/R10; D. Viner, 'Lock-ups at Cirencester and Bibury', *Trans. BGAS*, 109 (1991), 208–9.

³²⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, 14 Oct. 1740, 28 Aug. 1741.

³²⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, 1 Mar. 1744, 4 Oct. 1751, 10 Feb. 1758, 19 Nov. 1773.

³²⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.170.

³²⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.186.

³²⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, 16 Apr. 1784, 14 Apr. 1785, 28 Apr. 1786.

³³⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.229.

³³¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.233.

the poor when infected with smallpox or any other infectious disease.³³² These were generally short term, possibly because the accommodation was not continuously required. In January 1732 the churchwardens rented a building adjacent to the Querns from Lord Bathurst for £5 a year to be used during outbreaks of smallpox or other illness.³³³ A search began in 1746 for a location for a pest house, and £5 of the poor rate was allocated for securing a building.³³⁴ Money was assigned in 1747 for nursing children with the smallpox at the old Chesterton house.³³⁵ Payment of £8 to Benjamin Bathurst was authorised for a house for those with smallpox or other infectious diseases, with the option to rent an interim property while it was made ready.³³⁶ The old Chesterton house was again rented from Daniel Gibbs for housing people with the smallpox and other infectious diseases for £4 4s.³³⁷ Payments for nursing care or hospital treatment were occasionally made, and from 1793 subscriptions were paid to Bath hospital and Gloucester infirmary.³³⁸

In the late 18th century inoculation was also used to fight smallpox. In 1774 the vestry threatened to prosecute a parishioner if he did not have his children inoculated.³³⁹ In January 1796, regulations were agreed with the town's apothecaries regarding the prevention of the spread of smallpox. Inoculations were to be administered and clothing and bedding left in the house of infection. Visiting was not allowed.³⁴⁰ However, showing an ambivalent attitude to its efficacy, by February the vestry decided that the only way to prevent the spread of infection was to stop all inoculation for six months.³⁴¹

Parliamentary Representation

After acquiring the abbey's lands in 1547, Sir Thomas Seymour had two MPs returned to Parliament for the borough, constituting a restoration rather than an enfranchisement, as members had previously been returned in the 14th century. There is no evidence of another election in Cirencester until 1571, possibly instigated by the Earl of Leicester.³⁴² The lack of representation in previous parliaments was questioned by the House of Commons and the issue referred to the returns committee.³⁴³ However, two burgesses were again returned in 1572: Thomas Poole and Thomas Strange, son of the bailiff Robert Strange.³⁴⁴ Influence in the borough changed hands along with the largest estates; the Masters returned many MPs from George Master onwards, elected in 1586 and 1588, and the Poole family took over the Danvers interest in 1597, following the flight and eventual execution of Charles Danvers, who took the senior seat in

³³² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, 9 Jan. 1732, 11 July 1746, 9 Aug. 1751, 12 Feb. 1762; P86/1/IN/6/3.

³³³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.115.

³³⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.135-6.

³³⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.138.

³³⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.146.

³³⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.147.

³³⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, 31 May 1754, 23 Feb. 1753, 20 Apr. 1793.

³³⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.167.

³⁴⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.198.

³⁴¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.199.

³⁴² *Hist. Parl. Commons 1509-1558, Cirencester.*

³⁴³ CJ 1, 83.

³⁴⁴ Beecham, *History of Cirencester and the Roman City of Corinium*, 174.

1586 and 1588.³⁴⁵ Both families had strong connections with Wiltshire and rather than using their interest to return Gloucestershire gentry, Cirencester tended to be represented by local men.³⁴⁶ The elections of 1604 were the exception, when London lawyers were twice returned to Parliament.³⁴⁷ In 1614 Robert Strange became an MP for the borough, following in his father Thomas' footsteps.³⁴⁸

Unusually for Cirencester thus far, the 1624 election was contested. Henry Poole took the first seat by right, but the second was competed over by Sir William Master, Sir Maurice Berkeley and John George.³⁴⁹ As there was no law or custom to designate who the electors should be, the opinion of a local serjeant at law was sought, who thought the electorate was restricted to borough freeholders. The competitors agreed, and after some confusion, the under-sheriff managed to organise a count of freeholders, with the bailiff acting as returning officer. Sir William Master was declared to have won by five votes. Sir Maurice Berkeley and his supporters petitioned Parliament to have the result overturned as unlawful, due to the 'sinister practice and procurement of William Bird, the under-sheriff'.³⁵⁰ The Commons Committee of Privileges found that Bird had not acted improperly, that agreement of competitors could not alter the course of an election and that in an unincorporated borough without law or precedent, the electorate should extend to all householders. Nevertheless, Sir William Master was duly elected.³⁵¹ Connections to the Master or Poole interests decided most of the representatives throughout the rest of the 1620s.³⁵²

The turmoil of the civil war put the representation of Cirencester into a state of flux. The Puritan and Parliamentarian John George was twice elected in 1640, but was captured at the sack of Cirencester.³⁵³ George was disqualified with his fellow MP Sir Thomas Gorges for following the king to Oxford in 1644.³⁵⁴ A writ was issued in 1646 for two new burgesses to be elected.³⁵⁵ A by-election ensued in 1647, which was contested by two lists, comprising Thomas Fairfax and Nathaniel Rich on one side, with John Gifford and Isaac Bromwich on the other. Fairfax and Rich apparently had a clear majority, but Gifford and Bromwich were returned amidst accusations that the town was packed with ex-Cavalier soldiers and that Lady Poole had bribed the bailiff.³⁵⁶ The result was referred to the Committee of Privileges and was not resolved until 1649, when Rich and Fairfax were eventually returned.³⁵⁷ As a borough, Cirencester sent no member to the Parliament

³⁴⁵ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1558-1603*, Cirencester; Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 240.

³⁴⁶ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1604-1629*, Cirencester.

³⁴⁷ D. Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth: the People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge, 2011), 217.

³⁴⁸ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 154.

³⁴⁹ 'Diary of Sir Walter Earle', ff.152-3 from '20th April 1624', in P. Baker (ed.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1624: The House of Commons* (2015).

³⁵⁰ J. Glanville, *Reports of Certain Cases Determined and Adjudged by the Commons in Parliament* (1775), 104.

³⁵¹ *CJ*, 1, 708.

³⁵² *Hist. Parl. Commons 1604-1629*, Cirencester.

³⁵³ A.R. Warmington, *Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration in Gloucestershire 1640-1672* (1997), 27.

³⁵⁴ J. Rushworth, 'Historical Collections: The Lords and Commons at Oxford, 1644', in *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State* 5, 1642-45 (London, 1721), 559-603; 'Cases before the Committee: December 1645', in M.A.E. Green (ed.), *Calendar, Committee For Compounding* 2, (London, 1890), 1040-1069; Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 246.

³⁵⁵ *CJ*, 4, 712-4.

³⁵⁶ Warmington, *Civil War*, 84.

³⁵⁷ *CJ*, 6, 135-6; 17 Feb. 1649, 144-5.

of 1653, and was represented by John Stone, a Londoner without local connections, throughout the 1650s. Stone was joined by a second MP and another Londoner, Robert Southby, in 1659.³⁵⁸ Interests in Cirencester borough changed hands once again following the Restoration, although the Abbey estate remained in the hands of the Masters. The first Earl of Newburgh married the daughter of Sir Henry Poole in 1660, bringing him the manor of Cirencester. Poole sold most of the rest of his estates in Cirencester to Robert Atkyns (d. 1710) during the 1660s.³⁵⁹ In the 1660 election, Thomas Master I (d. 1680) and Henry Powle – both from Cavalier families – were returned, despite a petition by the defeated candidate, John George.³⁶⁰ George was subsequently returned in 1661, along with the first Earl of Newburgh. Newburgh died in 1670 and the ensuing by-election was contested by Henry Powle and Atkyns's son, Sir Robert Atkyns of Sapperton (d. 1711).³⁶¹ Powle was returned but Atkyns petitioned against the result, due to a disturbance between Master and John Grobham Howe I, a new interest in the borough.³⁶² The petition was referred to the Committee of Elections, but the disturbance was not thought sufficient to make the election void.³⁶³ Following the death of John George, Sir Robert Atkyns and Henry Powle were returned at the three exclusion elections of 1679-81.³⁶⁴ Atkyns became a representative of the county in 1685. Thomas Master II (d. 1710) was returned for one seat, presumably unopposed. The other seat was won from the Whig Powle by Charles Livingston, 2nd Earl of Newburgh. Powle petitioned against the result on the grounds that some of Newburgh's supporters were in receipt of alms, but examination of the petition was delayed by an adjournment and appears to have been later withdrawn.³⁶⁵ Thomas Master II and the aggressively whiggish John 'Jack' Grobham Howe II were returned in 1689, probably without a contest, as it is unlikely that the Jacobite Earl of Newburgh stood.³⁶⁶ Powle was elected for New Windsor and became Speaker of the House of Commons.³⁶⁷

The relatively large electorate, including a considerable dissenting community and the high church Tory leanings of Cirencester's major families and their supporters, made for a highly charged political culture. In 1690, the seats were contested by Henry Powle, Jack Howe and his cousin, Richard Grobham Howe. The latter announced his decision to withdraw from the contest thinking his position to be hopeless, but in doing so inadvertently lulled his opponents into a false sense of security. Richard Howe enjoyed a late resurgence thanks in part to Lord Newburgh's arrival in Cirencester.³⁶⁸ Amidst angry disputes about the legitimacy of many of the voters who were in receipt of charitable 'by-money' but not alms, the Tory steward Charles Coxe decided the count in favour of Richard Howe and Henry Powle.³⁶⁹ Jack Howe held that he had won the vote on any

³⁵⁸ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 161.

³⁵⁹ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1660-1690*, Cirencester.

³⁶⁰ Warmington, *Civil War*, 167; *CJ*, 8, 92-3.

³⁶¹ *CJ*, 9, 176-8; *Hist. Parl. Commons 1660-1690*, Cirencester.

³⁶² *CJ*, 9, 188-9; *Hist. Parl. Commons 1660-1690*, Cirencester.

³⁶³ *CJ*, 9, 205-7.

³⁶⁴ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1660-1690*, Cirencester.

³⁶⁵ *CJ*, 9, 715-8; 11 June 1685 732-3; *Hist. Parl. Commons 1660-1690*, Cirencester.; *CJ*, 10, 426-9.

³⁶⁶ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1660-1690*, Cirencester.

³⁶⁷ *ODNB*, 'Powle, Henry (bap. 1630, d. 1692)'..

³⁶⁸ Longleat House, Thynne papers 18, ff. 191-94, 197, 200; 26, f. 496.

³⁶⁹ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1690-1715*, Cirencester.

reckoning.³⁷⁰ He petitioned against the result in March and again in October, when the Committee of Privileges decided that those in receipt of by-money and inmates were not allowed to vote, and upheld the returns of Powle and Richard Howe.³⁷¹ The House narrowly overturned the decision excluding voters in receipt of by-money and referred the matter back to committee. The committee resolved to hear further evidence and then referred the dispute to the Bar of the House, which finally decided that Jack Howe should replace Henry Powle as representative for Cirencester.³⁷²

Powle died in 1692 and his son in law, Henry Ireton, contested the 1695 election in partnership with Sir John Guise.³⁷³ They were against Richard Grobham Howe and Jack Howe, the latter now a 'country' spokesman associated with Tory leaders, having lost his Court offices in 1692.³⁷⁴ The Howe cousins had the support of the town's Tory interest of the Master family and Sir Benjamin Bathurst, who had recently acquired Cirencester manor (along with the right to appoint the returning officer) from Lord Newburgh's widow.³⁷⁵ The Howes were duly returned, following an unsuccessful petition by Ireton.³⁷⁶ Ireton was successful in winning a seat in 1698, when Richard Grobham Howe contested a Wiltshire seat. Jack was defeated by Charles Coxe, steward to Cirencester manor and kinsman of Thomas Master, but was returned for a county seat.³⁷⁷ Coxe was returned unopposed along with James Thynne in January 1701 and retained his seat again in December, when William Master was also successful in defeating a challenge from Henry Ireton. Coxe and Master continued unchallenged in 1702.³⁷⁸ The 1705 election was fiercely contested and was the first in which the dissenting community of Cirencester voted *en masse* for the Whig candidates.³⁷⁹ Allen Bathurst put forward his candidature following the death of his father the year before, and was partnered by Coxe. They were opposed by the Whigs Ireton and Thomas Onslow. Bathurst topped the poll, but Ireton and Coxe gained an equal number of votes and upon the bailiff's refusal to return Ireton, violence erupted. As a compromise, a double return was made of Ireton and Coxe. Both petitioned Parliament accusing the other of bribery, but Coxe withdrew his petition, leaving Ireton to be selected with Bathurst.³⁸⁰

Bathurst and Coxe stood again in 1708, defeating the Whig Thomas Onslow. Onslow's supporters petitioned against the result alleging bribery.³⁸¹ The petition was heard at the Bar of the House and , following a decision that inhabitants of the old abbey land and the Emery and Spiringate Lane should not be allowed to vote in future, the election was declared void.³⁸² Bathurst and Coxe went on to win the by-election against Henry O'Brien, the Earl of Thomond, and Major Long. Thomas

³⁷⁰ *The case of J. Howe, touching the election of Cirencester* (London, 1690).

³⁷¹ *CJ*, 10, 350-4, 426-9.

³⁷² *CJ*, 10, 426-9, 465-8, 482-3.

³⁷³ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1690-1715*, Cirencester.

³⁷⁴ ODNB, 'Howe, John Grobham (1657-1722)'.

³⁷⁵ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.*, 163.

³⁷⁶ *CJ*, 11, 353-5.

³⁷⁷ *Cal. SP Dom.* William III, 1698, 369-84.

³⁷⁸ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1690-1715*, Cirencester.

³⁷⁹ Beecham, *History of Cirencester*, 177.

³⁸⁰ *CJ*, 15, , 12-3, 15, 26-7.

³⁸¹ *CJ* 15, 21, 213.

³⁸² *CJ* 16i, 235, 237.

Master died in 1710 and his son of the same name, still too young to stand himself, lent his support to the continuing Tory candidates of Bathurst and Coxe. Their only opponent, the Colonel Long (probably the same man as Major Long), suffered the ignominy of garnering a single vote. 1710 was a year of wider political disturbance in Cirencester. Supporters of Henry Sacheverell, spurred on by Thomas Master II, allowed their political festivities to take on a Jacobite tone, while enraged Whig supporters rioted following the election.³⁸³ Master took over Bathurst's seat unopposed when the latter was elevated to the peerage in 1712. Charles Coxe was forced to contest the Gloucester seat in 1713 as Allen Bathurst reserved his interest for his brother Benjamin. Bathurst and Master defeated two local Whigs, John Foyle and Edmund Bray.³⁸⁴

Benjamin Bathurst and Thomas Master III (d. 1770) were returned unopposed in 1715, and their families went on to enjoy a duopoly that lasted without a break until the mid-century. Personal animosity led to futile attempts to unseat the Bathursts in 1722 and 1727, when another brother Peter replaced Benjamin.³⁸⁵ Earl Bathurst's son-in-law William Wodehouse replaced Peter in 1734 but died a year later, when Henry, son of Allen Bathurst, took over the seat.³⁸⁶ Thomas Master III took over his father's seat in 1747 but died in 1749 and was succeeded by John Coxe, eldest son of Charles Coxe.³⁸⁷ The next election in 1754 was dubbed 'the Cirencester Contest', as the Bathurst family overextended their interest and triggered a deeply contentious election. Henry Bathurst was seeking re-election, but John Coxe had become deeply unpopular with the electorate. Rumours that Benjamin Bathurst planned to stand for a seat alongside his brother caused a deputation of electors to seek out Lord Bathurst and attempt to broker a compromise, by which he would choose one son to be returned unopposed and they would name the second candidate. The electors were dismissed and Benjamin Bathurst declared his candidacy.³⁸⁸ When Henry Bathurst attempted to enter the town with a group of dignitaries they were attacked by a mob and violence between the opposing factions resulted in a fatality.³⁸⁹ There was a religious element to the contest, with the opposition accused of courting the Dissenters of the town and the Bathursts suspected of having Presbyterian connections.³⁹⁰ Eventually Coxe and Henry Bathurst stepped aside making way for a new candidate, John Dawnay, 'the first Whig avowedly that ever represented this borough'.³⁹¹

Elections in Cirencester continued to be contested, with those of 1768, 1790 and 1802 each achieving high turnouts of between 82 and 92 per cent, continuing similar levels in the early 18th century.³⁹² Local interests and the tension between oligarchy and independence remained a more important consideration than party, which was still not irrelevant, particularly the link between Whigs and dissenters.³⁹³ In 1761 James Clutterbuck was defeated as Dawnay was returned again alongside James Whitshed, another son-in-law to Earl Bathurst who married Wodehouse's widow

³⁸³ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1690-1715*, Cirencester.

³⁸⁴ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.*, 166.

³⁸⁵ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1715-1754*, Cirencester.

³⁸⁶ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 167.

³⁸⁷ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 168.

³⁸⁸ S. Rudder, *The Cirencester Contest* (Cirencester, 1753), 3-5.

³⁸⁹ Friend to the old interest, *A View of the Cirencester Contest* (Cirencester, 1753), 13.

³⁹⁰ R.W. Jennings, 'The Cirencester Contest', *Trans. BGAS* 92 (1972), 161-2.

³⁹¹ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1715-1754*, Cirencester.

³⁹² F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 191; Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 217.

³⁹³ O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, 344, 362 and 366.

Frances. It was around this time that the Cripps family began to emerge as an electoral force, opposing the Bathurst interest.³⁹⁴ Dawnay's connection to the area was by marriage to Charlotte Pleydell of Ampney Crucis. He inherited the manor there and sold it in 1765 to Samuel Blackwell of Williamstrip in 1765. Blackwell attempted to gain a seat in 1768 but was defeated in a poll he described as 'vexatious and dilatory', by Whitshed and Estcourt Cresswell, lord of the manor of Bibury.³⁹⁵ Blackwell mounted a formidable challenge, bringing occasionally violent support to the town from London to act as temporary voting inhabitants and petitioning Parliament twice about the outcome.³⁹⁶ The same three men contested the 1774 election in a more sedate manner, when Blackwell triumphed at the expense of Cresswell. Earl Bathurst died in 1775 and was succeeded by his son Henry, who brought peace to the feuding factions.³⁹⁷ Whitshed and Blackwell were returned unopposed in 1780, but Whitshed vacated his seat in 1783 when Henry Bathurst II, Lord Apsley, came of age. Apsley was a successful politician, becoming a lord of the Admiralty, then the Treasury, a commissioner of the Board of Control and member of the privy council whilst representing Cirencester.³⁹⁸ Blackwell and Apsley retained their seats in 1784, but Blackwell died in 1785. His seat was taken by Richard Master, returning the Cirencester seats to the two oldest family interests in the borough.³⁹⁹ An Act of Parliament in 1786 stipulated that inhabitants had to be resident for six months before they could exercise the franchise.⁴⁰⁰

Apsley and Master received a late challenge in 1790 from London merchant Robert Preston, who lost to Master by only nine votes.⁴⁰¹ Preston petitioned Parliament claiming that the steward and bailiff had excluded legal votes for him, while allowing illegal votes for Master.⁴⁰² Preston's petition was eventually upheld in 1792 after extensive examination of witnesses in Parliament, and he replaced Master.⁴⁰³ At the same time, the definition of a householder was clarified as possession of 'the exclusive right to the outer door of the building'.⁴⁰⁴ The election committee also upheld the ruling of 1709, barring residents of the old abbey land, the Emery and Spiringate Lane from voting as they lay outside the hundred of the borough.⁴⁰⁵ Earl Bathurst died in 1794 and Apsley moved up to the House of Lords. He was replaced by Michael Hicks Beach, owner of Williamstrip Park. Hicks Beach and Preston were challenged by Thomas Bayly Howell in the 1796 and 1802 elections, in which time he attempted to grow his interest in the borough by building houses and tontines. Petitions were made against both results to no effect.⁴⁰⁶ The extremely high degree of accuracy of canvassing in this period suggests a low level of voter independence, as voters almost invariably cast their ballots as promised.⁴⁰⁷

³⁹⁴ Jennings, 'The Cirencester Contest', 164-5.

³⁹⁵ VCH Glos. 12, 21-44.; *Oxford Journal*, 16 Apr. 1768; Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 169.

³⁹⁶ Jennings, 'The Cirencester Contest', 166-7.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁹⁸ *ODNB*, 'Bathurst, Henry, third Earl Bathurst (1762–1834)'.

³⁹⁹ Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 170.

⁴⁰⁰ 26 George III, c. 100.

⁴⁰¹ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1790-1820*, Cirencester.

⁴⁰² *CJ*, 17, 12; *Evening Mail*, 19-21 Mar. 1792.

⁴⁰³ *CJ*, 17, 782.

⁴⁰⁴ Beecham, *History of Cirencester*, 171.

⁴⁰⁵ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1790-1820*, Cirencester.

⁴⁰⁶ *CJ* 52, 43, 45; *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 6 Nov. 1796; *CJ* 58, 1 Dec. 1802, 41; *Glouc. Journal*, 16 May 1803.

In 1806, Preston believed that he would be returned unopposed, but upon arriving in Cirencester found gathering support for Joseph Cripps, a local banker and lieutenant colonel of the Cirencester Volunteers.⁴⁰⁸ Preston withdrew in the face of overwhelming support for Cripps, who was returned with Hicks Beach in 1806 and 1807. Henry George Bathurst, also Lord Apsley, came of age in 1811 and his father put him up for a seat in Cirencester in 1812, which he won with ease. Hicks Beach and Cripps contested the remaining seat fiercely, polling 324 and 318 respectively. Hicks Beach did not stand again in 1818. Apsley and Cripps won an overwhelming victory against Richard Estcourt Cresswell of Bibury, son of the earlier MP. Thus a new duopoly emerged in Cirencester; Apsley and Cripps were returned unopposed in the next five elections.⁴⁰⁹

Economic Activity

Francis Boorman

Agriculture

In the 1530s Leland observed that the soil in the stony fields around Cirencester was more suited to barley than wheat and that around the town, as in the Cotswolds, there was 'smawl plenty of wood except in few places kept of necessite.'⁴¹⁰ After riding about a mile on the Foss Way and turning south, Leland came upon 'champayn ground', with plenty of corn and grass but still very little wood.⁴¹¹

Of the 355 men mustered in 1608 (including those with no occupation given), 14 were engaged in agriculture (4.3 per cent). These included six husbandmen, two yeomen, three gardeners and three shepherds. It is probable that many of the 43 labourers were also engaged in agriculture, at least for part of the year, and that some, if not all of the five gentlemen owned farmland.⁴¹² A Cirencester poll book of 1768 also listed 14 men engaged in agriculture from a total of 717. In that year there were nine gardeners, three yeomen, one husbandman and one farmer. Once again, some of the 77 labourers listed were probably working in agriculture.⁴¹³

In 1712 Atkyns described the land around Cirencester as mostly arable, with a 'good Share' of meadow, pasture and woods..⁴¹⁴ The major tract of woodland was Oakley Wood⁴¹⁵. From 1716 this was incorporated by Allen Bathurst (1684–1775) into the parkland of his estate and was the site of Alfred's Hall, the first recorded Gothick garden building in England.⁴¹⁶ In 1801 the acreage of crops in the parish was: 330.5 of wheat, 323.5 of barley, 116 of oats, 21 of potatoes, 15 of peas, 70 of

⁴⁰⁷ O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, 103.

⁴⁰⁸ *Glouc. Journal*, 1 Dec. 1806; *Hist. Parl. Commons 1790-1820*, Cirencester; Williams, *Parl. Hist. of Glos.* 171-2.

⁴⁰⁹ *Hist. Parl. Commons 1790-1820*, Cirencester.

⁴¹⁰ Leland, *Itin.* (ed. Toulmin Smith), III, 102.

⁴¹¹ Leland, *Itin.*, I, 130.

⁴¹² Smith, *Men and Armour*, 239-43.

⁴¹³ D. Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth: the People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge, 2011), 259–62.

⁴¹⁴ Atkyns, *Glos.*, 347.

⁴¹⁵ See *Manors and Estates*.

⁴¹⁶ T. Mowl, *Historic Gardens of Gloucestershire* (Stroud, 2002), 67-9.

beans, 175 of turnips and 7 of rye.⁴¹⁷ In 1807 there was over 900 a. of arable and pasture land in the tithing of Chesterton, much of it owned by the Bathurst estate.⁴¹⁸

The *Cirencester Agricultural Association* met from at least 1820 as a branch of the national Agriculture Association, chaired by George Webb Hall. The association protected the interest of agriculturists by petitioning Parliament and vehemently opposed the Corn Laws. The Cirencester Association, chaired by William Day of Tarlton and with Charles Lawrence as its secretary, was upbraided for its apathy by Hall in 1823.⁴¹⁹

Mills

St Mary's/New Mill

Blake, the last abbot of Cirencester, built two fulling mills costing 700 marks (£466), which Leland regarded as essential to the town's clothing trade⁴²⁰ Stone was used from a tower in the old town wall to build the fulling mills called Mary's Mill or New Mill.⁴²¹ In 1533-4 the abbot leased the newly built Mary's Mill, comprising a house, four stock mills and one gig mill, to Robert Fowler of Stonehouse. The mill was acquired from Thomas Parry by Cirencester clothier Roger Dune and his wife Margaret in 1571. They mortgaged the mill to Richard Master in 1575, who bought it outright in 1582.⁴²² In 1585 the mill comprised three fulling mills and a grist mill, which had recently replaced the gig mill. The mills were then handed down through the Master family.⁴²³ The New Mills, including two stocking mills and two corn mills, were included in William Master's marriage settlement of 1622.⁴²⁴ In 1685 the New Mills remained in the Master family and contained two corn mills and two 'tucking' or fulling mills.⁴²⁵ The New Mills were rented by Caleb Self from Thomas Master for £59 a year in 1748.⁴²⁶ Master later let the mills to Joseph Cripps, Edward Cripps and John Wilkins.⁴²⁷ According to Rudder, in 1800 the only clothing house in Cirencester employed the same stock mill built by Abbot Blake and mentioned by Leland.⁴²⁸ Joseph Cripps (son of the previous) continued to lease the New Mills from Jane Master in 1829, when one of the clothing mills had recently been converted into a grist mill.⁴²⁹

Barton/Clarke's Mill

Barton Mill or Clarke's Mill, along with meadow and pasture land, was held by Cirencester abbey and passed to the crown following the Dissolution. It was granted by Elizabeth I to James Woodford and Thomas Ludwell in 1560 who sold it to Sir Thomas Parry. He in turn sold it to Margaret and William Partridge in 1570. Partridge leased the two fulling mills and one water grist

⁴¹⁷ *Home Office: Acreage Returns (HO 67): List and Analysis Part I Bedfordshire to Isle of Wight, 1801* (List and Index Society 189, 1982), 170.

⁴¹⁸ GA, D674b/E90.

⁴¹⁹ GA, D10820/A12-1/a.

⁴²⁰ Leland, *Itin.*, I (1964), 129.

⁴²¹ Leland, *Itin.*, III (1964), 101.

⁴²² GA, D674b/T8.

⁴²³ GA, D674b/E73.

⁴²⁴ GA, D674b/E73.

⁴²⁵ GA, D674b/T27.

⁴²⁶ GA, D674b/E73.

⁴²⁷ GA, D674b/T21.

⁴²⁸ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 171.

⁴²⁹ GA, D674b/T21.

or corn mill to a clothier, Richard Seaman, in 1590. In 1606 the mills were purchased by Thomas and Robert Master.⁴³⁰ The mills then stayed in the Master family for over a century. The Barton Mills, consisting of a mill house and two water grist mills or corn mills, but no longer any fulling mills, were sold by Thomas Master to Lord Bathurst for £525 in 1730.⁴³¹

Langley's/Watemoor Mill

The third mill in Cirencester powered by the Churn, Langley's Mill, has also been known as Watemoor, Barton's, Driver's, Deighton's, Brambles' and Old Mills.⁴³² It was part of the Langley estate, but was at some point bought by John Coxwell. In 1579 Coxwell was the plaintiff against Richard Master, owner of Mary's Mill, which was upriver from Langley's in a dispute over water rights.⁴³³ There had been complaints from the tenants of Langley's Mills since 1563 about water being prevented from flowing through 'Furnes Hole', which had provided an added water source, by the tenants of Mary's Mill.⁴³⁴ Robert Stevens' will of 1647 states that he was a miller from Watemoor.⁴³⁵ Richard Bridges died in 1672 and the Watemoor grist mill was part of his estate inherited by his son, also Richard. The mill had previously been occupied by William Pullen and was currently or recently occupied by Joseph Hamlin.⁴³⁶ Another miller named William Pullen died in Cirencester in 1710 and it is possible that he followed family tradition and worked at Langley's.⁴³⁷ The mill remained in the Bridges family until 1778, when it passed by the will of George Bridges of Rownham (Hants.) to his sister Delitia Barton, wife of Robert Barton, for life with reversion to his nephew, Thomas Lord Baron Pelham. Pelham and the Bartons sold the mill to the Thames and Severn Canal Company in 1787.⁴³⁸

In 1797 arbitrators advised damming the Churn to provide a fair share of water between Watemoor and Mary's Mill, now owned by Joseph and Edward Cripps.⁴³⁹ The Thames and Severn Canal Company leased the mill to William Brewer, a Cirencester innkeeper, for 21 years in 1801 and Brewer agreed to purchase the mill in 1802,⁴⁴⁰ although it was bought by Joseph Cripps later the same year.⁴⁴¹ By 1808 the mill was being used as to grind edge tools instead of as a grist mill.⁴⁴² Joseph Cripps sold the mill property to Jane Master in 1840.⁴⁴³

Nurseries and seedsmen [by Jan Broadway]

In 1775 there were two plant nurseries on adjoining sites behind the Ram Inn, run by the brothers

⁴³⁰ GA, D674b/T9.

⁴³¹ GA, D2525/T113; D674b/T9.

⁴³² GA, D10989/1/28, R. Walls, 'Langley's Mill, Cirencester', *Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society Newsletter* 28 (May 1986), 4.

⁴³³ GA, D674b/L3.

⁴³⁴ GA, D674b/L1 and D674b/L2.

⁴³⁵ GDR Wills, 1647/133.

⁴³⁶ GA, D1388/III/184.

⁴³⁷ GDR Wills, 1710/195.

⁴³⁸ GA, D674b/T72.

⁴³⁹ GA, D674b/E11; TS/208/4-5.

⁴⁴⁰ GA TS/211/1; TS/194/88.

⁴⁴¹ GA, D674b/T72.

⁴⁴² GA, D12732/1.

⁴⁴³ GA, D674b/T72.

Joseph and Thomas Carpenter.⁴⁴⁴ Joseph Carpenter also grew plants on a close in Watermoor.⁴⁴⁵ In 1782 Samuel Smith, formerly a servant at Cirencester Park, took over Joseph Carpenter's nursery⁴⁴⁶ and in 1789 was growing trees on a site beside the newly opened canal extension.⁴⁴⁷ The business was continued by his son Alexander Smith with retail premises in Dyer Street.⁴⁴⁸ Joseph Carpenter's nursery was continued after his death by his wife and sons, but in 1796 the retail premises in the centre of Cirencester were abandoned⁴⁴⁹ and in 1829 the family's five acre nursery in Watermoor was sold.⁴⁵⁰ Richard Gregory was subsequently reported to have started his nursery in 1795, so may have acquired the Carpenters' property in 1796.⁴⁵¹ By 1820 he was operating from premises in Gosditch Street and Castle Street.⁴⁵²

Trade

Trade in Cirencester during the 16th and 17th centuries was dominated by the production and sale of woollen cloth, much of it for export to London and further afield.⁴⁵³ In 1608 there were 5 clothiers listed in the town.⁴⁵⁴ John Cripps, clothier, left a fortune of £900 after debts were deducted in 1695, while John Cripps, woolstapler, left a large estate in 1771, including £3,800 to be invested to provide an income for his wife.⁴⁵⁵ The collapse of the manufacturing of cloth in Cirencester led to its decline as a centre for trade in woollen products. The town's tertiary sector became increasingly important during the 18th century.⁴⁵⁶ A directory of 1822 listed more attorneys than woolstaplers.⁴⁵⁷

	Gentlemen & professionals	Merchants & manufacturers	retailers	craftsmen	Semi-skilled/unskilled labourers	Agriculturalists
1768	3.0	8.6	17.0	47.4	22.8	1.2
1790	5.4	5.2	21.7	39.0	26.7	2.0
1802	9.0	5.9	19.7	33.3	31.9	0.2
<i>Occupational structure of electorate (%)</i>						

⁴⁴⁴ *Glouc. Journal*, 23 Oct. 1775, 6 Nov. 1778 & 29 Oct. 1781; GDR Wills, 1783/100.

⁴⁴⁵ GDR Wills, 1783/39.

⁴⁴⁶ *Glouc. Journal*, 11 Nov. 1782.

⁴⁴⁷ *Glouc. Journal*, 9 Nov. 1789.

⁴⁴⁸ Gell and Bradshaw, *Gloucestershire Directory* (1820), Cirencester: nursery & seedsmen.

⁴⁴⁹ *Glouc. Journal*, 31 Oct. 1796.

⁴⁵⁰ *Glouc. Journal*, 2 Sept. 1826; GA, RX 79.5(3) GS

⁴⁵¹ GA, D6464/5/2.

⁴⁵² Gell and Bradshaw, *Gloucestershire Directory* (1820), Cirencester: nursery & seedsmen.

⁴⁵³ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 121.

⁴⁵⁴ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 239-43.

⁴⁵⁵ GDR Wills, 1695/192; TNA, PROB 11/968/95.

⁴⁵⁶ D. Rollison, 'The fellowship of the town': constituting the commonality of an English country town, Cirencester, c. 1200-1800' in J.P. Bowen and A.T. Brown (eds.), *Custom and Commercialisation in English Rural Society* (Hatfield, 2016), 244-6.

⁴⁵⁷ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 52.

Markets and Fairs

In the mid-16th century Cirencester's market, which was held on Mondays, dominated the local region.⁴⁵⁸ The right to allocate stalls was held by the abbey, and along with two shops beneath the 'Bothehall' was worth 40s. annually.⁴⁵⁹ All of the markets and fairs in Cirencester which had been held by the abbey were granted to Sir Thomas Seymour in 1547, then changed possession along with the manor, eventually passing to the Bathursts during the 1690s.⁴⁶⁰ In 1698 Benjamin Bathurst leased the tolls on sale of cattle, corn and grain at the markets and fairs of Cirencester to a yeoman, Samuell Habbage. Habbage paid £19 for the toll on cattle and £21 for the toll on corn and grain. This did not include tolls from the fairs recently granted by King William.⁴⁶¹

By 1712 Cirencester had a market on Mondays for corn, cattle and provisions and on Fridays for wool, which Atkyns claimed to be the greatest wool market in England.⁴⁶² According to Rudder, until the second half of the 18th century this market clogged the streets of Cirencester with traffic bringing wool from numerous other counties. However, by 1800 wool dealers travelled directly to the farmhouses and none was sold in the town. The Monday market was still held for general provisions.⁴⁶³ Rudder thought the Cirencester corn market was equal to or larger than Gloucester's,⁴⁶⁴ although newspapers in Gloucester and Cheltenham rarely mentioned it in their market reports. By 1800 farmers only brought samples of their grain to market, depriving individual customers of wholesale prices,⁴⁶⁵ although the limited evidence suggests prices were lower in Cirencester than Gloucester.⁴⁶⁶

From old deeds, Rudder identified the existence of cheese, grass, meal and wool markets, which had all fallen into disuse by 1800.⁴⁶⁷ Rudder did not know where the cheese and grass markets were and there are no other records of these two. The wool market was held in the Boothhall, which was mentioned in a grant of former abbey lands as le Bothelhall, along with le Salte Whiche (salt market) and le Canell.⁴⁶⁸ Gabriel Cook rented the Booth Hall or common market house for weighing of wool and yarn for 20 years at a cost of £30 per year in 1706. Cook also leased the weights and seals for weighing wool and yarn for £48 a year from Allen Bathurst.⁴⁶⁹ The meal market was situated to the east of Gosditch Street and north of the parish church. The building at that location was continually referred to as the meal market and storehouse when it was leased by the churchwardens to Joseph Harrison in 1739, in a lease of 1759 and another of 1799,⁴⁷⁰ although it had apparently not been used for that purpose long before 1800.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁵⁸ Leland, *Itin.* (ed. Toulmin Smith), I, 129.

⁴⁵⁹ Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Hen. VIII, vol. 2 (1814), 464.

⁴⁶⁰ Cal. Pat. 1547–8, 26.

⁴⁶¹ GA, D2525/E43; See Fairs.

⁴⁶² Atkyns, *Glos.*, 347.

⁴⁶³ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 149.

⁴⁶⁴ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 150.

⁴⁶⁵ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 151–4.

⁴⁶⁶ *Glouc. Journal*, 1 Feb. 1802.

⁴⁶⁷ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 149.

⁴⁶⁸ L&P Hen. VIII, XX (1), p.300.

⁴⁶⁹ GA, D2525/E282.

⁴⁷⁰ GA P86/1/CW/3/31.

⁴⁷¹ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 149.

Widow Mary Jones bought a shop in the butter market near Butcher (Bocher) Row from Charles Livingston, Earl of Newburgh in 1687.⁴⁷² The vestry agreed in 1717 that the pitching of the butter market belonged to the lord of the manor, not the town.⁴⁷³ In 1822 market days were still Mondays and Fridays. The market house, 'ornamented on the front with stone', was considered 'convenient'.⁴⁷⁴

In 1535 the abbey owned the issues of two annual fairs at Cirencester worth 60s.⁴⁷⁵ In 1695 William III granted letters patent for the holding of two annual fairs at Cirencester; one on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday before Palm Sunday and the other on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday before St Bartholomew's Day (24 August). They were for the sale of cloth, wool, woollen manufactures, horses, cattle 'and all other Merchandizes whatsoever'.⁴⁷⁶ The letters patent were specifically granted to Benjamin Bathurst in 1697, who promised to give stalls for free to encourage attendance.⁴⁷⁷ In 1712 Cirencester had three fairs: on Easter Monday, the feast of Thomas Becket (29 Dec.) and on the feast of St Simon and Jude (28 Oct.).⁴⁷⁸ Atkyns also mentioned two Cloth fairs, although these were discontinued before 1800.⁴⁷⁹

Rudder placed the three annual fairs on Easter Tuesday, 8 July and 8 November.⁴⁸⁰ Cirencester also held two statute markets, also known as mops or hiring fairs, on the Mondays before and after 10 October, with a third held if the 10th was itself a Monday.⁴⁸¹ In 1807 there were fairs on Easter Tuesday, 18 July and 8 November, selling horses and cattle of all kinds.⁴⁸² In 1822 fairs were held on Easter Tuesday and 8 November for cattle, sheep and horses. A statute fair was held on the Mondays before and after Old Michaelmas (11 Oct.).⁴⁸³ In 1823 a new, annual, toll free sheep fair was announced by Earl Bathurst's steward with considerable local support.⁴⁸⁴ At the first fair on 8 September 1823 6,000 sheep were penned and most were sold at advanced prices.⁴⁸⁵

Innkeeping

Several inns were listed by the Court of Augmentations in 1540, including the Angel, the Bell, the Crown, the Hart's Head, the Katherine Wheel, the King's Head and the Lion.⁴⁸⁶ These had probably been formerly owned by the abbey. The court rolls of 1559 indicate the existence of 2 inns that sold provender for horses, 10 common inns with signs and 20 alehouse keepers, as well as 12 inns without signs and 21 sellers of beer to be consumed off the premises, suggesting a town bustling

⁴⁷² GA, D2525/T91.

⁴⁷³ GA P86/1/VE/2/1, f.98.

⁴⁷⁴ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 51.

⁴⁷⁵ *Valor Eccl.* II, 464.

⁴⁷⁶ *London Gazette*, 27 Jan. 1695 and 10 Feb. 1695.

⁴⁷⁷ *London Gazette*, 21 Mar. 1697.

⁴⁷⁸ Atkyns, *Glos.*, 347.

⁴⁷⁹ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 172.

⁴⁸⁰ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 160.

⁴⁸¹ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 161.

⁴⁸² T. Rudge, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Gloucester* (London, 1807), 339.

⁴⁸³ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 51.

⁴⁸⁴ *Oxford Journal*, 23 Aug. 1823.

⁴⁸⁵ *Bristol Mercury*, 15 Sept. 1823.

⁴⁸⁶ A.H. Smith, *Place Names of Gloucestershire II* (1964), 63–4.

with trade from passing travellers.⁴⁸⁷ In 1686 there were 109 guest beds and stabling for 317 horses in Cirencester's inns⁴⁸⁸ In 1696 the inn holders and alehouse keepers of Cirencester petitioned the House of Commons complaining that debased coinage and a great reduction of trade in the town had left them 'reduced to so low a Condition, that they are hardly able to maintain themselves and Families'. To make matters worse, a foot regiment had been quartered in their inns for six months without paying for their board and the soldiers demanding payments themselves.⁴⁸⁹

The King's Head, on the north side of the market place, was an important meeting point in the social and commercial life of the town, hosting events such as balls and meals to coincide with the Cirencester races and innumerable business meetings, such as one for the local subscribers to the Bristol and Cirencester canal in 1794.⁴⁹⁰ In 1822 coaches to Bath and Oxford set off from the King's Head.⁴⁹¹ An inn called the Ram on Gosditch Street was in the tenure of William Style in 1545 as part of a grant of former abbey lands.⁴⁹² The Ram continued to be an important inn throughout the period and at its most successful stretched from an entrance looking out at the market place along the north side of Castle Street to Silver Street. Lord Chandos called for a Commission of Array to meet at the Ram in 1642 where his coach was attacked by the Parliamentarian townspeople.⁴⁹³ One long-term proprietor was John Portlock, a barber of Cirencester who leased the Ram for 99 years in 1629.⁴⁹⁴ The lease was bequeathed to his son Rowland Portlock in his will, proved in 1658.⁴⁹⁵ Coaches left from the Ram to London six times a week and to Gloucester three times a week in 1822.⁴⁹⁶

In the 1790s the Universal British Directory of the 1790s identified the King's Head, Ram and Swan as the principal inns in the town.⁴⁹⁷ A list of c.1800 identified 73 inns or taverns in the town organised by ward, of which 41 had been suppressed.⁴⁹⁸ In 1822 the principal inns of the town and their proprietors were the Swan (Mary Brown), the Ram (Robert Tyler) and the Crown (James Hodges) all in Gosditch Street; and the Booth-hall (William Miflin), the Fleece (John Hayward), the King's Head (William Date) and the White Hart (John Fox), all in Dyer Street. A further 28 taverns and public houses were recorded⁴⁹⁹

The Cirencester Brewery Company, as it would later be known, began by purchasing the Bell Inn in 1792 and expanded its portfolio of inns during the early 19th century. The brewery and many of its inns and public houses were taken over by a new partnership during the 1820s. A list of the property conveyed included the brewery and dwelling house at the Bell Inn on Cricklade Street,

⁴⁸⁷ GA, D1375/496; K.J. Beecham, *History of Cirencester and the Roman City of Corinium* (Dursley, 1978), 170.

⁴⁸⁸ TNA, WO 30/48, f.67v.

⁴⁸⁹ *CJ* 11, 601.

⁴⁹⁰ *Oxford Journal*, 9 July 1785; *Glouc. Journal*, 30 Dec. 1793.

⁴⁹¹ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 53.

⁴⁹² L&P Hen. VIII, XX (1), p.300.

⁴⁹³ GA, D2510/18.

⁴⁹⁴ Lincolnshire Archives, NEL VI/35/12.

⁴⁹⁵ TNA, PROB 11/276/329.

⁴⁹⁶ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 53.

⁴⁹⁷ *Universal British Directory*, II, 563.

⁴⁹⁸ GA, P86/1/MI/2.

⁴⁹⁹ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 52.

the King's Head, the General Wolfe, the Black Horse, the little Three Cocks, the Nag's head and the Wheatsheaf, as well as properties further afield in Lechlade, Minchinhampton and Northleach.⁵⁰⁰

Manufacturing

Textiles and Leather Trades

The evidence of 16th century wills shows that weaver, tailor and shoemaker were common occupations in Cirencester⁵⁰¹ The oldest charter of the Cirencester Weavers' Company dates from 1558.⁵⁰² At a view of frankpledge in 1550 several people were presented by the inspectors of hides for being common carriers and selling hides in the market, while the water conservators presented others for putting skins in the watercourse and making it insalubrious.⁵⁰³ In 1608 there were 42 weavers, 20 shoemakers, 13 tailors, 9 glovers, 5 saddlers, 4 drapers and 4 cardmakers in the town.⁵⁰⁴

A petition to Parliament in 1698 by the inhabitants of Cirencester complained that several hundred poor people in the area, previously employed in yarn-making and woolcombing, had recently become unemployed and impoverished.⁵⁰⁵ The petitioners called for legislation against engrossers of wool or 'wool-broggers', although the committee responsible for the petition decided that growers should be able to sell their wool to whichever chapman they pleased.⁵⁰⁶ In 1699 Cirencester's dealers in woollen manufactures petitioned Parliament, complaining that too much worsted and yarn was being imported from Ireland into Bristol, which was also hurting the poor of the town. At the same time the clothiers of Cirencester complained that the new charter for the East India Company did not stipulate that any English manufactures be exported by the Company.⁵⁰⁷

Analysis of the occupations given in a poll book of 1768 shows that woolcombers and woolstaplers remained important sources of employment, although textile manufacturing and dealing was to decline sharply by the end of the century.⁵⁰⁸ According to Rudge at the beginning of the 19th century, Cirencester's textile trade was composed predominantly of the manufacture of thin, worsted cloth known as 'chinas', carpet weaving 'in a small way' and the manufacture of woollen cloth for the army and India Company, sent undyed to London. Although substantial numbers were employed in separating wool from the fleece and in spinning, the introduction of machinery was reducing this trade.⁵⁰⁹ In 1822 there were 13 boot and shoe makers, 2 breeches and glove makers, 3 hosiers, 4 hat manufacturers, 9 milliners, 4 straw hat manufacturers and 10 tailors, indicating the continuing strength of the retail trade. There were still several linen and woollen drapers and wool

⁵⁰⁰ GA, D1443/box1/9.

⁵⁰¹ GDR Wills, 1550/061, 1551/146 and 1557/296.

⁵⁰² GA, D4590/1/1.

⁵⁰³ GA, D1375/495.

⁵⁰⁴ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 239-43.

⁵⁰⁵ *CJ* 12, 91.

⁵⁰⁶ *CJ* 12, 277.

⁵⁰⁷ *CJ* 12, 423.

⁵⁰⁸ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 259-65.

⁵⁰⁹ Rudge, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Gloucester*, 341.

staplers, but only a single clothier, Joseph Cripps and Co of New Mills and Stratton.⁵¹⁰

Brewing

Much of the beer brewed in early Cirencester would have been made in small brewhouses attached to an alehouse or inn and supplying only a few or even one establishment. A single brewer, Robert Hibbard of Instrope Street, was listed in 1608.⁵¹¹ The Three Tuns in Dyer Street included 'a good brew house' when it was advertised for let in 1759.⁵¹² When it was auctioned in 1813, the Anchor Inn was sold along with brewing equipment.⁵¹³ The Three Horseshoes also brewed beer in 1821.⁵¹⁴ A brewhouse at the corner of Lewis Lane and Cricklade Street had been converted into cottages when the site was sold along with the adjoining malthouse in 1824.⁵¹⁵ The site would later become home to the Cotswold Brewery.

Three brewers were listed in a directory of 1820: Croome, Cripps and Co in Cricklade Street; John Masters in Thomas Street; and Francis Smith of Cricklade Street.⁵¹⁶ Smith had acquired his brewery from William Hewer.⁵¹⁷ Only two brewers were listed in a directory of 1822: John Masters of Thomas Street and Joseph Cripps and Co of Cricklade Street.⁵¹⁸ By 1823 the Masters Brewhouse was occupied by John Small, having also been in the possession of Daniel Masters.⁵¹⁹ The Cirencester Brewery Company, as it would later be known, was started in 1792 after acquiring the brewhouse attached to the Bell Inn. The company was initially owned one-eighth each by Robert Croome and William Croome and one-quarter each by Joseph Cripps, Joseph Pitt and William Lawrence. The brewery and many of its inns and public houses were taken over by a new company during the 1820s. Half was owned by Joseph Cripps, one-sixth each by Edward Cripps, Thomas Byrch and John Byrch.⁵²⁰

Edge-tool making

In 1608 there were two cutlers in Cirencester.⁵²¹ During the 18th century Cirencester became established as a centre for the manufacture of heavy edge-tools. The will of edge-tool maker Robert Wilkins was proved in 1705.⁵²² The edge tool makers Charles Sloper⁵²³, Thomas Rodway⁵²⁴,

⁵¹⁰ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 52–3.

⁵¹¹ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 239-43.

⁵¹² *Glouc. Journal*, 3 Apr. 1759.

⁵¹³ GA, D177/III/5.

⁵¹⁴ GA, D846/III/10; P86/1/CW/3/20.

⁵¹⁵ GA, D9161/1.

⁵¹⁶ I.P. Peaty, 'The Cirencester Brewery Ltd', *Brewery History* 77 (1994), 25.

⁵¹⁷ GA, D1443/box1/9.

⁵¹⁸ *Pigot's Directory* (1822), 52.

⁵¹⁹ GA, D2957/79/13A.

⁵²⁰ GA, D1443/box1/9.

⁵²¹ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 239-43.

⁵²² GDR Wills, 1705/171.

⁵²³ GA, GDR/Q1/1762/entry 440.

⁵²⁴ GA, GDR/Q1/1766/entry 166.

Robert Lane⁵²⁵, Nathaniel and John Deighton⁵²⁶ and William Wilkins⁵²⁷ were all active in the 1760s. Rudder drew particular attention to the production of knives which carriers used to shave leather; these were sold across Europe and America and were apparently unmatched in quality by anything made in Birmingham or Sheffield.⁵²⁸ There is also evidence that the Cirencester edge-tool makers were innovators. Radway of Cirencester invented two ploughs. The skim-plough, widely used in the Cotswolds, turned the turf completely over and could cover two acres in a day pulled by two horses. The skim-and-go-deep plough pared off the top of the turf and covered it with four or more inches of mould, working particularly effectively in areas with knot grass.⁵²⁹ Radway also invented a chaff cutter, operated by three women.⁵³⁰

Social History

Francis Boorman

Population and Social Structure

From the 16th century figures of households, families or communicants, from which estimates of Cirencester's population can be calculated, relate to the parish as a whole including the townships of Baunton (until the mid-17th century), Chesterton and Wiggold. Early taxation records were collected by township, and so on occasion specify Baunton, Chesterton and Wiggold separately. The chantry commissioners certificate (which excluded Baunton) in 1548 returned 1,400 communicants, while Bishop Hooper's visitation in 1551 returned 1,460. This suggesting a population including non-communicating children of a little under 2,000.⁵³¹ In the 1563 diocesan returns Baunton appeared as a chapelry with 12 households, while Cirencester had 320 households, suggesting a population of between 1,411 and 1,577. The 1603 census has no separate return for Baunton.⁵³² From the mid-17th century Baunton was recognised as a separate parish.

The 1603 ecclesiastical census returned 1,825 conformists and six recusants for Cirencester; suggesting a total population of around 2,750.⁵³³ In 1608 352 men were mustered in the town but the relationship with households or overall numbers is uncertain.⁵³⁴ There were 700 families in Cirencester in 1650, suggesting a population of 3,000 – 3,300.⁵³⁵ In 1676 there were 1,745 conformists in Cirencester, and 155 nonconformists, suggesting a population of 2,850.

⁵²⁵ GA, GDR/Q1/1767/entry 30.

⁵²⁶ GA, GDR/Q1/1763/entry 175; GDR/Q1/1771/entry 132.

⁵²⁷ GA, GDR/Q1/1769/entry 26.

⁵²⁸ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 177.

⁵²⁹ Rudge, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Gloucester*, 63.

⁵³⁰ Rudge, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Gloucester*, 86–7.

⁵³¹ J. Maclean, 'Chantry Certificates, Gloucestershire' *Trans. BGAS* 8 (1883-84), 284; J Gairdner, 'Bishop Hooper's Visitation of Gloucester', *EHR* 9 (1904) 111; John S Moore, 'Episcopal visitations and the demography of Tudor Gloucestershire', *Southern History* 22 (2000) 74-8.

⁵³² A Dyer & D M Palliser eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (2005), 171, 338.

⁵³³ Dyer & Palliser, *Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*, 338.

⁵³⁴ Smith *Men and Armour*, 239-43.

⁵³⁵ Moore, 'Episcopal visitations and the demography of Tudor Gloucestershire', 75.

Atkyns suggested at the start of the 18th century Cirencester had a population of 4,000 and 800 houses, but Rudder argued from the number of baptisms and burials that this figure was too high.⁵³⁶ The response to Bishop Benson's Visitation enquiry returned 3,800 inhabitants, and 3,797 for Cirencester was added to an enumeration of Tetbury in 1741.⁵³⁷ According to Rudder an 'exact account' in 1775 recorded 3,878 people and 838 houses.⁵³⁸ The population was 4,130 in 1801, 4,540 in 1811 and 4,987 in 1821.⁵³⁹

Charities and Social Welfare [by John Loosley]

According to the terms of John Jones's service, the properties were to be sold after 60 years by the feoffees and the proceeds used as the churchwardens and feoffees should decide.⁵⁴⁰ At some point the feoffees or churchwardens decided to retain the properties and continue the Jones charity. In 1719 it was agreed that the churchwardens of Cirencester should be permitted to receive the rents upon trust, applying £8 towards the grammar school and the residue for the maintenance of the parish church. The properties in Dyer Street were sold in the 20th century, but the other properties were retained and the trust continued in 2017.⁵⁴¹

In his will Humphrey Bridges (d. 1598) gave a rent-charge on a tenement in Cricklade Street of 20s. to the poor of St Lawrence's Hospital on Good Friday and a further 20s. on Christmas Eve.⁵⁴² His wife, Elizabeth Bridges (d. 1620) gave 5s. per week to five poor widows of Cirencester.⁵⁴³ These poor widows were accommodated in an almshouse in Dollar Street called Hodden House, to which she gave £40.⁵⁴⁴

By an indenture of 1779, John Day of Lechlade left the rent on three cottages, Parsonage House and 90 a. of land in Pinkney (in Sherston, Wilts.) with the great and small tithes, to be distributed amongst the poor Anglican housekeepers in Cirencester.⁵⁴⁵ Payments were to be between £3 and £15 per year. The intention of the charity was to relieve the unavoidable misfortunes of accident, decay of trade, and old age and to encourage industry. No one should be eligible unless he or she had rented a house in Cirencester of at least £3 per year including taxes.⁵⁴⁶

John Webley by his will of 1598 gave the rent-charge on a house in Gosditch Street, exchanged with Lord Danvers in 1607, and £1 6s. 8d. charged on the Greyhound Inn in Dyer Street to be distributed to the poor on Good Friday.⁵⁴⁷ Alice Avening in 1598 gave the rent of £2 from a house in Dollar Street to the poor on Good Friday, as did Rowland Freeman by his will of 1658 from rent on a house and garden in Cecily Street, now incorporated into Earl Bathurst's park.⁵⁴⁸

⁵³⁶ Rudder, *Glos.*, 368.

⁵³⁷ *Benson's Survey*, 149; GA D566/Z/11.

⁵³⁸ Rudder, *Glos.*, 368.

⁵³⁹ *1851 Census*, population tables.

⁵⁴⁰ See Medieval Cirencester, religion, John Jones's service.

⁵⁴¹ TNA, PROB 11/17, ff.106v-107; GA, 913.362REE/CL.

⁵⁴² TNA, PROB 11/91/390.

⁵⁴³ TNA, PROB 11/136/389.

⁵⁴⁴ GA, P86/1 CH 5/1.

⁵⁴⁵ GA, P86/1 CH 7.

⁵⁴⁶ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 413.

⁵⁴⁷ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2.

⁵⁴⁸ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2.

William Hooper by his will of 1605 gave the rent-charge of 40s. on two houses in Little Silver Street to the poor on Good Friday.⁵⁴⁹ Jeffrey Bathe in 1618 gave part of the rent-charge on a house in Cricklade Street to the poor, as did William Blomer in 1614 on a house in Gloucester Street.⁵⁵⁰ In his will of 1638 George Monox, a merchant and sheriff of London, left houses in Dyer Street, Black Jack Street and Coxwell Street, the rent of £23 10s. to be distributed to the poor yearly on St Thomas's day.⁵⁵¹ John Paethe in 1641 gave a rent charge on a property in Dollar Street of £2 to decayed butchers and the residue to the common poor.⁵⁵² Sir Anthony Hungerford of Down Ampney, by an indenture of 1642, gave the rent-charge on 4 a. of land called Westmead in Ampney Crucis, to a coat and 12d. each to 11 aged and imperfect persons.⁵⁵³ On the left sleeve of each coat should be the letters A.J.H. in red cloth. By 1821 the rental income of £9 was insufficient sufficient to supply 11 coats, but upwards of 50 coats were provided from this and other funds.⁵⁵⁴

John Chaunler in 1654 gave the proceeds from rent of a house in Cecily Street which was purchased by Lord Bathurst in 1736.⁵⁵⁵ Edward King in 1692 gave the rent from two houses in Coxwell Street for four large coats for two poor men and two poor women, but not more often than every two years to the same person, nor ever again to anyone who should apply the garment to any other use besides his or her wear.⁵⁵⁶ John Master in his will of 1695 left half the interest from £200 to poor housekeepers as did Revd William Masters and Mrs Winifred Masters in 1716.⁵⁵⁷ Richard Note in 1697 gave the rent from a house and garden in Cricklade Street to clothe poor old men at Christmas.⁵⁵⁸ John Timbrell in his will dated 1793 left £134 in Consolidated Stock of which part of the interest to be distributed in bread to the poor.⁵⁵⁹ An estate of 40 a. at South Cerney was purchased with money donated by Samuel Coxwell, George Monox, Sir Henry Pratt, William Blomer and Mrs Chambers.⁵⁶⁰

Other charities providing for the poor included that of Philip Marnier, who by his will of 1587 gave a rent-charge on two houses in Dollar Street and property in Coxwell Street, 6s. 8d. for a sermon on the 1st Friday in Lent and the remainder to be distributed to any poor people present at the sermon. The distribution in the Church after the sermon caused disturbances, so it was distributed to the poor in their own houses. He also gave £80 in trust, £20 to be lent to four poor men of trade in Cirencester yearly without interest and also to four men in Burford, Tetbury and Minchinhampton.⁵⁶¹ The two houses in Dollar Street were leased by Earl Bathurst and the garden, timber yard and stables in Coxwell Street by Revd. Lewis Clutterbuck, but at rents considerably below their value. In 1829 both Earl Bathurst and a representative of Mr Clutterbuck agreed to re-

⁵⁴⁹ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2.

⁵⁵⁰ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2; P86/1 VE 2/1.

⁵⁵¹ GA, P86/1 CH 12.

⁵⁵² GA, P86/1 CH 14.

⁵⁵³ GA, P86/1 CH 8/1-2.

⁵⁵⁴ *Charity Commissioners Report (1829)*, 406.

⁵⁵⁵ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3.

⁵⁵⁶ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2; *Charity Commissioners Report (1829)*, 409

⁵⁵⁷ GA, P86/1 CH20/11.

⁵⁵⁸ *Charity Commissioners Report (1829)*, 411.

⁵⁵⁹ GA, P86/1 CH18/1.

⁵⁶⁰ *Charity Commissioners Report (1829)*, 407.

⁵⁶¹ GA, P86/1 CH 10/1-6, *Charity Commissioners Report (1829)*., 401.

lease them at current values. By 1829 the £80 had been lost due to default of the borrowers.⁵⁶²

In 1595 John Morse provided for two poor widows⁵⁶³ and Elizabeth Cripps in 1713 and Mrs Clutterbuck in 1783 gave the income from Old South Sea annuities, to be distributed yearly to ten poor widows or unmarried women of Cirencester at Christmas who were not receiving alms.⁵⁶⁴

Nicholas Edwards in a will of 1711 provided coats for two poor men and two poor women at Christmas and 20 loaves on St Thomas's Day for the poor.⁵⁶⁵ Isaac Tebbatt by his will of 1732 gave the interest on £20 to buy 40 loaves of bread for the benefit of the poor of Castle Ward.⁵⁶⁶ In 1829 the Charity Commissioners found that although the sum of £20 no longer appeared, the churchwarden still gave 20s. a year of bread to the poor of Castle Ward.⁵⁶⁷

Sir Thomas Rowe in 1637 gave the rent-charge on property in Wapley called Moswell for apprenticing orphans or poor boys, and every 3 or 4 years to a boy of Rendcombe if presented.⁵⁶⁸ The trustees, minister and parish officers were to choose the boys following a sermon preached on 13 September.⁵⁶⁹ James Clutterbuck in a will dated 1683 provided funds for apprenticing a poor boy of Cirencester. In 1795 the original sum of £100 plus accumulated interest of £46 was used to purchase £200 3% consols.⁵⁷⁰

In a will dated 1706 Thomas Perry left £100 to purchase property in Upton St Leonards, the rent of which to be used for apprenticing a poor boy.⁵⁷¹ This property consisted of 2 a. 2 r. of pasture land with a small house and blacksmith's shop. In 1822 the house was in a dilapidated state and William Gillman of London advanced £60 towards the cost of rebuilding, to be repaid out of the rent with 5% interest.⁵⁷² Richard Matthews in his will of 1727 left £150 to purchase property, the rent of which to be used for apprenticing a poor boy from Cirencester in London. Thirty-one acres of land was purchased in South Cerney. On enclosure in 1814 the holding was increased by 4 or 5 a. In 1829 the rent amounted to £27. The trustees, consisting of two members of the Presbyterian congregation and two of the Quaker meeting, decided to apprentice boys in conjunction with the trustees of the Yellow School.⁵⁷³ William Forder of Ampney Crucis left money for apprenticing a boy every three years,⁵⁷⁴ whilst Elizabeth Edwards in 1726 gave the interest on £100 for apprenticing a poor child of the charity school.⁵⁷⁵ Samuel Cockerell in his 1733 will left the rent-charge on property in Blackfriars, Gloucester for the placing out of a poor boy of Cirencester to a captain of a ship or some other trade in London or Bristol, although the Charity Commissioners in 1829 were

⁵⁶² Charity Commissioners Report (1829), 401.

⁵⁶³ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2.

⁵⁶⁴ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3.

⁵⁶⁵ TNA, PROB 11/526/272.

⁵⁶⁶ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2.

⁵⁶⁷ Charity Commissioners Report (1829), 408.

⁵⁶⁸ GA, P86/1 CH 20/2.

⁵⁶⁹ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 403.

⁵⁷⁰ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3.

⁵⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/494/227; GA, P86/1 IN 6/3.

⁵⁷² *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 421.

⁵⁷³ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1.

⁵⁷⁴ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3.

⁵⁷⁵ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3; *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 412.

unable to establish if it was ever in operation.⁵⁷⁶ The Cirencester Society, established in London in 1701, bound a poor boy of Cirencester as apprentice at their annual feast.⁵⁷⁷

Jane Overbury in her will of 1772 gave £150 in annuities, interest on £100 to the Baptist minister in Coxwell Street and interest on £50 to poor Baptists.⁵⁷⁸ In her will dated 1815 Catherine Stephens bequeathed the interest from £450 to the Baptist minister.⁵⁷⁹

Poor Relief

The poor of Cirencester had been provided for by the gild funds, but after they were dissolved in the 1540s there was little provision.⁵⁸⁰ Distribution of garments and money was eventually funded by endowments of the various parish charities and there was a distribution of offerings at Easter and Christmas. These were carried out by the churchwarden for the poor⁵⁸¹ and the churchwardens acted as overseers of the poor, following their establishment in 1597.⁵⁸²

Appointments to the separate post of overseer were recorded from 1624 and the procedure for setting the rates was announced in 1637, in which a rate was announced by the parish officers and the inhabitants could then raise objections before the rate was confirmed by the magistrates.⁵⁸³ In 1660 the poor rate was payable monthly at a collectors' table in the church and the collectors given warrant by the justice to distrain non-payers.⁵⁸⁴ In 1667 a register was established for the overseers to record their weekly disbursement at the same time as the supervisors of the highway were instructed to begin keeping accounts.⁵⁸⁵

To prevent poor relief becoming too great a financial burden, bonds were entered into by newcomers, or others on their behalf, as insurance against them becoming dependent upon the parish. These were recorded by the churchwardens from 1601 and in the vestry book from 1633. For some bonds the relationship of the person paying to the recipient was recorded and sometimes also the occupation of the recipient.⁵⁸⁶ The value of the bond was typically £30.⁵⁸⁷ Bonds were also entered into for bastard children and indentures for poor children.⁵⁸⁸

Following the Poor Relief Act of 1662 settlement certificates were required for outsiders to live in Cirencester, which ensured that they could be returned to their parish of origin if they needed relief.⁵⁸⁹ Certificates for residence in Cirencester were recorded from 1688 to 1690.⁵⁹⁰ Several removal orders to parishes in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Warwickshire were recorded in the

⁵⁷⁶ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 412.

⁵⁷⁷ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3.

⁵⁷⁸ GA GDR 1774/175.

⁵⁷⁹ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 422.

⁵⁸⁰ W. St. Clair Baddeley, *A History of Cirencester* (Cirencester, 1924), 229.

⁵⁸¹ GA, P86a/CW/2/1.

⁵⁸² S.E. Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century* (1914), 12.

⁵⁸³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.55.

⁵⁸⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.72.

⁵⁸⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.77.

⁵⁸⁶ GA, P86a/CW/2/1; P86/1/VE/2/1.

⁵⁸⁷ S.E. Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century* (1914), 15.

⁵⁸⁸ GA, P86a/CW/2/1.

⁵⁸⁹ 14 Chas. II, c. 12.

⁵⁹⁰ GA, P86a/CW/2/1.

vestry book for the first time in 1759.⁵⁹¹ Of continuing importance to financial responsibility for poor people, the boundaries of the parish were regularly rehearsed in the ancient ritual of perambulation, which continued well into the nineteenth century.⁵⁹²

Workhouse [by Louise Ryland-Epton]

Cirencester workhouse, opened in 1725, in a large converted house given to the parish for the purpose by Lord Bathurst.⁵⁹³ The new institution was situated just outside of the town centre and was one of its largest structures, set within extensive gardens and grounds.⁵⁹⁴

The vestry contracted Gabriel Cooke as its first master at a salary of £50 per annum for three years.⁵⁹⁵ The contract was renewed in 1727, 1730 and in 1734.⁵⁹⁶ During this period, the parish overseers paid the poor rates directly to Cooke and stopped providing relief to the poor outside the workhouse, which was intended to provide the only source of parish assistance.⁵⁹⁷ Inmates were employed in woollen and yarn manufacture and required to wear brown jackets, or later badges, to identify themselves.⁵⁹⁸ The workhouse was initially considered very successful, saving the parish £140 per annum in its first five years alone.⁵⁹⁹ The work undertaken by the inmates raised an income which was used to offset the institution's running costs.

Between 1736 and 1751 the workhouse was managed by 'governors' or 'guardians' of the poor who were appointed annually.⁶⁰⁰ The daily operation was entrusted to a workhouse master. Endeavours were also made to provide for the inspection of the workhouse and the work completed by inmates.⁶⁰¹ It remained the policy to only provide relief to the poor on the premises, although this could be waived, generally for short periods, with the agreement of overseers and church wardens.⁶⁰²

In 1751 John Ellis became governor of the workhouse with a salary of £20, which increased to £40 a year later.⁶⁰³ He was replaced in 1759 by Edward Gingell, a narrow weaver, who was paid 1s. 10d. per inmate and allowed to keep any profit from their work.⁶⁰⁴ The parish later reverted back to paying a salary.⁶⁰⁵ Gingell remained in post until 1772 when, as the ex-governor, he was called on to settle his account with the parish.⁶⁰⁶ Gradually the poor started to be relieved outside of the

⁵⁹¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.156.

⁵⁹² GA, P86/1/IN/7/1.

⁵⁹³ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 15 Oct. 1724.

⁵⁹⁴ GA, D2525/P6.

⁵⁹⁵ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 15 Oct. 1724.

⁵⁹⁶ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 22 Mar. 1727, 19 Mar. 1730, 29 Mar. 1734.

⁵⁹⁷ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 15 Oct. 1724; Anon, *An Account of Several Work-Houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor*, (London: Joseph Downing, 1725), 105.

⁵⁹⁸ Anon, *An Account of Several Work-Houses* (1725), 105; GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, Vestry Minutes 15 Oct. 1724, 16 Sept. 1743, 23 Feb. 1753.

⁵⁹⁹ Anon, *An Account of Several Work-Houses* (London: Jos. Downing, 1732), 110.

⁶⁰⁰ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 14 Oct. 1736, 6 Oct. 1737, 6 Oct. 1738.

⁶⁰¹ GA, P86/1 IN 6/3; P86/2 VE 2/1, 30 Oct. 1741, 4 Sept. 1761.

⁶⁰² GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 8 Oct. 1742, 11 June 1743, 30 Nov.1750.

⁶⁰³ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 12 Apr. 1751, 3 Apr. 1752.

⁶⁰⁴ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 7 Sept. 1759.

⁶⁰⁵ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 5 Oct. 1762.

⁶⁰⁶ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 4 Dec. 1772.

workhouse context and by 1776 the cost of poor relief had risen to £957.⁶⁰⁷ After Gingell's departure the vestry tried unsuccessfully to contract out the management of the workhouse.⁶⁰⁸ In 1778 the poor rates account was in debt and several men had to lend money to the parish.⁶⁰⁹ Later overseers were admonished for the levels of uncollected rates.⁶¹⁰ Rising demand for parish relief continued and by 1785 expenditure had risen to £1,300.⁶¹¹

In 1781 Samuel Webb became master of the workhouse.⁶¹² He was characterised as an adept financial administrator.⁶¹³ He left after ten years, but returned in 1798 to a larger role managing the entire parish poor.⁶¹⁴ This followed a period described by Rudder as a great dearth, which left the town's poor penniless and severely pressed by hunger.⁶¹⁵ But despite this effort to engage effective management and other methods employed to deter applications for aid, the cost of parish relief continued to spiral, reaching £3,295 in 1803.⁶¹⁶ More people were also relieved outside the workhouse despite it being filled to capacity; 120 were relieved in the workhouse and 170 received outdoor relief, not including dependent children.⁶¹⁷

In 1810 the parish refocused the objectives of the workhouse by voting to adopt the provisions of Gilbert's Act.⁶¹⁸ Under the terms of this voluntary legislation, a workhouse was intended to provide a refuge for the impotent poor. The able bodied were to be excluded and instead found work or be provided with outdoor relief. Consequently this group were gradually removed from the Cirencester workhouse. The parish also adopted the Speenhamland system of subsidising wages. Those accommodated inside the institution were now almost exclusively the most vulnerable: the old, sick or infirm. In 1828 the workhouse population comprised of 51 individuals of whom 27 were 'infirm', six were 'idiots', four were 'unwell', one blind, one deaf, one 'infirm and cripple', two were there for an unspecified reason and three women were pregnant. Only one was labelled 'capable of maintaining his family.'⁶¹⁹

The first governor under Gilbert's Act was John Hill. He was replaced the following year by William Chamberlain and his wife, who were paid £70 and made responsible for all those receiving relief both inside and outside.⁶²⁰ Chamberlain reported to the Rev Pye and other annually appointed guardians who took responsibility for the oversight of the management of the poor. In the years after the implementation of Gilbert's Act the cost of parish relief fell. In the year ending Easter 1813 the cost of maintaining the parish poor was £3,413. In 1814 it was £2,702 and fell to £2,513

⁶⁰⁷ Abstracts of the Returns Made by the Overseers of the Poor, (London: House of Commons Papers, 1776).

⁶⁰⁸ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 4 Dec. 1772, 15 Apr. 1775, 15 April 1776, 22 May 1778, 18 Apr. 1780, 26 May 1780.

⁶⁰⁹ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 10 Dec. 1780.

⁶¹⁰ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 20 Apr. 1781, 16 Apr. 1784.

⁶¹¹ *Abstract of the Returns Made by the Overseers of the Poor* (London: House of Commons Papers, 1787).

⁶¹² GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 20 Apr. 1781.

⁶¹³ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 319.

⁶¹⁴ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 29 Apr. 1791, 13 Apr. 1798.

⁶¹⁵ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 153-4.

⁶¹⁶ *Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for procuring Returns relative to Expense and Maintenance of Poor in England* (London: House of Commons Papers, 1803-4), 174.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid*, 175.

⁶¹⁸ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 27 Apr. 1810.

⁶¹⁹ GA, P86a VE 3/1-7.

⁶²⁰ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 27 Apr. 1810, 15 May 1811, 15 Nov. 1811.

the following year.⁶²¹ The number of inmates in the workhouse also dropped significantly. By 1821 the average number of paupers in the workhouse had fallen to 57.⁶²² A new poor rate was ratified in 1814, but collecting it became increasingly difficult. In 1818 the vestry appointed a salaried overseer whose sole duty was to collect the poor rate, but later resorted to calling on the overseers not to delay and to collect rates 'without exception.'⁶²³ By 1827 the poor account was in serious debt.⁶²⁴

Inside the workhouse conditions were austere. An inventory of 1811 reveals the poor were generally accommodated in dormitories, with a certain degree of segregation of the sexes, and the young. Unlike the majority of the institution's population, the children were provided blankets and heating. They were also likely to have received a rudimentary education.⁶²⁵ Labour remained an important aspect of the regime and, despite any individual infirmity, there was an expectation that everyone would work, often still in aspects of woollen cloth manufacture.⁶²⁶ Residents had access to medical care and a diet which was better than that available to the poorest labourer outside.⁶²⁷

Education [by Pam Morris]

Cirencester Grammar School

Following the dissolution of Winchcombe Abbey the £10 endowment for the school ceased and the parishioners were obliged to fund the incumbent Thomas Taylour at their own expense, providing a salary of £7 and a house. The commissioners confirmed the stipend to be paid from the Court of Augmentations, but provided no endowment of lands.⁶²⁸ Following the abolition of the Court of Augmentations, no stipend was forthcoming for several years until the schoolmaster, William Arderne successfully applied for its resumption. This represented a third of the fees paid to the schoolmaster and usher, the remainder being made up by the parishioners until 1582, when the payment from the Crown was increased to £20. In 1584/5 the payment was made to Thomas Elmes/Helme.⁶²⁹ Under Anthony Ellys, the master or usher in 1571, the school roll was 100 to 120 scholars.⁶³⁰

Dissatisfaction with Thomas Elmes's management of the school led to attempts to remove him. During a commission of enquiry it was alleged that Elmes was incompetent and that the number of scholars had declined to 40.⁶³¹ In 1594 the graduate John Bowden was appointed schoolmaster,⁶³²

⁶²¹ *Abridgement of the Abstract of the Answers and Returns made pursuant to an act* (London: House of Commons Papers, 1818), 146.

⁶²² GA, P86a VE 3/1-7.

⁶²³ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 29 Apr. 1814, 8 Apr. 1820, 5 May 1826.

⁶²⁴ GA, P86/1 VE 2/1, 27 May 1827.

⁶²⁵ GA, P86/1 OV 2/1.

⁶²⁶ GA, P86/1 OV 2/1; GA, P86a VE 3/1-7.

⁶²⁷ GA, P86/1 OV 2/1; GA D1070/I/43; Sir F. Eden, *The State of the Poor: A History of the Labouring Classes in England* (London, 1797).

⁶²⁸ A. F. Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation* (1896), pt. 2, 84-5.

⁶²⁹ *VCH Glos. II*, 390-1.

⁶³⁰ *VCH Glos. II*, 391-2.

⁶³¹ *VCH Glos. II*, 392.

⁶³² CCEd 129968.

but Elmes was reappointed in 1603.⁶³³ A Commission of Charitable Uses in 1603 concluded that the townsmen had withheld payment of £8 from the schoolmaster since 1583 and issued a decree declaring it obligatory, but this was not observed.⁶³⁴ Elmes remained in post until 1619. From 1612 to 1616 John Elmes was appointed undermaster.⁶³⁵ In 1616 four undermasters were appointed alongside Elmes by the bishop of Gloucester: John Elmes, Edmund Windowe⁶³⁶, Anthony Chapman⁶³⁷ and Henry Topp.⁶³⁸ In 1622 Henry Topp replaced Thomas Elmes as schoolmaster,⁶³⁹ remaining in post after his appointment as minister at Baunton in 1623.

The vestry drew up statutes for the school in January 1620, reissued in 1641 and 1677⁶⁴⁰ These regulations formed the basis for a contract with the master, who was required to attend a public vestry meeting, sign the orders and pay a bond of £200 undertaking to adhere to them. Patronage of the school was in the hands of the manorial and parish authorities, listed by function and described as Visitors or Governors, who were responsible for all matters, including appointment and dismissal of the master.⁶⁴¹ The statutes required that boys were able to read the English Testament on admittance to the school. The sons of townsmen paid 12*d.* and sons of 'out dwellers' 3*s.*; poor children were to receive a free education. Religious teaching and church attendance were specified, as were standards of behaviour, for the boys and the master. The only reference to the curriculum relates to use of Latin. Clauses inserted in 1641 stipulate minimum attendance, fining of parents in case of non-attendance, and lengths of school day and term.⁶⁴²

The composition and the inadequacy of the stipend; the condition of the schoolhouse in Dyer Street and the extent of vestry control over the master remained sources of contention. In 1639 the issue of the £8 annuity from the Jones trust arose again. Topp was given notice by the churchwardens, accused of lack of diligence and not having provided an usher to assist in the school.⁶⁴³ He too refused to leave his position and the dispute continued until 1641.⁶⁴⁴

His replacement William Taylor left the town in 1643 and Topp returned as schoolmaster until 1649, albeit threatened by the vestry with court action to recover the schoolhouse from him.⁶⁴⁵ The Exchequer payment ceased in 1645 and was unreliable thereafter, some townsmen taking it upon themselves to guarantee payment to the then schoolmaster Hector Ford.⁶⁴⁶ Ford left in 1660 to be replaced by John Hodges in 1661.⁶⁴⁷

The Governors' assertion in the statutes that the fees would be spent on books, any surplus going

⁶³³ CCEd 149872.

⁶³⁴ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.122 a, b

⁶³⁵ CCEd 149871.

⁶³⁶ CCEd 167938.

⁶³⁷ CCEd 129990.

⁶³⁸ CCEd 75810.

⁶³⁹ *VCH Glos. II*, 394.

⁶⁴⁰ GA, P86/1/SC/1/1 and 1/2. The statutes were reissued in 1641 and 1677.

⁶⁴¹ GA, P86 Sc1/1.

⁶⁴² GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.122 a, b

⁶⁴³ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.56v, 58 b

⁶⁴⁴ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.60 a

⁶⁴⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.65.

⁶⁴⁶ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.68

⁶⁴⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.73v.

to items such as repairs to the schoolhouse, was not followed through. Elmes claimed that £200 worth of repairs to the schoolhouse were required in 1609. After he left some work was carried out and more when Topp left, causing a parish deficit of £115 7s. 9d.⁶⁴⁸ Following extensive work, including reconstructing the frontage and adding stone mullion windows, in 1663 it was decided that in future repairs should be disbursed from the church rents by the churchwardens as required.⁶⁴⁹ In 1759 the Cirencester Society in London resolved to contribute ten guineas towards repairs to the school.⁶⁵⁰ Books fared no better - in the time of Nathaniel (or John) Gwynne (1664-1677) there was only one book in the school.⁶⁵¹

In 1677 John Parkinson was appointed by a patent under the great seal.⁶⁵² In 1754 Francis James was granted by patent, while Henry Wightwick was nominated by an alleged majority of the electors.⁶⁵³ The intractability of the parties was exacerbated by a contemporary dispute over the parliamentary election. The legal decision finally supported James and as a result the master was appointed by the Lord Chancellor until 1881.⁶⁵⁴

The schoolhouse again became an issue under John Washbourn (1764-1805), when a new wing was added to accommodate his family and 20-30 boarders.⁶⁵⁵ He had no free scholars but concentrated on the more profitable country boarders.⁶⁵⁶ The status of the school in 1780 was reflected in the fact that he had to pay for seats in church, as the private schools did.⁶⁵⁷ In 1783 Washbourne dispensed with the boarders, though he retained the house and remained as master until his death in 1805.⁶⁵⁸ He was replaced by Revd James Buckoll, who charged day pupils 8 guineas p.a. and boarders 30 guineas.⁶⁵⁹ James Grooby was master of the grammar school from 1810⁶⁶⁰ and Rev. H. Wood from 1823.⁶⁶¹

Charity Schools

A group of Cirencester residents instituted a charity school in 1714⁶⁶² to teach and cloth 40 boys and 20 girls, while younger children were to be taught in dame schools.⁶⁶³ The chief benefactor was Thomas Powell, who in his lifetime contributed £15 p.a. by way of a 99-year Exchequer annuity.⁶⁶⁴ The school became known as the Blue School, from the colour of the boys' uniforms. The school's

⁶⁴⁸ GA, P86/1/SC/1/1; P86/1/IN/6/3, f.61v

⁶⁴⁹ GA, P86/1/SC/1/2; P86/1/IN/6/3, f.75v.

⁶⁵⁰ J. Ireland, *The History of Cirencester Grammar School* (Cirencester Old Grammarians Reunion Committee 1993), 54

⁶⁵¹ Ireland, *History of Cirencester Grammar School*, 51.

⁶⁵² GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.85v

⁶⁵³ Ireland, *History of Cirencester Grammar School*, 54.

⁶⁵⁴ Ireland, *History of Cirencester Grammar School*, 55.

⁶⁵⁵ Ireland, *History of Cirencester Grammar School*, 57.

⁶⁵⁶ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 309.

⁶⁵⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/4.

⁶⁵⁸ *VCH Glos. II*, 395.

⁶⁵⁹ *Glouc. Journal*, 8 July 1805.

⁶⁶⁰ GA, GDR 333.

⁶⁶¹ *VCH Glos. II*, 395.

⁶⁶² GA, P86a/CH/2/1

⁶⁶³ GA, P86/1/1N/6/3 f.9

⁶⁶⁴ GA, P86/1/1N/6/3 f.9

initial fund was £228 10s.⁶⁶⁵ At his death in 1718 Powell left a share of profits from land in Cricklade (Wilts.) towards educating and clothing the poor of Cirencester.⁶⁶⁶ The share allocated to the school was three-quarters of the £20 rental income.⁶⁶⁷ The initial fund grew till it was £428 5s. 6d. in 1755. This sum was regarded as the capital of the school and invested by the churchwardens.⁶⁶⁸ Rebecca Powell (d. 1722), Thomas's widow, left the bulk of her estate in trust for a number of charitable purposes, including erecting, endowing and establishing a charity school or schools.⁶⁶⁹ Legal wrangles prevented early establishment of her school,⁶⁷⁰ but in 1725 it was decreed that the charities should be set up as stated in the will.⁶⁷¹ In 1737 Mark Thurston, a Master of the Court of Chancery reported that two competing schemes had been presented to him, neither of which he wholly supported.⁶⁷²

Following the 1737 Chancery judgement, and confirmation of the scheme the following year, a schoolhouse was purchased and fitted up at a cost of c. £1200, while £212. 8s. was to be applied to maintaining 20 boys and teaching them to write and cast accounts. The boys were also to be trained as stocking weavers, for which frames would be supplied. At least one boy each year should be set up with a frame and some worsted, in the hope that this would provide a source of employment for them and of wealth for the town. Twenty girls were also to be clothed and taught to read, say their prayers and catechism and to spin, at a cost of £28.10s. per year. A further £10 yearly would place two apprentices to husbandry, those least likely to be successful at weaving.⁶⁷³

This became the Yellow School, a separate institution from the Blue, although the Court of Chancery in 1737 decreed that £20 should be contributed to the Blue School from the estates bequeathed for the Yellow School.⁶⁷⁴ In 1744 the same court decreed that the product of a principal sum of £580 should be paid for the benefit of the Blue School (to compensate for future loss of the Exchequer annuity).⁶⁷⁵

In 1737 the yearly value of the Yellow School endowment was £226 2s. 3d. in real estate, while personal estate amounted to £5,443 13s. 7d., reduced to £3443 13s. 7d. after purchase and fitting-out of the house.⁶⁷⁶ The house in Gloucester Street was built in 1738-40.⁶⁷⁷ The vicar's accounts include £25 paid to Lord Bathurst in 1739 for the purchase of a smaller house to be joined to the charity school.⁶⁷⁸

In October 1739 Thomas Arrowsmith, stocking weaver, was appointed master at £30 p.a.; his wife was employed at £6 p.a. to teach 20 girls. John Hall and his wife Elizabeth were to reside in the

⁶⁶⁵ GA, P86a/CH 2/1

⁶⁶⁶ D225/Z13; *VCH Wilts.* XVIII, 81.

⁶⁶⁷ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 393.

⁶⁶⁸ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 392.

⁶⁶⁹ GA, P86/CH/1/7

⁶⁷⁰ GA, R/79/370 GS

⁶⁷¹ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 396.

⁶⁷² GA, P86/1/1N/6/3 f.9

⁶⁷³ GA, P86/1/1N/6/3, f.9

⁶⁷⁴ GA, P86/1/1N/6/3, f 9

⁶⁷⁵ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 394.

⁶⁷⁶ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 396.

⁶⁷⁷ Verey and Brooks, *Glos.* I, 269.

⁶⁷⁸ GA, D1441/box2521/2.

'charity house' and take care of the boys there at £30 p.a. Ten of the older boys from the Blue School were to be elected to attend this school.⁶⁷⁹ By September 1740 the boys had been elected, but the vicar refused to pay for clothing and maintenance without a further order from Chancery.⁶⁸⁰ The Governors ordered that the boys should come to school but were not to be clothed, fed or received into the house until the order had been obtained.⁶⁸¹ John Hall resigned in 1743, when Arrowsmith and his wife took over the care of the boys, while his son Obadiah taught the weaving and John Nelmes was employed as writing master.⁶⁸² In 1761 Obadiah Arrowsmith agreed to pay £20 an hour in return for retaining the profits from the weaving, with an additional £20 for any year when no boy was established with his own frame.⁶⁸³ When boys were set up as stocking weavers, Arrowsmith undertook to take all well-made goods at the market rate.⁶⁸⁴ In 1773 Arrowsmith was replaced by Joseph Blake, who resigned in 1775.⁶⁸⁵

By 1786 the Trustees were questioning the basis of the scheme: 20 boys were too many to be learning the trade as only one could be set up each year with a frame and wool, and the boys were expensive to maintain. It was agreed to reduce the number of boys to 12. The other eight would be sent to Quarterly schools to learn their catechism and to read, and then be admitted into the house as vacancies occurred. Only the eight oldest boys would be taught to weave stockings and three boys would be apprenticed each year to husbandry or trades.⁶⁸⁶ The girls' education having been neglected for some years, new regulations were also drawn up concerning their clothing, and education. Girls would attend the Quarterly school for the first year, followed by two years at the dame school learn to spin and be taught by the master to read, write and cast accounts.⁶⁸⁷ Later a spinning wheel, New Testament and prayer book were given at the end of three years to any girl who had obeyed the rules of the charity.⁶⁸⁸

In June 1787 Robert Warburton of Bath, framework knitter, was appointed master at a salary of £130 p.a., agreeing to take the work of the boys set up in business at a market rate.⁶⁸⁹ Within a few months he had been sacked and replaced by Samuel Webb as master, while James Viner was appointed to supervise the framework knitting.⁶⁹⁰ Rudder drew attention to the fluctuating income from the school's production of stockings in its first decades, reflecting the different terms under which the masters were employed. Between 1776 and 1788 the income was £50 a year, although the that had improved under Webb.⁶⁹¹

In 1814 Chancery ordered an enquiry⁶⁹² into the charity and whether a new scheme for the

⁶⁷⁹ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Oct. 1739.

⁶⁸⁰ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Sept. 1740.

⁶⁸¹ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Sept. 1740.

⁶⁸² GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Aug. & Sept. 1743.

⁶⁸³ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Sept. 1761.

⁶⁸⁴ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Sept. 1762.

⁶⁸⁵ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Mar. 1773 & Sept. 1775.

⁶⁸⁶ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Dec. 1786.

⁶⁸⁷ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Dec. 1786.

⁶⁸⁸ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Oct. 1787.

⁶⁸⁹ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, June 1787.

⁶⁹⁰ GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Oct. 1787.

⁶⁹¹ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 317-8.

⁶⁹² GA, D1441/box 2526/4, Sept. 1814.

application of the assets would be beneficial to the town. The 1816 report concluded that the attempt to establish the manufacture of worsted stockings had failed and using the funds for this purpose was no longer useful. The amended scheme of 1827 decreed that 40 poor boys and 20 poor girls should be kept properly clothed, taught reading, writing and arithmetic, educated according to the principles of the Church of England, and the girls instructed in knitting and plain needlework. When their education was complete they should be set up as apprentices, if the Governors saw fit, and a replacement pupil elected in each place. The costs of the schools should be taken from the income of the charity, any residue being applied to placing as poor children as apprentices at not more than £10 per placement.⁶⁹³

Private Schools

In 1786 Mrs Field purchased items for her boarding school from Timothy Stevens, printer and stationer.⁶⁹⁴ A directory for 1792 lists three boarding schools run by women, and also two schoolmasters.⁶⁹⁵ In 1794 Thomas Fowler advertised a boarding school teaching Latin, English, mathematics and bookkeeping. In 1798 he moved to premises in Silver Street, vacated by Miss Darke.⁶⁹⁶ Miss Darke had moved to a 'commodious house' in Cricklade Street, 'for many years a very eminent boarding school for young ladies'. Her terms for boarding were 18 guineas a year and she offered music, dancing, drawing, French and writing, taught by approved masters.⁶⁹⁷

During the 19th century, Cirencester had an average of around six private boarding and/or day schools. Some of these were short-lived and most small. Those that persisted often had more than one address. Several were family enterprises. By 1820 Thomas Fowler had been joined by his son.⁶⁹⁸ Of the schools listed in 1820 and 1822, only Elizabeth's Sheppard's ladies boarding school in Coxwell Street with 10 boarders was still in existence in 1841.⁶⁹⁹

Social and Cultural Life

Theatre

Plays were held regularly in Cirencester in the 17th century; the boys from Powell's school were permitted to attend no more than one play a week in 1620 and never on fair or market days.⁷⁰⁰ During the early 18th century a travelling theatre company probably visited from Bath and numerous other entertainments were available, ranging from performing dogs to popular science demonstrators.⁷⁰¹ Charlotte Charke, disowned daughter of the playwright Colley Cibber, travelled to Cirencester with the theatre company of a Mr Linnett.⁷⁰² The Three Cocks Inn held a theatre in its yard where a company had a six-week residency in the summer of 1753, with extra

⁶⁹³ *Charity Commissioners Report* (1829), 398 -9.

⁶⁹⁴ GA, D9125/1/7870.

⁶⁹⁵ *The Universal British Directory* (1792), Cirencester

⁶⁹⁶ *Glouc. Journal*, 20 Jan. 1794 and 8 Jan. 1798.

⁶⁹⁷ *Glouc. Journal*, 15 Jan. 1798

⁶⁹⁸ Gell and Bradshaw, *Directory* (1820).

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid*; *Pigot's Directory* (1822-3); *Robson's Commercial Directory* (c.1840); 1841 census.

⁷⁰⁰ GA, P86/1/SC/1/1.

⁷⁰¹ A. Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds: the Boles Watson Family and the Cirencester Theatre* (London, 1993), 17.

⁷⁰² C. Charke, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke* (1759), 189-197.

performances to coincide with the races.⁷⁰³

John Boles Watson, proprietor of a theatre and company in Cheltenham, opened a new playhouse in Cirencester in 1794, with performances on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights.⁷⁰⁴ A carpenter, William Fisher, built a new theatre in Gloucester Street which he immediately leased to Watson, although he retained the right to use the building when Watson's company was not performing.⁷⁰⁵ Cirencester's new theatre was advertised in February 1799 by the proprietor, although the takings of the first night were pledged to the builder.⁷⁰⁶ A benefit for the actor Samuel Seyward was held in May 1799.⁷⁰⁷

Following a winter season in 1801–2, which took advantage of the expanded potential audience provided by the North Gloucestershire Regiment, there is no evidence of any plays staged in the theatre for the next five years.⁷⁰⁸ John Boles Watson temporarily retired due to ill health in 1803 and management of all his theatres including Cirencester was taken over by two London actors, Edward Ray and George Collins. Financial difficulties forced the builder William Fisher to sell the theatre and several other buildings to Joseph Pitt in 1806.⁷⁰⁹

A short season of plays was advertised in 1807, with performances once again falling on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Cirencester's performances were 'previous to the Cheltenham Season' and obviously subordinate.⁷¹⁰ Watson also returned to produce plays on Mondays in June 1807.⁷¹¹ Reports of plays lapsed once again between 1807 and 1810 suggesting another lean period for the theatre, although a successful one-man show sold out in October 1810 and there was a full summer season in 1811.⁷¹² John Boles Watson gave up management of the theatre to his son of the same name in 1811 and died in 1813.⁷¹³

John Boles Watson II continued his father's policy of enticing stars from London to sell tickets, eliciting poor reviews but maintaining the theatre business into 1815.⁷¹⁴ No plays were performed in the Gloucester Street theatre in 1816, but a strolling company performed a season of plays at the King's Head Assembly Rooms, which continued to be used sporadically as a theatre.⁷¹⁵ Several benefits were held at the Gloucester Street theatre, but John Boles Watson II ran into financial problems and lost the lease on the theatre in 1819.⁷¹⁶

⁷⁰³ *Glouc. Journal*, 12 June 1753.

⁷⁰⁴ *Glouc. Journal*, 31 Oct. 1794; A. Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds: the Boles Watson Family and the Cirencester Theatre* (1993), 34–5.

⁷⁰⁵ GA D2525/Box73/Bundle10; Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 37–9.

⁷⁰⁶ *Glouc. Journal*, 11 Feb. 1799.

⁷⁰⁷ *Glouc. Journal*, 13 May 1799.

⁷⁰⁸ GA D10820/Box 144/1/1 and D10820/Box 144/1/2; Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 57, 70.

⁷⁰⁹ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 76–7.

⁷¹⁰ *Glouc. Journal*, 4 May 1807.

⁷¹¹ *Glouc. Journal*, 1 June 1807.

⁷¹² Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 85–90.

⁷¹³ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 94–8; *Glouc. Journal*, 22 Mar. 1813.

⁷¹⁴ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 99–104; *Chelt. Chronicle*, 5 Nov. 1812; *Glouc. Journal*, 20 Feb. 1815; GA, D10820/Box 144/1/3.

⁷¹⁵ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 105–13.

⁷¹⁶ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, chapters 13 and 14.

Henry Bennett repaired the theatre and staged a season in 1821.⁷¹⁷ John Boles Watson III, the son of John Boles Watson II, took over proprietorship of the family theatre circuit and occasionally leased the Cirencester theatre to other companies and performing there with his wife in the 1830s, but it gradually fell into disuse. The theatre was converted into residential buildings and continues to be used as such in 2017.⁷¹⁸

Cirencester Park

Allen Bathurst was a patron and often a banker to a circle of literary luminaries. He was alluded to in poems by Alexander Pope and John Gay, who enjoyed lengthy stays at Cirencester Park during the first half of the 18th century, as did Congreve, Swift and Prior.⁷¹⁹ He even co-published Pope's *Dunciad*.⁷²⁰ Bathurst was himself a highly accomplished silviculturist and created the magnificent Cirencester Park under the influence of Pope's ideas and with his collaboration.⁷²¹ Features such as the Wood House or Alfred's Hall were constructed which were later used by the town's residents.⁷²² Literary interest in the Park continued through the 18th century. Sir Joseph Mawbey was inspired by Lord Bathurst's gardens to write a poem of 1759 beginning 'In these fair woods, whilst thus unseen I rove', which also mentions Lord Bathurst.⁷²³

Music

Sporadic evidence is available that the people of Cirencester enjoyed professional musical entertainment from at least the 17th century. Two musicians were listed in the town in 1608.⁷²⁴ Musician Thomas Whale had his will proved in 1648.⁷²⁵ A bell ringing club was founded at the Black Horse in 1794.⁷²⁶ Before c.1770 a series of concerts was held at Alfred's Hall complete with refreshments. Beginning as an amateur and private affair, it came to be known as the Woodhouse concert and during the 1770s tickets were issued due to its increasing popularity.⁷²⁷ Professional musicians were added to the ensemble as the concerts became popular with the local nobility and gentry, but enthusiasm for the event waned and it was discontinued around 1788.⁷²⁸

Cirencester races and other sport

Cerney Downs was home to outdoor pursuits popular in the area around Cirencester including hawking, hunting and coursing. Horse racing took place on Cerney Downs from at least the early 18th century and it was the venue for the annual Cirencester races. A new course was established there in 1756.⁷²⁹ The races were accompanied by numerous entertainments in Cirencester town,

⁷¹⁷ GA, D10820/Box 144/1/4–9.

⁷¹⁸ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 173–7 and 201.

⁷¹⁹ J. Lees–Milne, *Earls of Creation: five great patrons of eighteenth-century art* (Harmondsworth, 2001), 28–9.

⁷²⁰ Lees–Milne, *Earls of Creation*, 32.

⁷²¹ Lees–Milne, *Earls of Creation*, 40–53.

⁷²² Lees–Milne, *Earls of Creation*, 44–6.

⁷²³ *London Courant and Westminster Chronicle*, 26 Jan. 1781.

⁷²⁴ Smyth, *Men and Armour*, 239–43.

⁷²⁵ TNA, PROB 11/205/372.

⁷²⁶ GA, P86/1/SP/1/1.

⁷²⁷ *Oxford Journal*, 14 Aug. 1773.

⁷²⁸ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 132–3.

⁷²⁹ VCH Glos. VII, 150.

including cock fights and theatre performances.⁷³⁰ Balls were held in Cirencester on the two nights of the races and in 1790 an ordinary (a fixed-price meal) was available at the King's Head on the first day and the Ram on the second.⁷³¹ Rudder claimed that the racing dwindled to two days and then became biennial, rotating with the Tetbury races.⁷³² Cricket was played in Cirencester from at least the 1760s, with the first recorded match in 1769.⁷³³

Bull Club

The Bull Club was a convivial dining and drinking club that was supportive of Unionism and Conservatism. It was reputedly founded in support of the Jacobite cause and, while its foundation has been dated to 1745, it was probably significantly earlier. The Club was may have been named after the Bull Inn where the majority of its early meetings were held. The first complete membership list is from 1746 and includes many leading men of the town including Henry Bathurst, Thomas Master, Robert Croome and John and Edward Cripps. Meetings were held on a weekly basis until 1832, when they were confined to the monthly general meeting and an annual meeting. Activities included wagering, possibly bull-baiting and occasional acts of charity, such as distributing £20 of bread in January 1758. Numerous toasts were drunk at meetings, including to Church and King and to Lord Bathurst.⁷³⁴

Influential Townspeople [by Alan Parris]

Strange/Straunge

As bailiff of Cirencester manor at the Dissolution Robert Strange exercised great influence in the town and bought the manor of Somerford Keynes (Wilts., later Glos) in 1554.⁷³⁵ Thomas Strange (d.1592), probably his son or nephew, was elected MP in 1572. He was a sheep farmer and sat on committees relating to land ownership and the wool trade.⁷³⁶ Robert's grandson Robert Straunge (c.1587–1630) was also MP for Cirencester in 1614 and was buried with his parents in Somerford Keynes.⁷³⁷

George

The George family played an important role Cirencester and the surrounding district from the 14th century or earlier.⁷³⁸ Lord of the manor of nearby Baunton, Christopher George married Anna, the eldest daughter of Robert Strange, and his brother John George was married to another of Strange's daughters.⁷³⁹ One of John's sons, Robert George, was a treasurer of Cirencester parish in the early 17th century.⁷⁴⁰ Robert's son John George was elected several times as MP for Cirencester

⁷³⁰ Denning, *Theatre in the Cotswolds*, 20–1.

⁷³¹ *Oxford Journal*, 17 July 1790.

⁷³² Rudder, *Cirencester*, 161.

⁷³³ *Glouc. Journal*, 29 May 1769.

⁷³⁴ GA, D19820/A3-1/b.

⁷³⁵ See *Medieval, Manorial Administration*; GA, D4871.

⁷³⁶ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Strange, Thomas (d.1594), of Chesterton, Cirencester, Glos.

⁷³⁷ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Straunge, Robert (c.1587-1630), of Cirencester, Glos. and Somerford Keynes, Wilts.

⁷³⁸ D. Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth: the People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge, 2011), 135.

⁷³⁹ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 101

⁷⁴⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.44; Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 205.

in the 17th century and helped to organise the Parliamentary defences in the town during the civil war, although he switched sides following his capture by Prince Rupert.⁷⁴¹

Master

Richard Master (d. 1587/1588) was royal physician to Queen Elizabeth I from 1559 and was president of the College of Physicians. In 1568 he was granted the former abbey of Cirencester for £590, where he bought out the other tenants to expand his landholding and then built a substantial house.⁷⁴² The Cirencester estate was inherited by his eldest son George Master (c.1566-1604). George Master was elected to parliament for the borough of Cirencester in 1586 and 1589, beginning a long line of Masters who served as MPs. Like his father he was a wealthy man and bequeathed his wife an annuity of £200 and his four younger children £1000 each.⁷⁴³

George's eldest son William Master (1600-1662) was elected to Parliament in 1624 but supported the king in the Civil War, who visited his house in 1643 and 1644. He was a justice of the peace for Gloucestershire for much of his life.⁷⁴⁴ The family line continued with Thomas Master (1624-1680), who became an MP, JP for Gloucestershire and commissioner for assessment upon the Restoration in 1660. He created a family vault at Cirencester.⁷⁴⁵ Thomas Master II (1663-1710) held all of the same offices and welcomed Queen Anne to his house in 1702.⁷⁴⁶ Thomas Master III (1690-1770) was a long-serving MP for the area, with a High Tory leaning. He held a place on the Gloucestershire magisterial bench.⁷⁴⁷ His first son, Thomas Master IV (1744- 1823) was sheriff of Gloucestershire from 1771 to 1772 and an MP for Gloucestershire for 12 years from 1784.⁷⁴⁸ His brother Richard Master (1746-1800) reached the rank of major before retiring from the Army in 1787 and was MP for Cirencester from 1785 to 1792, when he was unseated by petition. Richard was made consul at Algiers in 1797 and governor of Tobago in 1799.⁷⁴⁹

Coxwell

John Coxwell was born in 1516 and lived to be 101. A successful clothier, he bought and rented several properties in Cirencester, some of which had been part of the abbey estate before the dissolution, such as the Ramme Inn and the tithes and farm of Chesterton. He also acquired Ablington manor in nearby Bibury. He was one of a generation of merchants who helped to revive Cirencester in the late 16th and early 17th century. He lived for a time in a house in Abbot Street, which was later renamed Coxwell Street in his honour.⁷⁵⁰ Coxwell was one of the two treasurers for the parish with Robert George in 1613 and continued in the position until his death in 1617.⁷⁵¹ His third son Samuel Coxwell married Mary Strange, sister of the aforementioned Robert Strange, in

⁷⁴¹ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, George, John (1594-1678), of the Middle Temple and Cirencester, Glos.; Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 235.

⁷⁴² *ODNB*, Master, Richard (d. 1587/8)

⁷⁴³ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Master, George (c.1556-1604), of Cirencester Abbey, Glos.

⁷⁴⁴ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Master, Sir William (1600-1662), of Cirencester Abbey, Glos.

⁷⁴⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.74.

⁷⁴⁶ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Master, Thomas I (1624-80), of Cirencester Abbey, Glos.; Master, Thomas II (1663-1710), of Cirencester Abbey, Glos.

⁷⁴⁷ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Master, Thomas (1690-1770), of Cirencester Abbey, Glos.'

⁷⁴⁸ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Master, Thomas (1744-1823), of The Abbey, Cirencester, Glos.

⁷⁴⁹ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Master, Richard (1746-1800)

⁷⁵⁰ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 201–4.

⁷⁵¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.44; Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 205–6.

1615 and the couple inherited many of John Coxwell's lands around Cirencester and Gloucester. Samuel Coxwell died in 1625 when his son John was six years old and so much of his fortune passed temporarily to the Crown.⁷⁵²

Bathurst

Since Sir Benjamin Bathurst (1635–1704) purchased Oakley Park in 1695, the Bathursts have remained a very influential family in Cirencester. As lords of the manor, they were dominant in local affairs with responsibility for the courts leet and halimote, as well as appointing key local positions such as the bailiff.⁷⁵³ Six of the family sat as MPs before 1825 and the family had the strongest electoral influence over Cirencester borough, with men such as James Whitshed sitting on the family interest.⁷⁵⁴ Several of the Bathursts were notable political figures on the national stage, tending to be strongly Tory. Allen Bathurst, first Earl Bathurst (1684–1775) was an MP for Cirencester and opposed the Court and Walpole's administration, particularly on issues such as the South Sea scheme and the convention with Spain. He was made a peer in 1711 as Lord Bathurst, Baron Bathurst of Battlesden in Bedfordshire, and made an Earl in 1772.⁷⁵⁵ He was cofferer to Queen Anne and was made a privy councillor after Walpole's fall from office.⁷⁵⁶ He was friends with Alexander Pope, who helped him to design Cirencester Park and referred to him in verse, as well as with other literary figures such as Addison and Swift.⁷⁵⁷ Of the next generation, Henry Bathurst, second Earl Bathurst (1714–1794) rose through the legal profession despite his limited oratorical talents to become Lord Chancellor in 1771. He was also made Speaker of the House of Lords. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Apsley and was visited at Cirencester Park by King George III and Queen Charlotte in 1788.⁷⁵⁸

Henry Bathurst II, third Earl Bathurst (1762–1834) was MP for Cirencester from 1783 and succeeded to the peerage in 1794. In the 18th century he received several political appointments, including lord of the Admiralty and Treasury, and a commissioner of the Board of Control. However, his political career really flourished from the beginning of the 19th century. A close personal friend of Lord Grenville but political supporter of Pitt, he remained an unofficial adviser to the former and occasionally acted as an intermediary between the two.⁷⁵⁹ On a visit to Pitt's house in London in 1786, he was robbed by a highwayman near Lewisham.⁷⁶⁰ He became master of the Royal Mint in 1804 and entered cabinet as president of the Board of Trade in 1807.⁷⁶¹ He was highly influential in foreign affairs as secretary of state for war and the colonies, and ended his career as lord president of the council from 1828.⁷⁶² He twice acted as Foreign Secretary, awaiting Lord Wellesley's return in 1809 and during Castlereagh's absence in 1814, and occasionally

⁷⁵² *Abstracts of Gloucestershire inquisitiones post mortem: returned into the Court of Chancery in the reign of King Charles the First*, part 2 (1895), 56-9.

⁷⁵³ See Local Government, Borough Administration.

⁷⁵⁴ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Cirencester 1754–1790.

⁷⁵⁵ *London Packet*, 20 Sept. 1775.

⁷⁵⁶ *ODNB*, Bathurst, Allen, first Earl Bathurst (1684–1775)'

⁷⁵⁷ G. Sherburn (ed.), *The correspondence of Alexander Pope*, vols.1–3 (1956); *London Packet*, 15–18 Sept. 1775.

⁷⁵⁸ *ODNB*, N. G. Jones, 'Bathurst, Henry, second Earl Bathurst (1714–1794)'.
⁷⁵⁹ HMC, *Bathurst*, 54–6, 43–4.

⁷⁶⁰ *London Chronicle*, 8–10 Aug. 1786.

⁷⁶¹ HMC, *Bathurst*, xi, 41–2, 57.

⁷⁶² *ODNB*, N. Thompson, 'Bathurst, Henry, third Earl Bathurst (1762–1834)'.
⁷⁶³ *London Chronicle*, 10 Aug. 1786.

entertained foreign dignitaries or colleagues such as the Duke of Wellington at Cirencester.⁷⁶³

Religious History

Francis Boorman

Patronage and Incumbents

A canon of the abbey, William Phelippes or Phelpes, was made rector of St. John the Baptist after the dissolution.⁷⁶⁴ John Hooper, the evangelical Bishop of Gloucester, recorded in his 1551 visitation that Phelpes' minister William Badcoke knew where to find the Commandants but could not repeat them, could repeat the articles of faith but could not prove them in scripture and could recite the Lord's Prayer. Phelpes was conversant with all three.⁷⁶⁵ Hooper later had Phelpes sign a denial of all doctrines of transubstantiation, but after Hooper was deposed in 1555, Phelpes reverted to professing his earlier beliefs.⁷⁶⁶ The rectory and advowson (although not the great tithes of the rectory) were granted to Sir Thomas and George Tresham in 1551.⁷⁶⁷ It appears that Tresham never exercised his right of appointing the minister.⁷⁶⁸ The rectory soon passed to the heirs of Anthony Burchier and during his son Thomas' minority, custody of the rectory was granted to William Thomas in 1553.⁷⁶⁹ Phelpes died in 1558/9.⁷⁷⁰ After Phelpes, Cirencester experienced a period of instability as 11 ministers served the parish before the turn of the century.⁷⁷¹

Thomas Marshall became curate in 1558.⁷⁷² A return made by the Bishop of Gloucester then showed the rectory impropriated to Sir Thomazin Thomas and Sir Thomas Perpointe.⁷⁷³ John Perpoynt was curate in 1564.⁷⁷⁴ John Adams was rector in 1566.⁷⁷⁵ The next curate William Aldsworth was complained about by parishioners for his excessive doctrinal radicalism and refusal to administer communion according to the Book of Common Prayer.⁷⁷⁶ Aldsworth was dead by January 1575, when his inventory was valued at £83 11d.⁷⁷⁷ He was succeeded by Thomas

⁷⁶³ HMC, *Bathurst*, 136, 267, 473–7.

⁷⁶⁴ Hockaday Abs. CLV, 12 Feb. 1540; GA, D2525/R5.

⁷⁶⁵ J. Gairdner (ed.), *Bishop Hooper's Visitation of Gloucester* (London, 1904), 111.

⁷⁶⁶ J. Strype, *Memorial of the Most Reverend Father in God Thomas Cranmer, Sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, vol. II (1812), 902–4; GA, D10820/B7-1-j; F.D. Price, 'Gloucester Diocese under Bishop Hooper, 1551-3', *Trans. BGAS* 60 (1938), 125.

⁷⁶⁷ Cal. Pat. 1550-53, 202; Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 228n; Rudder, *Cirencester*, 245.

⁷⁶⁸ GA, P86/1/IN/3/6.

⁷⁶⁹ Cal. Pat. 1553, 4.

⁷⁷⁰ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 13 Feb. 1559.

⁷⁷¹ D. Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth: the People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge, 2011), 113.

⁷⁷² TNA, E179/28/2.

⁷⁷³ Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 296–7.

⁷⁷⁴ TNA, E179/28/3.

⁷⁷⁵ GA, GDR 22.

⁷⁷⁶ F.D. Price (ed.), *The Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes Within the Dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester, 1574* (1972), 37, 65; Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 111.

⁷⁷⁷ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 23 January 1575.

Woodlande, who was called before the consistory court in 1575 for his refusal to wear a surplice, although his case was deferred, and he was still curate in 1576.⁷⁷⁸ Upon the death of Thomas Bouchier in 1579, no specific provision was made in his will for the rectory and advowson of Cirencester and it passed to the Crown.⁷⁷⁹

John Mortimer appeared as curate at a visitation in 1580.⁷⁸⁰ John Stone was later said to be curate in 1581, but certainly was in 1584, when the Gloucester Consistory Court would not grant him a marriage licence until Ann Bearde of 'Bodbourne' was called to prosecute him in a matrimonial cause.⁷⁸¹ Nicholas Kecke was recorded as curate in a subsidy list of 1585.⁷⁸² During the late 1580s the fiery preacher Philip Jones was probably curate in Cirencester (preacher and minister were used interchangeably, although he was possibly unlicensed), delivering sermons which celebrated poor men and excoriated the rich for their ungodliness.⁷⁸³ Jones was brought before the Gloucester Consistory Court several times in 1586-7 for offences including preaching without a licence. He was excommunicated and then reinstated early in 1587.⁷⁸⁴ He was then accused of not following the Book of Common Prayer and refusing to baptise two children. By the end of the year he had left Cirencester.⁷⁸⁵ Henry Bishop was named in a subsidy list as curate in 1588 and was also vicar of Down Ampney from 1590 to 1603.⁷⁸⁶ Henry Butler appears in the burial register as minister, having died in 1592.⁷⁸⁷ Heymo Leigh was curate in 1594, followed by Richard Dyer in 1599.⁷⁸⁸ John Burgoyne was appointed curate in 1612, with the unlicensed John Smith as his assistant.⁷⁸⁹

Cirencester was recorded as a rectory impropriate in 1603. It was farmed by Mr Butcher (presumably Bouchier) of Barnsley and the curate lived on 'the courtesy of the inhabitants' as there was no stipend.⁷⁹⁰ In 1626 some part of the rectory at Cirencester, including several tithes, was bought for £350 by a group of London Puritans dedicated to promoting Calvinistic doctrine known as the lay feoffees, who made it one of their earliest purchases.⁷⁹¹ Their purpose was to establish lectures in market towns like Cirencester where they would have the greatest reach.⁷⁹² However, the feoffees had difficulty in removing John Burgoyne from his post, as they needed the consent of the bishop of Gloucester, who had the right of presentation to the living. They consequently tried to make him quit by 'wearying' through lack of funds, or by harassment, and

⁷⁷⁸ GA, GDR 37, 25; GDR 39.

⁷⁷⁹ GA, D2525/R6.

⁷⁸⁰ Baddeley, *Cirencester*, 297.

⁷⁸¹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, f.36; Hockaday Abs CLVI, 13 June 1584.

⁷⁸² TNA, E179/28/28

⁷⁸³ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.43; P. Jones, *Certaine sermons preached of late at Ciceter ... By Philip Iones, preacher of the word of God in the same towne.* (1588).

⁷⁸⁴ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 4 Oct. 1586, 11 Jan.1587.

⁷⁸⁵ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 28 June 1587, 11 Nov. 1587.

⁷⁸⁶ TNA, E179/28/31; GA, GDR 27a.

⁷⁸⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.43.

⁷⁸⁸ TNA, E179/29/43; GA, GDR 73.

⁷⁸⁹ GA, GDR 115.

⁷⁹⁰ *Eccl. Misc.*, 93.

⁷⁹¹ I.M. Calder (ed.), *Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England 1625-33* (1957), xv, 9, 37, 126, 147; E.W. Kirby, 'The lay feoffees: a study in militant Puritanism', *Journal of Modern History*, 14:1 (1942), 11.

⁷⁹² Calder (ed.), *Activities of the Puritan Faction*, 53; Kirby, 'The lay feoffees', 12.

eventually offered him £30, the cure until Michaelmas 1627 and the Easter book to leave.⁷⁹³ They later argued that Burgoyne was a legitimate target for removal as he had made ‘a factious Sermon against the then Acts of State’, as well as being more generally unfit for office.⁷⁹⁴

Alexander Gregory was installed in his place and received all of the profits of the office, as well as £60 in extra payments. However, the revenue of the church was small, he was not provided with a house and he had to find a curate to serve under him at a chapel belonging to his cure.⁷⁹⁵ It is likely that the Cirencester lecture was instrumental in bringing down the lay feoffees. After a court case precipitated by opposition from Church and king, and concern about the political implications of Puritan lectures having influence in parliamentary boroughs, several impropriations including Cirencester were turned over to Thomas Turner and John Juxon, who administered them for the King.⁷⁹⁶ Gregory was in any case appointed rector in 1640, when the taxable value of the church was set at £5 per year.⁷⁹⁷ Gregory was kidnapped by the Royalists in the civil war and taken with a large contingent of prisoners to Oxford in 1643.⁷⁹⁸ He resurfaced later in the year when he was made vicar of Camberwell (Surrey), where he was visited by three Cirencester parishioners at least twice in 1647 or 1648.⁷⁹⁹ He was also made minister of Lambeth in 1646.⁸⁰⁰ A rate was made in 1647 by the Cirencester vestry for Gregory’s maintenance and one of the churchwardens was paid to collect his tithes.⁸⁰¹ By 1650 Gregory was back in Cirencester where he received the annual profits of £20, later augmented by £30 taken from the rents and profits of the rectory of Berkeley and another £12 from the rectories of Kempsford and Welford.⁸⁰² John Stone (presumably the man who became MP for the town in 1654) received £10 for the use of the minister of Cirencester from the sale of dean and chapter lands and £75 from the sale of bishops’ land for the same, but named as Alexander Gregory.⁸⁰³ A report on augmentations of 1655 lists £30 going to the minister of Cirencester.⁸⁰⁴

Gregory died in 1666, but had been succeeded in 1663 by Thomas Carles, who remained in his previous post as rector of Barnsley.⁸⁰⁵ A terrier of tithes from 1666 noted that all the Baunton tithes in the parish of Cirencester were allowed to the rector of Baunton.⁸⁰⁶ The vestry granted Carles £4 per year towards the rent of his house in 1665, but urgently wished to provide him with a house in 1673.⁸⁰⁷ William Jackson was assistant curate to Carles from 1674 and after Carles’ death

⁷⁹³ Calder (ed.), *Activities of the Puritan Faction*, xix, 55, 56, 80-1; Kirby, ‘The lay feoffees’, 15.

⁷⁹⁴ Calder (ed.), *Activities of the Puritan Faction*, 89.

⁷⁹⁵ Calder, *Activities of the Puritan Faction*, 13, 40.

⁷⁹⁶ Kirby, ‘The lay feoffees’, 22.

⁷⁹⁷ *CSP Dom.* Apr – Aug 1640, 80.

⁷⁹⁸ *A particular relation of the action before Cyrencester (or Cycester) in Glocestershire, taken in on Candlemas day, 1642, by part of His Majesties army under the conduct of His Highnesse, Prince Rupert ... written by an eye-witnesse (1643)*, 13.

⁷⁹⁹ *CJ*, III, 31 Aug. 1643, 222–224; GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.64.

⁸⁰⁰ *LJ*, VIII, 5 June 1646, 358–360.

⁸⁰¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.63.

⁸⁰² Hockaday Abs. 66; Lambeth Palace Library, MS 972, f.513 & MS 995, f.610.

⁸⁰³ W.A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth II* (1900), 531, 565.

⁸⁰⁴ Shaw, *History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth II*, 502.

⁸⁰⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/1/2, f.253; GDR 208, 72; *VCH Glos.* VII, 13–21.

⁸⁰⁶ GA, P86/1/IN/3/9.

⁸⁰⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.75 and 81.

in 1675 was paid £5 for acting as curate and the parish covered the rent of Carles' widow.⁸⁰⁸

Jeremiah Gregory, born in Cirencester in 1650, was the son of the minister Alexander Gregory.⁸⁰⁹ Jeremiah was appointed curate by the bishop of Gloucester in place of Carles and also given £4 towards his rent by the vestry, as well as a further £4 for reading morning prayer.⁸¹⁰ By 1681 the various donations made for the minister to give annual sermons amounted to £13.⁸¹¹ In 1690 the vestry paid £20 towards defending a suit against Gregory brought by Charles Badham.⁸¹² Nevertheless, that year Gregory left Cirencester in ill health for the vicarage of Berkeley at the behest of his friend the earl of Berkeley and died in 1691.⁸¹³

Joseph Harrison was educated at Oxford and was assistant to his relation and predecessor Jeremiah Gregory before becoming minister in 1690.⁸¹⁴ Another candidate was suggested by the nonjuring Bishop Frampton of Gloucester, but the dependence of the curate on the vestry led John Hough, the bishop of Oxford who was administering the diocese, to appoint their preferred candidate.⁸¹⁵ The vestry continued to pay Harrison, as they had Gregory, £4 for reading morning prayer and £4 towards his rent, with an extra 40s.⁸¹⁶ Donations for sermons continued to augment the minister's earning further, particularly the £100 donated by John Master in 1695 for saying morning prayer.⁸¹⁷

There was still no house belonging to the minister, so in 1695 the churchwardens purchased and repaired a house previously belonging to John Webb for just over £204 which the minister rented for £1 6s. 8d. Harrison was asked to forego the £6 per year previously given to the minister for rent.⁸¹⁸ In 1698 Mrs Winifred Master gave £50 towards augmenting the living of the minister.⁸¹⁹ Sir Robert Atkyns gave another £30 a year arising from rent of Oakley wood in 1699 for the same, on which the minister did not have to pay the poor rate.⁸²⁰

A terrier of tithes from 1704 set out the income of the curate, stating that there were no glebe lands and the abbey lands remained tithe free, which Atkyns estimated to be worth £300 in 1712.⁸²¹ From 1710, the money laid out on the minister's house was recorded in the churchwardens' accounts.⁸²² In 1712 the curacy, with augmentations and perquisites, was worth £150 a year. An impropriation within the tithing of Chesterton worth £60 a year belonged to Mr Coxwell and an impropriation within the tithing of Wiggold worth £20 a year belonged to Mr Georges, but the tithe of hay and tithes arising arising out of both tithings belonged to the curate.

⁸⁰⁸ GA, GDR 208; P86/1/IN/6/3, f.44; P86/1/VE/2/1, f. 82–83.

⁸⁰⁹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.44.

⁸¹⁰ GA, GDR 208; P86/1/VE/2/1 f.82.

⁸¹¹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.5.

⁸¹² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.99.

⁸¹³ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.44 and 108.

⁸¹⁴ GA, GDR 226a; P86/1/IN/6/1, f.5.

⁸¹⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/4/1.

⁸¹⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.100.

⁸¹⁷ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.7.

⁸¹⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.102.

⁸¹⁹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.18.

⁸²⁰ GA, P86/1/IN/3/1; P86/1/VE/2/1, f.104.

⁸²¹ GA, P86/1/IN/3/5; Atkyns, *Glos.*, 342.

⁸²² GA, P86a/CW/2/1.

The tithes and legal dues owed to Cirencester were worth £30 a year. Gift-sermons had a yearly value of £12 13s. 4d. and John Master gave £5 for reading morning prayers. A further £15 a year was available from a fund set up by Dr Clarke, late Dean of Winchester, for improving the ecclesiastical benefices in market towns, provided matching local contributions were raised. A £30 annuity was thus purchased by a group led by the Masters and charged on the tithing of Oakley.⁸²³ Dean Clarke's trust continued to pay an annuity to the minister of Cirencester until at least 1893.⁸²⁴ The curate had to pay a fee farm rent of 5s. 4d. to the Crown.⁸²⁵

Harrison spent the rest of his life in Cirencester but accumulated several more positions; he was made rector of Daglingworth in 1729, chaplain to Lord Bathurst in 1732 and rural dean of Cirencester in 1739. He died in 1753, having served as curate for 63 years. He published several works including an address to the dissenters of Cirencester upon the death of their minister in 1697 and an exposition of the catechism for the use of his parishioners that ran to at least four editions. He was buried with his wife Catharine in the chancel of the parish church.⁸²⁶

Samuel Johnson was appointed in 1753.⁸²⁷ He was soon plunged into a series of disputes, firstly with a parishioner about the burial of his child in the graveyard, and then concerning the election or appointment of various officers including the gravedigger, churchwardens and combined offices of vestry clerk and sexton.⁸²⁸ These disputes were part of a wider struggle between Lord Bathurst and a group coalesced around the church that extended into local and national politics. Johnson's association with Bathurst and the bishop of Gloucester, both courtiers who secured him his appointment, set him at odds with the anti-court townspeople.⁸²⁹ He was adjudged by a contemporary curate Joseph Kilner to have been prone to 'a hurry and confusion of spirits' which made him unfit to deal with the contentions he became embroiled in, although his 'worst defect . . . was his reading and preaching'.⁸³⁰

The ongoing disagreements eventually led to the removal of the minister. Martin Stafford Smith was inducted into the vicarage of Cirencester in June 1778, made void by lapse.⁸³¹ He was joined by an assistant curate, John Collinson, in 1781.⁸³² Stafford Smith had been perpetual curate of Maisemore since 1776 and resigned the curacy of Cirencester in 1789, when he was made rector of Uphill and Breane.⁸³³ William Shippen Willes was made perpetual curate in 1789.⁸³⁴ Another assistant, James Buckoll, was appointed in 1797.⁸³⁵ By 1800 the curacy was worth around £200 a

⁸²³ Atkyns, *Glos.*, 344.

⁸²⁴ GA, P86/1/IN/3/7.

⁸²⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.2.

⁸²⁶ GA, D10820/B7-1-h, W.J. Cripps, *Pedigree of the Family of Harrison* (1881), 12; P86/1/IN/6/3, f.109.

⁸²⁷ GA, GDR 282a.

⁸²⁸ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, ff.3–7.

⁸²⁹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, f.39.

⁸³⁰ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, II, f.40.

⁸³¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.178; GDR 292a.

⁸³² GA, GDR 307.

⁸³³ CCEd 40605.

⁸³⁴ TNA, E 331/GLOUC/40.

⁸³⁵ GA, GDR 333.

year.⁸³⁶ Willes was given a piece of plate by the vestry to mark his retirement in 1806.⁸³⁷ Willes donated a velvet cloth for the communion table and two prayer books, prompting the vestry to acknowledge, not for the first time, his 'exemplary' service.⁸³⁸

Henry Anthony Pye leased a messuage adjoining the parsonage for £75 a year from Thomas Master in 1806 and just over two weeks later was made perpetual curate of Cirencester by patronage of the bishop of Gloucester.⁸³⁹ James Grooby was master of the grammar school and an assistant curate from 1810.⁸⁴⁰ Pye, who was made a prebendary of Worcester cathedral in 1818,⁸⁴¹ employed two curates from the 1820s and considered himself as non-resident.⁸⁴² The curates were Thomas Keble, appointed in 1823 and enjoined to reside in Cirencester, and Lawrence Latham, appointed in 1824, when he was also made curate of Baunton. Both men were paid a salary of £105 a year.⁸⁴³ The churchwardens agreed to exchange the house occupied by the vicar for lands owned by Jane Master in the parish of Stratton in 1824.⁸⁴⁴

Religious Life

Following the dissolution of the abbey, Cirencester's religious life continued to be catholic in its practices and the local oligarchy has been described as 'survivalist' in their outlook.⁸⁴⁵ The evangelical bishop of Gloucester, John Hooper, visited Cirencester in 1551. He aggressively pursued the transgressions of all classes of people in the consistory court and had the vicar, William Phelpes, sign a denial of all doctrines of transubstantiation.⁸⁴⁶ Penances were usually performed in two places, one secular (including Cirencester market), the other ecclesiastical.⁸⁴⁷

Following the dismissal of Hooper by Mary I, indifferent administration was an ongoing problem both locally and throughout the diocese, particularly under 'the pathetically weak, irresolute and impoverished Bishop Richard Cheyney (1562-79)'.⁸⁴⁸ Spiritual decline was reflected in the physical decay of the church, the quire being in a poor state in 1563.⁸⁴⁹ In 1567 parishioners complained that they only had one priest serving them, where there used to be two priests and a deacon for the rectory alone.⁸⁵⁰ By 1570 the roof and glass windows in the choir of the chancel were so 'ruinous' that no one could sit there if it was raining. Giles Selwyn had purchased the tithes of the

⁸³⁶ Rudder, *Cirencester*, 254.

⁸³⁷ TNA, E 331/GLOUC/44; GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.207.

⁸³⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.208.

⁸³⁹ GA, P86/1/IN/3/2; TNA, E 331/GLOUC/44; GDR 334b.

⁸⁴⁰ GA, GDR 333.

⁸⁴¹ T.D. Hardy and J. Le Neve (eds.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* III (Oxford, 1854), 83.

⁸⁴² GA, P86/1/IN/8/3.

⁸⁴³ GA, GDR 341 and 342.

⁸⁴⁴ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.234.

⁸⁴⁵ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 98-101.

⁸⁴⁶ F.D. Price, 'Gloucester Diocese under Bishop Hooper, 1551-3', *Trans. BGAS* 60 (1938), 93-4, 125; John Strype, *Memorial of the Most Reverend Father in God Thomas Cranmer, Sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury II* (1812), 902-4; GA, D10820/B7-1-j.

⁸⁴⁷ Price, 'Gloucester Diocese under Bishop Hooper, 1551-3', 90.

⁸⁴⁸ F.D. Price, 'Bishop Bullingham and Chancellor Blackleech: a diocese divided', *Trans. BGAS* 91 (1972), 175.

⁸⁴⁹ Hockaday Abs CLVI.

⁸⁵⁰ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 108.

rectory making him responsible for the repair, which the consistory court commanded he carry out by the feast of St Michael.⁸⁵¹ Soon afterwards Selwyn was excommunicated after showing contempt for the judge and court, and for contumacy.⁸⁵² A choir window was still or newly broken in 1572.⁸⁵³

The late 1580s saw a revival in the parish of Cirencester, not least because of the death of the long-serving bailiff Robert Strange, who had avoided conflict by not enforcing Sunday observance.⁸⁵⁴ After the church was again described as in a poor state of repair in 1585, some repairs were carried out.⁸⁵⁵ There was also a financial resurgence, beginning with Philip Marner's bequest in 1587 of a tenement with two gardens in Abbot Street, worth an annual rent of £3 13s. 4d. Money was to be distributed to the poor on the first Friday of Lent, with 6s. 8d. reserved for a sermon on the same day.⁸⁵⁶ Prior to 1587, the parish was left with only the bequests of Alice Avening and John Weobly worth £3 6s. 8d. and donated in 1498.⁸⁵⁷ In 1599 Margaret Roades of Cirencester was found guilty of witchcraft and was excommunicated.⁸⁵⁸

From the first records of the Cirencester vestry book around 1614 there were indications that the vestry was determined to keep the church in a better state of repair, with regular inspections of the fabric stipulated and a plumber engaged to renew the lead on the roof.⁸⁵⁹ During the early 17th century, greater social segregation, discipline and religiosity were a concern for the congregation. According to the churchwardens' orders of 1615, no seat in the church was to be given to a new occupant until the minister and six of the better sort of the parish had decided that they were of equal status to the previous occupant.⁸⁶⁰ In 1618 the instructions for the beadle stipulated that he should warn parents not to bring noisy children to church and offer correction if they did.⁸⁶¹ Three gates were installed around the seats in the aisles in the body of the church, presumably to separate off parishioners of higher social standing.⁸⁶² The vestry ordered that unruly boys should be prevented from disturbing the sermon by locking them in the vestry or belfry in 1641 and decided that the church account could no longer be published on a Sunday in 1642.⁸⁶³

Vestry holdings continued to grow, to 13 houses and allocations of £420 a year by 1630 and £661 by 1645.⁸⁶⁴ Three church inventories of 1614, 1633 and 1673 show that the amount of church plate remained the same throughout the century, consisting of two silver flagons, two silver cups used for communion, and a further lesser silver cup. Additions included Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and a

⁸⁵¹ GA, GDR 26, 135.

⁸⁵² GA, GDR 26, 139.

⁸⁵³ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 22 October 1572.

⁸⁵⁴ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 190.

⁸⁵⁵ E.A. Fuller, *The Parish Church of St. John Baptist, Cirencester* (rev. edn., Cirencester, 1932?), 17.

⁸⁵⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.2; Hockaday Abs CLVI, 1587.

⁸⁵⁷ Hockaday Abs CLVI, 1598.

⁸⁵⁸ GDR 87, 13 February 1599/1600.

⁸⁵⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.42.

⁸⁶⁰ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.43.

⁸⁶¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.40 and 44.

⁸⁶² GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.46.

⁸⁶³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.60 and 61.

⁸⁶⁴ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 192.

velvet pulpit cloth.⁸⁶⁵ Disruption to the religious life in Cirencester was evident during the civil war, when the church was used to house Parliamentary prisoners before the Royalists took them to Oxford.⁸⁶⁶ The standing in the south porch was leased early in the 17th century and then in 1678 to Edward and William Evans for 20s. a year, with a fine of two leather buckets.⁸⁶⁷ The 'Vice' (probably the parvise although the word's derivation may relate to a newel staircase) was assigned for use by the vestry clerk in the 17th century and the upper floor for use as a town hall in 1672.⁸⁶⁸

The organ was erected in 1683, funded by contributions from the inhabitants, and was extensively repaired and improved in 1717.⁸⁶⁹ The first seat book for Cirencester church began in 1685, by which time there had probably been few changes in seating since the Reformation.⁸⁷⁰ In 1704, the vestry described the church as 'out of repair' and introduced a new rate to fix it.⁸⁷¹ In 1706 a gallery was erected on the north side of the chancel by Allen Bathurst to replace a 'lesser' one. An earlier gallery stood to its east which was erected by Sir Anthony Hungerford. The font was erected thanks to contributions from the women of the town.⁸⁷² The seats were numbered in 1718 with the erection of a gallery and wainscoting, and no longer claimed by customary right to avoid future controversies.⁸⁷³ Mrs Powell left the grant of the churchyard and adjoining gardens to her husband's nephew Robert George in her will of 1722, reserving the right of burial to Cirencester residents.⁸⁷⁴

In September 1734 the vestry agreed to raise a rate equal to the poor rate for 25 weeks to pay for the casting of an eleventh bell for the church.⁸⁷⁵ In January 1738 the vestry met to consider a proposal to add bell towers to the parish church. After taking a month to consult with the parish the vestry decided that, as the church was in good repair and that no bell towers had been in place in living memory other than one which was blown off by the wind, none need be added.⁸⁷⁶ In November 1747 a rate of 6d. in the pound was set for repairing the church and organ.⁸⁷⁷ In March 1752 £7 10s. was set aside for repairing the organ.⁸⁷⁸ In 1765 a poor rate for repairing the decaying church was set at 5d. in the pound.⁸⁷⁹ Changes were made to the seating plan and approved by bishop's faculty in 1780.⁸⁸⁰ A new organ was installed in the church in 1790, paid for by the

⁸⁶⁵ GA, D10820/L3-1-b, S.E. Harrison, *The Cirencester Vestry Book During the 17th Century* (1914), 19–23; W.J. Cripps, 'On the ancient church plate at Cirencester', *Trans. BGAS* 2 (1877–8), 92–103.

⁸⁶⁶ Rollison, *Commune, Country and Commonwealth*, 236.

⁸⁶⁷ Fuller, *The Parish Church of St. John Baptist, Cirencester*, 19; GA, P86a/CW/2/1, f.8.

⁸⁶⁸ Fuller, *The Parish Church of St. John Baptist, Cirencester*, 20.

⁸⁶⁹ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.5.

⁸⁷⁰ GA, P86/1/IN/6/4, ff.1–6.

⁸⁷¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1 f.106.

⁸⁷² GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.5.

⁸⁷³ GA, P86/1/IN/6/4, ff.1–6; P86/1/IN/4/2.

⁸⁷⁴ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.16.

⁸⁷⁵ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.118.

⁸⁷⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.121.

⁸⁷⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.139.

⁸⁷⁸ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.146.

⁸⁷⁹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.161.

⁸⁸⁰ GA, P86/1/IN/6/4, ff.1–6.

subscription of several inhabitants.⁸⁸¹

New regulations were occasionally introduced to manage the graveyard. In 1791 the minister and churchwardens set a new fee of £5 5s. for obtaining a grave for anyone who did not purchase a plot when they were living.⁸⁸² The churchyard was extended 45 ft. into the surrounding gardens in 1792, to remedy the long-standing complaint that there was not enough room for burials.⁸⁸³ The new piece of ground was consecrated in 1793.⁸⁸⁴ The church had a revenue of around £67 in the late 18th century, largely from the rent of houses in the town, and for the most part spent on church repairs.⁸⁸⁵

In 1803 the vestry petitioned for a bishop's faculty, giving permission to build the gallery on the south side of the church. There were to be no family seats in the gallery, unless the minister wished to exchange his present seat for one there. The new gallery was to be modelled on the existing one at the north side of the church and would cost £230.⁸⁸⁶ To increase the number of free sittings in the church, a new gallery on the south side of the church was planned in 1822 with room for 130 people. The west gallery was also to be extended over the belfry, with £150 supplied by subscription and the rest by the Society for Promoting the Enlargement and Building of Churches and Chapels, with any shortfall being made up by the parish.⁸⁸⁷ A Bible Association began in 1813 and continued to meet, with its thirty-first anniversary held in 1844.⁸⁸⁸

Dissent and Recusancy

Protestant Non-conformity

This section is not yet available for comment.

Catholics [by Jan Broadway]

In 1676 no papists were returned for Cirencester in the Compton census⁸⁸⁹, although Bishop Benson recorded there being 5 Catholics in the town in the second quarter of the 18th century⁸⁹⁰ In 1715 Giles Harding, a tailor who held a fourth share in the Swan Inn for life, was listed as a non-juror.⁸⁹¹ A moiety of the manor of Wiggold was held by the catholic Talbot family, but the property was leased.⁸⁹²

⁸⁸¹ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.191.

⁸⁸² GA, P86a/VE/4/2.

⁸⁸³ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.192.

⁸⁸⁴ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.16.

⁸⁸⁵ GA, P86/1/IN/6/3, f.3 and 8.

⁸⁸⁶ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.204.

⁸⁸⁷ GA, P86/1/VE/2/1, f.232.

⁸⁸⁸ GA, P86/1/IN/8/4.

⁸⁸⁹ *Compton Census*, 541.

⁸⁹⁰ *Bishop Benson's Survey of the Diocese of Gloucester 1735-1750*, ed. J. Fendley, (Gloucestershire Record Series 13, BGAS 2000), 149.

⁸⁹¹ E.E.Estcourt & J.O. Payne eds., *The English Catholic Nonjurors of 1715* (1885), 69.

⁸⁹² See manors and estates.