

# CHARLTON KINGS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

RESEARCH BULLETIN 55  
2009



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**Membership of the Society**

Membership forms are available from the Hon Secretary. Annual subscription £9.50 or £13.50 for a couple, which includes the cost of the annual research bulletin. Meetings are held monthly from September to May at 7.30pm in the Baptist Church in Church Street. Visitors are always welcome at a charge of £2.

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**Publications:** Copies of the following publications can be obtained from the Editor. Prices apply to Society members. Postage and packing is extra. .

Charlton Kings Probate Records – 1600-1800 (2003) - £12.00

Charlton Kings Tudor Wills – Supp to Probate Records (2004) - £2.50

Charlton Kings Parish Rate Books for 1858 (2003) and 1882 (2004) - £4.00 each

Charlton Kings Registers of Electors for 1832/3, 1842/3 and 1862 (2004) - £1.00

The Hole in the Ground – Battledown Brickworks (2002) - £6.00

Lives Revisited (2005) - £6.00

John Burgh Rochfort Preacher Extraordinary - £2

Indexes to Parish Register Transcription for the following years:

1538-1634 - £2, 1634-1700 - £3, 1813-1834 - £5 each

Index to Bulletins 48-52 - £5

Troubled Waters – The Great Cheltenham Water Controversy (2008) - £9.00

**BULLETIN 55****SPRING 2009****Cover** – Photograph of Battledown Manor

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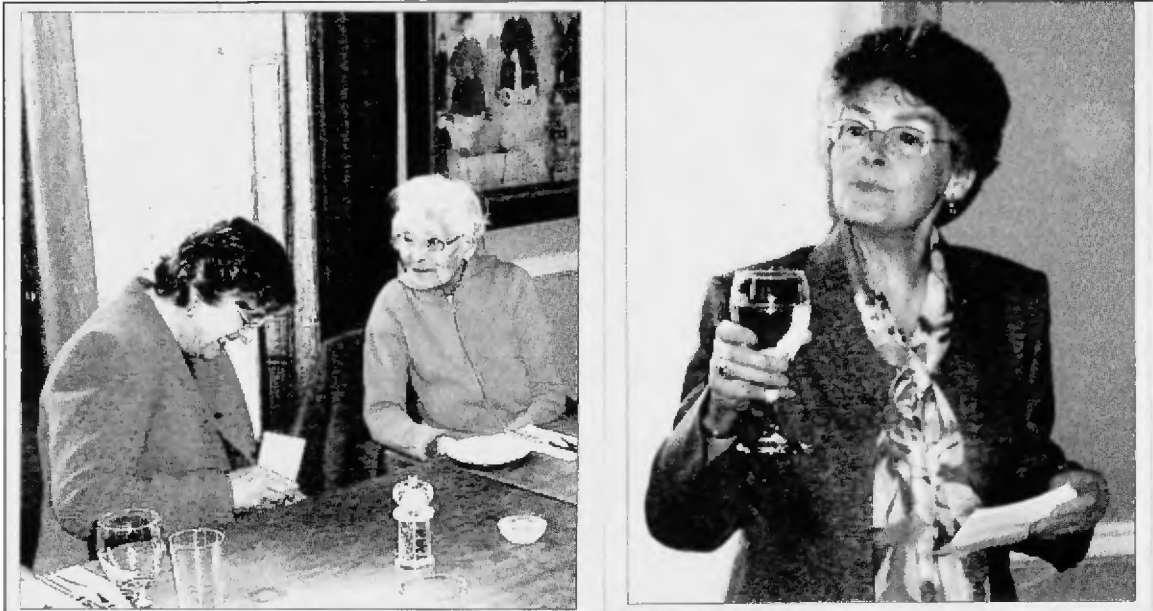
**EDITORIAL**

My grateful thanks go to all those who have sent contributions for this issue or who have helped in other ways by taking photographs and rescuing me when suffering computer problems. Each year I worry that there will be nothing to put into yet another Bulletin, but thankfully you rally round and between us we have managed to fill No 55. I was particularly pleased to receive an article from a new member, Margaret Hulbert neé Protherough, and do urge other new as well as regular contributors to send in articles for future bulletins.

The cover of this issue is a view of Battledown Manor, by kind permission of its current owners, Mr and Mrs Beeston. This house is central to David O'Connor's article on Samuel Higgs Gael. The publication of David's new book *Troubled Waters – the Great Cheltenham Water Controversy* was somewhat delayed, but he introduced it to us in September and sales have been going well. It is added to our list of publications at a price of £9, plus postage if needed.

2008 proved a year of mixed emotions for the Society: we celebrated our thirtieth anniversary in fine style but also lost some good friends. David Shipley died on 21<sup>st</sup> April and Eileen Wyss of 5<sup>th</sup> December, both long standing members and regular attendants at meetings. Members of the Society were particularly shocked to hear of the sudden death on 23<sup>rd</sup> July of Susanne Fletcher a real mainstay of the Society for many years. An obituary to her follows on page 4 with a photograph chosen by Christopher as one he felt Sue would have been happy to have published.

The Society's thirtieth anniversary was celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> March with a luncheon at The Langton, organised by Ann Hookey, our chairman. Thirty seven members attended including our President Mary Paget.



On the left Mary Southerton with Mary Paget, and on the right Ann Hookey proposing a toast to the Society

The Society, as a more permanent legacy, planted a Rowan tree and three small silver birches in the new Garden of Remembrance at Charlton Kings Cemetery. A plaque by the Rowan reads: 'Charlton Kings Local History Society 1978 – 2008'. This event was in conjunction with the '1000 Trees Gloucestershire Millenium Project' and was paid for in equal shares between the Society and the Charlton Kings Parish Council.

2009 will see some changes to our committee as both Michael Greet and Mary Southerton have decided to retire after many years of hard work for the Society. Michael was our very first chairman in 1978 and carried on in that post until 1986, since when he has been a committee member on and off for over ten years and been our representative on the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. Mary joined the committee in 1996, and was chairman from 1999 until 2005. Since then she has been our Speakers' Secretary and gained a well-earned reputation as prime organiser of displays. They will both be sorely missed but have certainly earned their retirement.

## OBITUARY – SUSANNE FLETCHER (1936 – 2008)

By Jane Sale

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It was with a great sense of shock and sadness that the Society learned of the sudden death of Susanne on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008. Poor health had restricted Susanne's involvement in the Society's activities over recent years, but she had played a leading role in its inception, being a member of the initial committee elected at the inaugural meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1978. At first Susanne acted as Honorary Treasurer, but in 1982 she took on the post of Secretary, which she continued to do until 1997 – a truly remarkable effort, especially as in those days the role was more comprehensive than it has been since. In addition to writing the Committee and AGM minutes, she also wrote and distributed the newsletter, helped Nancy Pringle with the distribution of the Bulletins, as well as arranging speakers for the meetings. All in all, Susanne was responsible for a great deal of the administration of the Society, in fact one wonders if the Society would have flourished as it has without her efforts over those twenty odd years.



That was not the end of Susanne's work for the Society, she researched and wrote an article about John Samuel Pritchard, whose story was the basis of Beatrix Potter's *A Tailor of Gloucester*, took an active part in the churchyard Memorial Record Scheme and in 1999 her book *Charlton Kings in Old Photographs* was published. That book will be her most obvious legacy to the Society. In recognition of her contribution to the cultural life in Cheltenham, Susanne was awarded a citation by the Cheltenham Arts Council, an honour she richly deserved.

However, Susanne was not just a hard-working voluntary worker and committee member, she was a good friend to those of us who served with her and such a modest, gentle person. She will be sorely missed by those who knew her.

## SAMUEL HIGGS GAEL AND BATTLEDOWN MANOR

By David O'Connor

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Samuel Higgs Gale was born in Charlton Kings in August 1808, the second son of John Gale, Esq., of Charlton Kings and his wife Susannah, née Higgs. His elder brother, also John, was born two years earlier but died as a young man in Milan in 1829. Samuel was educated at Gloucester and then at University College, London. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1835 and practised there as a barrister, specialising in Conveyancing and Government legislation. Samuel married in 1837 Annie, daughter of George Hassard, of Skea, Fermanagh, Ireland. The latter was from a well-known Irish family: he was a Justice of the Peace and High Sheriff of Fermanagh in 1818 and again in 1828. By his wife Jane, née Maguire, George Hassard had two daughters and seven sons, two of whom were barristers, and this connection is probably the way that Samuel met his wife. The marriage recorded in the Hassard Family pedigree shows that Samuel married in 1837 as a Gale and not a Gael, as he was soon thereafter to become. The Cheltenham Annuaires show that he remained a Gale until 1841 and made the change to the spelling of the family name in 1842. He was the first to do so: his father John Gale had died in 1812, when Samuel was only four years old but his mother Susannah stayed a Gale until at least 1850, though her death in 1851 was announced as a Gael.

### The Rise of the Gales

Samuel wrote a Family Pedigree for Gael of Charlton Kings in 1849/50. It began by stating that the name of the family had been variously written as Galle, Gale, Gael and originally de Galles. The crest of the family was given as a cock, an allusion to its Gallic origin. As none of the forbears he named in the pedigree had any other name than Gale, this has the air of an explanation for his own change. The pedigree is vague, particularly for a man who was highly regarded as a historian; it is sketchy and lacks dates, many of which were readily available on monuments in St. Mary's Church. However, Samuel was to state, when giving evidence in the Manor Enquiry of 1868,<sup>i</sup> that his family had held Cheltenham Manor copyhold land for hundreds of years and this is certainly true. The Charlton Kings Parish Registers list a Thomas Galles in 1539 and a Joanna Galle in 1594. Gales are found back to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, and in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> held positions of local importance in Charlton Kings, such as overseers and churchwardens. Charlton Kings<sup>ii</sup> and Cheltenham Probate Records<sup>iii</sup> show members of the Gale family steadily moving up in status during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus in 1604 a Robert Gale was a husbandman, a term applied then to the class next below a yeoman, typically a farmer possessing ploughland of two oxgangs. In 1673 a Robert Gale the Elder was described as a yeoman in his will, which was witnessed by Charles Higgs, a major village landowner. By 1714 his grandson Edward was still a yeoman but in 1747 the will of one Edmund Wells refers to Robert Gale the Elder and Robert Gale the Younger as "*both of Charlton Kings, gentlemen*", a status which the Gales henceforth preserved. However, a real advance in the family position was the marriage in 1805 of Samuel's father, John Gale, to Susannah, the daughter of Charles Higgs, of Deerhurst Walton and Charlton Kings. The latter had himself married well in the shape of Susannah Cooke, the

**PEDIGREE OF THE  
GAEL FAMILY  
OF  
CHARLTON  
KINGS**

Edmund Gale m Anne bro of John Gale, shipwright  
of Altonfield d 1679/80  
yeoman d 1693

John Gale m Sarah Ashmead ..... daughter of Giles Ashmead  
of Charlton Kings yeoman b 1645  
d by 1722 d 1687

Edward Gale m Sarah Tuckwell  
of Charlton Kings  
yeoman d 1750

John Gale m Anne  
b 1719 b 1720  
d 1765 d 1766

Chas Higgs m Susannah Cook  
b 1718 b 1723  
d 1780 d 1804

Henry Gale  
d. s.p.  
Edward Gale  
d 1785  
New Jersey

John Gale m Susannah Higgs  
b 1748 b 1775  
d 1812 d 1851

Chas Higgs m Rupertia  
b 1750 b 1768  
d 1809 d 1840

John Gale  
b 1807  
d 1829

Samuel Higgs Gale m Anne Hassard  
b 1808 b 1818  
d 1887 d 1881

Chas Cooke Higgs  
b 1797  
d 1884 s.p.

Rupertia  
b 1802  
d 1887

Elizabeth Anne  
b 1840  
d 1916

Chas Edward  
b 1841  
d 1907

Jane Susannah  
b 1843  
d

Samuel  
b 1846  
d 1917

Alice  
b 1848  
d 1910

John Delabere  
b 1853  
d 1921

George William  
b 1856  
d

Frederick Gratian  
b 1861  
d 1873

\* November 1837



last surviving child and heiress to the local lands and wealth of the Cooke, Sloper, Wager, Deighton and Cooper families. The grandson of this last marriage, Charles Cooke Higgs Esq., who usually grandly listed his address as simply "*Charlton*", was Samuel Higgs Gael's first cousin. The Gales were thereby linked to one of the oldest Charlton Kings' families, and Samuel bore the name to prove it.

## Changing Names

The reason for Samuel's change of surname remains unknown. It seems possible that it was connected with status: he may have wished to distinguish himself from some of the local Gales whose fortunes had not prospered quite so well, such as Edward Gale, brushmaker. There are, however, indications in Probate Records and Parish Registers that Samuel knew more about his family line than appeared in his pedigree. The 1571 will of a Catheryn Gaell of Charlton Kings, a widow who left one cow and three sheep, had as beneficiaries her sons John and Richard Gaell. In 1580, and again in 1594, the marriage of one Katherin Gaell was noted. In 1598 a John Gaell, described as a husbandman, died possessed of a team of oxen, wagon, ploughs and other farming implements. He had a wife Elizabeth and a son, also John Gaell. The relationship of Samuel Higgs Gael to the plethora of Robert and John Gales/Gaells over the centuries is difficult to determine. However, Samuel named his youngest son Frederick Gratian Gael. Sadly, Frederick died as a young boy in 1873 when, galloping his horse across Battledown Camp, he fell and was dragged along by the stirrup. Gratian, a little known Roman Emperor from 375 - 383 AD, is an unusual name, particularly as Samuel chose commonplace names for all his children, with this one exception. However, in a Charlton Kings will made in 1593 by one John Whithorne, a husbandman, a pair of buckskin hose was left to one Gracian Gaell. The Parish Register shows that Gracian Gaell married "*his wyf*" Ellinor in 1604. It appears possible that in changing the spelling of his name, Samuel was looking back to this Tudor part of the family history. He might well have argued that he was not changing the family name, but restoring it. It could have been the action of a historian rather than a status seeker, though elements of both might have been involved.

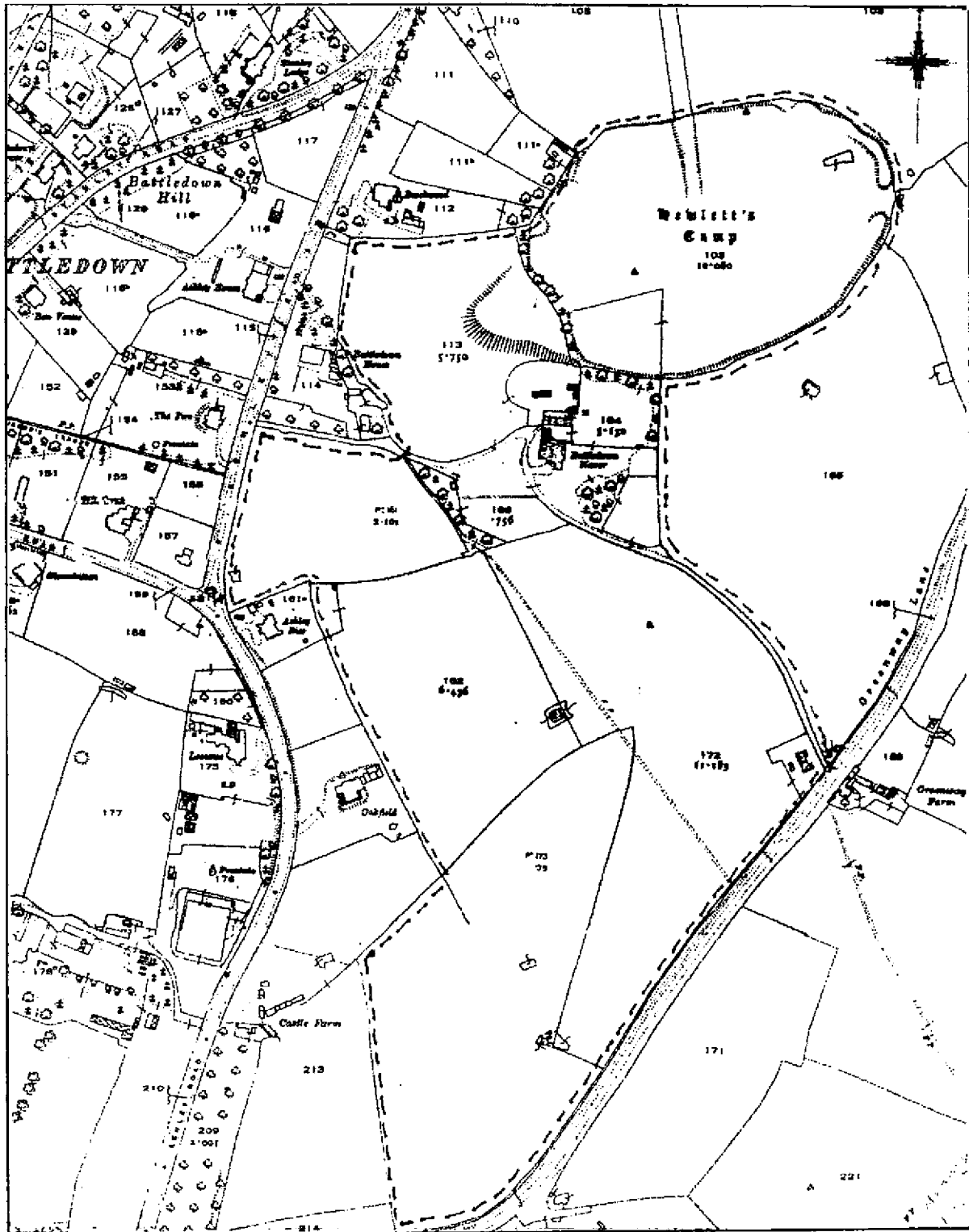
There are other points worth considering in respect of name changes. Samuel acquired the name Higgs from his mother's well-known family. His cousin Charles Cooke Higgs, some eight years older, did not marry and had no heir. Samuel was almost the last of this Higgs line, with the exception of a possible nephew. He did not, however, pass on the name to any of his seven children, who thus received neither their grandfather's nor their grandmother's family name. This might explain in part why Samuel's second son John abandoned the name Gael, with which he was born, and continued the family line as a De La Bere, his second given name, which, however, was given to him as "*Delabere*" and always so written by his father. The Reverend John De La Bere made the name change in 1892, after his parents had died but also after five of his nine children had already been born as Gaels. Confusingly, he was not the Reverend John Baghot De La Bere, the Vicar of St. Mary's, Prestbury, who had also changed his name, in his case from Edwards. The latter did, however, have a direct family link to the De La Bere family, since in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century William Baghott of Prestbury had married an Anne De La Bere. The link for John Gael, and the reason Samuel gave him the second name Delabere, was that John's godfather was Mr Delabere Blaine, a well-known veterinary surgeon, the author of many books on horses' and dogs' diseases, and a man who had studied Napoleon's famous horse, Marengo. Samuel explained in his will that Delabere

Blaine, a kind friend, had given him *"the Pickering Reid picture and some plate from the same family"*, which he in turn bequeathed to his son John. A William Pickering Reid married Elizabeth Higgs of Prestbury at Charlton Kings in 1792, and the picture presumably belonged to, or portrayed, members of the family. There is in this at least an indication of a link with a member of the De La Bere extended family. Name changes were not limited to the Gaels and De La Beres: Charles Higgs married Susannah Cook in 1755; the gentrifying additional -e came later.

## Settling Down

Samuel's study and training took him to London and on qualifying and being called to the bar at the age of 29, he practised at Lincoln's Inn. His roots in Charlton Kings were still strong; his mother Susannah Gale was living as a widow at her house Cops or Copt Elm in Cudnall, which had been in the Gale family since at least 1751. Samuel is known to have lived there between 1837 and 1850. His mother died in 1851 and in 1864 Samuel sold the house to Sir William Russell, who knocked it down and built Copt Elm Road. After his marriage in 1837 and the regular advent of his eight children from 1840 onwards, it was time to find a new and worthy residence, which was to be on Battledown. In 1799 Charles Cooke Higgs' grandfather had purchased from the Earl of Essex nearly a hundred acres of pasture and arable farmland on Battledown Hill. In 1810 there were no houses of substance on Battledown, though there was a barn and two small cottages adjacent to Greenway Lane. By 1843 Battledown House, a dwelling suitable for gentry, had been built there. In that year Samuel and his mother were recorded living in Cudnall but in 1851 the *Annuaire* records the first reference to The Knoll, Battledown (sic), with Samuel Higgs Gale (sic) as the occupant. This was confirmed by the 1851 Census, which recorded Annie and four Gael children there, Samuel presumably being in London. It is therefore likely that the house was built in 1850. In 1870 Kelly's Directory described it as *"a handsome, modern edifice"*, which supports the probability that The Knoll was Victorian and not an old farm or manor. An auction document from 1949<sup>iv</sup> states that *"the original portion of the house is reputed to have been a farm cottage (over 200 years ago)"*; however, The Knoll was not built on the site of any of the 1810 buildings and its cellars are of the same stone as the house and conform to its shape.

This second gentry house with stables was built in the lee of the Hill, just below The Camp. It was of eccentric shape with two unequally protruding wings on the frontage. It had four reception rooms, five main and four secondary bedrooms, a principal galleried staircase, a secondary staircase leading to the butler's room and a third nursery/back staircase, plus the usual offices and wine, beer and coal cellars. There were several outbuildings, including a stables and coach house. It was a capacious house but Samuel already had four children and there were four more to come, which meant at least three living-in servants. Originally it had access along the rough lane that already served Battledown House, which followed the line from Coltham Lane (Hale's Road) now taken by the Jacob's Ladder footpath. At an auction in May 1850 Samuel paid £2,020 for 23 acres of land joining the house to Greenway Lane. By 1885 the main access was from Greenway Lane up a graceful and sinuous drive. The Knoll, or as it was sometimes known, Knowle, would originally have been owned by Charles Cooke Higgs but it is certain that by 1856 Samuel was both the owner and occupier of the house and some 34 acres of surrounding land.



*The dotted line shows the boundaries of the estate of 44 acres when it was auctioned in 1949. Samuel Higgs Gael had also owned Battledown Estate land to the west of The Knoll fronting Ashley Road, (excluding the Beechwood and Battledown House plots), as well as the ten acres of The Camp. The latter was sold off in 1951. He also owned Castle Farm to the south, which was not Battledown Estate land.*

In 1858 most of the Battledown land, including The Camp, an Iron Age fort then known as The Castles, was sold by Samuel's cousin, Charles Cooke Higgs, to the Trustees of the planned Battledown Estate. Over the next five years Samuel took advantage of the slow development of the Estate to buy three more prime lots adjoining his land and also the ten acres of The Camp, which overlooked his residence. This gave him access to the Estate roads, should he require it. He continued to expand his land holdings by inheritance and purchase. In the 1873 Return of Owners of Land in England, which gave the position as at 1871, Samuel Higgs Gael held a total of 131 acres with a gross rental value of £502.5s., while Charles Cooke Higgs held 159 acres to a value of £566. By 1887 his holdings included not only The Knoll but also Castle Farm, Ryeworth Farm, Copshedge Close, the Battledown Estate lands west and north of Greenway Lane, Greenway Farm with its house and 40 acres, plus the Stall Grounds, The Great Log and The Grove. He owned land and a cottage at Dowdeswell Old Mill, unspecified property in Prestbury and the inherited Gale estate in Deerhurst, Deerhurst Walton, Elmstone Hardwick and Walton Cardiff. In addition to the land holdings, he was the owner of 22 cottages in and around Charlton Kings. He was catching his cousin up.

### **Professional Life**

In 1836, almost immediately after he was called to the Bar, Samuel was added to the Commission for the Peace for the County by Earl Fitzhardinge and became thereby a JP. He served periodically on the Cheltenham Bench and appeared regularly at the Quarter Sessions. He practised as a Conveyancer in London at Lincoln's Inn and resided at 5, Verulam Buildings, Gray's Inn. He was the author of a number of legal guides and handbooks: in 1840 *A Practical Treatise on the Analogy between Legal and General Composition*, followed by *The Bench Formalist*, *The Constable's Guide*, and *The Law of Easements*. He was deeply interested in changes to the systems of Local Government, which constituted Boards of Guardians and abolished Parish Overseers, and was recognised as an authority on the Poor Laws. In London he was employed by the first Board of Health, the precursor to the Local Government Board; and also in the drafting of bills connected with sanitation and water supply for presentation to Parliament. In 1856 he advertised his services from chambers in Cambray in Cheltenham for the first time but this was short-lived and thereafter and until 1882 his local legal practice was based at his home on Battledown.

Samuel placed all his knowledge at the disposal of the local community and his record of public service in this respect is admirable. There were very few organisations in Charlton Kings which did not avail themselves of his advice, mostly given on a voluntary basis. He freely assisted the Trustees of Cooper's Charity, audited the Vestry and school accounts, was Patron of the Benefit Society, contributed handsomely to the Charlton Infant's School, and was on the Committee which in 1851 enlarged and improved the village churchyard. He assisted the Trustees of the new Battledown Estate, though in this case his formal Counsel's Opinions cost between £1 and £3. He was Vicar's Churchwarden for over 25 years and a member of the Charlton Local Board, in the first election for which, in 1862, he finished one vote behind his cousin Charles Cooke Higgs in the list of elected candidates. He was for many years Chairman of the Local Board, its members being well satisfied with his even-handed approach. In Cheltenham he was also active in promoting the Cheltenham Town Act; although not elected, he was a regular ex-officio attender at Board of Guardians meetings,

which he often chaired, and an acknowledged authority on Poor Law administration, where his legal advice came free of charge. He showed some sympathy for the large number of unemployed Irish in the Town, a position which few of his fellow Guardians shared, though he had, of course, an Irish wife. He also took an interest in the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Antivivisection Society, which throws more light on his outlook. In temperament he was an analytical, reasoning and emollient man, who sought to avoid taking a political stance and disputes where possible.

Samuel's other great interest was history. Through his specialised local historical knowledge he became friendly with Sir Thomas Phillips, the antiquary and bibliophile, who amassed a vast collection of manuscripts and documents in Thirlestaine House. After the latter's death in 1872, Samuel spent much time arranging and classifying the collection. In 1876 he became a founder member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society. He edited the continuation of Bigland's *"History of Gloucestershire"* after the latter's death. At a meeting of the Society in 1879 he acted as a guide to Southam De La Bere House, on which he read a paper and in which he appears to have had a deep, personal interest, possibly for family reasons. In 1880 he was appointed a Vice-President of the Cheltenham District of the Society.

### **Leaving The Knoll**

In 1881 Annie died and in 1883 Samuel left The Knoll and moved to Porturet House on the London Road, which was then occupied by his son Charles Edward, a bachelor and Civil Engineer who had worked in the Public Works Department in Bombay and his unmarried sister Elizabeth. Samuel Higgs Gael died on 17 September 1887, aged 80, after a short illness. The funeral took place at St. Mary's, Charlton Kings on 20 September and was conducted by the Reverend F.H. Neville, a friend and former Incumbent of Holy Apostles. His sons were the chief mourners. It was said of the deceased that *"he showed a sympathetic interest in the welfare of his tenants, especially since the agricultural depression, and that he inspired not only sincere esteem but even affectionate regard, as one of the oldest and best known residents in this locality."*

In his will Samuel left The Knoll and his Charlton lands to his eldest son, Charles Edward. He allowed for a wife and children in legal terms but for Charles this contingency did not occur. John was to receive the houses and land at Dowdeswell End and the rent charges paid by the Banbury and Cheltenham Railway Company. His lands in the Tewkesbury area were left to Charles and John as joint trustees, with discretion to use the income and let or sell property to benefit other members of the family and putative widows and children. George William, an officer in the West India Regiment, was to benefit from the Prestbury property. His son Samuel, who, unlike John, George and Frederick, did not go to Cheltenham College and who may have had some disability, was to receive an income of £100 a year. For the daughters, the trustees were to pay out the £2,500 balance owing on the settlement of £3,000 Samuel had made on the marriage of his daughter Jane Susannah, who in 1862 had married the Reverend Frederick Williams, Dean of Grahamstown, South Africa. For the unmarried daughters, they were to set up capital sums of £1,500 (Elizabeth) and £1,600 (Alice) and pay the daughters the annual interest. The trustees were given a free hand to spend to improve, rent or sell the real estate. This would indeed be necessary: his personal estate amounted to £2,181.18s.6d. The will was signed on 8 September 1887 and he died nine days later.

## Under New Management

Following Samuel's move to Porturet House in 1882, The Knoll had been let to Sydney Proctor Ryland and his wife Anne Whitfield Ryland, née Gladstone. Sydney Ryland was then 29 years old but one of Cheltenham's leading solicitors and his practice, Griffiths, Ryland, Waghorne and Co., was located at 2, Crescent Place and later Clarence Parade. After Samuel's death, the Rylands remained as tenants until 1903. In 1893 Sidney became a member of the Gloucestershire County Council and he was a front-runner for the Town Clerk's post but just missed it in 1903. He died in 1923 and was described as a fine golfer, a prominent Freemason, a sportsman and a gentleman. His wife distinguished herself by living to 101. In 1904 a new tenant was found in the shape of Captain Arthur Henley, J.P., of Eastwood, County Carlow and late of the 52<sup>nd</sup> (Oxfordshire) Light Infantry. From a distinguished Irish family, he was born in 1833, the fourth son of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Warner Henley, D.C.L., M.A., J.P. and D.L., M.P. for Oxford 1841 - 1885 and President of the Board of Trade 1852 and 1855 - 1859. Arthur had seen active service in the Indian Mutiny and earned two Mentions in Despatches. He married in 1865 Margaret Gore and had three sons and two daughters. In 1907 Charles Edward Gael died and The Reverend John De La Bere, having changed his name in 1892, became the owner of The Knoll. He had been invalided out of the Indian Civil Service in 1880, married in 1882, took holy orders and proceeded to produce seven sons and two daughters between 1883 and 1902. In 1901 he was living at Charlton Lodge with his wife Elizabeth and five children. However, his career as a vicar took him and his family away from Charlton Kings and he had no personal interest in The Knoll. Captain Henley remained in The Knoll as a its tenant until 1915, when for three years the house, like many others in the nation, remained empty as the Great War dragged on. In 1919 Reverend John De La Bere found a new tenant, Robert Percival Percival Humphris. However, two years later, John De La Bere died at St. Aubyns, Hove, Sussex, bringing to an end the Gael ownership of The Knoll, which had lasted for 71 years. The entries in the Gentry handbooks had gone from "*Gael of Charlton Kings*" to "*De La Bere of Porturet House*" and finally "*De La Bere, Late of Porturet House*" in 1921. The Knoll and its land was sold to the sitting tenant and two adjoining Battledown Estate lots were also sold for separate development.

## Another Change of Name

In 1922 there came yet another change of name, this time of the house itself. The new owner, Robert Percival Percival Humphries, changed the name of The Knoll to Battledown Manor, the name it bears to this day. Cosmetic changes of this kind were not unusual. In 1888 Sir Frederick Dixon Dixon Hartland had changed The Oaklands to Ashley Manor, which technically it was not, and his Sussex property Middleton Farm to Middleton Manor; and in 1925 Captain Arthur Herbert at the nearby The Leasowe in Ashley Road changed its name to Charlton Manor. Apart from the fact that the title sounded distinguished, one other possible incentive for the change at The Knoll, which had been copyhold land of the Manor of Cheltenham, was that by the law of Property Act of 1922 all copyhold land was extinguished and turned into freehold. The old manorial system was no more and the Lords of the Manors of Cheltenham and Ashley could raise no objection, though this Act did not come into force until 1 January 1926. Robert Percival Percival Humphries stayed eleven years at his Manor but very little is known about him. He and his wife appear to have played little part in the

affairs of the area. His surname appears as both Humphris and Humphries and the second "Percival" appears optional. He seems to have followed the Gael tradition of name-changing.

### **Major Harold James Mylne**

In 1930 Battledown Manor was sold for £17,250 to Captain Harold James Mylne.<sup>v</sup> He was born in India in 1900, the youngest son of a plantation owner, Ernest Mylne and his wife Mabel Mary, later of Ellenborough House, Roehampton. After Wellington College and Sandhurst he was commissioned in 1919 into the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Hussars, an expensive Cavalry Regiment but later joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars and served in India. In 1926 he transferred as a lieutenant to the 5<sup>th</sup> Mounted Rifles (Imperial Light Horse) in South Africa, with whom he remained until retiring as a captain in 1930, when he purchased the Manor. His major addition to the Manor was the building in 1938 of a pair of semi-detached cottages at the gates, built to be in keeping with the residence and occupied by the butler and the gardener. As might be expected from his military record, he and his wife Dorothy Evelyn, née Safford, were very much part of the horse-riding fraternity and hunted with the Cotswold. With war looming, in 1938 he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Royal Gloucestershire Hussars and raised 'H' Squadron in Cheltenham. The Regiment sailed for Egypt in 1941 and was quickly in action. In the Battle of Sidi Rezegh Major Mylne's tank was hit and he suffered severe concussion, from which he never really recovered. He died in the Radcliffe Infirmary at Oxford on 23 February 1943 and is commemorated on the Cheltenham Borough war memorial outside the Municipal Buildings. The Mylnes had three sons, one of whom died aged seven in India. Ownership of the Manor passed to his wife on his death but she did not continue to live there and in 1942 Battledown Manor itself joined the War effort.

### **The War Years**

From the late 1930s onwards the Gloucester area became an important hub of British aircraft production. In 1935 Dowty Aviation was formed at Staverton to build landing gear and aircraft hydraulics and in 1937 Rolls Royce and Bristol Engines joined together to form Rotol Airscrews to take over both company's propeller development. Rotol later dropped the "Airscrews" part, allegedly because RAF aircrew kept turning up, and eventually in 1960 merged with Dowty to form the Dowty Group.<sup>vi</sup> In 1939 R.J. Coverley, the Controller of Rotol, tired of living in rooms at The Hop Pole in Tewkesbury and tried to persuade the Board to lease Battledown Manor as a guesthouse where important visitors could be entertained. He was not alone in this: on the nearby Battledown Estate, Battledown Tower had been leased by Dowty, who built a workshop in its garden, and Mond Nickel Co. Ltd. had taken over Montrose (now Firsbrake) in Stanley Road.<sup>vii</sup> He failed but succeeded in getting agreement in January 1942, when he promptly moved in. During the rest of the war the Manor, with a living-in staff of five, became the venue for high level visitors, parties and celebrations. Goats from Greenway Cottage, at the end of the drive, which was also rented by a Rotol executive, were used to keep the Manor's lawns tidy. No record was kept of the visitors to the Manor but certainly members of the Royal Family visited Rotol during this period and may well have graced the house. Rotol propellers equipped the Hawker Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire and the first Allied jet fighter, which flew in February 1945, so Battledown Manor may be said to have played its part in the War. Rotol handed the Manor

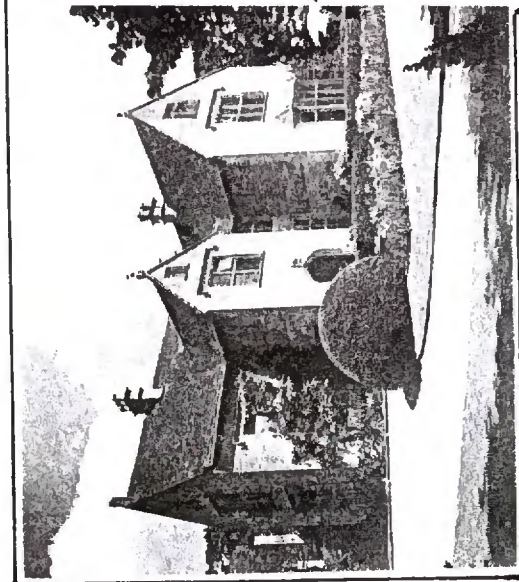
back in 1945 to Mrs Mylne and in 1946 it was sold by her executors to Mrs Mary Yeats Hignett, a widow from the imposing Robgill Tower, Dumfries. She was a member of the Hignett Family who were in business as tobacco manufacturers in Liverpool, where they had the Hignett's Tobacco Works Band (last noted playing in 1893) and in London. Both Hignett companies were founder members of Imperial Tobacco Co. in 1901 and were still producing cigarette cards in 1936. She lived there until her death in March 1949, when her executors put the Manor up for auction. It failed at the first attempt, being withdrawn at a bid of £14,750, with the desired price of £18,000 not achieved. This was to be the last time that Battledown Manor was to be, as it was described in the auction brochure, "*a Miniature Residential Estate*". Surrounding the house and gardens were six enclosures of timbered park and pasture land, including The Camp, and extending to over 40 acres. In all the property extended to about 44½ acres. The Manor was now entering the period of post-war economic depression, which was to lead to the break-up and sale of much of the land surrounding Samuel Higgs Gael's Knoll estate.

### **The Post-war Years**

In April 1950 Mrs Hignett's executors sold the estate to two joint purchasers: the main purchaser was Louis Sylvio Armandias, of Ellingham House, Cheltenham, who bought the Manor and 34 acres. Within the same deal, the sub-purchaser, John Guy Davies, a company director from the Isle of Wight, paid Armandias £8,000 to purchase the two cottages at the end of the drive and 10 acres of the surrounding land, bordering Greenway Lane. The day of the butler was over and the two cottages were converted by him to become one house, known as Kyle Lodge. Armandias was an unusual man.<sup>viii</sup> Described as an aeronautical adviser, he had both French and English nationality and was bilingual. During the war he worked on the Halifax bomber and he introduced from France the Messier hydraulic system which it used. He became the Technical Director of Rubery Owen Messier Ltd. He later became involved in the early use of helicopters and was granted helicopter licence No. 5 in Britain and No. 3 in France, where he was awarded the *Medaille de l'Aeronautique* by the Government. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. It is reputed that he also had another life as a Captain in Army Intelligence and might have had connections with SOE and GCHQ, but this cannot be confirmed. It is quite possible that Armandias came to know the Manor during his aeronautical work during the war but he did not stay long. In November 1951 he sold the Manor to Mrs Mignon Margarite Muirhead Tanner, formerly of Osborne Lodge in the Park, Cheltenham, but excluded The Camp, which was subsequently sold to John Guy Davies. Thus began the decline of Samuel Higgs Gael's estate.

The decades of the 1960s and 70s were marked by a series of property sales and attempted and successful changes of use affecting both the land, buildings and outbuildings of the estate. In 1962 Gloucestershire County Council leased the Manor, which was already divided into flats, as a hostel for young male students, trainees and apprentices and it served as such until 1970. In 1965 the old tennis court of the Manor was sold off to become the site of Cherry Court. In 1970 an application was made to build nine detached dwellings with garages, and to convert the Manor into private houses. Both these applications were refused, the Manor being in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 1975 the Stables were sold off and in 1976 an application to use the Manor as a guest house with restaurant facilities to be used solely for the residents of the guest house, and car parking for 20 cars off





*The Residence*

*By Direction of the Executors of Mrs. M. Y. Hignett, decd.*

**CHARLTON KINGS**  
(GLOS.)

About 2½ miles from the Garden Town of CHELTENHAM amidst the glorious Cotswolds.

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**FREEHOLD RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY**

**Battledown Manor**

in an elevated position on Sunny Slope with extensive views.

A Delightful Medium Sized Cotswold House with *Out-Pooling, Co.'s Services, Main Drainage, Central Heating.*

Two Modern Cottages, Garages, Stabling and other useful Outbuildings. BEAUTIFUL PLEASURE GROUNDS, KITCHEN GARDEN AND NICELY TIMBERED PARKLANDS

in all over  
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WITH VACANT POSSESSION.

**HAMPTON & SONS**

Will offer the Above by Auction

At The Lamb Hotel, High Street, Cheltenham

On THURSDAY, 14th JULY, 1949

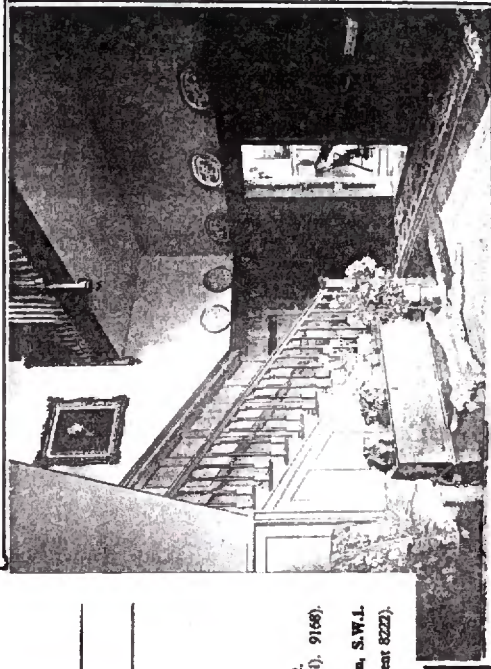
At 3 p.m. (unless sold privately beforehand)

Solicitors: Messrs. BARRELL & CO., 20, Castle Street, Liverpool, 2. (Phone: Central (Liverpool), 9160).

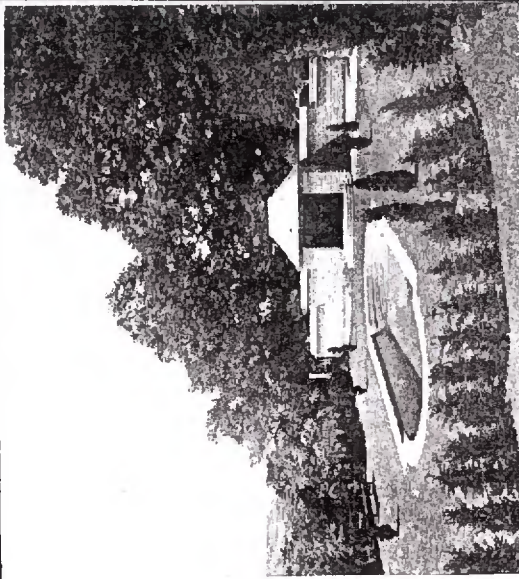
Auctioneers: HAMPTON & SONS, Ltd., 6, Arlington Street, St. James's, London, S.W.1. Branches: Wimbleton & Bishops Cleeve. (Phone: Regent 8222).

**1949**

*Nos. 1 and 2 Battledown Cottages, now Kyle Lodge*



*The Hall and Main Staircase*



*Norman Jewson's Swimming Pool*

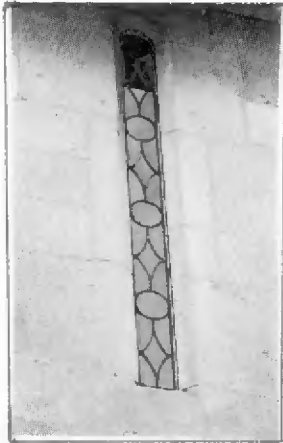
Greenway Lane was granted. However, in early 1977 the Manor was sold to be converted into two apartments, with the remaining land split between the two owners. It was not a happy situation, and it led to conflict. In 1979 an application to convert the Coach House into a dwelling was refused. The Manor appears to have been empty from 1982 to 1984.

The burgeoning prosperity of the 1980s brought large houses everywhere back into favour and Battledown Manor was no exception. The Manor went back into single ownership and recovered its integrity. In recent years it has undergone restoration and renovation, including the removal of the secondary butler's staircase and the subsequent replacement of the two-storey front window by two separate windows. A modern swimming pool now occupies the walled garden and a new tennis court has been added. The house has fine gardens and, surrounded by undeveloped land, interesting views to the south. It is even regaining some of the lost acres around it.

Battledown Manor, alias The Knoll, is, through its long association with the Gael Family, very much part of Charlton King's history, though its position has meant that very few people have ever seen it. The author is most grateful to the current owners, Mr and Mrs Beeston, for affording him this opportunity to research their home and those residents who have gone before them.

### **Postscript: The Hand of Norman Jewson**

It is accepted by authorities on the Cotswolds Arts and Crafts Movement<sup>ix</sup> that the distinguished architect, Norman Jewson, carried out work at Battledown Manor, though it does not seem to have been of major proportions, for a date is not given for it. The work listed is the gate and ironwork screen to the then walled garden (now a modern swimming pool) and the graceful old swimming pool (now a lily pond) with its stone-built and tile-roofed pavilion, with terrace at rear and flanking walls. Whether he did more than this is not clear: the arrow-slit windows in the two front wings have an Arts and Crafts feel about them. However, the puzzle is when this work was done. One source<sup>x</sup> gives the garden house, pool and gates as "*c1900*", which seems unlikely. Jewson was born in 1884 and went up to Cambridge in 1902 before serving his articles as an architect in London until 1907. He came to work as an unpaid assistant to Ernest Gimson at Sapperton and did not complete his apprenticeship and set up his practice in Cirencester until 1919. He became established as the "*Cotswolds Gentleman's Architect*" and most of his work in the area was done between 1923 and 1940. This included plasterwork and gates at Glenfall House in 1929 and the conversion of Oakfield in Ashley Road from a brick and timber house into a Cotswold manor house in 1933/4. The two most likely owners to have called on Jewson's services are Robert Percival Percival Humphries, who owned the house from 1919 to 1930 and who changed its name to Battledown Manor; and Major and Mrs Mylne, who lived there in the following decade and who were neighbours and friends of the Mews at Oakfield. However, the matter remains open.



*Above, the east side of the Manor, showing also the gate into what was originally the walled garden but has been raised to hold a modern swimming pool. The gate was the work of the famous Arts and Crafts architect Norman Jewson. To the rear are the Stables. Note the two arrow-slit windows, which are repeated on the other side of the wing and again on the front door wing. To the left, a close up of the upper window, which has an Arts and Craft Movement feel and might also have been the work of Jewson. Below is a view through the gate from the inside of the walled garden area.*



## References:

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- <sup>i</sup> Wm Gyde Esq versus The Lord of the Manor of Cheltenham. Report of the Proceedings. G. Norman, Cheltenham 1864.
- <sup>ii</sup> Charlton Kings Probate Records 1600-1800. Joan Paget and Tony Sale. Charlton Kings Local History Society, 2003
- <sup>iii</sup> Cheltenham Probate Records 1660 - 1740. Ed. A.J.H. Sale. Bristol and Glos. Archaeological Society, 1990.
- <sup>iv</sup> Battledown Manor Auction Details. Hampton and Sons, 1949.
- <sup>v</sup> Detail from Held in Honour: Cheltenham and the Second World War, Graham Sacker, 2000. There is a photo of Major Mylne on p.286.
- <sup>vi</sup> Detail in this para from Rotol - The History of an Airscrew Co., 1937 - 1960, Bruce Stait, 1990 and The Dowty Story, L.T.C. Rolt, Dowty Group, 1962.
- <sup>vii</sup> Battledown - The Story of a Victorian Estate. David A. O'Connor. Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992.
- <sup>viii</sup> In Search of Le Petit Bi. Tony Hadland, from 'The Boneshaker', Winter 1988. Available on website.
- <sup>ix</sup> Owlpen Manor Estate - Norman Jewson, Architect. Nicholas Mander. Available on website.
- <sup>x</sup> Gazeteer of Arts and Craft Architecture in the Cotswolds Region. Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, 1992.

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## **REVIEW – ‘*Troubled Waters – The Great Cheltenham Water Controversy*’**

The floods of July 2007 and the subsequent period without mains water make this book, by David O'Connor, particularly relevant. As David himself points out ‘Water suddenly ceased to be a commodity obtained by the turn of a tap and became something to be thought about’. His book tells the story of how Cheltenham, and Charlton Kings, eventually obtained an efficient mains water supply. The whole process was a long drawn-out affair lasting over sixty years. The conflict was conducted mainly through the local papers, and it is by an assiduous trawl through these that David has managed to find so much of the details behind the story.

However, the Great Cheltenham Water Controversy was not just about water. To quote David again ‘Its real interest lies in what it revealed about the people of Cheltenham, how they thought, what they believed and how they dealt with the attitudes that fuelled the Controversy.’ The book covers the feeling of a God-given right to water which should not have to be paid for, the special position that Cheltenham residents accorded their town, and the parochial arguments between upstream Charlton Kings and downstream Cheltenham..

## LANGTON HOUSE

By Mary Southerton

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Langton House, on the London Road in Charlton Kings, is now a restaurant and is where our Society held its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon. It was built, as a private house, in 1826 by Charles Cooke Higgs and its history is bound up with this leading Charlton Kings character.

Born on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1797, the only son of Rupertia and Charles Higgs, Charles was to inherit considerable property while still a minor when his father died in 1809. On reaching his majority in 1818 Charles came into this inheritance, which included the neighbouring houses Charlton House and Charlton Lodge which, at that time before the Cirencester Road was cut, were both in Cudnall Street, together with the land on which Langton House and Holy Apostles Church and School would later be built, and much of the land on which the Battledown Estate would be developed. He chose to live in Charlton Lodge, while Charlton House was rented out. [See *Bulletin 10* for more about Charlton House, now the headquarters of Spirax-Sarco]

At this time Cudnall Street was part of the main Cheltenham to London Road, but in 1825 a new road was cut on the line of the present London Road. This became the place to live and a number of large houses were built there. Cooke Higgs already owned land with frontage on to the new road, and in 1826 he had Langton House built. The Rate Books for 1858 and 1882 show that though he still owned Charlton House and Charlton Lodge he was residing at Langton House. With rateable values of £90 and £102 respectively it was one of the most highly rated properties in the parish. The house had a large garden and, as John Bowen tells in his reminiscences, he had to cultivate a patch of potatoes for 'Squire Higgs' on the land where Holy Apostles now stands.

In 1860 Cooke Higgs began to make plans for a second church in the parish. The foundation stone of Holy Apostles was laid in 1865 and its first service was held in 1871. The school attached to the church was begun in 1872, the boys section opened in 1873 and the girls in 1874. Cooke Higgs not only gave the land for the new church and school but also paid for them to be built.

Charles Cooke Higgs died on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1884 aged 88. At the Local Board Meeting he was described as an 'exceedingly good and worthy man'. His obituary in the local Examiner states: 'it will cause widespread regret in the neighbourhood in which he lived. He was a liberal benefactor of persons and institutions in which his interest was aroused.' The funeral took place at St Mary's church in Charlton Kings and he is buried in the churchyard. In his will Langton House was to become the vicarage for Holy Apostles but there were conditions which were later not able to be fulfilled and the house was eventually sold.

Other residents of Langton House include the Reverend F H T Curtis from 1891–93. Later in 1910 William and Alice Crooke made it their family home while their four sons attended Cheltenham College, but the 1914 Rate Book shows that they were only tenants, the house was still owned by the Trustees of Cooke Higgs' will. Henry P Bridger lived there with his wife and son from 1925 until 1929 when a Miss Rowntree took up residence and seems to have remained there until about 1951. By 1952 a Mrs Lewis-Hall was there and in 1955 she was described as 'Director of the Thirlestaine Club at Langton House'. In 1957 the Holy Union of the Sacred Hearts Convent moved their Junior Department there and the house remained a school until the 1990s.

The present owners have maintained the elegance of this Regency house and it made a very fitting venue for our celebratory luncheon.

Photograph taken by Eric Armitage in the 1980s



## AMBERLEY, 194 LONDON ROAD

By Jane Sale

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I am very grateful to Mr and Mrs Rogers who kindly lent me the deeds to their house for this article. Amberley was built in 1891/2 on a site just to the east of the Beaufort Arms and was in Charlton Kings at that time. In 1894 the boundary between Cheltenham and Charlton Kings was moved from the middle of Hales Road to the middle of Haywards Road, so officially the house is now in Cheltenham. However, the deeds proved of considerable interest to those of us concerned with the history of Charlton Kings as the site of the house was previously part of the estate of Charles Cooke Higgs and later of Samuel Higgs Gael – two well-known Charlton men. [See pp 5-18, 19-20, & 26-29 of this Bulletin ]

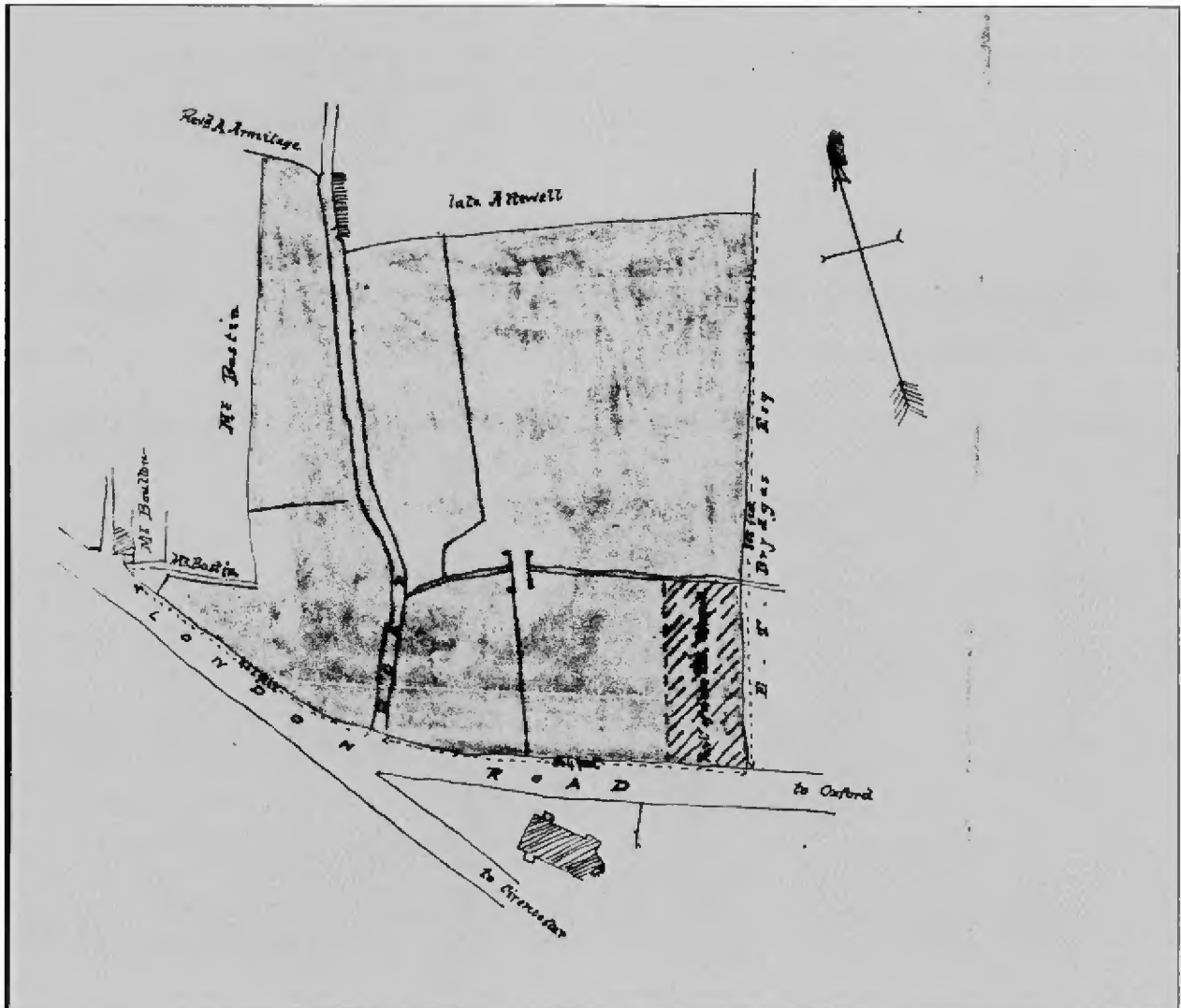
The earliest document mentioned in the Abstract of Title is the will of Charles Cooke Higgs, made on 9 June 1882. After certain bequests all the residue of his estate was left to Charles Pritchard Higgs and Benjamin Bonnor in trust for his godchildren, his sister Rupertia Sands for her life and for Edward Gael (son Samuel Higgs Gael) in tail general. Rupertia was to be executor. Cooke Higgs died on 7 August 1884 and the will was proved on 18 November of that year. Because the Cooke Higgs estate was partly copyhold land of Ashley Manor and partly of Cheltenham Manor, the trustees attended both courts on 3 November 1885 to be officially admitted as tenants of the two manors. The Cheltenham manor record lists the the following properties: a close of pasture called Slad Bottom containing about 2 roods, the east end of which is between lands heretofore of Daniel Chester deceased. Also the Old Cherry Orchard and Great Ewens containing 11 acres and 19 perches, and a meadow called Saw Pit containing 7 acres 1 rood and 14 perches.

The next document is the will of Rupertia Sands made in March 1887. She died on 5 August 1887 and the will was proved on 19 November of the same year. After devising certain named premises the residue of her real estate passed to Samuel Higgs Gael. However, Samuel had died shortly after Rupertia on 8 September 1887, leaving the residue of his estate to his sons Charles Edward and John Delabere Gael with full power to sell the same for building purposes if they thought it would be in their best interests. Samuel's will was proved on 6 January 1888 and the following year Charles Edward and John Delabere Gael were formally admitted tenants of Ashley Manor to that part of the estate shown on Plan I. At the same time a Statutory Declaration was made by George Alfred Wheeler of Early Cottage in Cirencester Road, which will be discussed later.

The two Gael brothers sold that part of the property shown on Plan II to John Bastin of 3 Beaufort Race, Charlton Kings, builder, by conveyance dated 23 March 1891. Bastin paid £150 for a piece of land having a frontage to London Road of 110 feet and an average depth of 70 feet, bounded on the north west by land recently sold by them to Frederick Shakspeare Shenton, on

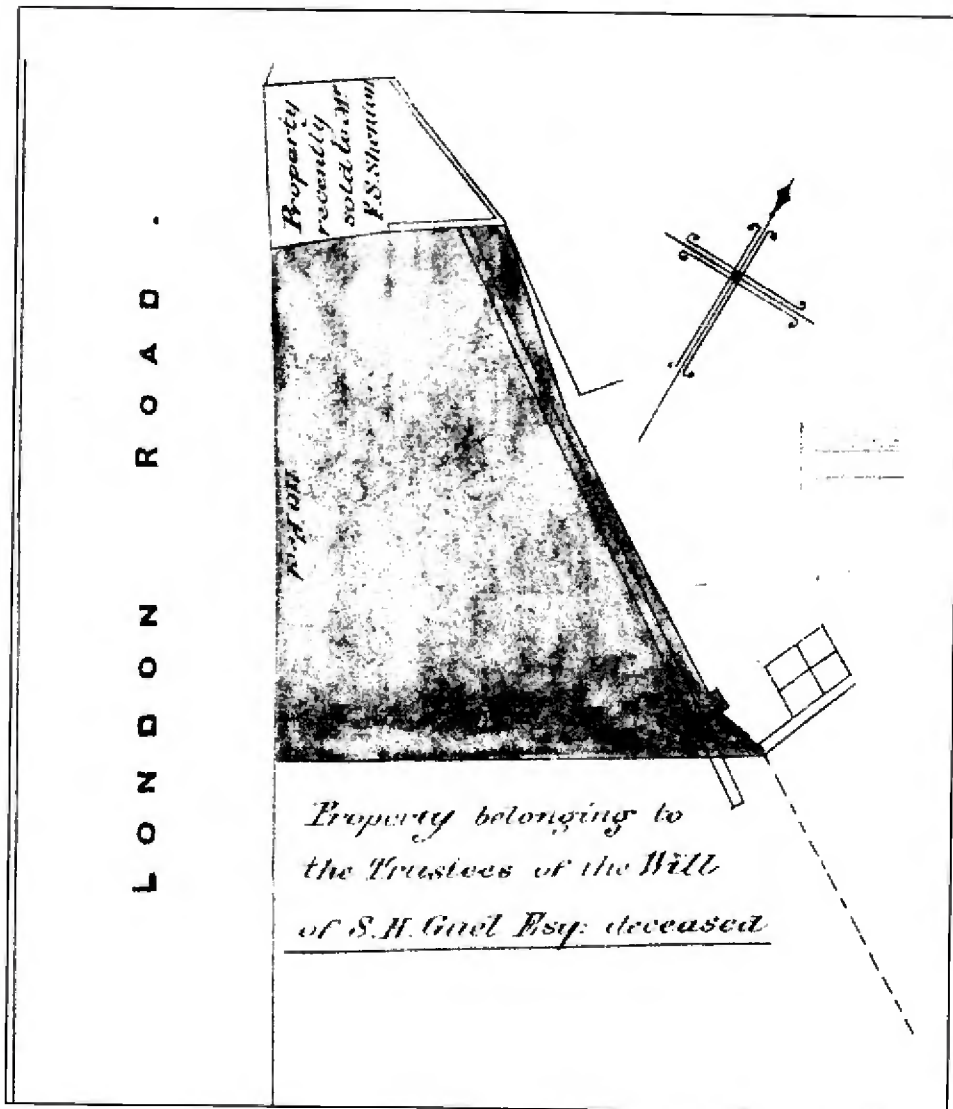
the north by land of Miss Whitmore and on the south east by other land held by the Gaels. There were conditions laid down: only dwelling houses to be built, they should face the London Road

Plan I attached to Abstract of Title to Building Land on North Side of London Road





Plan II Attached to Conveyance dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1891



and be set back at least 10 feet from the road, be of value of at least £200 each, and a fence of not less than 5 feet to be erected on the south east side.

John Bastin built the house for his own use as shown by his will dated 24 August 1904, in which we find him living at 'Amberley', London Road, Cheltenham. He devised the house to his son Walter Richard Bastin, builder, and his nephew William Henry Townsend of Leckhampton, retired grocer, in trust so that Amberley should be for his wife for her life and after to Walter Richard. John Bastin died in 1909 and his widow, Keren Rose Bastin died in 1911, so the piece of land shown on Plan II together with the house known as Amberley, 'formerly in Charlton Kings but now in Cheltenham', was formally conveyed to Walter Richard Bastin.

The house remained the home of Walter Richard until his death on 18 August 1941, when it passed to his widow Mildred Bastin. It was then described as Amberley, 94 London Road. Mildred died on 6 March 1961 and probate of her will was granted to Sybil Adele Briscoe of Amberley, widow, daughter of deceased and sole executrix. The beneficiaries of Mildred's will were her three daughters: Sybil Adele Briscoe, Beatrice Rosalie Bastin of Amberley spinster and Lilian Maud Bastin of Reading, spinster.

By 1967 the house had been re-numbered 194 London Road. It was in that year that Miss Lilian Bastin applied for building permission for erection of a detached house and garage with vehicular access on garden land at the side of No 194, but the application was refused. The following year permission was granted for the erection of a garage with vehicular access.

The final document was a conveyance dated 18 April 1969, when Sybil Adcle Briscoe of Bishops Cleeve, widow, and Beatrice Rosalie and Lilian Maud Bastin, both of Amberley, spinsters sold the property to Peter Alan Rogers of 7 Stockton Close, Charlton Kings, civil servant and June Gladys Rogers of the same address his wife for £5000.

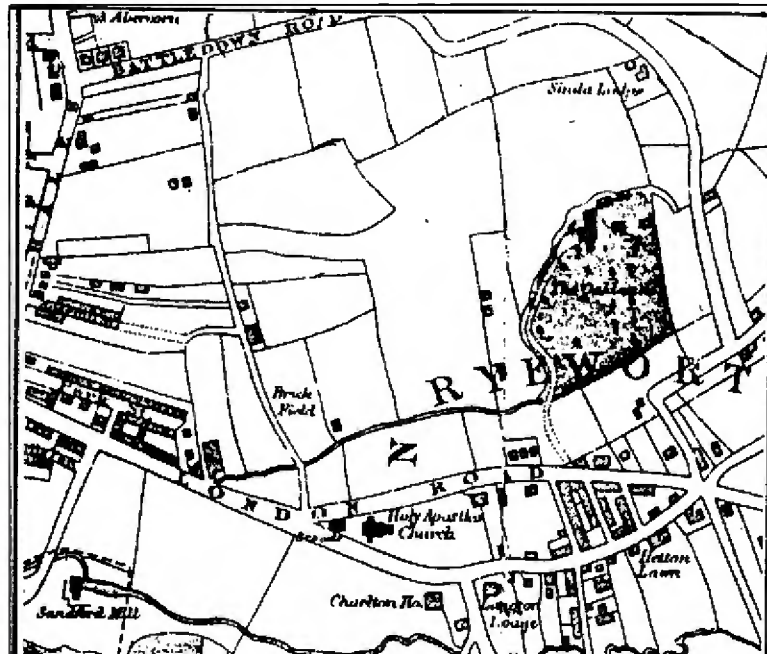
An additional bonus to these records was the Statutory Declaration made in 1889 by George Alfred Wheeler of Early Cottage, Cirencester Road, Charlton Kings, Rate Collector. In it he states that he is 55 years of age, was born in Church Street, Charlton Kings, and apart from a period of 8 years in Somerset, had spent his life in the parish. After returning from Somerset at the age of 28, he had started up as a Butcher in Cudnall and carried on in that business for about 12 years. Since 1869 he had been Collector of the General Rate under the Local Board of Charlton Kings and was also Inspector of Nuisances until about 8 years ago. George Wheeler declared: 'I am well acquainted with the property delineated on Plan I and always known it to be the property of Charles Cook Higgs late of Charlton Kings Esq who died on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1884. My intimate acquaintance with the parish enables me to say that Charles Cook Higgs was for 40 years and upwards before his death the owner of the property and I believe Charles Cook Higgs had owned the property with other properties adjoining for many years before I was born'

An article in *Bulletin 36* concerning records of the Charlton Kings Local Board of Health states that on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1896 George Wheeler of Early Cottage was re-elected General Rate Collector at

a salary of £65 per year. In December of that year George resigned and requested a pension after 27 years work. There is no record of whether he was given one, but his request was supported by George Townsend the chairman of the Finance Committee and Brook Kay of Battledown, past chairman of the Local Board. Early Cottage was on the east side of Cirencester Road, beyond Bafford Lane. It was demolished in 1988.

**P.S.** Mr and Mrs Rogers' enjoyment of Amberley was rudely shattered in the summer of 2007 as the result of the floods. A normally quiet little stream which runs through their garden at a depth of about 3-4 feet overflowed and flooded their cellar. As a result the foundations of the front of the house became unstable and the whole of the front wall of the house had to be rebuilt.

This stream, the Slad, has caused problems before. It runs parallel to Greenway Lane, under Ashley Road and through the playing fields of St Edwards Junior School before continuing westwards parallel to the London Road. After passing through the Rogers' garden it crosses under the London Road on its way to join the river Chelt at Sandford Mill.



David O'Connor, writing in *Bulletin 49*, described how it caused a major land collapse at the southern end of the school rugby pitch in 2001. This area is a natural water collecting point for run-off from Battledown Hill, and storm water from the Ewens Farm estate and other adjacent houses would also flow into it on its way westwards. It is not surprising then that this innocent looking little 'babbling brook' should have caused such damage in July 2007.

## DRINKING FOUNTAIN AT HOLY APOSTLES

By Ann Hookey

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In March 2008 an application was made to the Cheltenham Borough Council by Mrs Karen Radford, Heritage and Conservation Manager, on behalf of our Society, for a grant from the Severn Trent Water Community Recovery Fund to renovate the Drinking Fountain at Holy Apostles. This fund was set up to offer recompense to the citizens of Cheltenham and its environs for the loss of mains fresh water supply following the Great Flood in 2007, the flooding of the Mythe Treatment works and its consequent closure for several weeks. The aim of the project was to totally repair and restore the stone structure of the drinking fountain, but it was not intended to re-instate the plumbing and water supply.



Copy of Old Photograph (1872)

It was thought that this scheme would have a very good chance of success since the drinking fountain was a Grade II listed structure known to have been designed by the well-known Cheltenham architect, John Middleton. A ledger from Middleton's firm covering the years 1868-1883 includes notes concerning the fitting out of Holy Apostles church together with mention of

the 'design of the fountain'. Also the fountain makes its own plea for preservation by the following inscription carved into one of its faces: "The Public Are Expected To Protect From Injury That Which Is Erected For The Public Good"



In preparing material for the application we received a detailed Condition Report with Recommendations from Centreline (Architectural Sculpture). Below are some excerpts from their report:

**History:** It is difficult to imagine that the quaint items of street furniture, which drinking fountains have now become, once provided a basic necessity of life and saved thousands of people from inebriety and disease. These are monuments to Victorian ideals and attitudes and remind us of the times when access to clean drinking water was difficult or impossible for the poor at a time when new water companies vied with each other to supply piped water to wealthy areas. The moral crusade for sanitary reform in mid-Victorian England was closely associated with an evangelical message: as water sustains the body so religion elevates the spirit. Many drinking fountains were positioned near churches or opposite public houses in an attempt to draw the masses towards temperance, religion and public peace. Accordingly, the social significance of drinking fountains is as important a reason for preserving those which have survived as the architectural contribution they make to the character and appearance of our streets.

**Description:** The Listing description states that this drinking fountain was probably supplied by Boultons of Cheltenham and the work paid for by Charles Cooke Higgs of Langton House. This splendid gothic example points an inspiring finger to the heavens with a pyramidal spirelet embellished by crockets, its four crocketed gables enclose trefoil decorations raised on four

Forest of Dean sandstone columns with stiff leaf capitals; there is an inscription panel on the north side and a low relief carving on the West front with the Woman at the Well; a granite bowl to collect the water and a dog trough below.

The fountain is positioned at the intersection of two of the main roads leading from Cheltenham and was designed to architecturally complement and morally emphasise the message of the Holy Apostles church behind. The fountain is a typical example of the evangelical design popular in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, offering both religious reflection and refreshment to the people of Charlton Kings, their children at the adjacent school as well as travellers on the London and Cirencester roads. The moral imperative of providing free fresh water to the suffering masses is underlined by the relief carving above the drinking bowl which depicts a favourite Biblical scene of Christ with the Samaritan woman at the well, leaving her pot behind as she runs to tell her neighbours about the water of everlasting life.

**Condition and Recommendations:** The drinking fountain has succumbed to the effects of acid rain, pollution and vandalism over the years; the four columns are significantly eroded and several of the crockets have fallen off and have lodged upon the top of the canopies. The finial is missing, the roll around the edge of the gables is badly corroded. The four columns need replacing in matching Forest of Dean sandstone, a finial is required to complete the design of the spirelet, all the missing crockets need re-carving and indenting. Overall the drinking fountain would benefit from cleaning as well as repair and the whole should be shelter-coated to protect it, blend the new work with the old and enliven its present unloved appearance.

David O'Connor, while researching further into the history of the fountain uncovered a reference to the original ownership in the will of Samuel Higgs Gael dated 8 September 1887. Paragraph 14 states: "I empower my Trustees to make such arrangements as they in their discretion may consider to be necessary to continue the supply of water to the Drinking Fountain at the Holy Apostles church, which comes to me under the will of the late Mrs Sandes, and to vest the said Fountain and the Apparatus connected therewith in the Local Authority of the Parish or in some other Public Body or Trustees." The trustees of the will were his executors, his two elder sons Charles Edward and John Delabere. Mrs Sandes was Rupertia, the sister of Charles Cooke Higgs, both of whom had died by this date.

The fountain did have a rather inauspicious start, as reported in the Cheltenham Examiner of 12 June 1889, under the report of the Charlton Kings Local Board, viz:

"Mr Townsend complained of the absence of a cup at the drinking fountain near the Holy Apostles Church; made some comments on the fittings and alleged that owing to the great pressure of the water it was difficult to get a drink without also experiencing a drenching. The Surveyor said the fittings were according to the requirements of Mr McLandsborough, and the cup had been ordered but was delayed on the railway. Mr Townsend commented, "I know we are subject to the terrible powers above – the Water Powers" to which Mr Attwood replied, "the water pressure is indeed very heavy" (Laughter). The Clerk, "The Water engineer is anxious we should have all we pay for."

Unfortunately, in spite of the historical significance of this fountain, the result of the application was unsuccessful. The reason given was that there was an overwhelming response in requests for funding in excess of £3.2 million, far outweighing the sum available, about £460,000. However, in the meantime we have learnt more about the history of this piece of Charlton Kings' landscape.



Photograph taken by Eric Armitage in the 1980s

**P.S.** There is hope that the fountain may yet be restored. The *Echo* dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009, reported that officials in Charlton Kings were debating whether to spend the £8000 from Cheltenham Borough Council, which had been earmarked for the parish, on new signage for the Sixways Crossroads or on renovating the fountain. Our vice-chairman, David O'Connor, spoke for the Society when he said 'It is a piece of Charlton Kings' history and should not be allowed to simply waste away. Local people would be proud to have it restored.'

Figure 1. Routes of the proposed railways leading to Cheltenham, drawn on a map dating from c.1840. Gloucestershire Archives (Q/RUm 232/3)





## FROM CHARLTON TO THE WORLD BY RAIL

By Eric Miller

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The subject of railways that were proposed but never built has been touched on in earlier Bulletins.<sup>1</sup> The topic is worth revisiting, however, since Charlton would have been affected to a greater or less degree by all the schemes, and there is a wealth of information of interest to local and family historians to be gleaned from the plans and the details that accompany them. The documents invite comparison with similar evidence from inclosure and tithe maps. A more comprehensive article on the subject is in preparation, for publication in the Cheltenham LHS Journal in 2010.

### 'Railway Mania'

If, in the era of 'railway mania' in the early to mid-19th Century, all the proposed lines had been built, then Britain's countryside and towns would have looked very different today and Dr Beeching's Axe would have had many more branches to chop! Charlton Kings would not have been spared. It had its own station, as is well known, on the Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway (later taken over by the Great Western), which was opened in 1881 and closed in 1962. However, there were various earlier projects designed to link Cheltenham with other parts of the country. This article singles out two in particular, proposed during the period 1845-1847, which would have had a drastic effect on Charlton's layout and character:

- A line from Southampton to Manchester, approaching Charlton from Cirencester and joining the Midland Railway at Cheltenham. One version of this scheme continued via Coltham Field and Prestbury, while three variations followed routes through Leckhampton.
- A line from Oxford, approaching via Dowdeswell (along a route roughly similar to that of the successful Banbury and Cheltenham Direct Railway) but then skirting Battledown, Prestbury and Swindon Village. A link was also envisaged from the proposed Southampton - Manchester line, with a junction at Ham.

The threat of compulsory purchase of land to make way for the railway was not welcomed by all property owners, but the strongest opposition came from the Great Western Railway, whose directors wanted to maintain the dominance of its broad gauge network. It is probably as a result of objections that several fresh or amended schemes were presented, as described below.

### The Routes

Route 1.<sup>2</sup> The course of the proposed Manchester and Southampton Railway was surveyed under the direction of no less than Robert Stephenson, who was the company's Chief Engineer.

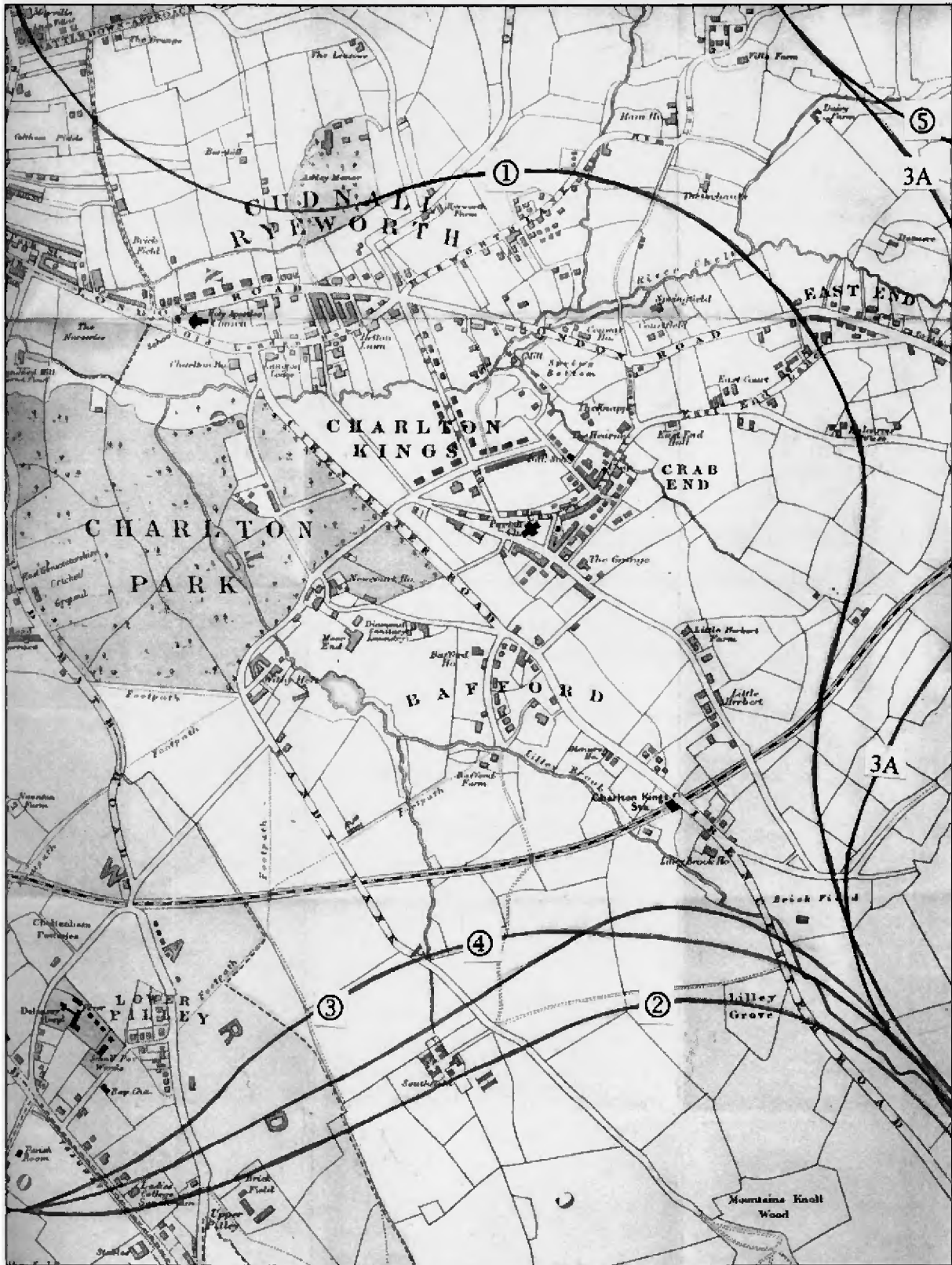


Figure 2. Four of the routes superimposed on a map of 1897, which gives a clearer idea of how Charlton itself might have been affected.

From Cirencester the line would have followed the valley of the Churn through North Cerney, Rendcombe, Colesbourne and Cockleford. By Coberley church it would have entered a 2961-yard long tunnel, under the turnpike from Cirencester, emerging in Charlton near Vineyards Farm and continuing alongside the Lilley Brook. Within Charlton itself it would have run very close to Balcarras House, past East Court, across the London Road and through the grounds of Oaklands (now St Edward's School) and Coltham Field on its way to Prestbury to join the Midland line north of Swindon Village. This line would have altered the layout of countless suburban streets in what are now quite densely populated areas of Charlton and beyond. The proposal was submitted on 30 November 1845.

Route 2.<sup>3</sup> On the following day, plans for what was evidently a competing scheme were presented (the Manchester, Southampton and Poole Railway, surveyed by Chief Engineer Joseph Locke. This would have impinged on Charlton somewhat less in today's setting, though Leckhampton and beyond would have been cut in half (and the author's house in Leckhampton might have overlooked a deep cutting!). The Coberley tunnel would have been even longer long in this case, after which the line would have crossed the Cirencester Road close to today's Lilley Brook Hotel, curving westwards into a 396-yard long tunnel and passing below Southfield Farm.<sup>4</sup> It would have joined the Midland line just south of Lansdown Bridge.

Though the directors of the Midland Railway were willing to take a proportion of the stock, the Great Western and South Western Railways were strongly opposed. At the Second Reading of the Manchester and Southampton Railway Bill in March 1846 the matter was referred to a House of Lords committee, which nearly six months later rejected the Bill.<sup>5</sup>

Routes 3<sup>6</sup> and 4.<sup>7</sup> Following the rejection, the Manchester and Southampton Railway Company twice renewed its application with modified details for the Cheltenham section of the line. The two new routes are not identical but follow the same general course, broadly similar to the rival company's earlier Route 2, passing to the south of Cheltenham through Leckhampton to join the Midland line at Lansdown Bridge.

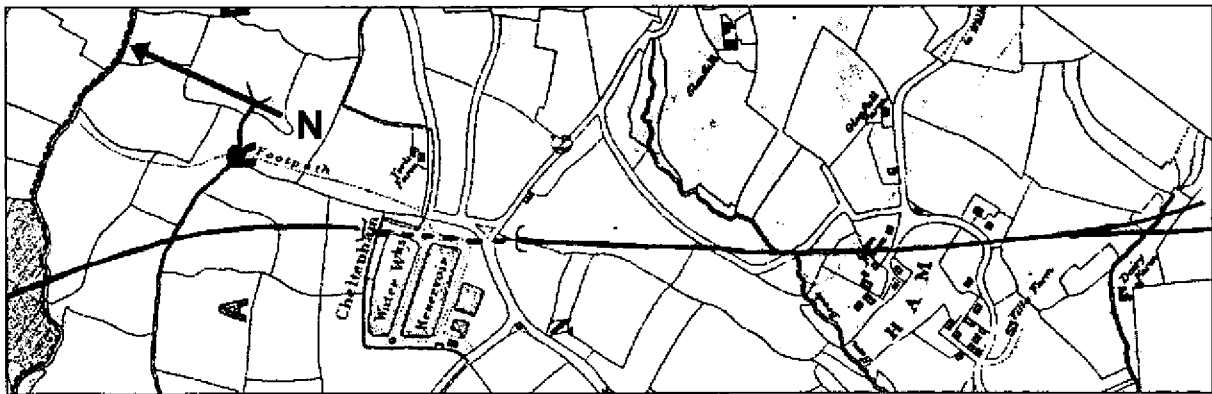


Figure 3. Part of Route 5, through Ham and under Agg's Hill.

Route 5.<sup>8</sup> In addition, a branch from Route 3 was envisaged to make a link with another proposed but unbuilt railway, the London, Oxford and Cheltenham. This branch (numbered 3A in Figure 2) was to commence in a field in Charlton Kings ‘now or late in the occupation of Thomas Finch, on the east side of the Turnpike to Cirencester’ and would terminate by the junction of the proposed London, Oxford and Cheltenham Railway, ‘at or near a hamlet or place called Ham’.<sup>9</sup> The line from Oxford would have approached Cheltenham from Andoversford and Dowdeswell on the north-east side of the London Road and continued through Ham and Battledown, with a tunnel at Agg’s Hill, evidently beneath the Hewletts Reservoir, before descending steeply to join the Midland line north of Swindon Village. Another branch would have led south to Cheltenham for Gloucester. The impact on Charlton of this line from Oxford would have been comparable to that of Route 1. (The implications of the proposed tunnel are discussed later.)

Nothing more came of any of these proposals. Despite support from Robert Stephenson, the ‘Direct Oxford’ scheme was defeated, ostensibly ‘by the machinations of the GWR’<sup>10</sup>, and the Manchester and Southampton Railway scheme was described as well and truly *hors de combat*.

### **Landowners and Tenants**

The books of reference that accompany the plans list for each parish descriptions of the properties affected, typically spanning 100 yards either side of the route, together with the names of the owners, lessees and occupiers. Fields, orchards, woods, coppices, brakes, streams, rivulets, watering places, rick-yards, barns, a cider mill, houses (or in one case a hovel), cottages and gardens, outbuildings, waste land, turnpikes, footpaths and public highways: all are identified by numbers which correspond to markings on the beautifully drawn plans.

To take examples from the documents relating to Route 1, some 300 plots are listed within Charlton itself. The particulars given in them, though limited to the swathe of land either side of the proposed railway, may nevertheless be regarded as reasonably representative. Below are mentioned a few of the personalities involved. It is a striking fact that few of the approximately 40 landowners or 120 occupiers named in 1845 also feature in the Register of Electors for 1842-43<sup>11</sup> or in the 1851 Census. This is in line with findings for Leckhampton, where only six out of twenty-one names of occupants could be found in the Census<sup>12</sup>, and suggests a marked degree of mobility. Whether their absence after only a few years is a reflection of rural depopulation or other socio-economic factors is perhaps a topic to be left for deeper analysis on another occasion.

Of the owners, several of the more likely ones occur repeatedly, eg ‘local worthies’, some of them interrelated, whose names are familiar from the Indexes to CKLHS *Bulletins* or *Lives Revisited*:

Dame Jane Eliza Prinn (35 entries - mainly near the boundary with Coberley)

Samuel Carter (16 ‘garden grounds’ and an ‘occupation road’ (ie a private or business road allowing occupants access to their premises). In the 1851 Census he was living at Vineyards farm, farming 235 acres. The plots in question were narrow strips on a site that was later excavated for clay and marked as ‘Brick Fields’ at the ‘Timbercombe Triangle’.

Samuel Higgs Gael (22). His name was in some cases given together with other relatives, such as Susanna Gale, widow, or Mary Gardner and James Agg Gardner.

The trustees of Thomas Augustus Gale (18)

Charles Cooke Higgs (20)

Conway Whithorne Lovesey (15)

Elizabeth Lysons Collard (15 - see below)

William, Charles and Emily Kear (10 plots, all on the triangle bounded by today's London Road and East End Road, including several houses on East End Road itself). Further west in the same triangle, Charlotte Shill owned some sheds and six strips described as 'garden ground'. These plots follow the same layout as today's properties opposite the entrance to Chase Avenue. Charlotte Shill's address in the 1851 Census, as a 'proprietor of houses', was 'Gravel Pit' – clearly one of the cottages that still retain that name, next to 'Shill's brickyard'.

In one exceptional case a field was in the ownership of the 'committee of the estate of Richard H—, a lunatic'.

Of the occupiers, most have only one plot each. Very few, such as Thomas Ballinger (7) and Thomas Finch (8), have an interest in more than one plot. Only eleven are mentioned in any of the lists of electors, and only ten (not all the same ones) are listed in the Census. Rather more are previously known Charltonians, with entries in the indexes to the *Bulletins*.

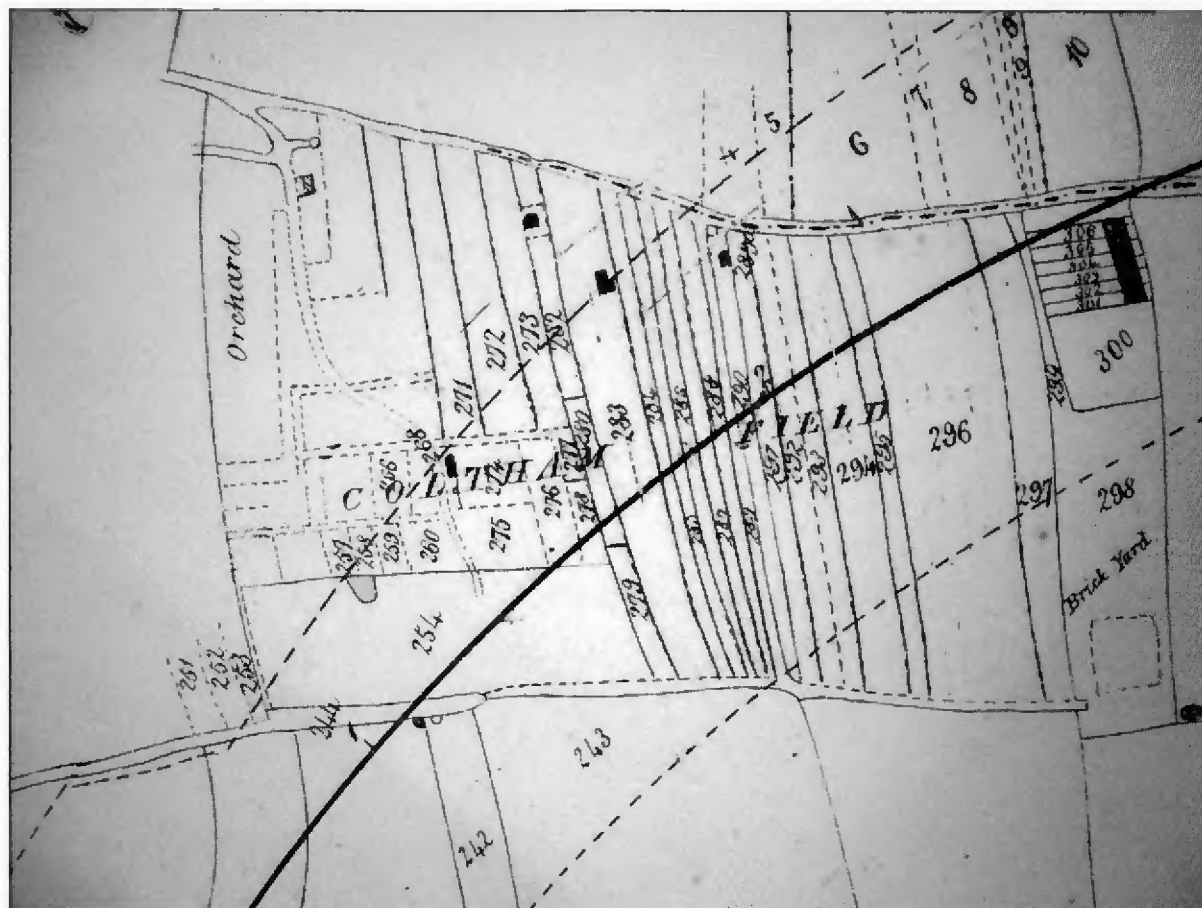
### **Agg's Hill**

Figure 3 includes the tunnel under Agg's Hill, envisaged as part of the route from Oxford. Surprisingly, neither on the original plan nor in the book of reference is there any mention at that point of the Hewletts Reservoir, which dates from 1824 and would have been in operation at the time of the survey<sup>13</sup>. The area occupied by the two basins is simply marked as a field owned by William John Agg or George Edmunds Williams. William John Agg was listed in the 1851 Census as a 'Landed Proprietor' living at Hewletts House. ('Agg's Hill' will have been named after that family.) George Edmunds Williams was a prominent Cheltenham solicitor who was later, if not already, Clerk to the Magistrates and Town Commissioners.<sup>14</sup> The only mention in this context of the Cheltenham Waterworks Company is as owners of the adjacent field and watercourse. The construction of a tunnel underneath the reservoir would surely have been a worrying development; if the company lodged an objection, that has yet to be found.

### **Strip Cultivation**

Apart from the above-mentioned group of plots belonging to Samuel Carter at Vineyards Farm, two large areas along Route 1 stand out as evidence of strip cultivation. The widths vary, but each strip or selion is about the standard length of 220 yards, and some have been subdivided.

Figure 4. Coltham Field. Today's Hales Road runs from left to right at the top, with Haywards Lane at the bottom. *Gloucestershire Archives (Q/RUm 210)*



One area was at Coltham Field, where some thirty narrow plots are delineated. A block of twenty-four adjacent plots was owned by Elizabeth Lysons Collard (not otherwise identified in a Charlton context). Eighteen more strips were owned variously by Mary Matthews, Edwin Shelton, Charles Cooke Higgs, and (jointly) Jane Cooke and Elizabeth Tatham. Of these, Higgs was prominent in both Cheltenham and Charlton Kings, and Jane Cook(e) and her sister Elizabeth Tatham were grand-daughters of Daniel Cook, who had bought Coltham Field in 1735.<sup>15</sup> They also owned isolated plots further along the proposed route to the east. Some twenty men were named as occupiers of the plots. Mostly they worked on one plot only, but a few occupied up to four, not necessarily adjacent ones.

Plot 298 is marked as a Brick Yard, in the occupation of Thomas Hawkins and owned by Charles Dowle, who also owned the garden and row of cottages nos 300 - 306, intended presumably for workers at the brick yard. (Their names are given.) Much of the area was later occupied by the extensive Battledown Brickworks. The orientation of the modern roads follows that of the strips and the name of Coltham Fields survives in a road giving on to Hales Road.

The other area is at Ryeworth, though it is not named as such on the map or in the book of reference. Again, the strips are clearly marked out. There are various owners. As well as the big landowners, Jane Cooke and Elizabeth Tatham have three plots, each time with one Robert South Bennett as occupier, and he is also the lessee of three other plots. Plot 160 includes barns, sheds, a garden and part of the Ham Brook, and also a cider mill, owned and occupied by William Turner. This cider mill is well known and has been mentioned in several earlier *Bulletins*.

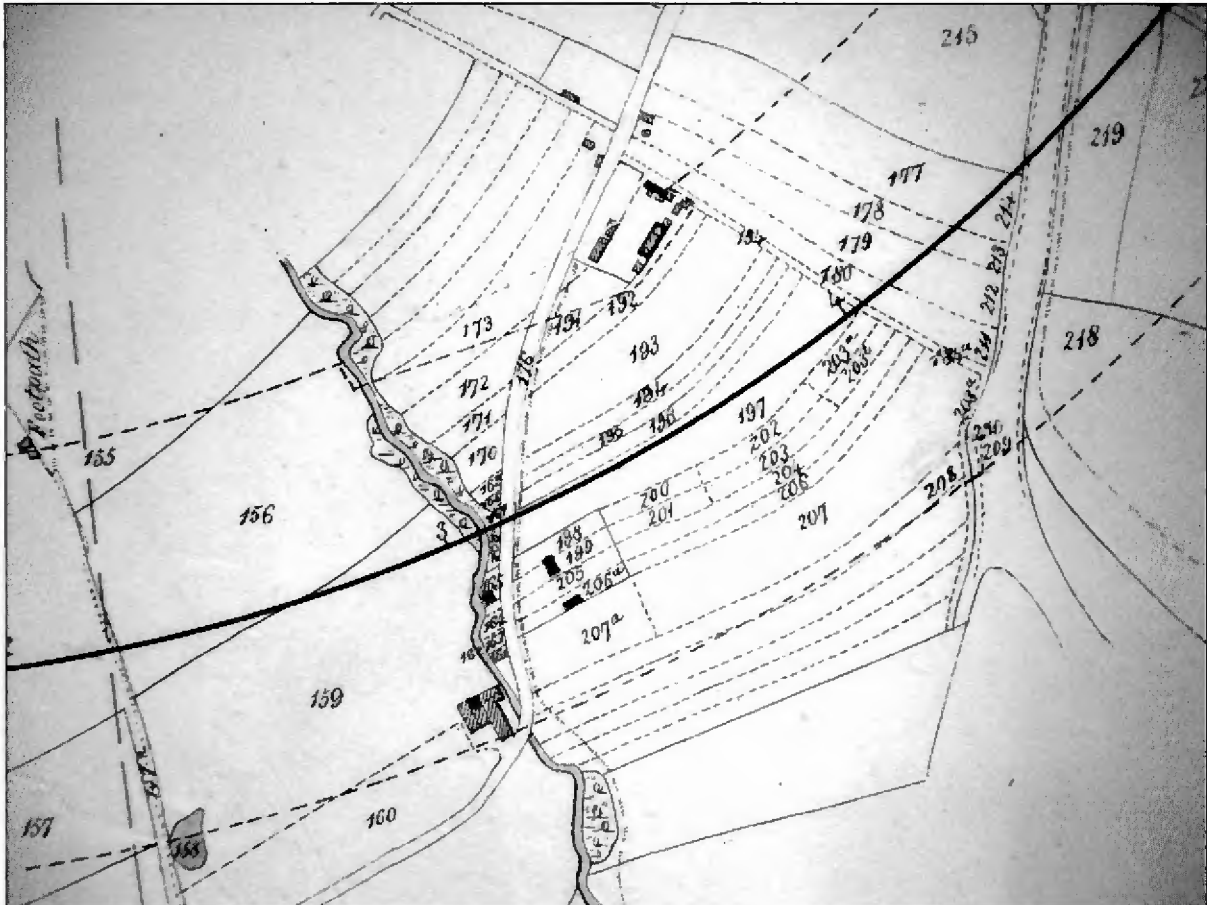


Figure 5. Strip Fields at Ryeworth. Ryeworth Road is to the left, beside the Ham Brook, and Greenway Lane to the right. *Gloucestershire Archives (Q/RUm 210)*

Anyone familiar with the area will immediately recognise this as the location of today's Ryeworth Allotments. A comparison of the plan with the same fan-shaped area on Google Maps shows that the outline of site is virtually unchanged today. The modern allotments (78 in all, in great demand!) are at right angles to the original strips, but the overall outline remains, particularly in the case of the broad plot 207.

It may also be pertinent that during the Second World War, the area of ridge-and-furrow surrounding the clay pit at the Battledown Brickworks at Coltham Field was given over to allotments.<sup>16</sup>

In these circumstances, some consideration has been given to the possibility that the strips shown on the plans might have represented allotments. The layout of ridge-and-furrow – evidence of former strip cultivation – evidently facilitates further subdivision as allotments. The allotment movement had been given added impetus in the 1840s, partly as a result of the General Enclosure Act of 1845, which provided for land to be set aside for the landless poor in the form of ‘field gardens’ limited to a quarter of an acre.

However, there is no positive evidence that the strips at Coltham and Ryeworth were rented for that purpose. Indeed, at an auction sale held on 27 June 1850 various lots in Coltham Fields, Ewen and Ryeworth were simply described as ‘piece of arable land’, ‘piece of garden ground,’ etc, having Edwin Atwell and Robert South Bennett (see also above) as the main occupiers.<sup>17</sup> The fact that the pieces of land were being sold, and not let, therefore implies that they were still in private ownership and were the remains of the open field system and not early instances of allotments.

## CONCLUSION

The rejected railway schemes joined many other failed speculative ventures from the period. Whether or not this was a fortunate outcome from a financial standpoint, the failure to build the lines – particularly the route first proposed – meant that Charlton Kings was spared much upheaval. Posterity can be grateful that the companies engaged such methodical engineers as Robert Stephenson to survey the terrain and that they and their assistants produced such detailed documentation to support the bids. The information to be discovered in the archives is of value not just to railway historians but to anyone who is interested in the development of the area where they live.

<sup>1</sup> In *Bulletin* No 17 A Johnson wrote about a proposal of 1836 to link Cheltenham with London, and in *Bulletin* No 40 John Milner reviewed a dozen schemes mooted during the years 1811 to 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Gloucestershire Archives (GA) Q/RUm 210

<sup>3</sup> GA Q/RUm 215

<sup>4</sup> The standard gauge line opened in 1924 to link the Leckhampton Quarries and the Great Western line at Charlton Kings station followed part of this route.

<sup>5</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, various dates

<sup>6</sup> GA Q/RUm 232/1

<sup>7</sup> GA Q/RUm 232/3

<sup>8</sup> GA Q/RUm 225

<sup>9</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner* 18 November 1846

<sup>10</sup> *Cheltenham Examiner*, 9 March 1864 p3 col 1

<sup>11</sup> See Mary Paget, *Three Registers of Charlton Kings*, CKLHS

<sup>12</sup> See Dominic Harper, article in *GFHS Newsletter* 107, December 2005. I am grateful to him for advice on this subject.

<sup>13</sup> See O'Connor, D, *Troubled Waters*

<sup>14</sup> See *Slater's Commercial Directory*, 1858-59 and *Bulletin* 45, p 1

<sup>15</sup> For more detail on the ownership of Coltham Field see O'Connor, D, *Bulletin* 29, pp 36-46

<sup>16</sup> See O'Connor, *Op Cit*, p75

<sup>17</sup> *Cheltenham Free Press* Indexed by Eric Armitage Advt 178/50



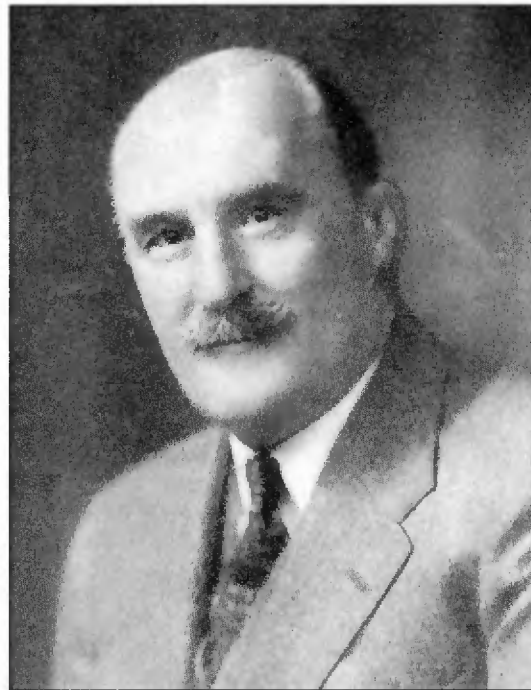
## CHARLTON PARK IN THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

By David Hanks

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[Much has already been written about Charlton Park and its previous owners, the Grevilles, Prinns and Russells. Now thanks to the work undertaken by David Hanks we can bring the story up-to-date. He acknowledges the help of the Archivist at Cheltenham College, who gave him access to important material.]

A sea-change for Charlton Park commenced in about 1918, when its owner, Albert Brassey, died. At this time the Vassar-Smith family were tenants of the estate, so it was not until they moved to Shiel in Sandy Lane Road in 1921, that the estate went on the market. [See *Bulletin 52* for Mary Southerton's article about the Vassar Smith family] Owing to what was described as 'extreme financial stringency' following 1914-18 war, it did not sell for some considerable time. In 1922, by happy co-incidence, a Mr Hugh Reeves was staying with his family in a house in Cheltenham; as a boy he had attended Cheltenham College and two of his sons were pupils. Realising that the growing college was now seriously short of playing fields, Reeves hoped to buy the ten acres of Charlton Park nearest to the college. However, the Brassey Trustees were unwilling to divide the estate, but eventually Reeves was able to buy the house and 110 acres for what he described as 'a remarkably low figure'.



Hugh William Reeves, 1866 - 1952

His next step was to give the College 14½ acres fronting Old Bath Road. The land sloped fairly sharply to the north-west so had to be levelled to be suitable as playing fields and they remain in two terraced halves known as Upper and Lower Reeves Field.

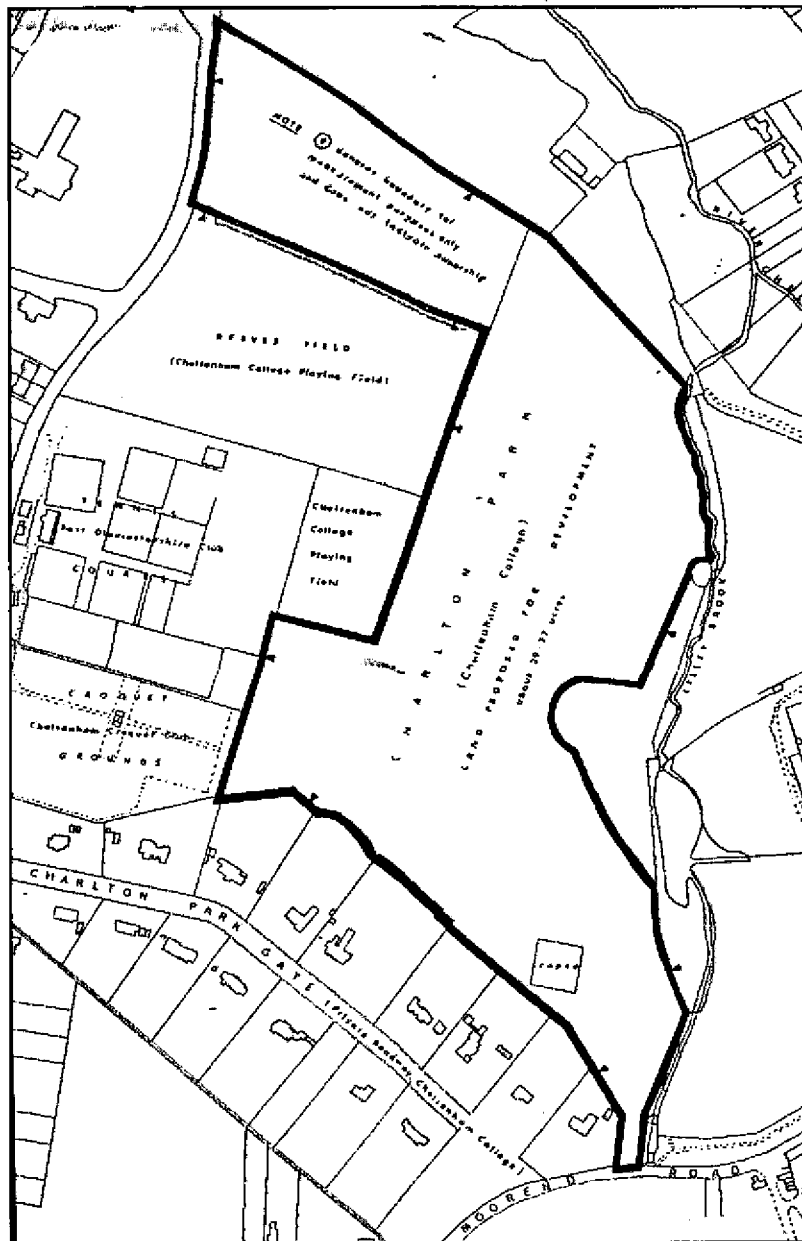
It is thought that Reeves let the house and the rest of the land to tenants for the next ten years or so, while keeping it in good order and allowing the garden to be used for fetes and other public functions. By 1929/30 Reeves was being pressed to sell some of the parkland for building development, but he declined hoping for the right kind of purchaser to come along, preferably a religious or scholastic establishment. In 1931 he sold another 25½ acres to the College, at £200 per acre, a figure well below its commercial value, but with the following restrictive covenants on its future use: only private or professional dwelling houses to be built; only one house on each plot to the value of at least £1200; no trade, business, calling or occupation to be carried on without the college's consent, nothing which might become a nuisance to the neighbourhood; no digging or removal of sand, stone, or soil except for the digging of foundations; and no timber to be felled without consent of the College. The first housing development consisted of fifteen houses in generous plots on either side of Charlton Park Gate, a road off the Old Bath Road so named because it was on the site of the turnpike gate. At about the same time houses started to be built in The Avenue, a road leading off Moorend Road on the line of an avenue of trees which can be seen on maps as early as 1746.

A significant amendment to these restrictions was added in 1935 in relation to the rest of the parkland: 'no buildings other than dwelling houses or buildings for scholastic or religious purposes'. This was followed by the sale of the house, gardens and some 40 acres of land on the east side of the Lilley Brook, with walled frontage to the Cirencester and Moorend Roads, to the Irish Community of the Blessed Union of the Sacred Hearts, whose Superior General was looking for a suitable site to open a Catholic School for Girls. After various adaptations to the house and the erection of additional buildings the school opened in September 1939. Before leaving Cheltenham, Mother Marie Therese, the Superior General of the Order, donated part of the land for a site for a parish church and money towards its construction, but any plans for that had to be put on hold due to the outbreak of war. [See *Bulletin 51* for more information about the Sisters of La Sainte Union and *Bulletin 54* for the Golden Jubilee of the Sacred Hearts Church]

Throughout the next twenty or so years the remaining 26 acres of parkland west of the Lilley Brook remained much as before: the grassland being rented out for grazing and the College boys having the use of it for scouting and golf practice. From time to time Reeves had been approached by developers but was not interested. It was only after his death in 1952 that things began to change. On his death the benefit of the covenants transferred to the College, which meant the College now held the land in Charlton Park whilst unencumbered by the covenants formerly applying to it.

The College were naturally keen to maximise the potential of their property and as an Educational Charity the Trustees were obliged to satisfy the Secretary of State for Education and Science that they had taken steps to obtain the best price for their land. In 1960 it was

considered that the value of the land for residential development was something in the region of £100,000, providing that access from Old Bath Road could be arranged. By 1961 the Local Planning Authority entered into a formal agreement with the College that they would be prepared to recommend proposals for residential development of the Park under certain conditions: the land should retain its park-like character with as many trees as possible retained, the building and lay-out to be of high standard and, surprisingly, mainly in the form of blocks of flats including possibly some high blocks.



1960 plan of a proposed development area incorporating Lower Reeves Field

The College consulted their London architects – Louis de Soissons & Partners, who had already undertaken various modernisation schemes for College property, and in due course they prepared plans for the residential development of 26½ acres of land in the Park. These plans were to build five 20-storey tower blocks with 400 flats and 13 houses, with an entrance off Moorend Road. To put this in perspective the Withyholt flats are a mere 6 storeys high and even the Eagle Star block is only 13 storeys. Thankfully, the County Planning Officer, no doubt influenced by local objections, indicated that five 20-storey blocks were too high and would dominate the landscape. Nevertheless the College Council submitted another application, this time with only four 20-storey blocks with access from Old Bath Road. This too was refused on similar grounds as the previous application. College's next attempt was for five 16-storey blocks with no more success. The matter continued unresolved through the 1960s, with various applications being turned down. Finally the College Council decided to put the land on the open market, leaving others to tackle the seemingly insuperable planning problems.

In 1975 an offer from Bovis Homes Western Ltd (Cheltenham) was accepted by the College, for 29 acres of Charlton Park excluding Reeves Fields which would remain as College playing fields. A strip of land between Reeves Fields and the Cheltenham Tennis Club would provide space for an access road. The sale price was £715,000, a sum which enabled College to modernise several of the boarding houses. Work commenced in 1976, starting with the cul-de-sacs: King Arthur Close, King Henry Close, King George Close and finally King William Drive completed in 1983.

Charlton Park entered the twenty first century as a pleasantly established housing development with an acceptable blend of bricks and branch, people and parkland. The inhabitants, and others in the area, consider themselves fortunate that the original plans never reached fruition.

Other parcels of land, formerly part of Charlton Park and lying on the east side of the Lilley Brook, were sold for residential development by the community of the Blessed Union of the Sacred Hearts. The 1980s saw the building of Chancel Park and Chancel Way, followed by St Jude's Walk, Marlborough Close, Randolph Close and St Edward's Walk, all approached from Cirencester Road; together with Guardian Court and Moorend Glade approached from Moorend Road. More recently in 2006/7 we have seen the building of St Michael's Close together with 'that roundabout'.

**P.S.** If you would like to read the fuller account of the '*History of Charlton Park*', together with various maps, plans and photographs, it is now more widely available (free of charge) on the internet under: [www.charlton-park-cheltenham.co.uk](http://www.charlton-park-cheltenham.co.uk).

## CHELTENHAM'S LOCAL NEWSPAPERS BEFORE 1914

By Don Sherwell

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In May 1809, the first issue of The Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire [sic] General Advertiser appeared. This article looks at that edition and also examples in the same week of May in 1859 and 1909.

Before 1809, there had been no local newspaper for the town, which was growing fast, more than doubling in size during that decade. A newspaper was particularly valuable to advertisers, who previously had been dependent on handbills. The paper was printed by a Mr Ruff of the Library in the High Street: he also diversified into the selling of candles made by steam “with decided advantages over those made in the common way” and soap. It had 4 pages, and cost 6d [possibly £2 in today's prices, or half a workingman's daily wage] – raised soon after to 7d. Most of that went in stamp and paper duties, and taxation on the advertisements which filled one third of the columns [a similar proportion to today].

The leading article on 4 May 1809 declared that the fame of Cheltenham “seems rested on foundations that neither the fickleness of fashion nor the rivalry of less favoured contemporaries can affect... in the present vast expanse of British Empire, the virtues of its Springs are familiar to the remotest colonies....the remarkable variety of [its] waters - the peculiar salubrity of the air, the beautiful and picturesque scenery.... the general accommodations and amusements –but above all the social manners, equally free from coarseness and formality, give charms to this spot which few, if any can exceed”.

Much space was given to national and international news, notably the war with France, copied, as was customary with local newspapers at the time, from the London Gazette. It had been reported that Napoleon was suffering from “some scorbutic humour” [scurvy] and the editors wished that “some of our gallant captains would give him a passport to Cheltenham”.....

There was very little local news in the first issue. It was however reported that Parliament had approved the building of “a Railway or Tram Road ” from the quay at Gloucester to a gate at Cheltenham called the Knapp Tollgate, with a branch to the top of Leckhampton Hill: this was expected to reduce the cost of coal in the town by one third. Another Act approved “the paving, lighting and improving of Cheltenham, and a new turnpike road” . The thrice weekly coach to Bath took 8 hours to reach its destination. Jesus College, Oxford [patrons of Charlton Kings parish church at the time] threatened to prosecute poachers on its lands in Cheltenham. One Shurdington man was sent to jail for a month for failing to sleep at his master's house for several nights. It was reported that the recent weather had been disappointing , which had affected “the show of beauty and fashion usually seen in our walks at this season but the town and its environs were never fuller at this time of year”.

By 1859, Cheltenham had 6 local newspapers: the [Cheltenham] Chronicle, Examiner, Free Press, Journal, Looker-On and Mercury. Their prices were substantially lower than in 1809, thanks to recent reductions in relevant taxation by Gladstone.

A General Election had been held in the previous week, As now, Cheltenham was a marginal constituency. Colonel Berkeley for the Whig/Liberals held the seat by 922 votes to 910, despite being behind for most of the day. [There was no secret ballot and voting figures were issued hourly] Feelings ran high [the Baptist minister of Bethel voted for Berkeley, and one deacon resigned and left the Church altogether in protest.] A “shilling hop to celebrate the MP’s re-election was attended, we are told, by “about 40 blooming specimens of *‘the great unlicked’*”. Sir William Russell, who had been travelling abroad for some time and, perhaps as a direct result, had lost his seat in Dover, promptly returned to Charlton Park .

As in 1809, there was much foreign news. [War between France and Austria over the issue of Italian reunification had started a few days earlier]

Local news included the Board of Guardians reporting that the Workhouse contained 189 adults [only 20 able-bodied] and 122 children [Those figures may be taken with some reservation – the Board mid-century was apparently prone to claim substantially more relief from the poor rates than was justified - one reason why a journalist later claimed that Cheltenham at that time showed “more sharp dealing and moral turpitude than any other town in the kingdom”]

A sign of the times in mid- Victorian England - religious news and events began to take a prominent place in newspaper columns: special prayers in local churches to give thanks for restoration of tranquillity to India , following the Mutiny of 1857 were well attended. A sermon by the vicar of Holy Trinity was summarised at length – this became common practice in years to come. Roman and Anglo-Catholic practices provoked considerable emotion in the Letters columns.

Many musical events were advertised including one by an ‘Organaphobic Band’ i.e. one made up of human voices, not instruments. There were innumerable advertisements for pills, potions and books claiming to cure a wide variety of illnesses; also several for what we would call dating agencies; and for a treatment to stop ladies’ dresses from catching fire.

Miscellaneous articles included “A Lady’s Defence of the Crinoline” against male hostility [her main arguments being that they kept the lower limbs dry and cool on wet and hot days]; and an American view of the Irish & English: “The Irish can’t eat nothing but tatters and drink nothing but whisky, and talk of nothing but priests and patriots, revolutions and repeals”... but are preferable to the English “who are as heavy and stupid as the porter they guzzle all day, who are as proud as Lucifer...lamenting Columbus hadn’t gone to the bottom of the sea instead of discovering America”.

By 1909, the number of local papers had fallen to four, as the Free Press, Journal and Mercury had ceased by then [to be followed by the Examiner in 1913]. The Gloucestershire Echo [founded in 1873 but so-named from 1882] in early May 1909 had 4 pages and cost one halfpenny [say 15p today], while the Cheltenham Chronicle, celebrating its centenary, was twice as large and expensive. Neither contained photographs, or any illustrations apart from a few sketches as part of advertisements.

There was, as previously, a large amount of space given to national and international news. Mr Lloyd George had recently introduced his famous budget to provide old age pensions and extra Dreadnought battleships, raising taxes on the rich, drinkers and smokers to pay for them.. The press gave many reports of the rage of those adversely affected [from Peers of the Realm to the Chronicle's "boys" whose Woodbines now cost 25% more than before]. A brief but bilious article declared that "the average English workman cannot exert himself to be exact.....often he does not know what accuracy means" International news ranged from a revolution in Turkey to the burning down of a Japanese temple by a passing vagrant, riots in Argentina and the adulatorily- reported birth of the future Queen Juliana of the Netherlands.

The religious element had increased substantially since 1859, with special columns for children full of worthy ideals, and prizes for the best sermon summaries, several of which appeared each week

Local news covered a very large area of the county and the Cotswolds and beyond. Passions were aroused by the activities of rooks in the Promenade and a bellringing session [5075 changes] at St Mary's in the town ["the Niagara of melodious tintabulation.....a showerbath of sound"]. Advertisements relating to Charlton Kings included many for domestic staff. Houses for rent or sale in the village included attractions such as nearness to the tram route and "Charlton rates" [sadly these were in the process of being raised by about 25% in 2 years, solely because the Borough Council increased its charges for sewage disposal by 600%]. Motor car advertisements included a secondhand Humber with 3 speeds and reverse gears for £45.

News of local dignitaries included the presentation of a gold-headed umbrella to Sir Dixon Hartland to celebrate his 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary as MP for Staines. A portrait of another local worthy, Mr Richard Vassar Smith, was shown in the Royal Academy but pride of place must go to Herbert Lord, master of the Cotswold Hunt, who presided at a dinner and gave his own version of the loyal toast, "Long life to our king and may he win the Derby", to great acclaim.

## THE BAND OF MERCY

By Mary Southerton

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Among the Society's archives is a certificate dated October 25<sup>th</sup> 1884, which shows that Beatrice Turner was a member of the Cheltenham Branch of the Band of Mercy. What kind of an organisation was the "Band of Mercy" and how did it fit into the life of Beatrice Turner, the owner of the certificate?

The Band of Mercy was founded in 1876, in Wood Green, London by Mr and Mrs Smithies. The aim was to encourage children to learn to care for animals. On joining the children would pay 1d a quarter and be asked to make the following declaration: "*We agree to be kind to animals and to do all in our power to protect them from cruelty and promote their humane treatment*", they then received a certificate or medal and a monthly journal. This was first published as "Band of Mercy Advocate" later simply as "Band of Mercy". Independent branches were formed around the country with the Smithies in overall control. After Mrs Smithies' death in 1878 and ill health had forced Mr Smithies to give up the work, the local Bands came together under the banner of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. At this time, the local branches of the RSPCA all had their "Ladies Committees" and it was these ladies who undertook the running of the Band of Mercy within their branches. The Cheltenham group was organised by Mrs Rebecca Champion of Maldon Court, Pittville, with Mrs Bertram Ogle as Honorary Secretary.

The 1881 census shows a Beatrice Turner, aged nine, living with her parents William and Ellen at East End Lane. The 1882 Rate Book shows William Turner as occupier of a cottage belonging to Benjamin Wood in Eastend, but unfortunately it does not give any number or name for the cottage. We see that Beatrice joined in 1884, receiving her certificate on 25<sup>th</sup> of October, perhaps at a meeting similar to the one described in the *Cheltenham Examiner* of March 1885.

The meeting was held in St John's School Room Cheltenham, to welcome recently enrolled members. The evening began with prayers, followed by two talks. The first by the Rev R W Ferguson, the other by Mr Ley Wood, both reminded the children of their responsibilities and duties towards animals. This was followed by an entertainment provided by Captain Ryves and some of the ladies. Band of Mercy melodies were then sung by the children and the evening closed with the singing of the national anthem. The melodies may have come from "The Band of Mercy Entertainer" by T W Rogers. Sketches and dialogues were also available, with such titles as "The Royal Deputation to King Reasonwell" and "Teeth versus Claws". Animal masks could be bought or hired from the headquarters.

The Cheltenham Ladies Committee, under Mrs Champion, appears to have been very active. It was reported in 1878 that they had opened a home for stray dogs near the kennels in Prestbury Road. It was noted that the key of the "home" was kept at a cottage nearby. These ladies also kept a watchful eye open for any mistreatment of animals, and undertook the



prosecution of owners where necessary. A novel exhibition of horses and donkeys was held in the yard of the Plough Hotel in the July of 1879. This event warranted a good half column in the Examiner. The competition, with money prizes, was for horses and donkeys that were in regular work. The judges were Lieut-Colonel Thoyts, Captain Tonge, and Mr W Watson. The first prize, for the best-kept horse or pony, was awarded to Mr Spreadbury, who received a prize of £3. Several other prizes were awarded. The ladies of the committee were apparently not present (perhaps it was not thought right for “ladies” to mix with cab drivers and the like), as the Rev Cannon Bell closed the proceedings by saying, that he had been requested by the ladies to say “that they were sorry there had been so few prizes and they hoped there would be more another time”. He also called for three hearty cheers for the judges and the ladies, especially Mrs Champion.

The Ladies Committee was active in rising funds for the provision of horse troughs around the town. In 1879 they had erected a trough at the cattle market in Cheltenham. In *Bulletin* 26, there is a photograph of a trough being presented to Charlton Kings, to mark the centenary of the RSPCA in 1924.

In 1888, there is a report of the annual Band of Mercy treat, when four hundred children assembled in Pittville Gardens. There they enjoyed an excellent tea, followed by a number of amusements. Prizes in the shape of money, books and ‘useful articles’ were distributed during the afternoon. The cost of the entertainment was partly defrayed by the proceeds of a concert and Mrs Ogle made up the deficiency. I think the prizes given at this event, especially the ‘useful articles’ tells us that the Band of Mercy must have attracted children from all classes. Four hundred children is a very good number and an excellent tea seems to have been part of any event at this time.

Perhaps today’s children might not be keen to attend meetings with quite such a moral tone but all the other activities would have been in a similar vein at that time. School, Sunday School, Temperance Meetings, and other Church-related organisations would have followed a similar format. Outings and teas would have encouraged regular attendance.

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## **MAKING LIGHT WORK**

[This excerpt from a Bournemouth local paper ‘*The Daily Echo*’ for 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1908 was sent to Mary Southerton by a friend]

UFOs resembling “orange lights” which terrified a genteel West Country suburb could simply have been Chinese sky lanterns, it has emerged. Revellers making their way home to Charlton Kings in Cheltenham spotted the unexplained luminous cylinders at the weekend.

It has now been revealed that a nearby junior school had sent up a number of paper lanterns that evening to celebrate its centenary.

## EARLY CHELTENHAM MANOR COURT ROLLS

**By Jane Sale**

Last year I wrote about two 15<sup>th</sup> century documents relating to the Manor of Ashley alias Charlton Kings. Since then I have had the privilege of being granted access to some early court rolls from the Manor of Cheltenham, which had been found in an uncatalogued collection at Gloucestershire Archives<sup>1</sup>. Two of the rolls date from the 1370s and '80s, one from the 1430s and another from 1500 to 1501; together they cover a span of a hundred and twenty five years of turbulent British history with no less than eight separate monarchs ruling over the country.

Manors can best be described as administrative units and the manorial courts, such as these held at Cheltenham, dealt with matters affecting the tenants' holdings, the services due from them and the settling of disputes between them. The business consisted of firstly, punishment of offenders against the court, the lord, and other members of the community and the collections of fines due to the lord; secondly the settling of disputes between tenants; and thirdly the approval and recording of land transactions, including the succession of heirs. Some courts were also granted powers to oversee the assizes of bread and ale and this aspect makes up a large part of the business in Cheltenham. Whatever the matter being dealt with, the result amounted to money being paid to the lord of the manor – even if conflicting tenants agreed to settle their differences out of court they had to apply for a licence to agree and pay the appropriate fee.

The Cheltenham Manor courts covered an area including the Borough of Cheltenham, together with the tithings of Cheltenham, Arle, Alston, Westal, and the three Charlton Kings tithings of Ashley, Bafford and Charlton. The lord of the manor also had the right to hold half-yearly courts called 'View of Frankpledge', which included the additional tithings of Leckhampton, Bradwell [a part of Leckhampton] and Swindon village, and it was at these courts that 'tithing silver' or 'cert money' was paid to the lord. The Borough was represented by the bailiff and each tithing by an elected tithingman. Court proceedings were conducted in English but written up in Latin by a clerk in a highly abbreviated script that follows a fairly standard format. Each court was written on a separate membrane of thin parchment and then stitched together across the top and rolled up.

### **Fourteenth Century Rolls – proceedings of seven courts held between December 1377 and July 1378 and three courts held between November 1384 and May 1385**

The earliest of these courts was held in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the reign of Richard II, who as a boy of eleven, had succeeded his grandfather Edward III following the death of his father Edward the Black Prince. The lordship of Cheltenham Manor was held by the Abbey of Fecamp in Normandy, the original grant having been made by Henry III in 1247 and later confirmed by Edward III in 1367<sup>2</sup>. The courts would have been held under the jurisdiction of a steward appointed by the Abbott, although no name is mentioned on any of these rolls.

Tenants of the Manor had a duty to attend the courts, but if unable to could provide another person in their place for up to three consecutive courts. After that they paid a fine for 'default'. Some of the wealthier tenants preferred to pay in advance 'for release from suit of court'. These included the Priors of Llanthony and Magdelene, who both held land in Cheltenham, and the 'Prior of the Hospital next to Suddeston' – perhaps an early reference to Bedlam (or Bethlehem), an outpost of the the charity hospital of St Margaret, Gloucester?

Each tithing held a responsibility for those living within it. For example if physical assault, described as 'drawing blood' occurred and was not reported then the whole tithing would be fined, the fine being determined by the value of the weapon used, so a sword would incur a larger penalty than the more common 'stick of no value'. Certain families, or male and female members of those families, were repeatedly brought before the court for violence against each other, and one Agnes Boner was 'found to be a common scold'. The tithing could also be responsible for the upkeep of roads, bridges and water-courses within its area, for example when the road at 'Aschbrugge' in Bradewell tithing was found to be damaged, the whole tithing was fined. However, when the Cheltenham tithingman reported that the kings highway at Stonebridge was faulty, it was the Abbott of Cirencester who had to pay the fine. Stonebridge is marked on John Ogilby's 1675 strip map as being on the road from Cheltenham to Gloucester where it crosses the river Chelt.

Many of the cases brought before the court involved trespass, not surprising when one remembers that much of the agriculture was carried on in open fields with only meer stones to mark the boundarics. In some cases a fine was paid so that representatives of the court could 'take a view' of the bounds between neighbouring holdings. Stray animals would be put in the manorial pound and owners would have to pay a fine to retrieve them, as did John Whithorne when he 'gave 6d for custody of a calf which he proved to be his'. An example of trespass involving inhabitants of Charlton Kings, though not in the open fields, is the case between John Horemoryene and Philip Pisteley, in which John claimed that Philip had cut down his thornbushes at Hennecroft [Hencroft] to the damage of 12d, so the following day John had cut down trees within a close of Philip's to the damage of 12d. The court decided that they should be 'judged six-handed' which meant that each would bring six other inhabitants to swear that they were telling the truth. Unfortunately we do not have the result of this case.

Other common cases involved debt, in which a 'distrain' would be placed on the guilty party until the debt had been settled, this might be anything from a bowl worth 6d up to a horse worth 10s. One unfortunate woman had been distrained of her coverlet and night-cap as well as a bowl. It is noticeable that there were more cases of debt in the courts held in 1384/5, perhaps the harvest of 1384 was a particularly poor one.

Two unusual entries were described as 'chattel waive' – waive being the lord's right to any unclaimed animal or object. The first was for a pair of silver crucifixes, valued at 4d, and the second for stolen hides worth 2d, though in this case the previous owner paid the lord to have them restored to him.

By far the largest number of cases were concerned with men and women involved in brewing. For most courts these were simply recorded as ‘brewed and broke the assize’ without explaining in what way they had broken it. More detail is given at those courts described as ‘View of Frankpledge’: offenders had ‘brewed and sold beer at an excessive price and without a tradesman’s sign and in unmarked containers’. The largest number were in the borough and they paid 2d for each offence, while those in the tithings paid 3d. The offenders in Charlton Kings were: John Hobbus and John Wyrhale in Charlton; John Adamus, Walter Aylrich, Thomas Balle, John Barot, Thomas Cadul, Thomas Felawe and Richard Gorelf in Asheley; and Thomas Bronell, Thomas Falowe, Alice More, William Muchgross, Thomas Norman, Philip Posteley/Pistelene, and Johanna the servant of William Frensche in Bafford. Other cases involved the Assize of Bread such as when Agnes Pap was fined 6d for selling an underweight loaf, and there were several cases of millers ‘charging an excessive toll’ on grinding corn into flour, including the millers at Arle, Alston, Sandford, ‘Whelemull’ in the Cheltenham tithing and ‘Prestesmulle’ in Swindon tithing.

Of particular interest to Charlton Kings were the following cases. In Charlton tithing Johanna Hore was fined because she ‘occupied the lord’s land at Holeweway’ – that is Hollow Way, the road later to be called Horsefair Street. We can visualise it as a track with wide grass verges, which the lord reckoned to be his property, and Johanna had perhaps tethered some stock there. In Bafford the ‘common way above Richald [sic] Forest was obstructed by William Muchegross’ and there was to be an inquiry into the matter by twelve pledges before the next court. The whole tithing of Asheley was fined because ‘a ditch at the church [*monestkirch*] of Cirencester Abbey lies inundated to the common harm’. This must be our present St Mary’s church, and the ditch would have marked out the extent of the churchyard at that time. Mary Paget, in *A History of Charlton Kings*, explains that the consecration of St Mary’s as a chapel of ease to the mother church of Cheltenham, was described in a cartulary of Cirencester Abbey to which the rectory of Cheltenham had been granted by Henry I.

At the end of the court proceedings notice was given of any transfers of property and the consequent ‘entry fines’. Sometimes these gave detailed descriptions of the whereabouts of the land, for example Margery Shot conceded to John and Margaret Hamme two acres of land with enclosures in Awneldefurlong [Arnoldsfurlong?] next to Sandford lying next to the royal highway towards Sandfordebrugge to hold for the life of said Margery and twelve years after her death according to the custom of the manor. Also recorded were any deaths of tenants resulting in the payment of a ‘heriot’ or best beast, such as the heirs of Walter Sturmy who paid as heriot one affer [draught horse] worth 5s. In the case of the death of John Hanch it is noted that his land would remain in the hands of his wife ‘according to the custom of the manor as her freebench’. ‘Freebench’ is described as the custom of the manor whereby the widow retained between a third and the whole of her late husband’s land until her death or remarriage. It can be seen that ‘custom of the manor’ in Cheltenham was generous to widows as they could hold all their late husband’s lands for life and for twelve years after death.

### **Fifteenth Century membrane attached to a later Roll – proceedings of 2 courts held January and February 1432**

These courts were held in the tenth year of the reign of Henry VI, who had succeeded to the throne as a nine month old baby after the death of his father Henry V. Lordship of Cheltenham Manor, along with other English properties in France, had been transferred to the Crown by an Act of Parliament in 1414.<sup>3</sup> Henry V then conferred it to his aunt Elizabeth of Huntingdon and her second husband Sir John Cornwall for their lives and it was in their hands when these courts were held. There is no mention of them or their steward by name in the proceedings of these two courts, but Gwen Hart refers to letters written by them to bailiffs William Goderich and Walter French, requesting lampreys from the Severn.

The court proceedings follow the pattern as in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the numerous brewers are still being charged for each offence at the rate of 2d if they are within the borough or 3d if in one of the tithings. There are no brewing offences reported for the three Charlton tithings.

John Norton, the chaplain, had ‘raised the hue and cry’ after being attacked ‘by force and arms’ and having a mazer belonging to the lord worth 40s stolen. ‘Raising the hue and cry’ was done to alert people in the immediate area to a recent crime; public support in the pursuit and arrest of the criminal was obligatory, to ignore it rendered one liable to a fine.

An innovation in these courts is a summary of the receipts and expenses at the end of each court, for example: Total for perquisites 5s, for heriots 24s 4d and for fines 26s 8d. In expenses of the Steward and others 2s 11d.

### **16<sup>th</sup> Century Roll – proceedings of eight courts held between October 1500 and September 1501**

These courts were held during the reign of Henry VII, the first Tudor king, who succeeded to the throne after Richard III had been killed at the Battle of Bosworth. In the years since the previous courts of 1432, the country had suffered the long drawn-out Wars of the Roses, and witnessed the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471 and the killing of the young Edward V and his brother – the Princes in the Tower. Cheltenham Manor had passed to the Abbess of Syon in 1441 after the deaths of Elizabeth of Huntingdon and Sir John Cornwall and consequently had a ‘Lady of the Manor’. The proceedings of the first of these courts named William Grevyll as the head steward. This roll is in poor condition with the margins of each page wholly or partially missing. These margins state which tithing is involved so it is frustrating to read that a certain person had been elected as tithingman or ‘is sworn assizer to the lord King’ [presumably the ale-taster] but not to know which tithing is involved.

Some changes have occurred since the previous courts. The rolls are still written in Latin but in a different script and in a less abbreviated form and there is now a named jury of twelve men. It was members of the jury who reported tradesmen for selling unwholesome meat or fish. Interestingly the butchers, John Hall senior and junior and Richard and John Feyrant, were ordered, with the assent of the jury, to provide 'to each pauper a pennyworth of meat or halfpennyworth of mutton'. Seven of the brewers are now paying a sum of between 8d and 12d for a year's licence to brew; but there are also those who are fined for each offence, still at the rate of 2d if within the borough and 3d if in a tithing.

It seems that Cheltenham and district had recently suffered flooding as particular attention is being paid to the need to keep ditches cleared. The bailiff of the borough reported that the 'course of the common stream there has flooded from the mill of the Abbott of Cirencester as far as the return in default of John Ryce and William Latyner' who were ordered to clear it before the next court; the tenants holding land in Alston are ordered to clear out their ditches 'from the tenement of Richard Parsons as far as the tenement of Alice Lane'; John Sturmy is ordered to clean out the ditch at 'Brode Scherde'; a ditch at Sandfordes Mede is flooded and John Alexander must improve it before the next court; John Owtrege permitted a ditch at Dangersbryg to stay uncleaned so is ordered to clean it before the feast of All Saints under pain of 20d; the course of the common stream flooded so William Millener is ordered to scour the course; and at a later court 'William Millener has not yet cleared a certain ditch at Frogpittes as was ordered at the last court so is penalised 40d.'

Roads too needed to be maintained – the Asheley tithingman reported that 'a common road called Cawell is in default of the whole tithing, it should be sufficiently mended under penalty of 6s 8d. This road was later called Cowell Lane, and ran from Cudnall Street to cross the Chelt and then continue through the land now known as Charlton Park – remnants of it remain as the slip-road from Cudnall on to Cirencester Road and then into St Edmunds Way. [See Bulletin 11 p28 for a map]

There are noticeably more land transfers than previously, either through death or transactions, and they play a greater part in the court business with fewer suits brought between the tenants involving trespass or debt. Of particular interest to Charlton Kings are the following entries: Walter Alysaunder, who held three messuages in Cheltenham and Charlton, had died and his property remained in the hands of his widow; Thomas Atkyns paid a fine for a licence to marry Agnes Hawthorn, relict of Walter Hawthorn, and to hold one messuage with its appurtenances in Northefeld; Thomas Lane asked for a licence to marry Elizabeth Blyke widow of [...] Blyke and to have one messuage with appurtenances in Hamme; Walter Godryge has conceded to Margaret Hale 3 acres of arable land in Charlton in a field called Ryfeld for the term of twelve years; and finally Thomas Godryge receives from the lady of the manor 1 close in Hamme called Schabe Brechs lying in Hamfeld with Cuthambettes and 1 Breche next to Greneway called le Hays and 1 piece of land in Batildon with 2 headlands together there, he and his wife are to hold the land for their lives paying 4s yearly and 'all other accustomed services' and an

admission fine of 20s. [The name ‘Godryge’ is an alternative spelling to the more familiar ‘Goodrich’]

Other interesting land transfers concern the church in Cheltenham – a messuage and land in Newington was conceded ‘to the use of the Church of Cheltenham’; a burgage in Cheltenham is described as being between ‘the burgages of St Katherine on both sides’ and another one is between the burgage of the ‘senior bedel’ on the west and the burgage of St Katherine of Cheltenham on the east - St Katherine is believed to have been one the chantries in Cheltenham church.

## Conclusion

These court rolls help to fill the gaps between existing rolls at the National Archives and Gloucestershire Archives; the fourteenth century ones being particularly important as there is little local information about that century apart from the 1327 Lay Subsidy lists [see *Bulletin 7* for Mike Greet’s article] and one court roll of 1343<sup>4</sup>. The 1377/8 and 1384/5 courts were held towards the end of a traumatic century – there had been severe famines and animal murrains in the period from 1315 – 1321, the Black Death of 1348/9 which recurred, almost as disastrously, in the 1360s and 1375, and the Peasants Revolt against the Poll Tax in 1381, all set against a background of intermittent fighting in the Hundred Years War against France. National population figures show a steep decline from a peak in about 1300 to a trough in the 1350s followed by a gradual increase by the end of the century, and figures for the death rate resulting from the Black Death alone vary between from 25 to 40 per cent of the population<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately no Cheltenham court rolls have yet been found for the 1340s and ‘50s, so we do not know how the inhabitants of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings were affected. What can be said is that there were 53 inhabitants mentioned by name in the first of the 1334 court rolls compared with 80 in the first of the 1377 rolls. Whether these figures show a real increase in population is impossible to tell, but it seems fair to presume that they do not indicate a drastic fall.

If we cannot determine population numbers from these rolls or the effect of the Black Death in this immediate area, we can still glean a considerable amount of information about the ordinary people of the period. The nation may have been riven by wars and its leaders obsessed by power politics, but life for the inhabitants of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings revolved around more local matters – a neighbour has encroached on another’s land; a dog has killed some sheep; a long-standing debt has still not been paid; the beer for sale is too weak or too expensive; that woman is a common scold; and the roads are flooded again because the ditches have not been cleared - it all sounds rather familiar.

### Footnotes:

1 – GA D7661/28, 29 and 30.

2 & 3 – *A History of Cheltenham* by Gwen Hart.

4 - A court roll held at the National Archives and summarised by Jill Barlow

5 – *The countryside of Medieval England* edited by Astill and Grant

## THE PROTHEROUGH FAMILY

By Margaret Hulbert

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The Protherough name was first noted in Charlton Kings when on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1828 James, born in Upton upon Severn, married Ann Morgan, born in Merthyr Tydfil, at St Mary's. We wonder how they came to be in Charlton Kings. For the next 100 years the name Protherough was rarely found outside Charlton Kings, making it a very easy name to research.

Documentation shows that James and Ann had five children: John, Charles, George, Mary and Frances. We follow Charles who married Sarah Keen from Colesbourne in 1854. They ran a Coal Yard in Horsefair Street. Only two children were found: Charles and Frederick. Charles senior died in 1902 in Gloucester Lunatic Asylum, while Sarah's death is reported in St Mary's January 1913 parish magazine. Frederick married Matilda Burrows (Burroughs) in 1878. They lived in Church Piece and raised 11 children: Charles, Ernest, Emma, Alice, Sarah, Edith, William, George, Lavinia, Thomas and Hilda.

Ernest, the second son, married Alice and they had two children: Victor and Ella. In 1919 they set up the 'Honey Pot', a sweet and tea shop in Stow on the Wold, with Alice making her own ice-cream! The shop is still popular and being cared for by Ernest's grand-daughter Lynette. Emma, the eldest daughter, married Thomas and moved to Bristol, where they had three children: Frederick, William and Maud. Her younger sister, Emma, married Charles and had three children: Frederick, Robert and Lillian. Robert was killed in the Second World War and his grandson, Nigel, in the Falklands conflict along with 'Colonel H'. By coincidence Robert's widow died on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

Among Frederick and Matilda's younger children, we know that George died when he was five and is buried with his parents in St Mary's churchyard. Lavinia married Ernest and emigrated to Detroit in USA, where they had one son James, who was a lecturer at Massachusetts University. Thomas married Mary and had two children: Kenneth and Betty. Thomas was a chauffeur and Mary a dinner lady at Charlton Kings Senior School. Little is known of Alice, Sarah, William and Hilda as yet.

Going back to Charles, the eldest son of Frederick and Matilda, he married Charlotte Ellen, daughter of George and Ellen Simmons, in St Mary's Charlton Kings on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1908. They lived Fern Cottage, the house next door to St Mary's Hall in New Street. They had five children: Cecil, Vera, John (Jack), Lillian and Rhoda.

When I, their grand-daughter, realised that 2008 marked 100 years from their wedding the idea of a family gathering was born. St Mary's Hall was booked and what started as just a small gathering of grandchildren, with their families, grew to include several nieces and nephews and their families. In all 51 members of the family sat down to 'Afternoon Tea', coming from



France, Islay (Scotland), Colchester, Great Missenden, Bristol and various Gloucestershire villages. Unfortunately no Protheroughs live in Charlton Kings any more. Vera Lawrence was the last to leave in 2007 and we had hoped that she, as the last remaining child, would be able to attend but unfortunately she died in October 2008.

All the family contributed photographs and life stories, which were well scrutinised, copied up and filed. There was even a baby's nightdress worn by Charlotte's children, but the old photos were a real surprise. We had seen ones of Charles and Charlotte, because although Charles had died, Charlotte played a large part in the grandchildren's lives. But few of us had seen a photograph of our great grandmother Matilda or her mother Mary (Burrows). We would now like to see photos of our great grandfather and our Protherough great grandparents.

It was a wonderful afternoon, a chance to put faces to names of those we hadn't met, which we hope to repeat in a few years. We also hope to widen our family to include all James' and Ann's descendants. I am sure Charles and Charlotte would be thrilled to thin their descendants celebrated their anniversary.

Photograph taken at Charles and Charlotte's wedding on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1908  
outside Fern Cottage in New Street

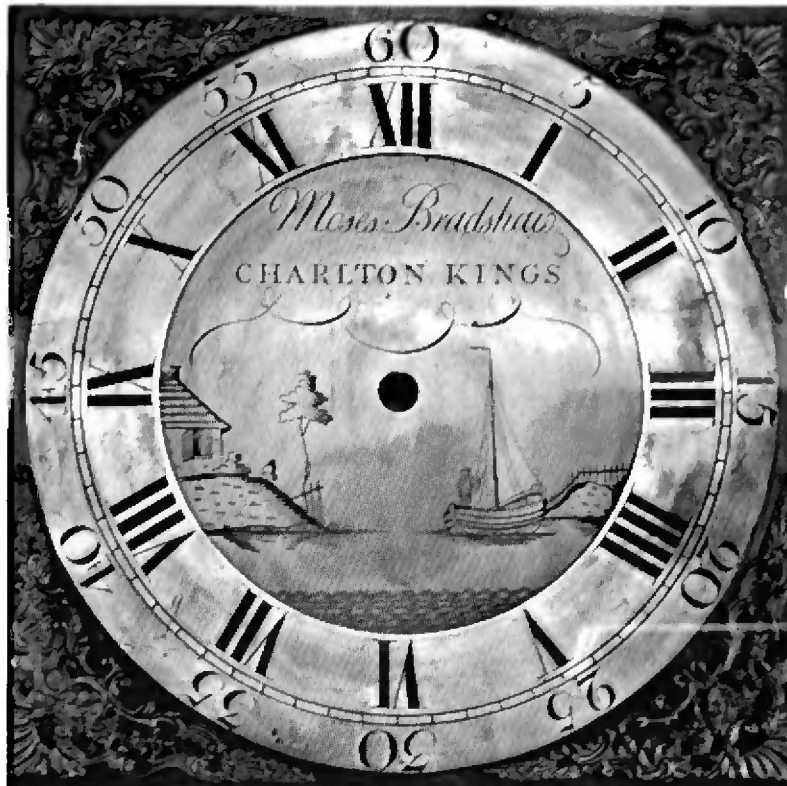


## MOSES BRADSHAW CLOCKMAKER

By Jane Sale

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I am grateful to Dr Steven Blake for sending me an extract from the April 2008 issue of *Clocks Magazine* which was an article entitled 'An Unrecorded Maker Moses Bradshaw of Charlton Kings'. The article is by Brian Loomes, an acknowledged expert in the field of antique clocks and watches. In it he referred to an enquiry he had received from a correspondent interested in Gloucestershire clocks who had a clock dial and movement signed by a Moses Bradshaw of Charlton Kings. He also mentioned that Cheltenham Museum had a loose dial of very similar nature signed by the same man. Loomes describes the clock dials, with their tiny engraved vignette of an estuary scene with a building on an island and a boat, as being typical of those engraved in the Bristol area in the third and fourth quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He suggested that they had probably been supplied to the clock-maker as a ready-finished engraved dial, with the name of the customer included.



The loose dial presented to Cheltenham Museum in 1925 by S D Scott Esq.  
 Photograph courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

But who was Moses Bradshaw? This maker's name does not appear in Graham Dowler's book *Gloucestershire Clock and Watch Makers* nor in any other works of reference held by Loomes, so he decided to try and find out more. He hoped that the combination of names Moses and Bradshaw coupled with a Gloucestershire location would be sufficiently uncommon to be able to pin the maker down, but he quickly found that it was not so simple. As Loomes wrote 'Wrong! In fact I found four Moses Bradshaws in the right location!' Those of us familiar with family history research will know the feeling. Loomes had found a Moses baptised in Northleach in 1716, son of a Moses; then another one baptised in Leckhampton in 1752 again the son of a Moses; and finally a fourth Moses baptised in Charlton Kings in 1778, again the son of a Moses. Were these all the same family and was one of them the clockmaker? Loomes had obviously based his research on the IGI [International Genealogical Index]. With more local resources available I decided to take up this interesting challenge.

*Charlton Kings Probate Records 1600 – 1800*<sup>1</sup> was my starting point and I was delighted to find five Bradshaw entries including one for a Moses. The first entry was that of the will of Margaret Bradshaw of Ham widow, dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 1754 and proved 18<sup>th</sup> December 1756. She named her son Hugh and daughter Priscilla Chapman as executors. She left the residue of her estate to them and money and goods to her son Moses and her Heming grandchildren. A check with the IGI proved that this was indeed the family from Northleach – Moses and Margaret had had the following children: Anne who later married John Hemming, Moses, Hugh, Priscilla who later married Giles Chapman and Mary. Our Parish Registers showed that the family had moved to Charlton Kings sometime before 1744 when Mary was buried on 6<sup>th</sup> June, followed by her father Moses in January 1745/6.

Another entry in the Probate Records is the will of Hugh Bradshaw of Ham yeoman, dated 14 August 1768 and proved 7 June 1771, who named his wife Mary and son William as executors. Hugh left, among other bequests, 'my customary property of the manors of Ashley, otherwise Charlton Kings, and of Cheltenham'. *Bulletin 22* includes a family tree for this branch of the Bradshaws and a description of the land they held. *Bulletin 45* (pp10 and 11) states that Hugh was tenant of Old Ham Farm in 1752 and by 1802 it was held by Hugh's sons William and Joseph Bradshaw. Also in the Probate Records is the will of William Oliffe of Ham dated 1767, who named Hugh Bradshaw as his executor. By the time the will was proved in 1777, Hugh had died and administration was granted to his widow Mary Bradshaw. Lastly there is mention of Moses Bradshaw owing 3s 10d to Bartley/Berkeley Wilson when he died on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1777. We have evidence therefore that members of the Bradshaw family found in Northleach by Loomes were living in Charlton Kings between 1744 and 1777, but was one of the Moses mentioned the clockmaker?

Another local resource are the Prinn papers at Gloucestershire Archives, which include Rent Books kept by William Prinn from 1744 to 1782 and then by his son-in-law Dodington Hunt from 1785 to 1821.<sup>2</sup> The first book, as well as recording rents paid by tenants, has various loose slips of paper within it, one of which was the lease taken out by a Moses Bradshaw dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 1767. It reads as follows: Let to Moses Bradshaw my House Orchard and Garden together with the Barn and Stable there (the Copice by the Lane's side and the close of arable

land now in the occupation of Mr John Gale (always excepted) late of Thomas Robins for half a year from Michaelmas next to Lady Day 1768 for thirty shillings and from Lady Day 1768 for one year from thence ensuing at the yearly rent of five pounds payable half yearly. The lease is signed by William Prinn and Moses Bradshaw. This is the house in Spring Bottom which Thomas Robins the artist had inherited from Jacob Porteret the Huguenot fan painter and had sold to William Prinn earlier in 1767.

11 Sept<sup>r</sup> 1767  
 Let to moor Bradshaw my House Orchard and  
 Garden together with the Man and Stable there (the  
 Copie by the Land side and the Close of arable  
 Land now in the Occupation of Mr John Gale always  
 excepted) late of Thomas Robins, for half a year  
 from Michaelmas next to Lady Day 1768 for thirty  
 shillings, and from Lady Day 1768 for one  
 year from thence ensuing at the yearly Rent  
 of five pounds payable half yearly. Tenant  
 not to set any part of the premises to any  
 other person without permission and to com-  
 mit no Waste upon the premises, Landlord  
 to cut any Timber or other Wood thereon  
 at pleasure and Landlord to keep the premises  
 in repair during the said Term, and to put  
 the Windows into repair and the Tenant to  
 keep and Levee them on. Tenant to spend  
 all Soil Duing and Compost arising from  
 the premises thereon. Witness our hands  
 the day and year first above written.  
 William Prinn  
 Moses Bradshaw

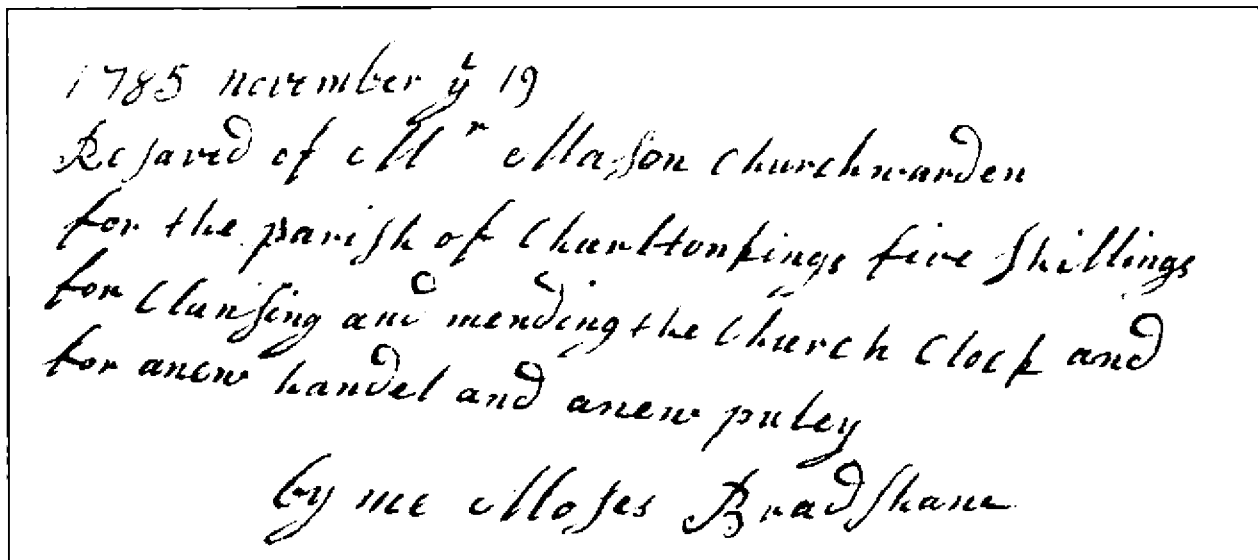
Returning to Loomes' research in the IGI, he had found that the Moses baptised in Northleach in 1716 (Loomes calls him Moses I) had married a Mary Green in Churchdown on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1744. They subsequently had three children baptised there, then five baptised in Leckhampton, including a Moses II in 1751, then two more in Charlton Kings in 1758 and '61. It seems therefore that Prinn's tenant in 1767 must have been Moses I – his father had died in 1745/6 and

Moses II would only have been about 16. The tenancy continued in the name of Moses Bradshaw until Michaelmas 1794, but whether by Moses I or II is impossible to tell. Our Parish Registers do not include a burial for a Moses Bradshaw before 1813, and that was for a man aged 34, which would have been Moses III, the son of Moses II. The only clue comes from an entry in the rent book for September 1773, when the rent was paid by Mary Bradshaw. Perhaps Moses I had died by then and Mary his widow was the tenant?

My next search was through the Church Wardens' Accounts and those for the period 1771 to 1790 proved very fruitful<sup>3</sup>. The first mention of a Moses Bradshaw came in November 1774 when a bill for £1.7s.0d from him was paid but without any details. However a later one dated 1777 is much more helpful:

'November ye 7 for making a knew wheel for the Church clock 6s  
for clensing 2s 6d  
for three knew collers and a stay to the pendulum 1s  
for a new wier 1s  
The Whole is 10s 6d'

Further entries from 1780 through to 1795 for 'cleaning the clock', 'mending the clock', 'mending the dial', 'new fly for church clock' etc., with signed receipts. See the example below which includes 'clansing and mending the Church clock and for anew handel and anew puley'.



1785 november y<sup>e</sup> 19  
Receaved of Mr<sup>r</sup> Ellison churchwarden  
for the parish of Chanttonkings five Shillings  
for clensing and mending the Church clock and  
for anew handel and anew puley  
By mee Moses Bradshaw

A comparison between the signatures on the lease and on the churchwardens' receipts make me feel that these are by two different people. In addition it seems unlikely that a man born in 1716 would still be mending church clocks in 1785 – 1795. I feel confident therefore that our

clockmaker is Moses II, baptised in 1751 in Leckhampton and then moving with his family to Charlton Kings about 1767.

There remains the problem of how and where Moses II was trained. Loomes discusses this point in his article and mentions the Washbourne dynasty of clockmakers who plied their trade in Gloucester for several generations. He concludes, however, that there is nothing in the Bradshaw clock to suggest that he had learned clockmaking from them. One possibility is linked with the fact that Bradshaw lived in what had been Thomas Robins' house. Is this just chance, or could the families have known each other or even been related? Both families had daughters named Priscilla, a not particularly common name at the time. Robins worked mainly in Bath, though maintaining his Spring Bottom house in Charlton Kings and returning there to carry out local commissions. He had only sold the house in 1767, the year that Moses I signed the lease for it, and was to die in Bath in January 1770. He would doubtless have had connections there and would have been able to arrange a suitable master for Moses II's apprenticeship. A study of Bath clockmakers and their styles might provide the answer.

#### References:

1. *Charlton Kings Probate Records 1600 – 1800* edited by Joan Paget and Tony Sale and published by the Charlton Kings Local History Society in 2004
2. GA D7661 Box 8/5 & /6
3. P76 CW 2/4 and 2/5

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## BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

Our Society is an affiliated member of the BALH and as such our individual members would be welcome to join any of the Association's activities at members' price. Visits are arranged for small groups to less accessible collections and places. These visits are advertised on the website [[www.balh.co.uk](http://www.balh.co.uk)] along with booking forms and details as they become available. Alternatively details can be obtained from BALH, PO Box 6549, Somerset Herbert, Ashbourne, DE6 5WH

Examples for this year are:

March 4<sup>th</sup> – The Apothecaries Hall and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

April – Nottingham University Archives

May 13<sup>th</sup> – Verulamium, St Alban's Cathedral and St Alban's Museum

June 6<sup>th</sup> – Lecture on Almshouses by Professor Nigel Goose at Friends' Meeting House, London

July 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> – Local History Conference at Leicester University