

CHARLTON KINGS

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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2012



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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, Charlton Kings. Visitors are always welcome at a charge of £2.

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Cover: The snuff box presented by Harry Villar to Fred Archer, England's champion jockey, on his winning of The Derby in 1878. It shows the jockey and the winning horse Silvio.

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Editorial

In 2011 the Society sadly lost one of its most active, energetic and reliable members. Jane Sale and her husband Tony came to live in Charlton Kings in 1985. They were soon closely involved in the Local History Society and her first article appeared in 1987. She became Chairman of the Society in 1991 and served for three years, during which time she also studied for and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) at The Open University. She retired from the Chairman's post in 1994 but came back for a further year when the

position unexpectedly fell vacant. In 1996 she received the Cheltenham Arts Council's Award for her outstanding contribution to the Arts in the Town. In 2003 she took over as Editor of a new-look, annual, sixty-page Research Bulletin. She took great pride in producing a journal which was not only interesting but also attractive. A look back over the many years Jane was a member reveals that a Bulletin with less than three of her own articles was a rarity. Jane, helpful, pragmatic and effective, was one of the driving forces of the Society. We shall really miss her.

We also record with regret the death on 1st November, after a serious stroke three years ago, of one of our longstanding members, Ron Phillips. Although born a few miles north, he was a Charltonian all his life and had an unequalled knowledge and pride in the history and geography of the Village. As an artist, he contributed to our Bulletins, publications, and many posters. In 1974 he produced a pictorial map of the then Charlton Kings to mark the abolition of the Urban District Council and its absorption into Cheltenham. With the kind permission of Ron's family, an attractive framed limited edition of 50 has been produced and has been very well received. It serves as a fitting memorial to the man and his skills. At his funeral in November he was well described as "a lovely man", three simple words which any man would be proud to have as an epitaph.

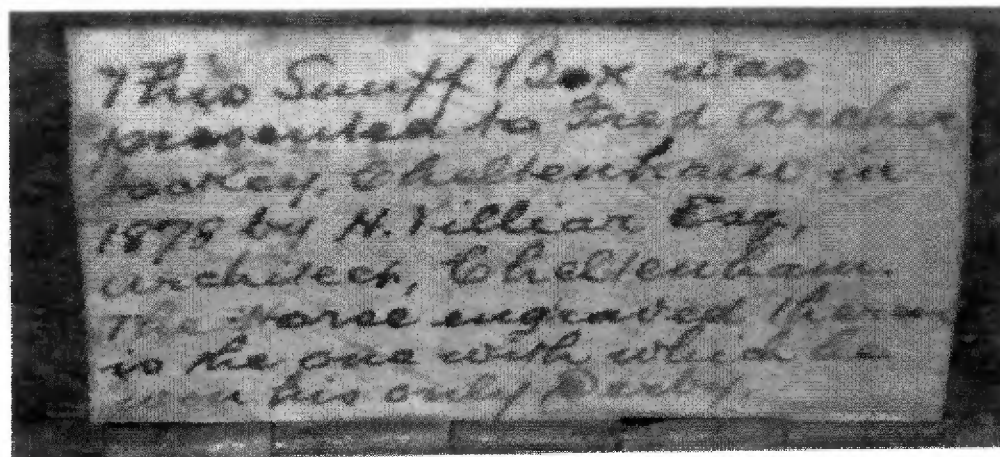
One feature of the past year has been the increasing number of people contacting the web site for information about their relatives. These included researchers from Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and USA, as well as all parts of the UK. While this certainly generates a deal of extra work, the results can be most satisfying, particularly when independent queries about the same person arrive. It was a pleasure to introduce to each other for the first time two descendant cousins of our Preacher Extraordinary, John Burgh Rochfort, and when I passed the queries of two separate descendants of the Pates family to our own Pates expert, Eileen Allen, she found all three were related. In this connection, we have now had two separate queries from New Zealand about Marcus Jacob Sisson, who lies in St. Mary's churchyard. We know his son emigrated to New Zealand - could the inquirers be related? One other oddity in this respect: in the last year two requests for information about different Charlton Kings antecedents have come from Horsham, in Sussex, where the editor of this Bulletin spent his early years. Local History has its surprising moments.

The lead article in this year's Bulletin also stems from an inquiry about one Harry Villar, which exploded into an extraordinary story. However, the content wanders widely: the story of a family escaping from the German invasion of France in 1940, seen through the eyes of a 14 year-old boy, now resident in Charlton Kings, provides a unique insight into what was a menacing time. Following in the steps of Dr. Anthea Jones' Lloyd George Survey, Brian Lickman has provided a preliminary look at another wartime event, the 1941-43 National Farm Survey of England and Wales and how it saw Charlton Kings. Research into houses and their occupants, the arrival of trams in Charlton Kings, the 1775 equivalent of satnav, some tricky local legal stuff, and an interesting 1827 local will provide the light relief.

THE TWO LIVES OF HARRY VILLAR

PREFACE

On the 7th of April 2011 Mr John Wisdom contacted the Society's website. John, who lives in Sherborne, Dorset, with his wife Beverley, was seeking information about links between Fred Archer, the Victorian Champion Jockey from Prestbury, and the local auctioneers James Villar and Sons: in particular, his interest was focussed on one of the sons, Harry Villar. He explained that his wife had some time ago been given a wooden snuff box as a present. Inside there was an inscription:



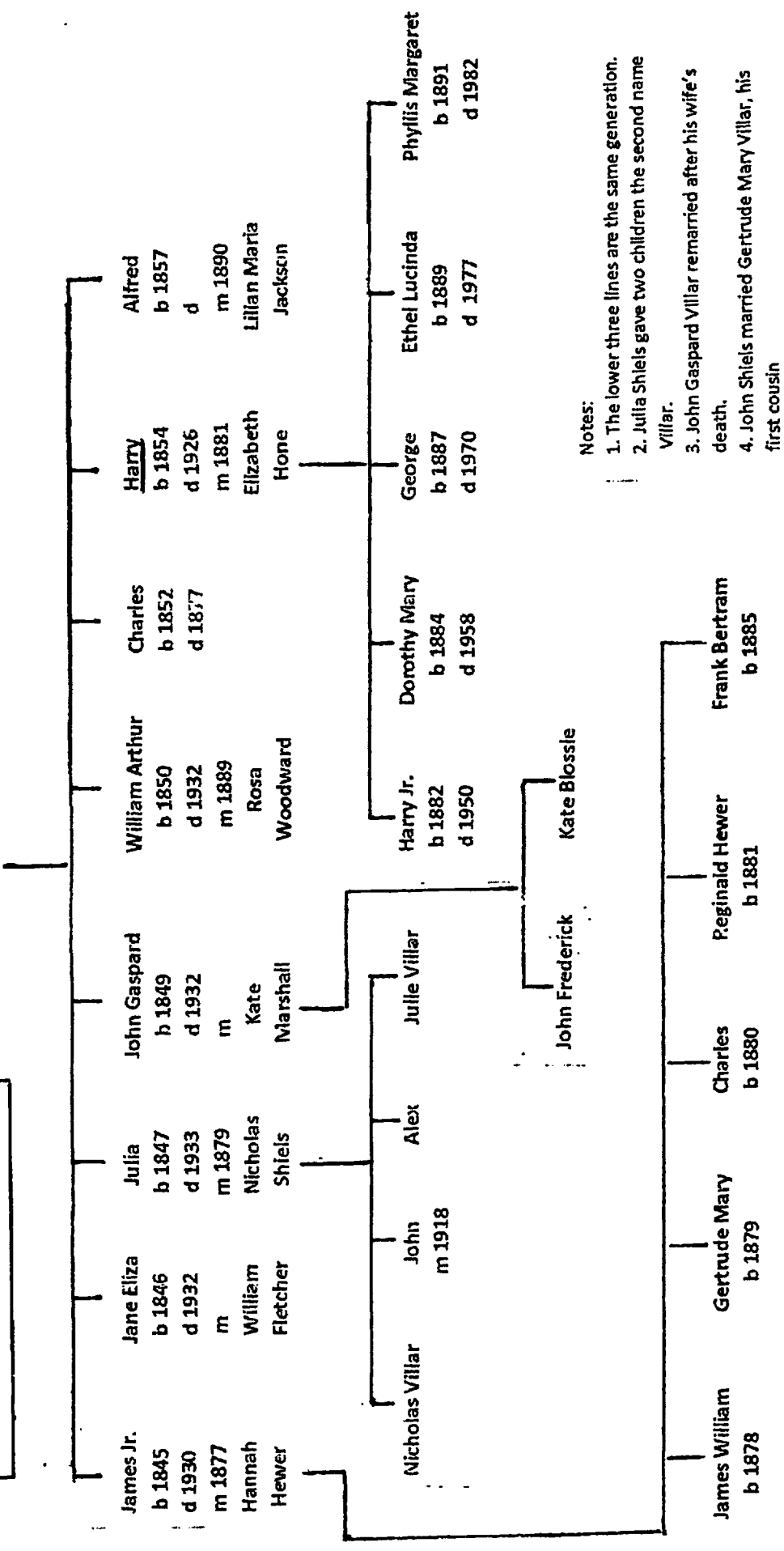
"This Snuff Box was presented to Fred Archer, Jockey, Cheltenham in 1878 by H. Villiar Esq, Architect, Cheltenham. The Horse engraved thereon is the one with which he won his only Derby."

Initially, they had no knowledge of who Fred Archer was and took little notice of it. Only later, when John found out that Fred Archer was a National and International hero in his day, did he think that Harry Villar, or Villiar, as it was misspelled in the inscription, might also be worthy of some research. Peter Clifford, our webmaster, passed the request to your Editor and so began six months of intensive and fascinating research which involved four weekend visits to Cheltenham for John and Beverley and a continual and voluminous exchange of emails, for the life of Harry Villar turned out to be extraordinary in its own right. The result is a joint effort by your Editor and John and Beverley, with the former doing some of the local research and the writing and the latter showing an amazing flair and a relentless appetite for internet research. The team hope you will enjoy the story.

On 7 November 2011 the Wisdoms put the snuffbox up for sale by auction in London. Without authentication of the provenance it was estimated at £60 to £80. However, the research done by us into Harry Villar's life was more than sufficient to convince the auction house of its provenance and it was catalogued at £600 to £800. It was sold for £1,100.

**HARRY VILLAR
AND
HIS FAMILY**

James Villar Sr.
b 1821
d 1884
m 1844
Mary Jane
Bridgewater



- Notes:
1. The lower three lines are the same generation.
 2. Julia Shiels gave two children the second name Villar.
 3. John Gaspard Villar remained after his wife's death.
 4. John Shiels married Gertrude Mary Villar, his first cousin

THE TWO LIVES OF HARRY VILLAR

David O'Connor, John Wisdom and Beverley Wisdom

Harry Villar was born in Leckhampton on 18th November 1854 to James Villar and his wife Mary Jane, the sixth of eight children, five of whom were boys. His parents had married in 1844 and his mother was the daughter of a prominent Cheltenham auctioneer, estate and commission agent, W. H. Bridgewater. His father James had begun his life as a farmer at Piccadilly Farm in Prestbury. By 1850 he had moved to Leckhampton, where he was described first as a farmer and dairyman and then as a farmer, dairyman, corn and hop dealer and maltster, having acquired a malt house in Cheltenham. However, by 1851 his businesses had failed. He moved into Close Cottage in Shurdington and then into lodgings at the Royal Oak Inn in Bredon and a petition for bankruptcy was raised. Subsequent proceedings revealed that the petition was fraudulent: the petitioner was his own brother-in-law, William Bridgewater, he had sold many of his effects immediately before the petition and made arrangements with his relatives to reduce the payments to actual creditors¹. By this time he had three children under five and another on the way and it is not clear what happened to his dependants. The 1851 census found James Villar in Worcester Prison at the age of 30, awaiting an appearance at the Worcester County Court on 12th March. It was not the best of starts but James managed somehow to achieve an annulment of his bankruptcy. By 1852 he was back at Leckhampton Farm and pursuing a new career, as an auctioneer and appraiser and land and general agent, with an office at 1, Portland Street in Cheltenham. This was successful, and even international: in June 1860 he was advertising in an Australian newspaper² the auction of 350 ewes of all ages, 400 ram and ewe lambs and 50 shearling rams, average ram's fleece 12 to 17 pounds, the property of an estate at Salperton Park, near Andoversford. Australian flockmasters were advised to contact Mr James Villar in Cheltenham. Five years later in 1865 an Australian newspaper was reporting the sale prices of Cotswold sheep on the property of Mr. William Hewer of Northleach, whose flock was regarded as the leading one in the district. The sale was conducted by Mr Villar.³

The Villars' social position is unclear. Villar is a common Spanish name but they claimed membership of the family of the distinguished French soldier, diplomat and statesman, Claude Louis Hector, Duc de Villars. Born in 1653, he was created a Marshal of France and among many campaigns, fought against Marlborough at Malplaquet. The Duke died in 1734. By this pedigree, the Villars should have been Gentry and there is a record of a Reverend John Gaspard Villar, James' uncle, one time Vicar of Hoggston and running a private school at Bishops Cleeve in the late 1700s: reverends in those days were usually from Gentry families.

¹ *London Daily News* – 24 October 1850

² *The Hobart Town Mercury*, 10 June 1860.

³ *South Australian Register* – 29 December 1865. James Villar's eldest son James married Mr Hewer's daughter Hannah in 1877 and they came to live in Charlton Kings.

One of Harry's brothers was named John Gaspard, which certainly makes the connection. However, at this stage, this branch of the family appeared to have slipped a little. Nevertheless, it is known that both John Gaspard and William, Harry's brothers, were educated privately at Hygeia House School in Prestbury and it is likely that Harry was also.

The Prestbury that Harry and his brothers grew up in was a village deeply concerned with horses, particularly the racing and the hunting variety. Nationally, horse racing fever was spreading through the country and simple wagers on horses had been replaced by bookmakers. In the 1850s, 62 new horse-racing meetings were added to the calendar and this intensity was accompanied by an explosion of gambling in England. There had been racing on Cleeve Hill since 1818 and the 1828 Ordnance Survey map shows a figure of eight circuit and a grandstand. Consequent upon the Reverend Francis Close's vitriolic sermon, "*The Evil Consequences of Attending the Racecourse, Exposed*" in June 1827, the 1829 meeting was disrupted by his zealous followers and the grandstand burnt down. The course was abandoned but a new race-course was established at Prestbury Park in 1831 and during the 19th century Prestbury maintained strong associations with racing. Dr Fothergill, the trainer of the Prince of Wales' steeplechasers, had his stables there and Tom Oliver, who rode three Grand National winners, trained at Prestbury. The landlord of the "Kings Arms" inn in the High Street was William Archer, a successful jockey who won the 1858 Grand National, and the father of Fred Archer, England's Champion Jockey, a man who headed the winning jockey's list from 1873 to 1885 and who won 34% of all the 8,084 races he started, including five Derbys.⁴ Fred Archer's reputation was immense nationally but even more so in Prestbury and the "King's Arms" was a very popular meeting-place. It was also opposite Hygeia House School, which, in addition to the Villar boys, was attended by the young Fred Archer, who became, in the language of the time, one of their chums and spoke of his friends, the Villars.⁵ The presentation of the snuff-box to Fred Archer by Harry in 1878 confirmed this relationship and William Archer gave the whip which he used to win the Grand National to William Villar.⁶ These connections spread to include marriage: Fred Archer's indentures as a jockey were signed by a prominent Cheltenham lawyer, Frederick Marshall,⁷ whose daughter Kate d'Egville later married Harry's brother, John Gaspard Villar.

However, there was a bad side: it was an open secret that confederacies of jockeys, trainers and bookmakers existed and there was scandal that jockeys could lay heavy bets, a practice that Fred Archer indulged in, once putting £7,000 on a horse that lost. It was alleged that he had participated in the occasional betting coup by pulling a race⁸ and it was believed that for a period of his life he was acting as the adviser to a betting syndicate⁹. Moreover, his brother

⁴ *Victoria County History – "A History of the County of Gloucestershire – Vol. 8 1968*

⁵ *The Life of Fred Archer – E.M. Humphris, 2006*

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Cheltenham Racecourse – Alan Lee, 1985*

⁹ *Fred Archer – His Life and Times – John Welcome*

Charlie, a trainer, had had his licence to train at Newmarket refused by the Jockey Club¹⁰. Harry's friendship with the famous jockey and the high risk, big money world he lived in brought him into close contact with wealthy gamblers, both ruthless and amoral, people who could make big wins but, unlike Harry, could also afford to lose.

During the 1860s James Villar Senior made steady progress as a successful auctioneer and land agent and appeared to have overcome the bankruptcy troubles of his early life. He seems to have avoided any stigma and been fully accepted by the community and indeed, he became quite prominent in local society. He was founder and first Chairman of the Farmers' Club Room (Corn Exchange Company) and a Director of the Plough Hotel Company. In 1873, despite his past history, he became Treasurer to the Cotswold Hunt, succeeding no less a person than William Nash Skillicorne,¹¹ and by 1875 he had become Chairman of the Tradesmen's (or Town) Committee of the Hunt. The Cotswold, like many others, was a mix of Gentry and tradesmen, mostly in the shape of local farmers, who supported fox-hunting. At Hunt Dinners, the announcement by the Master of how many brace of foxes had been killed would be met with loud cheering from the farmers, and in return there would be a toast to "The Farmers". The function of the Tradesmen's Committee and its Chairman was to support the Hunt financially and the Chairman would announce what he had collected at the Annual Dinner, the aim being as much as £500, which was seen as a vital contribution to the Hunt. All the family were closely involved with the Hunt: at the 1881 Annual Dinner, the brothers William, Alfred, John Gaspard and Harry attended, and John sang an entertaining song. William, who stayed in the Prestbury area all his life, became a horse dealer by profession and also a successful steeplechaser, on whose races Fred Archer placed bets. In his later years he acted as Clerk of the Course to local events. Later in his life, John Gaspard wrote how, as a child, he was allowed to ride to hounds one day a week. This was indeed a family of horse enthusiasts.

James Villar's success through the 1870s was marked by a move of the family to Charlton Kings, where Sir William Russell's financial difficulties and bankruptcy had presented a large number of opportunities. Much of the Russell estate was mortgaged and in 1876 James Villar first rented, and later bought, Newcourt House, which was to become a family home. He also rented Southfield and the 294 acres of Southfield Farm, Mordiford Lodge on the London Road, next to the entrance to Ashley Manor and six acres of land named Green Lye and Hencroft near his house. His eldest son, James Jr., who was pursuing his own business in Cambray as an architect and surveyor, moved to Elborough Cottage in Cudnall and later made his family home at Iffley in the London Road. Until 1879 the Auctioneer's business remained in James Villar's name alone but with incipient illness, he brought in his unmarried sons Harry, John Gaspard and James Jr. as partners and the firm was renamed James Villar and Sons. Initially Harry looked after the Bristol part of the business but in 1880 he purchased a firm in Wotton-under-Edge, though he subsequently rejoined his father. However, James

¹⁰ *The Graphic* – 5 January 1884

¹¹ *Cheltenham's first Mayor*

Senior was injured in a serious gig accident: he retired in 1882 and died on 8th July 1884 at Newcourt House. He was buried in a family vault in St. Mary's churchyard. There was a quiet family funeral: one newspaper obituary remembered him as one who united the highest ability as a businessman with social qualities which endeared him to all and who had a wide circle of friends among the commercial and agricultural classes. Another wrote that as an auctioneer he had few superiors and that it was gratifying that the mantle fell on his sons, so that his memory would be perpetuated. It took but one month after James' death to show how badly that mantle had fallen.

In July 1876 Harry Villar, aged 22, had been gazetted as a sub-lieutenant in the 10th Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteer Corps, he being described as a gentleman. Two years after becoming a partner in the firm, he married. His bride was Elizabeth Hone, the youngest daughter of the late Henry Hone, of Stoke Orchard, and they married in the Parish Church at Cleeve on 23rd August 1881. It was to all appearances a good marriage, in financial terms. Henry Hone owned 202 acres of land with a rental value of over £500 a year¹². After the wedding, Harry resigned his commission as a lieutenant in the Volunteers, possibly to save money, since officers were expected to bear considerable costs. The first hint that all was not well in James Villar and Sons had come in 1879, when the formal dissolution of the partnership between James Senior, James Jr and John Gaspard was published in the London Gazette. John Gaspard was planning to start his own rival firm, James Jr was pursuing his own course as an architect, Harry was effectively left on his own and the firm became James Villar and Son. Nevertheless, in 1880 Harry Villar, Auctioneer, was formally acting as Trustee in the liquidation of a Gloucestershire farmer, it being common for appraisers of land to act in such cases and things appeared to be normal. They were not.

On 23rd August 1884, a few weeks after the death of Harry's father, Cheltenham newspapers informed a shocked town that Harry Villar, trading as James Villar and Son, had stopped all payments and a receiving order had been issued on his petition. He had presided at a large sale in Cirencester market on Monday and had other important engagements on his list; but on Tuesday, when the cheques given to stockowners at Monday's sale were presented, the catastrophe came. The Cheltenham Free Press asked, "*How could this be? A young man succeeds to one of the largest concerns in Gloucestershire, with a turn-over of £100,000 a year, and after two years and a half, acknowledges a deficit of some £15,000. He says he took over a deficit of £5,000 and had paid £8,300 to money lenders. The crash has come and it is difficult to believe that the real explanation of the disaster has yet been offered.*" The heading of this piece was "*Odds and Ends*", surely a veiled allusion to betting. It was the newspaper's way of saying that it had a pretty good idea what the real explanation of the disaster might be.

Alongside and in sharp contrast to the reports of this sensation, the Cheltenham newspapers carried the many advertisements for John Gaspard Villar, Harry's brother, whose auctioneer

¹² *The Return of Owners of Land – 1873*

HORSE SHOW AT CHELTENHAM.

The second annual show for Cheltenham and the West of England commenced on Tuesday, in the Fittville Grounds, Cheltenham. The exhibition was under distinguished patronage, the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Northwick, and the Marquis of Worcester being among the patrons, the list of which also includes Sir G. Courington, Bart., Mr. C. J. Monk, M.P., Mr. J. R. Yorke, M.P., and Mr. A. J. Stanton, M.P., while Lord Fitzhardinge is the president, and Baron de Forrières, M.P.; Colonel Kingscote, C.B., M.P., Captain Sumner, and Mr. R. Richardson Gardner, M.P., are numbered amongst the vice-presidents. The committee was a strong and influential one, and the honorary secretary, Mr. Henry J. Cochrane, was the right man in the right place—courteous, energetic, and a capital organiser and administrator. Ten silver cups and about \$500 were offered as premiums, and with such an able committee, and with such inducements to owners to compete, it is not a matter for surprise that the show was one of the best, both as regards quantity and quality, that has been held in this part of the country for many years. There were altogether 176 entries, and one gratifying feature in connexion with the gathering was the very few empty boxes to be met with, only about half-a-dozen competitors having neglected to fill their engagements, and the quality of the animals was eminently satisfactory. The work of making the awards occupied the attention of the judges until after four o'clock, and the prolonged process—it commenced at eleven o'clock—was rather tedious to the spectators, who heartily welcomed the relief afforded by the jumping competition. The horses had plenty of work set them to do, being required to negotiate a fence, a stiff bit of timber, a stone wall, a tall gate, a double jump, and a big water jump. For the prizes given for the best jumper not exceeding 15 hands high, there were seven horses entered, the names of the owners being Messrs. T. H. Quarrell, Le Terrier, Hobbs, Broomhall, R. Hanke, Grundy, and Villar. The first prize was allotted to Mr. Quarrell and the second to Mr. Le Terrier. The stewards of the ring were Captain St. Clair-Ford, Mr. H. Villar, and Mr. R. H. Mill, and the judges were Colonel Luttrell, Badgeworth-court, Axbridge; Colonel Barlow, Hasketon, Woodridge, Suffolk; and Mr. W. Dester, Sockington, Tamworth. Annexed is the

PRIZE LIST.

The judges resumed their work on Wednesday. The first competition was for the best pony above 12 and not exceeding 13 hands. The first prize was taken by J. B. Griffiths, Esq., The Grove, Horley, Surrey, with a dun gelding, Chedworth, Sir F. Ford, Bart., Cheltenham, was second with gray mare, Eloise. A general parade of the horses on the show ground then took place, after which the prizes for the best jumper in Class 8 were competed for. Mr. T. Chauce Quarrell, Starfield, Worcester, took first honors with his brown gelding Victor, and Capt. Sumner, M. F. H., Cheltenham, was second with his bay gelding, Kelroy. For the best jumper in classes 18, 20, and 22, there was a keen competition, the first prize eventually being taken by Mr. Nathaniel Percy Milne, Southfield, Tewkesbury, with his bay gelding, Bristol. The second position was gained by Mr. J. B. Griffiths, The Grove, Horley, Surrey, with Chadworth. During the latter event an accident happened to a rider, which, fortunately, was not attended by any serious results, in trying to take the water-jump the rider of Mr. Kingscote's pony was thrown heavily to the ground, and at the same time being stunned the man did not appear to have received any serious injury. In Class 15, for the best harness cob, above 14 hands, and not exceeding 15, W. B. Bingham, Esq., Cheltenham, was first, and Mr. Thomas T. Forest, Northleach, second. Class 17 was keenly contested, Mr. T. Archer being first, and Mr. George Hona, Stoke Orchard, second.

Class 5. Mare (hunter), with foal—1st, Mr. G. E. Fletcher, Sibleton; 2nd, Mr. W. A. B. Bingham, Cheltenham.

Class 6. Hunter, 4 years old—1st, Colonel Barlow; 2nd, Mr. G. Hona, Stoke Orchard. Highly commended—Captain Uleygate, Buckland, Gloucester.

Class 7. Hunter (weight carrier), mare or gelding, up to not less than 16 stone—1st and champion prize, Mr. Jacob Sturdy, Tamworth; 2nd, Mr. J. Goodwin, Cheltenham. Highly commended, Mr. W. Baker, Horse-Bampton, Cheltenham.

Class 8. Hunter, mare or gelding, up to 15 stone—1st, Mr. G. B. Fletcher, Andoversford; 2nd, Mr. J. Goodwin. Highly commended, Major Quentin, Cheltenham; Mr. J. Sturdy, Tamworth. Commended, Captain Sumner, M. F. H., Cheltenham.

Class 9. Hunter, the *bonis fide* property of tenant farmers, and to be ridden by farmers—1st, Mr. W. Fletcher, Andoversford; 2nd, W. A. B. Bingham, Esq., Cheltenham. Highly commended, Mr. G. Hona.

Class 10. Hunter, of any age, being the property of a resident of the Cotswold country, and regularly hunted with the Cotswold hounds last season—1st, Sir Alexander Ramsay, Bart., Cheltenham. Highly commended, Mr. J. Goodwin, Cheltenham; Mr. W. Fletcher, Andoversford.

the Gentry

Cotswold Hunt

HARRY VILLAR'S WORLD 1883

gambling client

champion jockey
brother-in-law

brother-in-law

brother

brother-in-law

Harry Villar

Archer's manager

and land agent's business in Clarence Street was plainly successful. Directly beneath the news of Harry's failure lay an item reporting John G. Villar's election to the board of the Plough Hotel Company and another reporting his selection by the Board of Trade to be a local estimator for certain agricultural returns. The Editor of the Mercury went along to a stock sale at Andoversford run by John Gaspard to see what sort of reception the latter would meet with in the face of his brother's failure. He was happy to record that the latter came through the ordeal with flying colours. Touching directly on what was a disagreeable subject, he told the assembled crowd that if there was any distrust, cash and not paper was available. The farmers showed their confidence in him and did not insult him by putting him to the test. The Editor predicted that a prosperous career stood before him and the name of Villar would long be associated with the agricultural sales of Gloucestershire. In the case of John Gaspard, he was right.

In some respects Harry Villar was fortunate in the timing of his bankruptcy. After 1869 routine imprisonment for debt ceased in England, other than in cases of fraud and deliberate refusal to pay. In 1884, the year of his bankruptcy, the Board of Trade supervised the work of an Official Receiver who, after a receiving order had been made by a court, held meetings of creditors, investigated the circumstances and acted as the administrator of the bankrupt's assets, pending the appointment of a Trustee chosen by the creditors, who would realise as much of the bankrupt's assets as possible to pay off the debts. Hearings would produce fierce arguments about the level of payment but the bankrupt would hope to receive a certificate of discharge, which could be immediate, suspended or conditional, depending on the circumstances. If it was denied, an undischarged bankrupt incurred losses of civil rights, including those of parliament, local authority, becoming a director, corporate manager or solicitor, obtaining credit and the right to start a trade without disclosing he had been bankrupt. This enlightened view saw bankruptcy as an inevitable event in a commercial country and set out to make the best of it. However, there were hurdles for Harry Villar to overcome: the outcome of the proceedings would depend on whether the bankruptcy had been brought about, or contributed to, by rash and hazardous speculation, extravagant living, culpable neglect of business affairs and last, but certainly not least, gambling.

At the beginning of September 1884 the Official Receiver's list of creditors was published¹³. It was truly astounding in its length; although not a complete list, it filled in small print nearly a full column of a page. There were straight forward debts arising from the non-payment to the sellers of wool and live-stock auctioned at recent sales at Cheltenham, Andoversford and Cirencester. These ranged from £6 to £644 and it is clear that no-one at these sales received their due, whether large or small. Their money had gone elsewhere. Advertising was a prerequisite for auctions and it was apparent that the bills due to local Gloucestershire and distant newspapers, such as the Manchester Guardian, Birmingham Daily Post and the Chamber of Agriculture Journal had not been paid for some time. Larger creditors in respect of money lent included the Worcester Bank £2,289, Mrs Hone, his mother-in-law, £1,500, Mr

¹³ *Cheltenham Mercury* – 13 September 1884

George Hone, his brother-in-law, £500, and Mr William Fletcher, another brother-in-law, £750. These debts to relatives, probably designed to lower assets and reduce the dividend payment to real creditors, were suspiciously similar to those noted in his father's fraudulent bankruptcy. Mr Ryland, the solicitor, was owed £2,580, which was secured by a mortgage against property, presumably Harry's. There was a substantial debt of £2,250 to the owner of Cowley Manor, Mr W. Baring Bingham. Then came the money lenders: H.G. Margrett, £2,637, D. Sternberg, £100, J. Riste, £200, Isaac Solomon, £275, James Conacher, £1,902, Mr. E. Lowe £150, most of whose debts were fully secured.¹⁴ Some of these also held bills drawn by other creditors, against which they had loaned lesser sums than their face value. It was evident that Harry Villar had been desperately shuffling money round until it became impossible to continue doing so.

At the first meeting of creditors, Harry Villar claimed that the cause of his failure was that he had paid money lenders some £8,000 in interest, £100 interest for every £200 borrowed. He was subjected to aggressive questioning about his betting. Conscious of the stricture on gambling, he agreed that he had done some betting in his time and he had not always won but he would not consider that his betting was one cause of his failure. He was extremely vague in his answers: to the question whether his betting had come to tens of thousands, he replied that his questioner could call it what he liked but then decided it was not even in thousands. He was unwilling to name bookmakers to whom he owed money, saying that they were of little consequence in the world but named one when the Chairman reminded him that it was a most important question connected with bankruptcy. When asked how in 1882/1883 he had shown income from sales as £93,000 but had paid into the bank £132,000, some £40,000 more, he replied vaguely that he had "*got the money from day to day, a mixture of the business money and that from clients*". The appointed Trustee reported that he had only been able to make an estimate of the firm's business, since no purchase books had been submitted and the receipts for expenditure were all mixed in with papers from the old firm. However, he was struck by the high expenses derived from money lending transactions, and also that sums paid as interest on betting transactions had not been entered. He had no doubt that the debtor had wasted a large amount of money in expenditure and, to shouts of "*hear, hear*", it would be his duty to ascertain where the creditors' money had gone.

Harry Villar's next appointment was in late October 1884 at the County Court in Northleach, before a judge. He made a full statement about his financial affairs, claiming that when he took over the firm of James Villar and paid off the liabilities, amounting to over £7,000, he had but £100 left. He also admitted that he owed money in respect of betting transactions, named the bookmakers and what he agreed were considerable transactions. He had no records for these. However, he had acted as agent of Mr W. Baring Bingham of Cowley Manor in this respect. He owed Mr Bingham £2,949, though he maintained that not all of this was betting transactions. The book, marked "*Cowley Manor*" was sent for, but the entries were so vague

¹⁴ Isaac Solomon charged 42% interest. Harry Villar said rather bitterly that he didn't deny trying to get money by gambling but it was better than borrowing it at the rate he was borrowing.

as to give no indication of their nature. There was little doubt that Harry Villar, with his well-known friendship with Fred Archer and inside knowledge of the racing world, was acting as a commission agent to lay bets for Mr. Bingham, a very wealthy man himself closely connected with the racing world.¹⁵ In conclusion the Official Receiver informed the judge that the deficiency, fixed by the debtor for £13,000, should have been upwards of £17,000. He was granted an adjournment for the production of a proper deficiency account. An affidavit was then produced to the judge, which claimed that Harry Villar was about to leave the country.¹⁶ His Honour ordered detention and Harry Villar found himself, like his father 33 years previously, incarcerated, though in his case, it was in Gloucester Prison.

The adjourned case came up at the end of October. Harry Villar came under relentless pressure from the Official Receiver concerning the way that he paid for his private debts with the cheques of the firm and the extent that these private debts were in fact betting transactions. Thus the insolvency of the firm was to great extent caused by him. Harry repeatedly resorted to loss of memory but he did accept that a great deal of money was paid away with betting transactions. More damaging was the fact that he admitted cashing cheques belonging to Mr W. Baring Bingham to pay betting men. Harry denied that all the items in the two Bingham private account books were betting transactions, though the Receiver held that, although there were a few genuine items charged, that amount was a small proportion of the £2,948 owed. At the conclusion of his questioning, the Official Receiver made an ex parte application directing the Trustee to prosecute the bankrupt for offences under section 11 of the Debtors' Act 1869, including material omissions in his statement of affairs, concealment of his property, fictitious expenses and fraud in bill transactions. His Honour agreed a prima facie case had been made and therefore made the order. There followed a hearing at Cheltenham Police Court, at which Harry Villar's solicitor, James Winterbotham, applied for bail. The magistrates agreed but set it at one recognisance of £2,000 and two sureties of £1,000 each. This was out of reach of the accused and despite protests, he remained in Gloucester Prison.

It was as a prisoner, therefore, that Harry Villar appeared at Gloucester Quarter Sessions on 14 January 1885, to be tried before a jury. The case against him had two parts: concealing property and debts, falsifying accounts and not rendering up books; and obtaining credit by fraud. The first was the most important, since a bankrupt was bound to make a correct statement to the best of his ability and to show how he accounted for his deficiency, which had by this time had risen to £23,598 19s 10d. The second related to an incident where he had obtained £160 for a consideration of only £60. His defending counsel mocked the bankruptcy proceedings, comparing it to a poor camel among a throng of vultures. Villar had certainly been guilty of carelessness, irregularity and speculation and might deserve not commendation

¹⁵ He ran his own pack of hounds. In 1881 he bought Prestbury Park and in 1902 offered it as a racecourse.

¹⁶ There is some evidence that this might have been true. E.M. Humphris' book (Note 4) records Fred Archer, who was going to America, leaving with his friend Herbert Mills an open cheque, saying "You may want money or be in difficulties while I am away, and if you are, you will be able to fill in this". Mills was a wealthy corn merchant, hardly in need of money, and was a character witness for Villar at his trial.

but censure, but that was not enough. It was claimed that he had taken over an insolvent business and had borrowed money at exorbitant interest. He had not been riotous in his living for he lived at a rate of only £300 a year. Two character witnesses were called for the defence: Mr F. Harvey of Barnwood Court and Mr Herbert Mills of Cheltenham, the man with Fred Archer's open cheque. They gave him a good character. The Chairman told the jury that mistakes that might have been made by the prisoner could not be brought home to him as a crime. He might have made mistakes and omissions but the question was whether they were of such a material character as to vitiate the account and show it to be fraudulent. He was not going to preach a homily on the evils of the turf. They had heard of the prisoner's betting transactions, but the question was whether in rendering his account, the prisoner wilfully neglected to state anything about the money lost in betting. Betting debts were not recoverable in law but he thought that if a man engaged in a large business was betting large amounts for his own pleasure, he was bound, when taking advantage of bankruptcy law, to explain what had happened to his money. It was for the jury to decide whether the prisoner had any intention to defraud in making these admissions. It was undoubtedly a fairly sympathetic summing up¹⁷. The jury retired to consider their verdict at 9.15 and returned at 10.2. The Clerk of the Court having put the question: "Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?" the Foreman responded in a bold voice, "Not guilty". A loud burst of applause greeted this announcement, which could not be readily suppressed and the friends of the accused clustered round him to shake his hand and congratulate him on the result of the trial. For certain, not many of his creditors were among them but Harry Villar was off the hook, though he had still to deal with the fact that he was an undischarged bankrupt.¹⁸

Harry was not alone in emulating his father in this respect. His brother, Alfred Edwin Villar, who lived in Charlton Kings and had in 1880 applied for a license to sell beer in Cheltenham, set up as a wine and spirit merchant in Cheltenham. He later moved the business to No. 48, Pall Mall, London, and May 1886 appeared in the High Court of Justice in Bankruptcy, for a Public Examination of his petition for bankruptcy. Like his father and his brother, Alfred had not kept his books properly and was questioned about what was described as a matter between himself and a firm in Scotland, given as Messrs. Shiel and Sons of Leith. The Receiver was mildly curious about his despatch from Cheltenham of £900 of goods, including champagne, to this firm, plus another £500 sent to Scotland to secure another bill from Messrs. Shiel. What did not come out in court was that this firm was actually Messrs John S. Shiels and Sons, Wine Merchants of Leith, then being run by one Nicholas Shiels, who had in 1879, at St. Peter's, Leckhampton, married Julia Villar, Alfred and Harry's elder sister. In retrospect, it looks suspiciously like the off-loading of assets to relatives practised by the previous two family bankrupts. However, the connection was missed and Alfred's debts were not large; he

¹⁷ The summing up was by Mr. J. Russell Kerr. However, the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions was His Honour Charles Sumner; the Master of the Cotswold Hunt, of which Villar was a member, was Captain A.H. Sumner.

¹⁸ The Official Receiver reported on this case "I am sure the jury failed to grasp or understand the evidence. One only had to look at the class of men they were to see this. The foreman was an ostler and two others had themselves failed (i.e. were bankrupts)." – *Law and Society – Michelle Cale, PRO Guide No. 14*

passed his Public Examination and received an order for discharge of bankruptcy, suspended for three months. He was discharged on 4th August 1886.

Harry Villar was not to be so fortunate. It was not until January 1890 that he applied to be discharged from his bankruptcy. By then he had left Cheltenham and moved to Churchdown, where he established a farm business called H. and E. Villar, the E. being his wife Elizabeth, who was the official owner of the business, Harry being barred from that position. He also worked for his brother-in-law, George Hone, as an auctioneer in the Tewkesbury area, so that he was well supported by two of his previous biggest creditors. Hone even advertised in the Oxford Journal in February 1885 that he was to start business there as an auctioneer and had engaged the services of Harry Villar as his clerk and salesman, perhaps a bold move, since the bankruptcy of the latter had been nationally reported.¹⁹ During this period "*George Hone (Harry Villar)*" was reported as holding the three-day auction of the Newmarket home of the jockey Fred Archer, following his suicide in November 1886²⁰. Harry Villar's application for discharge was opposed by his non-related creditors, who were, not surprisingly, unsatisfied with a dividend of five and five-eighths pence in the pound. His lawyer pointed out that he had been found not guilty of any crime and had suffered imprisonment and great public humiliation; he had little money and his creditors were therefore unlikely to get any more back. The Judge reluctantly bowed to this logic and Harry was discharged though not without conditions: he was still paying out dividends for this bankruptcy thirteen years later in 1903²¹. By that time, however, he had actually managed to go bankrupt twice more.

The trouble began in February 1894, when for some unknown reason Harry split with his brother-in-law George Hone.²² He began in business with an Arthur Edward Bellamy of Maisemore and Gloucester under the style of Villar and Bellamy, they taking in the former business of H. and E. Villar, which had been conducted by Harry on behalf of his wife. Harry was to pay £150 and Bellamy £1,500, to Elizabeth for the goodwill of the latter. To practise as an auctioneer in the Tewkesbury area, Harry had also to pay George Hone £650. Bellamy joined with Harry on the understanding that the business he was buying into was worth £2,000 per annum. He soon became disillusioned; he wanted to sever the partnership but an agreement was reached that he should stay and Harry retire and this dissolution was published in the London Gazette. In belief that book debts of over £3,000 were good, Bellamy gave a guarantee to the County of Gloucester Bank for £780 and subsequently found that all the £3,000, less £100, was gone. Meanwhile, Harry Villar was held responsible for debts incurred while in the former firm but he had also stood as surety for £950 for a Bristol corn merchant,

¹⁹ *Even in the legal column of The London Furniture Gazette – 17 January 1883*

²⁰ *Birmingham Daily Post – 3 February 1887. Archer was ill, had lost his son and his wife, and shot himself. Herbert Mills was the executor of Fred Archer's will and had plainly offered this high value and nationally publicised auction to his friends.*

²¹ *London Gazette – 5 May 1903*

²² *He really should have stayed. George Hone died in 1926, leaving £20,519.*

John Harding, who had gone bankrupt. He owed £1,200 for household expenses and losses for working the farm of £665. On the petition of the County of Gloucester Bank and his old creditor from his first bankruptcy, H.G. Margrett²³, Harry Villar was adjudicated bankrupt. Their examinations were held in June and July of 1897 and they, both individually and together as Villar and Bellamy, were declared bankrupt, the three cases being consolidated in December 1897 to two, one against both as partners in the firm and one against Harry's separate estate. It had been three years of muddle and financial incompetence, with more than a suspicion of sharp practice from Harry Villar, though no mention of gambling this time. The two men applied for discharge in 1899 but were suspended for four years until June 1903.

Harry Villar is recorded in 1897 as acting as Quartermaster of the Tewkesbury Troop of the Royal Gloucester Hussars, though this may not have survived the bankruptcy proceedings.²⁴ However, he did not return to the Cheltenham area. In 1901 he was living in the town of Swindon at 4, Westlecott Road, a large Victorian bay-fronted house, with his wife, two daughters, Dorothy Mary and Phyllis Margaret, and a living-in servant. He was described as an auctioneer, though whether he was actually working as such, with three bankruptcies under his belt, is not known. However, it would seem that sufficient money remained in the family, possibly from his wife's side. He next appeared in 1904, when he was mentioned in a newspaper report as playing bowls for the Vice President's team at Randwick Bowling Club.²⁵ This was not the village of Randwick, a few miles from Stroud, Gloucestershire but the town of Randwick, a few miles from Sydney, New South Wales²⁶. Harry Villar was in Australia and to work his way into a club team suggests he had arrived there by 1903.

Harry Villar returned to England after this first visit but he took two, and possibly three, more voyages to Australia. A passenger list shows a party of Mr H., S. Villar and Mrs and Miss Villar arriving at Sydney in 1908; the detachment of the Mrs and Miss from the Mr H. suggests that this was possibly Harry's son, Harry Junior, with his mother Elizabeth and daughter Phyllis.²⁷ Harry himself is listed leaving London for Sydney in 1911 and again travelling from Liverpool for Sydney in 1913; on this last voyage, on the White Star Line "Suevic", he was alone and did not return. Whether his wife and children visited him or not, and for whatever reasons, they did not stay in Australia. In 1911 Elizabeth and Phyllis were living in Worcester and in 1924 they moved back to Cheltenham to live at 17, Pittville Villas²⁸. Margaret Hone lived at No. 2 and Mary Hone at No. 14 and it seems she was in effect rejoining her own family. Elizabeth died at No 17 in 1935 and in 1936 the house was owned by Miss P.M. Villar, Harry's daughter, Phyllis Margaret, who died in 1982 in

²³ H.G. Margrett was described as a money lender at Harry Villar's first bankruptcy in 1884: at this one, he was an accountant. A nephew, Charles Henry Margrett became Mayor of Cheltenham in 1909.

²⁴ Slayter's Directory 1897. No rank was given and Harry Villar was not gazetted as an officer.

²⁵ The Sydney Morning Herald – 22 February 1904

²⁶ The Australian Randwick does, however, take its name from the Gloucestershire one. The first Mayor of the town was an immigrant from Randwick, Stroud.

²⁷ The "S" person cannot be identified and may be a misprint. One possibility is Harry Villar's cousin Sidney Villar from Taunton, who did settle in Australia as a veterinary surgeon.

²⁸ No longer a postal address and now part of Prestbury Road, near Pittville Circus.



Newtown, Powys, where she had been living with her married sister Dorothy. Harry's eldest child, Harry Junior, also remained in this country. There did not appear to be a divorce but Harry had put his wife and children through a series of demeaning failures and it may well have been that his decision in 1894 to leave the security of his position with brother-in-law George Hone and set off on another disastrous venture was just one too many. Despite this sad separation, Harry Villar was not short of family at Randwick, though it was not his very own.

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Dumb-bell and other Athletic exercises.

Season, weekly or monthly Tickets issued.

Admission only 1d.

H. VILLAR, Lessee.

As shown above,²⁹ Harry's start in Australia was in pennies rather than the thousands of pounds in England but it was probably the prospect of a starting in a country where nothing was known of his past that drew him there. A cynic might suggest that the fact that Randwick was the location of one of Australia's major racecourses, the Royal Randwick, might have attracted him there but the main reason for his choice was almost certainly that his older sister Julia, married to Nicholas Shiels from Scotland, was already settled near Sydney, with their four children: Nicholas Villar, John, Alex and Julie Villar. Julia evidently wished to keep the Villar name alive. Nicholas Shiels had resigned his commission in the Militia in 1884 and wound down the Leith Wine and Spirits business in 1885; the family emigrated to Australia in 1888. Nicholas Shiels was a highly talented man, an artist who had studied painting and etching at the Slade School of Art under Alphonse Legros³⁰ and exhibited at The Royal Academy, the Scottish Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery. His studio, opened in Sydney advertised classes in drawing, painting in oils, water colours and pastels, etching and modelling in clay. He was warmly welcomed by the Sydney Arts Society, and by the local Press as "*adding to the ranks of the true artists who are gradually being attracted to*

²⁹ *The Randwick District Recorder*, 7 January 1911

³⁰ *Professor of Fine Art, who introduced etching to the Slade School This connection raises the possibility that Harry Villar's snuff box gift to Fred Archer was made by his brother-in-law Nicholas Shiels.*

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Australia". More significantly, his arrival coincided with an initiative to form an Academy of Arts of Australia. The first meeting of the Academy was held in November 1891 and he was elected one of the first seven academicians, with responsibility for drawing, painting and etching classes. He was also a musician, being proficient enough to play violin solos at Academy concerts. In 1895 he opened his own boarding and day school, Woollahra Grammar School, as headmaster. This flourished and in 1901 he purchased extensive grounds at Randwick to create Australia College and become its first Principal. He was enthusiastic about sport, especially cricket and baseball, and became President of the Cricketing Association at Randwick and President of the Metropolitan Baseball Association. On top of all these activities, he and his wife Julia were active members of the Randwick Presbyterian Church. The Shiels were undoubtedly highly respected citizens of the Randwick area, and it was into this safe environment that Harry Villar's new existence began. Racecourse or not, there was to be no further hint of gambling in his life.

Harry joined them in these activities and was also accepted as a respected member of the community and of the Presbyterian Church. As early as 1906 he spoke at a meeting of the Randwick Presbyterian Institute concerning the benefits that agricultural immigrants brought to Australia. In 1908 he was the Presiding Officer for the Randwick Municipal elections at the Town Hall and in 1919 he was advertising in the Sydney Morning Herald with regard to a relative, and was to be contacted at the Town Hall, which suggests he had some function there. He was listed as those attending major funerals in the 1920s. He was a Freemason and a member of the local Lodge; and at a presentation to the widow of the Presbyterian minister in the Randwick Town Hall in 1923, the speakers were Sir David Storey, Sir Alfred Meeks and Mr H. Villar. It was not all serious: in 1909 he was the stage manager for the Randwick Football Club annual concert at the Town Hall.³¹ Harry Villar had embraced respectability and appeared to relish it. The connection with the Shiels family was doubled in 1918 when John Shepherd Shiels, Harry's sister Julia's second child, married his first cousin Gertrude Mary Villar, Harry's brother James' second child. Romantically, the wedding was celebrated at St. Peter's, Leckhampton, where Nicholas Shiels and Julia Villar had married 39 years before, though the happy couple returned to Randwick after the event.

Harry Villar had gone to Australia when he was about 50 years old and it is no surprise that his public appearances, as recorded in the Sydney Morning Herald, ended in 1924, when he was 71. He died at his home, 88, Avoca Street in Randwick on 15th October 1926 and was buried in the Presbyterian Section of Randwick General Cemetery the following day in the grave of William Henry Shiels, Nicholas Shiels' brother, who died in 1903 aged 47. Nicholas Villar Shiels, Julia's oldest child, was also interred in the same grave in 1933, a fact that illustrates that Harry Villar had been fully accepted and integrated in the family³². Julia herself died five months later on Christmas Day 1933 and her husband Nicholas in 1946; both were cremated. Harry Villar had two very different lives. In the first he grew up in the

³¹ *All these events are drawn from reports in the Sydney Morning Herald.*

³² *Randwick and District Historical Society Inc –Thanks to Hazel Bromley*

exciting world surrounding an internationally famous jockey, a world where wealth was won and lost in large amounts in a short space of time and not, as his brother John Gaspard did, by assiduous hard work and respectable means. His business ventures were ruined by his gambling, though they appear in themselves to have been embarrassingly naive. The credit for his embracing a new life-style in Australia must go primarily to the Scottish Presbyterian Shiels, for providing him with a family of which he could be proud to be a member. A life of respectability at last made sense to him. Perhaps it cannot be said that Harry Villar quite restored the social position of the great Duc de Villars' line but John Gaspard Villar did. His daughter married an Army Officer in Tewkesbury Abbey and, what is more, the wedding was reported in the Cheltenham Looker-On. In the Cheltenham of its day, one could not get higher than that.

MR. HARRY VILLAR
 (From JAMES VILLAR & SONS, of Cheltenham),
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AUCTIONEER AND VALUER,
 on his own account, and hopes, by strict attention to all matters
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Two Lives – England and Australia -- Beginning and End



'THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CITY OF CHARLTON KINGS'

Don Sherwell

For over two centuries the Townshend family had prospered in Denbighshire. However, economic difficulties, including the long agricultural depression in the last decades of the 19th Century, forced the family to put their property up for sale. Charles Townshend (then Deputy Lieutenant of the County) decided to remove his family from Rossett to Cheltenham, encouraged by the good schools available for his children. In about 1900, a new family moved into Charlton Kings from Wales and settled in for several years in Springfield House. (later the childhood home of this Society's own Jane Sale and eventually demolished to make room for Nazareth House). However, once his house in Wales was sold, Charles set about building a new house in Charlton Kings and named it "Trevallyn" after his former family home.

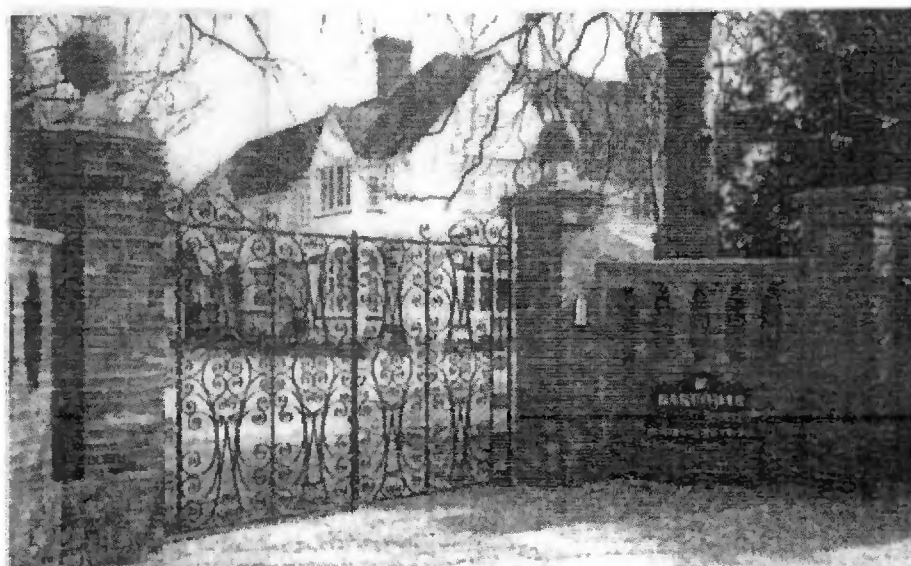
Once living in Charlton Kings, Charles became an active member of the Fine Arts Society and lent several family portraits by Lely and Kneller to the public art gallery. He was also involved in charitable work. He and his wife Clara attended St. Mary's Church and Clara once embroidered several white silk offertory bags, to be used on special occasions – the Vicar hoped their beauty would attract only pieces of silver! For several years Charles was vice chairman of the Urban District Council: it was on a visit to New York that, to his great amusement, he was described as shown in the title of this article. Charles died on 28th January 1915, aged 67, just a few months after the new house was completed. His grave (and that of Clara, who died in 1940, aged 91) is in St. Mary's churchyard. His obituary in the Cheltenham Chronicle tells of a man who was very kindly and approachable, who made friends easily and was evidently popular with all. Perhaps this did not always include his children on occasions. His daughter Dorothy (1884-1960) was offered a tour of the USA with a theatre group when in her late teens but her father would not allow her to go; his younger son Harry (1888-1953), was apparently regarded by his family as rather feckless, especially with respect to money, and it seems it was his father's decision, rather than his own, to apprentice him to a farmer in western Canada, where he showed more success at cards than agriculture.

Charles' elder son John (1886-1928) entered the Army after attending Cheltenham College and fought with distinction in the First World War. He inherited the Sandy Lane House in 1915 but sold it for £5,000 five years later. His mother moved out of Charlton Kings to live in Bath Road. John moved with his young family to Eldorado Road until his death, which was caused mainly, according to the death certificate, by "acute general military tuberculosis". He is buried in Charlton Kings cemetery. Dorothy married Basil Bowers, who became head of

Cheltenham College Junior School (1923-1933). She was an accomplished actress, singer and pianist and lived in Charlton Kings all her adult life, her home in Balcarras Road being named "Rossett" after the village where she was born. Harry returned to England with his young family for several years in the mid-1930s but they went back to British Columbia before the Second World War began.

The original address of "Trevallyn", seen first below in 1927, was 1, Sandy Lane but the house, renamed "Bardowie" by 1931, will not be found in Sandy Lane now, but a distance down Sandy Lane Road. It seems that selling off gardens to build houses in them is not a new phenomenon. Neither is a drop in house prices: the selling price of the house in 1931 was nearly 30% lower than it had been in 1920.

The author acknowledges the help given by Lewis Hughes (Harry's son-in-law), and the late Rosemary Ash, in writing this article.



BATTLEDOWN GRANGE – A HOUSE OF CHANGING ROLES

David O'Connor

A grange was originally a barn or granary, from the Latin granum, grain. However, in 18th and 19th Century Britain it was generally accepted as an appropriate term for a country house, with outbuildings, usually the dwelling of a yeoman or gentleman farmer. By the late 19th Century it had become, like “Manor”, “Court” and “House” a designation for the residences of the wealthy and not necessarily those lying deep in the country. In the late 19th Century there were four residences named “The Grange” in the Cheltenham area: in Prestbury, Christ Church, Charlton Kings and from 1882, Battledown. By this time the Battledown Estate had struggled to reach eleven gentry houses on its 105 acres but it had opened up an access road from Hales Road, originally called the Hales Road Approach but by this time the Battledown Approach. There was little development in this area, with the open fields and trees of Coltham Close on its northern side and the clay pit and machinery of the Battledown Brickworks and Terra Cotta Company on Coltham Ground and Little Ewens to the southern. The latter was then owned by the Reverend Arthur Armitage, the Vicar of St. John’s, Berkeley Street and in 1881 a Cheltenham man, Charles Winstone, purchased from him a one acre site to the south of the Approach, backing on to the clay-pit. Winstone was a stone and marble mason, quarry owner and proprietor of the building firm of Winstone and Sons of 12, Sherborne Terrace. Although the site was not on Battledown Estate land, he had already been in negotiations with the Trustees of the Estate with a view to obtaining access and extending the main sewer and in 1881 he built on the site a large and imposing gentry residence, with stables. The house was occupied in 1882 and was initially named The Grange, though the presence of the other local Granges soon made it necessary to identify it as Battledown Grange. Its rateable value was £85.5s, which was considerably higher than most of the gentry houses in the area.

The first resident of The Grange, as a tenant of Winstone, was a Colonel John Edward Harden. Born in 1839 in an Irish family, he was the son of a County Court judge in Rock Ferry, Cheshire. He attended Cheltenham College as a boarder and left in 1855. He joined the Honourable East India Company’s Service as an ensign in the Bengal Infantry, which after the 1857 Mutiny was incorporated into the British Army as the 101st of Foot and later The Royal Munster Fusiliers. The highlight of his career was the North West Frontier Expedition in 1865, for which he was awarded the medal with clasp. He resigned from the Army in 1869 but did not appear in the Cheltenham Directories until he occupied The Grange in 1882. He certainly needed a large house, for he and his wife Alice Mary had no less than seven children under eleven years old: Jessie, John, Angelina, Jane, Alice, Marian and Allan, together with three living-in servants.

His tenure was for four years only and in 1886 he was followed by John Peyton Lambert, another Irishman from the family of Lambert of Castle Lambert, which at one time had an estate of 5,000 acres in Athenry, Co. Galway. Born in Dublin in 1833, he was married to Bessie Iggulden, who was related to the family who owned Glenfall House. They had three children, one of whom attended Cheltenham College as a day boy. In 1847 John Peyton Lambert entered the Postal Service and in 1851 became Assistant Surveyor in the West Indies. In 1885 he was promoted to be Postal Surveyor for the South Wales District, a territory which ran from Wantage to Pembroke. Postal Surveyors, as the Post Office Establishment Book of 1832 records, were "*very important men, selected from the most competent officers of the Department.*" They were required to visit and inspect frequently the Post Offices in their District, take charge of vacant offices and instruct Deputy Postmasters in their duties, make contracts for the conveyance of the mail and maintain proper discipline. Here Battledown Grange assumed a new function in addition to being just a family residence. Cheltenham had been selected as a convenient centre for the administration of South Wales District and the administrative machinery of the District required both a permanent, or stationary, staff, and a travelling staff. The work of the former was carried out at Battledown Grange and here there would have been both offices and clerks in attendance, and much to-ing and fro-ing. This administrative function remained until 1897, when The Examiner reported the retirement of Mr. Lambert "*an officer of considerable importance in connection with the Postal Department*". The Post Office had, in anticipation of this event, purchased new offices in Clarence Square and The Examiner was hoping that Cheltenham would remain the headquarters of the District. It was made clear that this decision rested entirely with the new Surveyor, Mr. A.G. Babington, who had been Lambert's Assistant, indicating that Lambert himself had on appointment chosen to run the District from The Grange, which would conveniently have fitted in with his son's day schooling at the College. The Lamberts spent eleven years at The Grange: they left in 1897 and in 1901 reappeared up the Hill in Battledown House, as the tenants of Mrs. Frederick Worsey, though they owned land in Shropshire. In 1911 they moved again to Longville, Pittville Circus Road, where he died in May 1916.

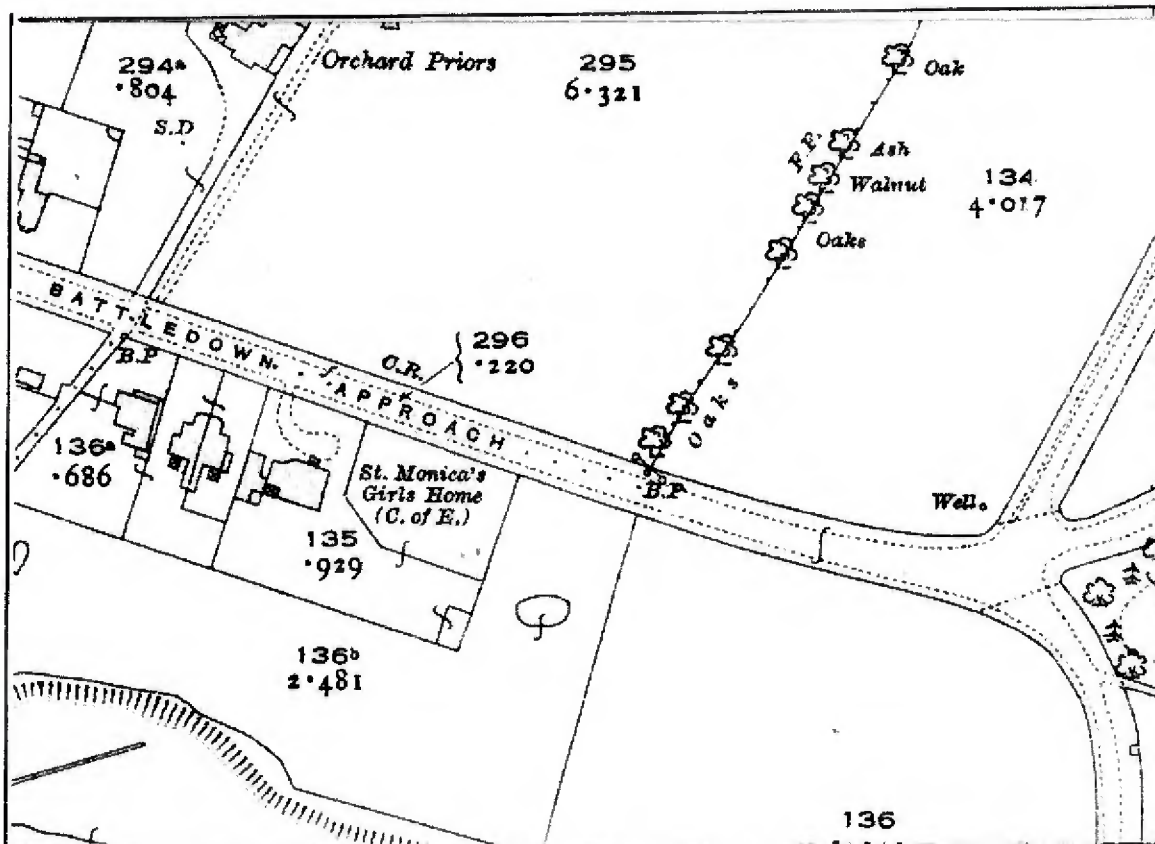
In 1898 The Grange again changed its function, when it was purchased by the Governors and Board of Cheltenham Grammar School. A new Headmaster, John Style, previously Second Master at Manchester Grammar School, had been unanimously selected in February 1882 from 57 candidates. He came highly recommended by many people, including the blind M.P. Professor Henry Fawcett, the Postmaster General, which seems perhaps appropriate for one destined to live in the former headquarters of the South Wales Postal District. Style and his wife arrived in Cheltenham in 1881, some eight months before he was formally selected, which suggests he was confident of being offered the post. They moved into Wolseley House in Oriel Road and took in five boarding pupils. Style was to be paid £200 per term, the fees for the pupils being two guineas under eleven and three over eleven, and also took some part of the boarding fees. In April 1882 it was said that, although essentially a Day School, the Headmaster was entitled to receive a limited number of boarders, for whose reception ample

provision was available in the existing old School House, where as many as 30 could be accommodated. In fact, before Style's arrival, there had never been many more than 100 pupils, few of whom boarded: in 1868 the Grammar School had 120 boys, of whom only 17 were boarders. Style's ambitious plans for the School led to the move from the old Gothic-style building in the High Street to a new building capable of holding 300 pupils, though when they opened in 1898 there were only 135³³. The foundation stone was laid in 1887 and it was this move that prompted the Governors to buy Battledown Grange for use both as the headmaster's residence and accommodation for boarding pupils. Style left Wolseley House in 1898 and settled in this new residence. Wolseley House, perhaps strangely, became a Post Office telephone exchange in 1912.

The expansion plans envisaged new School buildings erected near Christ Church on land now occupied by the Ladies' College, where the School would have possessed extensive playing fields. These plans were rejected by the Charity Commissioners and new playing fields were urgently required. Opposite Battledown Grange lay an open expanse of about 12 acres comprising Coltham Close and five as yet undeveloped lots of the Battledown Estate. In 1896 the land was put up for auction; the Governors wished to purchase it but could not do so without the agreement of the Charity Commissioners. As Mr. Winterbotham, the Chairman of the Governors explained, tongue in cheek, the Commissioners thought that if they gave agreement to anything in under twelve months, they were doing business at a remarkably rapid rate; unfortunately, people who had something to sell did not move at that rate. It was in these circumstances that the Headmaster, John Style, stepped in and personally purchased this land for the sum of £2,250. He offered it to the Governors on a contract under which the field would be immediately available as the School playing fields. The Governors were to be tenants at a rental returning him about 3% on his outlay or would return the purchase price. Mr. Winterbotham expressed his gratitude to the Headmaster for his public spirit and announced to cheers that at the next meeting in October, they would take over the contract and call the field their own. This signally failed to happen. Ten years later John Style fell into conflict with the Governors over the future of the School and resigned in February 1906. The Governors were now in the embarrassing position of not owning their own playing fields and being still without the Charity Commissioners' consent to buy them. They continued to pay rent to Style for a number of years to follow. Style's successor, Sydney Jones, decided that a good grammar school had no need to take in boarders and that Battledown Grange, which in 1906 had only nine boarders, was an appendage the School could do without. Its educational role finished, it was put up for sale.

The new owner of the Grange in 1907 was nominally Edward de Montjoie Rudolf, who was the Secretary of the Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, a body which he and his brother Robert had established with the backing of the Church of England hierarchy. Rudolf, born in 1852 and a civil servant and Sunday School superintendent in London, was appalled at the idea of homeless children going into

³³ *Much information regarding the Grammar School is taken from Tudor Foundation – Arthur Bell. 1974*



Battledown Grange in 1921. To the rear is the clay pit of Webb's Brickworks and opposite the twelve acres of open land, including, to the right of the trees, undeveloped lots of the Battledown Estate, which John Style bought for the Grammar School playing fields. The Grange has covered access to the laundry and also a drive leading to the steps of the front door. Below, Battledown Grange in 2011 – but where's the front door? A bit of a mystery here.



workhouses, where they would be stigmatised and removed from any family they had. He wanted to give such children, and poverty, disease and family breakdown ensured that there were many of them, a loving and secure family environment. The first home opened in Dulwich in 1882 and by 1918 there were 175 homes in England and Wales, varying from rural cottages to city houses. Children varied from babies to girls from 15 to 21 who were “*out of situation*”. Girls would be trained for domestic service and boys for industry. The main thing was that they had a place they could call home³⁴.

At a meeting on behalf of the Waifs and Strays Society held in Cheltenham in March 1893 the town was accused of offering comparatively little help even though some twelve children from Cheltenham had gone into Society homes in the preceding three years. Since 1887 there had been a Diocesan Home for Little Girls at 2, Alexandra Villas in Hewlett Road which had been founded by a local woman, Miss Eliza A. Sawyer. Miss Sawyer, born in 1840, was a talented musician who came to Cheltenham in 1877 to join the staff of the Ladies’ College. She was a strong, independent character described as “*one always to be reckoned with, if not agreed with.*” She became deeply involved in charitable work with the Rutland Street Mission in Cheltenham and, concerned about the problems of orphaned girls, moved out of her rooms in the College and bought the house in Hewlett Road, which looked after up to twelve girls aged between seven and twelve. Miss Sawyer became anxious that her “*Little Girls’ Home*” should not suffer after her death and it was affiliated to the Waifs and Strays Society in 1887.

Following the purchase of Battledown Grange in 1907, the Hewlett Home closed and all its occupants, including Miss Sawyer, the Honorary Lady Superintendent and the Matron, Miss Kershaw, moved into what was now transformed into St. Monica’s Home for Girls. By the end of the year fifteen other girls aged from four to sixteen, had joined them, and the establishment of twenty seven girls was complete. A formal blessing by the Bishop of Gloucester was held on 28th October 1907 and “*the chief room on the ground floor of the house was crowded to excess, with bishops, clergy and laity squeezed together like herrings in a barrel*”³⁵. Having been a home for school boarders, the premises were well adapted for their new purpose, with a large playground. The only addition made was the provision of a laundry, in which the girls were to be taught while performing immediate service to their own colony. The capital cost of the venture was about £2,500. A new all-female life began for Battledown Grange.

Miss Sawyer fell ill in 1911 and died in October 1912 after at least forty years of unpaid work for her cause. She was rightly accorded lengthy obituaries in all the newspapers and, after the well attended funeral in All Saints’ Church, children from St. Monica’s placed white chrysanthemums in the grave. St. Monica’s Girls’ Home continued to function at Battledown Grange for another forty years. However, times were changing and in 1946 the owners dropped the “*Waifs and Strays*” and became the Church of England Children’s Society. It was also changing the emphasis of its work, away from the maintenance of homes and more

³⁴ Website – The Childrens’ Society

³⁵ *The Cheltenham Examiner* – 30 Oct 1907



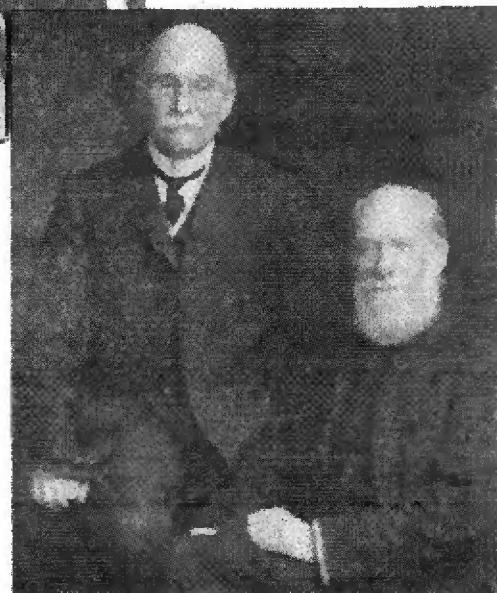
**Gloucester Diocesan Home for Little Girls
1887-1907. 2, Alexandria Villas, Hewlett Road**

**Miss Eliza A. Sawyer - 1840 – 1912: Honorary Lady
Superintendent of St Monica's Home for Girls**



Miss Sawyer and her waifs and strays

**Robert and Edward Rudolf (seated) who bought
The Grange in 1907 for the Church of England
Society for Providing Homes for Waifs & Strays**

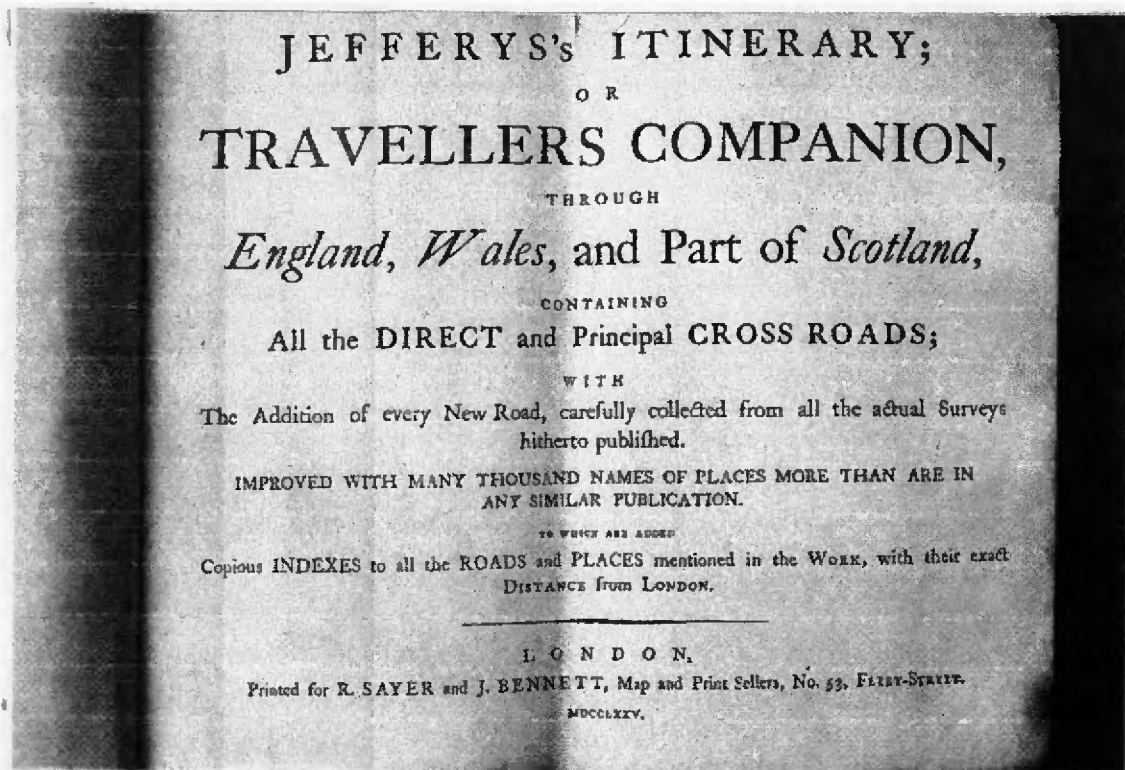


towards cooperation with local government departments in social work, such as adoption. As a result, in 1947 St. Monica's Home closed. However, Battledown Grange remained occupied and in 1949 it reopened as St. Monica's Training College for Nursery Nurses, though it was now referred to simply as St. Monica's. Between 1949 and 1955 the Electoral Registers show between two and six female adults resident at Battledown Grange. However, by 1957 the building had ceased to be occupied and disappeared from the Electoral Register and Cheltenham Directories. After half a century of caring for children, Battledown Grange was waiting to emerge in yet another guise.

In 1958 the Church of England Children's Society sold the property to Cheltway Investments Limited, which set about converting the Grange into eight flats. This required some major reconstruction, perhaps the most striking of which was the removal of the Grange's front door. A Victorian gentry residence without one would have been inconceivable and indeed old maps clearly show a driveway leading to a front door approached by steps, with an alternative carriage entrance on the right hand side under what seems to be a glass portico. The reconstruction called for the removal of the steps and of the cellar located underneath. This done, a window, the same size as the existing windows, was inserted and the entrance hallway became the bathroom of one of the flats. This new window, however, betrays its later arrival: it lacks the decorative stone label which all the other front windows have. The main entrance is now on the right hand side, which underwent considerable changes, including the removal of chimneys and chimney breasts. Additional garages were built at the back of the garden; however, two thirds of an acre of land to the east of the building was kept separate for development of further detached houses. The new Battledown Grange was completed and the first flats occupied in 1960 at a price of around £2,000. At the same time a company named the Battledown Grange Flats Limited was set up to acquire the freehold interest in the property for the benefit of the owners of the flats, who now effectively manage their own residence. They look out on a somewhat different view from that seen by Colonel Harden in 1881, though it would probably still be recognisable. There are neighbours on both sides, behind them the clay-pit tried to become a playing field but turned into a bumpy green space and across the road lies the bustle of Holy Apostles School. The once vacant Battledown Estate plots have been developed but beyond that the playing fields that John Style bought remain relatively untouched. Battledown Grange, gentry residence, Post Office District headquarters, Grammar School Headmaster's home and Boarding House, Children's Home, Training College and residential apartments appears to have reached its final role.



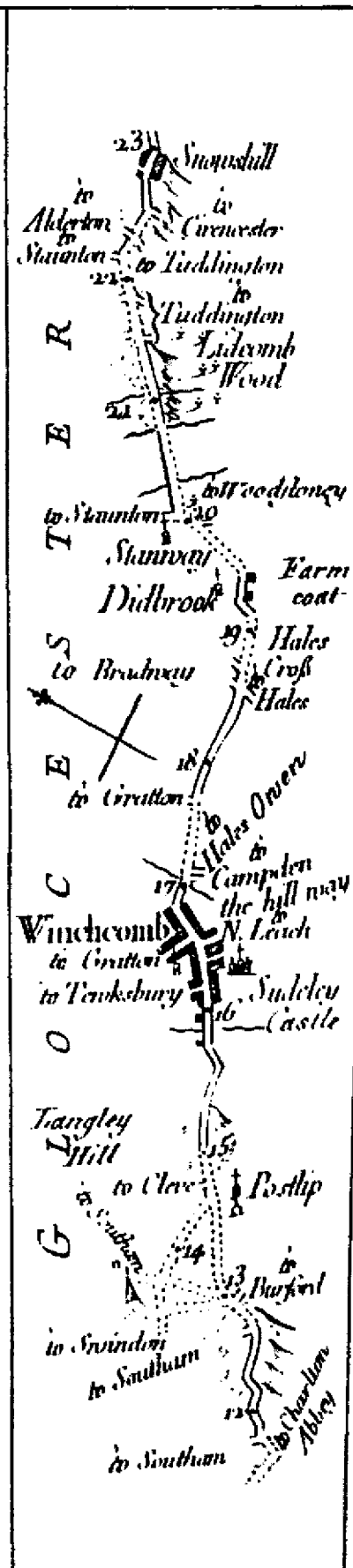
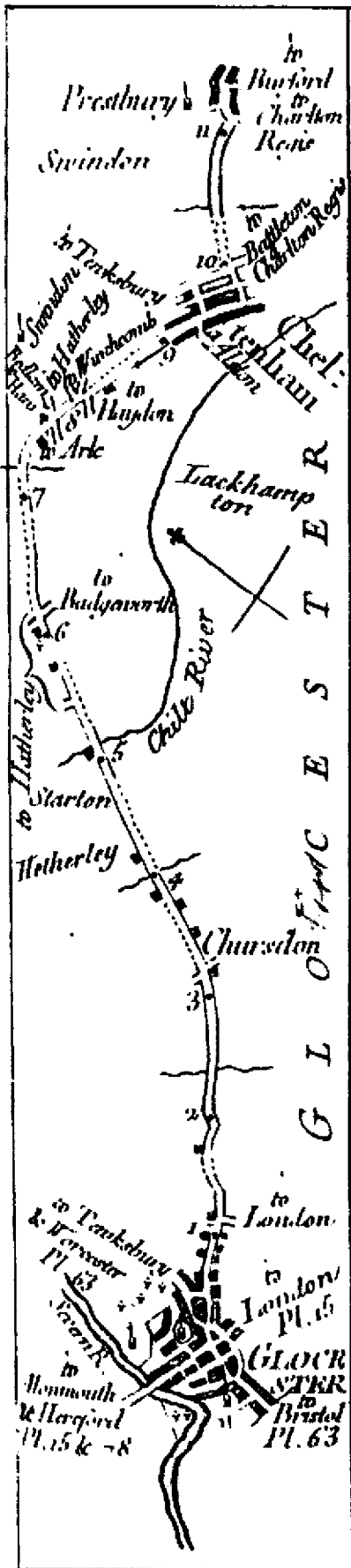
JEFFERYS'S ITINERARY OR TRAVELLERS COMPANION



Jefferys's Itinerary (making quite sure of the genitive here) or Travellers Companion (but not here) was published in London in 1775 and this year a copy of it came into the possession of Mr. Peter Covey Crump. It covers England, Wales and part of Scotland but his attention was naturally drawn to the itinerary for a journey from Gloucester to Coventry, which passed through Cheltenham, proceeding northwards through Prestbury, Winchcomb and on to Campden. This route appears to follow what is now the Old Gloucester Road B4634 to Cheltenham and leaves the town on what is now the B4632 through Prestbury. As a former Trustee of the Battledown Estate, he was interested to see at this point a turning indicated as to "Battleton, Charlton Regis" and he therefore contacted your Editor, for two reasons:

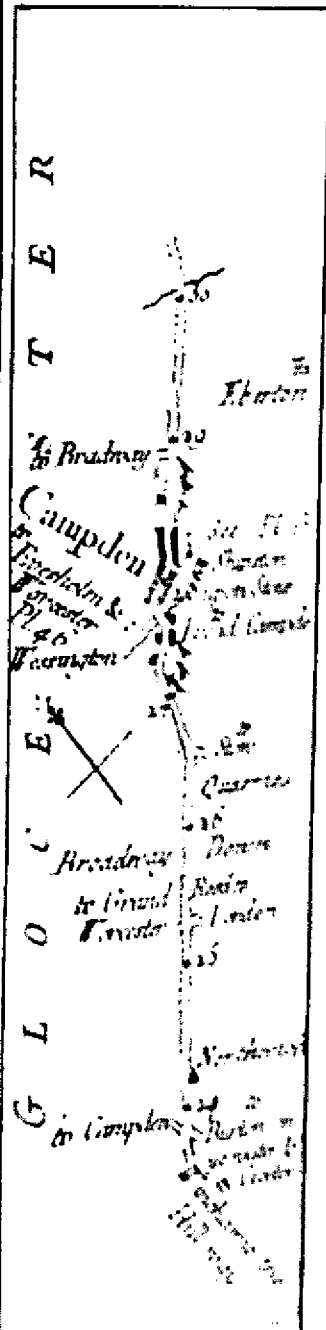
1. In 1775 Battledown Hill was just a stretch of pasture and arable land with a farm house and a barn. It is understandable to indicate the way to Charlton Kings, but why would our travellers also wish to know the way to unpopulated farmland? The answer is that the route being indicated was what we now call Harp Hill, formerly Hewlett's Road, which skirts Battledown Hill and climbs up Aggs Hill. This was an ancient trackway and formed the old Parish boundary of Charlton Kings. In a 13th Century deed it was called "the Kings highway" and in 1733 the parish was indicted for not repairing it³⁶. Under the 1755-6 Turnpike Act for

³⁶ A History of Charlton Kings – ed. Mary Paget, 1988, p.13. quoting other sources.



From GLOUCESTER

Cheltenham	9 1/2
Winchcomb	16 1/2
Camden	28



Battleton and Charlton Regis are top left. Note Chursdon (Churchdown) and Storton (Staverton)

Cheltenham Roads it was turnpiked from Cheltenham market house, up Aggs Hill, through Brockhampton and to Pusedown Ash, where it joined the road from Gloucester.³⁷ From 1755 to 1784 it was in fact a major route to London and hence the direction in the Itinerary.

2. Battleton is the first 18th Century record noted to date and it fits well into the accepted historical transition of the name of the hill we now call Battledown i.e.,

Baedala's Tun – a message belonging to a Saxon, Baedala

Badleton – 16th century name

Battleton – in the 1755 Itinerary

Battledons, Battledowns, Battlesdown -- early 19th Century variants

Battledown – Name fixed in 1859 through Estate legal documents.

The transition above suggests that the name has no connection to a real battle and is merely an example of people attempting to make sense out of meaningless place names. However, a local Victorian writer was quite explicit in describing "*The Fight on Battledown*" in his account of the Civil War Siege of Gloucester:³⁸

"Charlton and Cheltenham were held as Royal property and were crowded with Royalists and Rupert's cavalry; these occupied Battledown camp, as it commanded the Stow road, was a strong defensive position and would threaten the flank of an army advancing from Prestbury. Essex, on his side, descending in full force from Cleeve and Hewletts, drove the Royalists from Battledown. Of the fight nothing appears to have been recorded except the tradition that it took place on the part of the hill next to the present reservoir and near the junction of Greenway lane with Hewletts road, a tradition which is doubtless correct, as not only were the Roundheads advancing from Hewletts in this direction but the nature of the ground renders this the weakest point of the Battledown position and one which an enemy would endeavour to assail."

Most people would like there to have been a battle, like Clarence Dobell, whose account is strong on supposition and weak on evidence. However, when the land was sold in February 1800 to Charles Higgs it was described as "*commonly called and known by the name of Battledons.*" The seller was none other than the Earl of Essex, a descendant of the Parliamentarian Commander named by Dobell above, and he ought to have known. Perhaps, therefore, we can settle for a skirmish.

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ *Memoirs of Old Charlton Kings – Clarence M. Dobell. A series of papers written for the Charlton Kings parish magazine, 1896. Published as a book by Norman, Sawyer and Co. Cheltenham in 1898.*

HOW THE TRAMS CAME TO CHARLTON KINGS

David Morgan

On the 2nd June 1890 the Cheltenham Omnibus Company introduced horse-drawn buses into the town.³⁹ The first service ran from Lansdown Castle⁴⁰ to Pittville gates and was later extended to Prestbury and Southam. This was followed a few weeks later by a service from the High Street to Charlton Kings. As more horses and buses were acquired, a further route was opened from the Gas Works/Lower High Street to Leckhampton. By 1891, the Company had 29 horses stabled in Regent Street along with four “two horse” and two “one horse” small buses. After an encouraging start, operating costs rose, fare evasion became a problem and profit margins began to dwindle. More routes were introduced but in 1896 the Town Council was beginning to plan for an electric tramway system to be installed. This became a reality in mid-1901, competing with the horse-drawn service from Lansdown Castle. Proposed extensions to the tramway to Charlton Kings and Leckhampton spelled the end of the horse-drawn omnibus and it was decided to withdraw all services by 31 October 1902. The Cheltenham Omnibus Company was dissolved some weeks later.

In 1896 the Cheltenham Corporation received a request from Thomas A. Nevins, an Irish-American engineer and entrepreneur to install an electric tramway system from the Leckhampton Road to the Rising Sun Hotel on Cleeve Hill. Although the destination of Cleeve Hill seemed “a little odd”, the proposal was greeted with enthusiasm. However, it was soon realised that the route avoided the Town centre. In addition, Nevins was insisting on using a track gauge width of 4ft 8½ins, rather than the 3ft.6ins gauge used by tramway systems in other towns. Nevins claimed that the narrower gauge would not give enough power for the trams to climb Cleeve Hill but he also had another agenda: if at a future date the line could be extended to Winchcombe, it would be possible, with the standard railway gauge, to transfer freight, cattle etc., using steam locomotives connected with both the Midland and Great Western railway lines. After much debate, Nevins was told that steam power would not be allowed. The project would, however, be a useful model for a more extensive urban system.

During 1897-98, the Corporation’s sub-committee (later known as the Electric Tram Committee) began the task of studying the many complexities of the total project. The technology was by no means new: Bristol had established a horse-drawn tramway in 1875, which by 1890 was carrying 5 to 6 million people per annum and also serving to enlarge the city by drawing the outlying areas into the boundaries. In 1895 Bristol electrified the network,

³⁹ *The author wishes to acknowledge information drawn from the authoritative work “Cheltenham’s Trams and Early Buses” by Mr Colin Martin*

⁴⁰ *A small castellated building built in 1854 at the junction of Lansdown and Gloucester roads. From 1870 it was a grocer’s and later a tobacconist’s shop. It was demolished in 1972.*

as many British cities and towns did in the 1890s. However, there were legalities, several hundred objections from people living along the route, which had not been finally defined, the electrical supply, safety issues and the positioning of the poles to carry the electric cables. The decision to use overhead instead of underground motive power was Nevins' and his company funded this⁴¹. There were also the usual Cheltenham heated side issues, in particular whether the trams should run on Sundays. The Gloucester County Council also had to be involved because the Cheltenham Corporation had no jurisdiction on the proposed route through Prestbury, Southam and Cleeve Hill. In addition, other proposals from interested parties were received, but in view of the work already done, the plan submitted by the two Nevins, Thomas and his son, was given preference, although his request to extend the line to Winchcombe was still lurking in the background. However, one major gain was pointed out by a Cheltenham journal, namely that "*compared with horse tramways there is, at least, a sanitary advantage not to be overlooked and the nerve-destroying jangle of the equine method is quite eliminated*"⁴².

The gauge of the track was finally settled at 3ft.6ins. The route was extended from the Rising Sun to a flatter stretch of road further up the hill, to the point we know today as the Malvern View Hotel. However, the route from Pittville to Lansdown could not be settled. It was therefore decided to raise a provisional order for Nevins to proceed on the 3½ mile stretch of track from Cleeve Hill to Pittville Circus. This was approved at the end of June 1899. The 2½ mile route continuing to Lansdowne was then finally defined and a further order approved on 12th January 1900. The total capital expenditure approved for both orders was £57,000. By now Nevins had formed the Cheltenham and District Light Railway Company. It was complete with uniforms with metal buttons marked "CD LR" and either "Conductor" or "Motorman", a term indicative of the Company's American origins.⁴³ The agreed final route would start at Lansdown Castle and run along the Gloucester road to the junction with St. George's road. It would follow this road, turning into St. George's Place and thence to the Great Western Rail Terminal. From there it led to Clarence Street, North Street, Albion Street, Winchcombe Street and on to Prestbury, Southam and Cleeve Hill. At the time, none of the roads were metalled, as tarmac had not yet been invented. At Southam, passing Southam House⁴⁴ the road twisted left, then right, before commencing the steep climb. The main road as we know it today was not straightened until the 1960s. The original road, now Old Road, remained more or less in place. It had taken 3½ years to reach this stage but it would take only 20 months to install an operational tramway.

The Corporation needed to upgrade the electricity generation and installed a new sub-station in the large Italianate building which still stands on the corner of Clarence Street and St. George's place. By 1901 the power supply was ready and the rates to be charged to the Light Railway Company were agreed. Nevins placed orders with American companies for most of

⁴¹ *Cheltenham Looker-On – 24 August 1901.*

⁴² *Ibid*

⁴³ *British Tramway Buttons and Badges – www.birches.plus.com*

⁴⁴ *More recently the De la Bere and now Ellenborough House Hotel*

the equipment, which began to arrive in Cheltenham in January 1901. Work began in February and by the end of April five miles of track had been laid by a team of some 120 men, most of whom were American. "Turn Outs", or passing points, were installed at approximately ½ mile intervals. In June the tramcars began to arrive and a series of trial runs were made with more or less satisfactory results, culminating on 10th June with the successful completion of a full distance run. The Board of Trade certification inspection was fixed for 15th July and on the evening of 12th July a run up Southam Hill to test the motor and brakes of a tramcar was made. Nevins travelled on the car with some ten or twelve of his engineers, together with some informal "*at own risk*" passengers, including two or three women and a Mr Friskney, who lived on the Hill. The car then began the steep climb towards the Rising Sun and, half way up, where the gradient is 1:9, Nevins stopped the car to allow Mr Friskney to alight and himself got off. Suddenly, the car began to slip backwards: two workmen applied the brakes but it continued to slide with the wheels locked, accelerating to an estimated speed of 10 mph and striking fire from the friction of the metals. One of the workmen jumped from the car and escaped with a few bruises but the rest hung on to their seats until the curve near the junction with Woodmancote Lane, where the great speed with which it was travelling caused the car to fall on its right side. Unfortunately, two workmen chose that side and that time to jump for it: the car fell on them and crushed them. Jacks were immediately fetched from the car but the two men, both local workers⁴⁵, were dead. The remainder who stayed in the car suffered just bruises and a severe shaking and the tramcar was repaired at a small cost⁴⁶.

The immediate reaction of the press was to wonder whether this fatal accident would halt the project. However, Nevins was unconcerned, as he had predicted that the brakes would be ineffective on the hill and his son had designed a modification which, when the brakes were applied, would exert pressure on the ground below. Unfortunately, the modification had not been fitted to the test car! However, the Board of Trade Inspector ruled that passengers must not travel on the top deck of cars travelling beyond Southam. Later two single deck cars functioned exclusively on this section and passengers had to change to continue up the hill. Perhaps significantly, motormen on this stretch were paid more money than the rest. Despite this accident, the Board of Trade inspection was carried out on the 29th August, with representatives of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Councils present. Stops were made to inspect the track and the new "slipper" brakes were successfully tested on Cleeve Hill. The line was declared fit for use and it was announced that public services would begin on 17th August. The opening ceremony was staged with 100 invited guests. Two cars decked with Union Jacks and the Stars and Stripes carried guests through the crowded streets. Champagne was served at the Southam stop and the Mayor toasted "*Success to the Light Railway*".

In the first week of operation, 40,000 passengers travelled on the line and success indeed appeared to be materialising. Not everything went smoothly, however. There were technical

⁴⁵ Thomas Holloway, 30, an engine driver from Cheltenham and George Jackson, 18, a labourer training to be a conductor, from Swindon Village.

⁴⁶"Shocking Tramcar Accident"- report from the Cheltenham Mercury – 3 August 1901

problems as well as a feeling among the more well-off that the noisy beasts were not appropriate for Cheltenham Spa and should in any case be kept well away from their residences. There was also a debate about what opponents called "*Municipal Socialism*"; in some towns Corporations had assumed control of the tramways and the Cheltenham gentry were very much against any such financial burden on the rates and very much for private enterprise.⁴⁷ Almost immediately after the first line had been opened, proposals were made to extend the system to Charlton Kings and Leckhampton. By mid-1902 agreement was in sight but in August Thomas Nevins suddenly died. The local papers offered his family sympathy, describing him as "*a great town benefactor*".⁴⁸ Two months later, the horse-drawn Cheltenham Omnibus Company saw the writing on the wall and the directors abruptly withdrew their services, leaving Charlton Kings and Leckhampton without any public transport.⁴⁹ For six months little progress was made but Nevins' son, also Thomas, took over. It was not until September 1903 that he confirmed that orders for eight new tramcars and associated equipment had been placed. Work began on the two new lines in September 1904 with over 400 men employed. When the tramcars arrived, they were inspected at the St. Mark's (Maintenance) Depot and Tram Sheds, built on what is today the Lansdown Trading Estate. This was accessed on a branch line running from the main track in front of the Midland Hotel. The official Board of Trade inspection was successfully carried out on 25th March 1905 and there was a somewhat less exuberant celebratory opening with local dignitaries. The tramways had at last come to Charlton Kings.

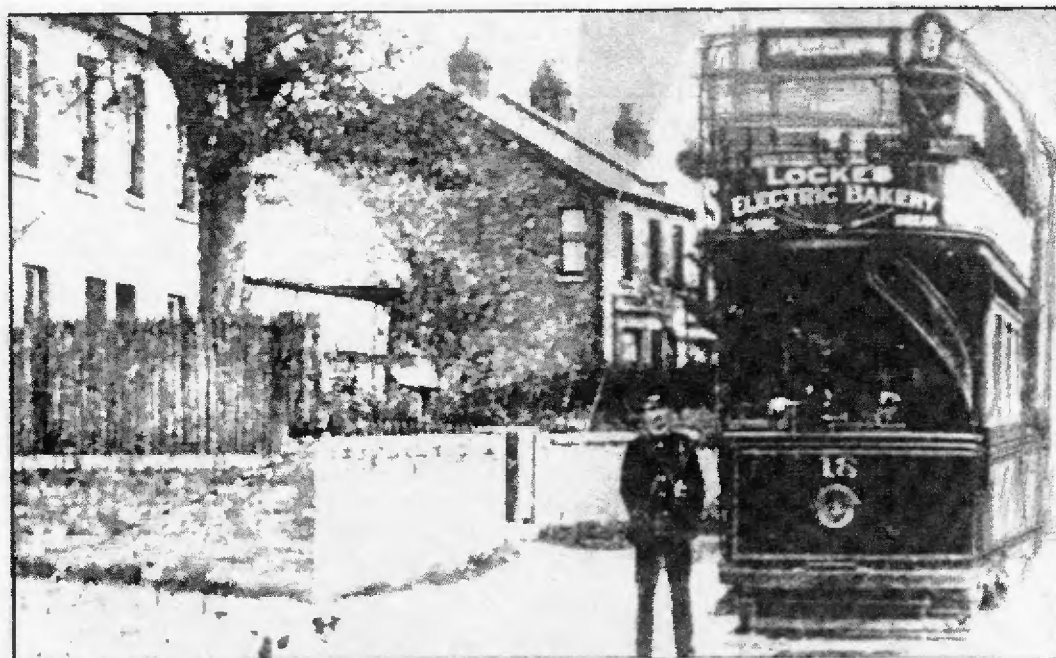
The Leckhampton service started at the Tram Centre (Boots' Corner today), passed along the High Street, turned into Cambray Place and Bath Parade, and then followed the Bath Road to the Norwood Arms, continuing up the Leckhampton Road to the terminus at the foot of Leckhampton Hill. The Charlton Kings route started at Lansdown Castle and ran on the existing 1901 track to the St. James' GWR Rail Station. At St. Gregory's corner, points diverted the trams to the new track along Ambrose Street, into the Lower High Street and on to the Tram Centre. It continued along the High Street, through the Strand and on the London Road to Sixways. Here it turned into Copt Elm Rd and then Lyefield Road West. On meeting the Cirencester Road, it turned left and proceeded to the terminus outside the New Inn, a few yards from the Charlton Kings Rail Station. The service ran every 15 minutes from 7.38 a.m. until 9.15 p.m. On Saturdays the last tram from the Tram Centre left at 10.00 p.m. and on Sunday, once the subject of much agonising, the service operated from 2.15 to 9.00 p.m. It took 35 minutes from Lansdown and 20 from the Tram Centre to the New Inn. There were stops at regular intervals and near to road junctions. However, there were restrictions and rules. Passengers were not allowed to smoke, play musical instruments, swear or use obscene language, be intoxicated, wear clothing which might damage the seats, or travel with loaded firearms! Dogs and other animals had to receive the conductor's approval and workmen's

⁴⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On* - 18 October 1902

⁴⁸ *Cheltenham Examiner* - 7 January 1903

⁴⁹ *The Company, chaired by Richard Rogers, five times Mayor of Cheltenham, went into voluntary liquidation a few months later.*

tools were to be deposited on the driver's platform. The top deck had rails around the sides, raising questions of modesty for ladies; later models had panels to solve this delicate matter. Having said that, the service to Charlton Kings from the town was regular, every 15 minutes, and took about 35 minutes from Lansdown or 20 from North Street. Weekdays it ran from 7.38 a.m. until 9.15 p.m. and on Saturdays the last tram from North Street left at 10.00 p.m. A Sunday service, once the subject of much agonising, ran from 2.15. to 9.00 p.m. Rules on the numbers of passengers allowed to be carried were continually ignored, particularly on the late weekend services and there were calls in the newspapers for a bye-law to be passed to prevent overcrowding.⁵⁰ In Charlton Kings there were stops at Hales Road, Holy Apostles, Copt Elm Road, Lyefield Road West and the New Inn⁵¹ for the Railway Station. To maintain the 15 minute schedule, it was necessary to employ five tramcars on the line, as the round trip took 70 minutes. Each tram would have to pass the other four at the passing points along the route every 15 minutes. Ordinary passengers paid out and return but workmen could make a return journey for the price of a single, this being an age when workmen were readily recognisable, as indeed were aristocrats. Mr. Fred Robinson, a Charlton man recalling his youth, once saw Lady Dixon Hartland of Ashley Manor, Sir Frederick's widow, who always wore black, travelling on the tram. The conductor shouted "*London Inn*", to which Lady Agnes called, "*Ashley Manor, if you don't mind*".⁵² A memory from Mr Fred Taylor described how the terminus for the tram at the Station was outside his parents' house and his father used to give the drivers roses for their buttonholes. About lunch-time the trams would always be about ten minutes late, as the drivers used to go into the New Inn for a quick one and sometimes a song at the piano! The fare then, in about 1910, was 2d to town and 1d to Holy Apostles.⁵³



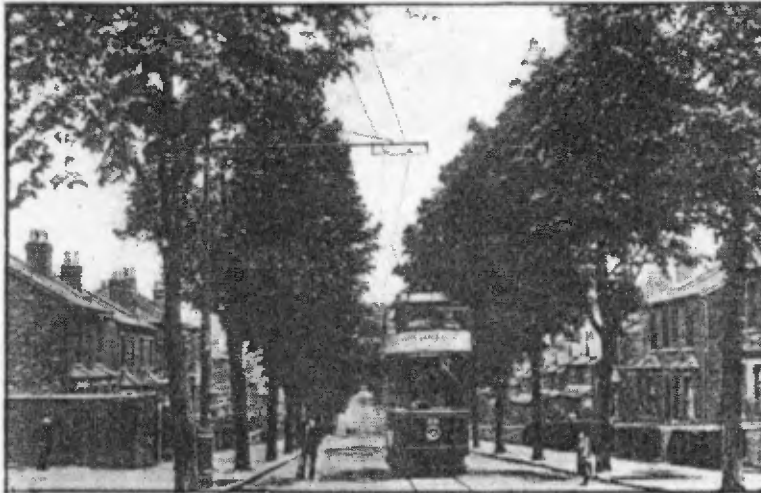
⁵⁰ *Cheltenham Examiner* - ^ January 1904

⁵¹ *Now the Little Owl, again.*

⁵² *CKLHS Bulletin No. 33. The entrance to Ashley Manor, now St. Edward's Junior School, was opposite the London Inn.*

⁵³ *CKLHS Bulletin No. 23*

In 1914, at the outbreak of war, Thomas Nevins sold his company to Balfour, Beatty and Co., an engineering company which also managed tramway companies: they had already purchased the tramways in Dartford and Luton. However, by the end of the war and the subsequent depression, operating margins and passenger usage in Cheltenham were dropping from the peak period around 1913, when 3.3 million passenger journeys were recorded. Track condition and the tramcars were deteriorating and in 1924 the Company invested in three motorbuses, which operated a service between the town and the cemetery. It was becoming clear that the age of the motor vehicle had begun and the first age of the tramway was ending.⁵⁴ Debate about the future ended in 1929 when it was agreed to buy motorbuses and close the tramway system. The Cleve Hill and Leckhampton routes ceased by the end of March 1930 and Charlton Kings lost its trams by the end of that year. Its tram age had lasted for 25 years. One, however, survived the scrapping process: the No. 21 to Charlton Kings was sold to a local farmer for storage, rescued for restoration in 1961 and in 1965 made a final ceremonial run over the old Charlton Kings route on a transporter before departing for the Crich Tramways Museum in Derbyshire. It was later moved to Bournemouth but in 1992 returned to a secure home in Cheltenham.



⁵⁴ *Little then did anyone suspect that there might be a second tramway age.*

A CHARLTON KINGS LEGAL PRECEDENT – BAGNALL v VILLAR – 1879

David O'Connor⁵⁵

Among the cases heard by the Chancery Division of the High Court in Lincoln's Inn are those relating to mortgages and other charges on lands, trusts and real estates. On 10 July 1879 Judge King heard a case involving two inhabitants of Charlton Kings. The Plaintiff was William Henry Bagnall⁵⁶, a wealthy gentleman who had that year moved into Bafford House with his family, and the Defendant James Villar⁵⁷, an Estate Agent and Auctioneer, who was a near neighbour of Bagnall's in Newcourt House. This case was to provide a legal precedent which survives in Law books to this day⁵⁸.

The background to the case was as follows. Thomas Ballinger, a bachelor farmer who had worked Northfield Farm in Charlton Kings following the death of his father Gabriel in 1862, borrowed from Bagnall in May 1874 the sum of £2,000. This was probably to enable him to purchase the farm, on which the Ballingers had previously been tenants of the Lord of the Manor of Ashley, Sir William Russell. The latter was at this time in grave financial difficulty and was having to mortgage or sell off much of his large estate to meet his creditors. This was a period when England was undergoing an agricultural depression and land was not producing wealth as it had. As a security for the loan, Thomas Ballinger mortgaged the farm freehold, to Bagnall. The indenture of mortgage contained a power of sale and covenants by the mortgagee (Bagnall) allowing the mortgagor (Ballinger) quiet enjoyment and further assurance. However, things did not go well for Ballinger and five years later, on 31st May 1879, he filed a petition for the liquidation of his estate and in the bankruptcy proceedings under it James Villar was appointed receiver.

You can see now that this is a situation likely to produce conflict. Ballinger's asset was his farm and what was growing on it. This was mortgaged to Bagnall and as mortgagee he was entitled to demand and recover income of the property in receivership. However, Villar as receiver, was equally empowered to do the same. Thus in theory both groups could in law demand rent, distrain or sue. The crux of the matter was which of the two had properly "entered into possession" and what had been done as a result.

Villar had taken possession of the property on 3rd June. He continued in possession and on 1st July was appointed trustee in the liquidation. On 26th June the Plaintiffs put a man in possession but the Defendant Villar did not go out of possession. On 28th June the Plaintiff's

⁵⁵ Who was granted legal aid by Mr. Matthew Bullock

⁵⁶ He is buried in St. Mary's churchyard. See "Lives Revisited", page 7 for further details.

⁵⁷ He is also buried in St. Mary's churchyard but some way away from the plaintiff.

⁵⁸ The Queensland Law Journal and the Victoria University of Wellington Law Review, to name but two.

solicitors⁵⁹ wrote asking the Defendant to give up his possession: he did not do so but continued cutting the grass on the farm, having begun to do so before the Plaintiff's man went into possession. The action before the Court was one against the Defendant Villar for damages for cutting the growing crops upon the lands in mortgage and for an injunction to restrain him from so doing, and from selling, removing or otherwise interfering with such of the crops as had been cut by him since 26th June. For the Defendant, it was argued that the mortgagor (Ballinger and hence his receiver) was entitled to the crops until he was ejected by judgement of the Court in an action for the purpose. The Judge was of the opinion that the possession of the mortgagor after the demand of possession was made on behalf of the mortgagee Bagnall was a wrongful withholding of possession. He would therefore not allow the Defendant Villar to remove the crops which were growing when they put their man into possession on 26th June. The injunction asked for by the Plaintiffs would be granted.

Thus did Charlton Kings pass into legal history and whenever the question of "*The Mortgagee Remedies of Entry into Possession*" is debated amongst those who debate such things, a footnote at the bottom of the page will read "Bagnall v Villar – 1879".



"May I draw Your Lordship's attention to the crucial case of Bagnall v Villar?"

⁵⁹ London agents were used but William Henry Bagnall's solicitors were Rowlands & Bagnall, Birmingham. James Villar used Ticehurst and Sons, Cheltenham.

EXIT FROM FRANCE 1940 - A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

Philip Warner

Editor's Note: The author lives in Charlton Kings and married his wife, a former pupil of the Charlton Park Convent, in one of the first marriages celebrated at Sacred Hearts Church.

This is the story of our departure from France in June 1940 as the German army was taking over. It is essentially a personal record but several people have suggested that I set down what I can remember as it could be of interest as a worm's eye view among dramatic and historic events, actually quite trivial compared to what many other people had to endure. It is all from memory.

Setting the Stage

I was born in 1926, so by 1940 I was fourteen. My father was British and my mother French by birth and British by marriage. At the time they married (1923), a foreign girl marrying a British subject became British without the option to keep her own nationality. They were married from her parents' Paris home (in three sessions, *Mairie* (Town Hall), Church and British Consulate), and set up home in London where his work was, first a flat in Holland Park and then a house in Golders Green. My one sibling is a brother a year and a half older, born in 1924. Our father died on 1 September 1928, four weeks after his 34th birthday. He had rheumatic fever as a child, which left his heart in such a state that he was not accepted in the British army when the First World War started in 1914. However, he volunteered to be a British ambulance driver in the French army. He had already been in France as a student at the Lyons silk school. He met my mother at his firm's Paris office in 1922/1923. Her parents, our French grandparents, had retired to a small town called La Loupe (pop.4,000) between Chartres and Le Mans. It had been her home, as her father owned its main shop - clothes and cloth and things of that kind. They had moved to Paris, where he became a partner in a small corset business. They retired back to this house in La Loupe called "La Providence". Their bachelor son, my mother's older brother and our uncle, came when not in Paris at his work

My mother had a low opinion of English doctors. It seems one reason was an experience she related with relish. In a daze during my birth, she reckons she heard the doctor say, "The baby's dead, let's try and save the mother". More importantly, she did not feel they were coping properly with our father's heart and brought him back to France to see what could be done there, which was not very much as he was really quite ill. He died in La Loupe and is buried there (creating in my mother a lasting horror of chrysanthemums). My brother and I did not go to the funeral, but later we would go and visit the grave. At first my mother left us at the gate with Nurse. Eventually we would go in with her to stand in front of the grave and say prayers: it was always stressed, in memory of "daddy".

The death had left this French girl, British only by marriage, stranded in a foreign country. She sold the London house and took us back to France, initially to live with her parents. It was our home for a few years, with gaps for the annual Christmas pilgrimage to London to see our English relations, buy clothes and perform various other rituals. We had English nannies who made sure we kept up our English, and in due course Nurse Evelyn supervised our morning

English classes, learning to read and write. There was also Madame Gautier, who came in the afternoons to teach us the equivalent in French. Teaching at home was not unusual then and there were standard courses by both English and French educational firms. Nurse and the French teacher worked from them, at each grade a pupil's copy and a teacher's copy.

One effect was to remind us continually that we were English, not that we particularly wanted to forget it. An English name unpronounceable by most French made it inescapable. When we eventually went to school, other children would keep on at it, taunting me when a history lesson came to the English burning Joan of Arc or lost a battle (in schools only victories by the home team get mentioned). The Hundred Years War, for instance, started more or less after the death of Henry V and the beginning of the retreat from France. There was a traditional song we were taught in class celebrating an eighteenth century capture of an English frigate by a much smaller French ship on August 31st ("*Le trente-et-un du mois d'Aout*"). It was sung with glee by my school mates, a glee that owed something to my being there. It was not until I went back to an English school in 1940 that I became aware of opposite perspective. Just as bad! England had invented everything from the steam engine backwards (and forwards!) and won all the battles. The climax of this nonsense was the Dome of Discovery at the Festival of Britain in 1951. All countries do it, I suppose. Checking around the countries of Europe, I found that several cherished a hero who had brought the potato (and/or tobacco) back from America – just conceivably explained by a different country of destination for each. But several had someone they celebrated as the native inventor of the steam engine; in fact the French and the English tell identical (and equally fictitious) tales about the childhoods of Papin and Watt respectively (watching with wonder a kettle lid bobbing up and down) – in any case James Watt is the wrong British nominee.

The 1930s

I think it was in 1932 when my mother got a flat in Neuilly, a suburb of Paris. For three years we went to a day school there but that changed when my mother felt I needed a tighter discipline. It was a ground floor flat and for security the windows when open were held by bolts across the front (in France windows open inwards). The gap it left was too small for regulation size thieves but I could get through. My mother used to send someone to collect me at school and see me safely across the dangerous boulevard Bineau, but I would evade them and slip into the flat without ringing the bell. It worried her.

So when I was nine we both went to a boarding school, "Les Roches". It was in extensive grounds in Normandy, and claimed to be modelled on an English public school, with separate houses, prefects, cricket, and hockey. In particular, we got up at 6.20am to take a cold shower. I am not sure whether there were English schools where that was still done, probably not in the 1930s. My brother says it was just a fad of our house-master, Monsieur Trocmé. He was an Alsace Protestant with lots of grown up offspring, the last adopted. Incidentally there was a Catholic chapel and a Temple which is what Protestants in France call their places of worship.

In 1938 my brother, whose studies were a year ahead of mine, stayed at home to attend an English tutor, Mr Brace, and prepare the Common Entrance for boarding school in England, when he would be thirteen and a half. A year later I too left to go to Mr Brace. He lived right across Paris via the "U" bus (Paris routes had letters, not numbers). About the only thing I remember from Mr Brace was that when he taught triangles in geometry he called them "glow worm" and "nanny goat", with little pictures inside them, part of his teaching technique. By the

summer of 1939 we had both been more or less converted into English schoolboys, to the extent that was possible from life in an essentially French family and school environment. One 1938 morning in La Loupe my mother came into our bedroom as the two of us lay in bed, saying, "Mr Chamberlain has gone to Munich to save the peace. You must get up quickly." We didn't see how that would help, but probably every holiday morning she would dream up some reason why we should get up quickly. We had followed events from the radio: Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland (France felt England let them down badly in letting pass this clear breach of the 1919 peace treaty), the Spanish Civil War, the Anschluss, the Sudeten crisis, Dantzig. It got more significant as we grew older. France's great fear was repetition of her appalling 1914-18 losses (the memory of that war dominated her right through those two decades). Then came the dramatic 1939 moment when the Russians changed sides, and it became obvious that Poland no longer had much of a chance. The Germans invaded on 1 September.

The Phony War

The French government had already called a general mobilisation and started putting everything onto a military footing – they had military service for all, two years, then into the reserve. Moreover, it was part of the routine to call in all the farm horses, in case the army might need them, a relic of past wars. Those from the La Loupe district were collected on grassland on the edge of town. We went to look. I had never seen so many horses together, probably hundreds, mares and stallions chained to steel pickets in the ground, with excited stallions making an awful racket. Service reservists reported to stations for trains to their assembly points. My uncle went to look at the local scene and told us that it wasn't anything like the enthusiasm of 1914. He would have been 44, having been in the first war as an observer in a two-seater plane to spot the fall of artillery shells. His ears were damaged by the cold and he was no longer fit for duty. The invasion of Poland produced the Franco-British ultimatum, Chamberlain's declaration at 11am on September 3rd, and Daladier's, the French Prime Minister at 4 or 5pm.

My mother was concerned about crossing the Channel in wartime, so we did not to go back to school in England for the autumn and stayed in France. She drove to Paris with her brother to collect various personal things, because it was assumed Paris would be bombed but not a small country town. It actually turned out the opposite way: the USAF bombed La Loupe in 1944 but nobody bombed Paris! She then made the prophetic announcement that even La Loupe was not far enough from the front to be safe from the German Army. She decided we should go to Brittany, to friends called Lafosse. We had often stayed during summer holidays at their chateau near Vannes. Off we went in our great little Renault "*Celtaquat*" car. Since buying it five or six years earlier, we had covered many miles with it on various holiday trips, including even a triumphant climb of the Simplon pass from Switzerland into Italy, during the Abyssinia crisis. We were held for ages at the border because of our British passports, much to the consternation of the French members of our party in their own cars, Britain having imposed sanctions on Mussolini. The car was black with green upholstery, a drop-head with a single bench seat (no arm-rests), and a dickey for luggage or an extra passenger. My mother sat in the driving seat on the left, I was plonked in the middle with the gear lever and my brother had the outside. We used look at guides and maps and learnt quite a bit about the geography of France in those trips.

So here we were again setting off westward, to Le Mans, Angers, Vannes, with Le Mezo about 8 miles further. We were not expected and they were astonished to see us. My mother explained her worries about the Germans reaching La Loupe, which were greeted with amusement. It

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Mme. Louise Warner and her boys, the author on the left



became a joke over the next few months, with regular references to a German submarine coming to the bay nearby. Then there was the question of where we would be going to school. The Lafosses were a bit status conscious, but we ended up at the *lycée* (state school) in Vannes, a good school with good teaching but with a different atmosphere from the private fee-paying schools we knew. My mother drove us in the morning and fetched us in the afternoon. Vannes was a major town some miles from Le Mézo and in a different municipality. The French local government system starts from *communes*, grouped into *cantons* (La Loupe was a *canton*, which is why it was the collection point for all those horses). Initially the wartime rule was that foreigners needed official permission to travel from one *commune* to the next. This meant visiting the *Gendarmerie* to get bits of paper stamped allowing us to travel between *communes*. My mother held a French identity card stamped: "*Nationalite Anglaise*" (France has a problem with the word "British"!) but the fact that we were allies seemed not to have any bearing on the matter (the system was put right at the New Year). We stayed at Le Mézo for one term. By then my mother had persuaded herself that she was imposing on her friends, although there was some financial arrangement. She also persuaded herself that the Germans were not coming, in which her prophetic vision failed her. We were back in La Loupe for Christmas and it was arranged that we would both go back to Les Roches for the next term.

My brother and I were in the same form because of his extra year in England, which the French educational system regarded as marking time. In France forms work backwards: you start at the twelfth and go down, so you are in the eighth form at the age of eight years, then going on to the seventh and on until you come to *la première* (first). There you sit exams roughly corresponding to today's English GCSE, and follow with a more specialised year. None of this recognises time in a foreign school, so in their eyes my brother had lost a year. So we were both in *deuxième* (second).

Back we went to Les Roches in January 1940. Two remarkable events during that winter term are worth recording. One evening we all went out to see the whole sky lit up red. They said it was an aurora borealis, but I certainly had never seen one before and my understanding is that they don't come down to temperate latitudes as a general rule. I read somewhere that it was visible all over western Europe. The second event was also climatic. One morning we woke up to find the trees shrouded in ice, quite colourless. Frost would have been white. Every twig, branch and small leaf had an envelope of clear see-through frozen water. It stayed on the trees several days. It is not something I have seen anywhere else and I do not know what caused it.

On the war front, the phoney war, as it got called in England, was still on. The *Graf Spee* was sunk in a two day drama. We had the report in the French press of nine French *Morane* fighters meeting twenty-seven German planes and shooting down nine of them, which was hailed as a splendid piece of work by the French Air Force. Other war news during that period consisted of the Polish campaign, sadly a short one, then of the war between Finland and Russia where we were all on the side of the Finnish people, and the accounts of the frozen Lake Ladoga with tanks and guns going across, and the idea of bombing it to break the ice. The Finns fought extremely hard during that period. Unfortunately it meant that they later came in on the side of the Germans, which did them no good. Then came the invasion of Norway, and everyone said "Oh at last! Now the Germans are somewhere we can get hold of them and beat them. They cannot hide behind the *Siegfried Line*." It didn't quite work out that way. Soon after that we heard the news of Churchill replacing Chamberlain. My brother was very pleased about this. He had been pleased when Churchill was made First Lord of the Admiralty at the outbreak of war, coming in from opposition. He seemed to know something about it. When the radio announced the new

wartime ministry back in September 1939, and it came to Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, "Oh! Good!" he said. He was pleased again when he became Prime Minister. By then we were at Les Roches for the summer term. We were back in La Loupe for the Easter holidays with the usual French Easter customs: chocolate eggs and fish in the garden. French church bells go off to Rome on Maundy Thursday and come back on Easter Sunday, dropping sweets on their way past. I am not sure that we were still young enough to get much fun out of that or indeed whether they took the trouble to do it at that stage, with the war on and us getting a little older, but I just recall it from perhaps earlier Easters.

Invasion

On the 10th May the Germans invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. I was in the infirmary, suffering from something, possibly mumps. I was a regular visitor anyway, because I was getting syringed at the back of my neck. In Brittany that previous autumn, a hairdresser had cut into my head. Hairdressers are not always very clean, and can bring you other people's bugs if they do not disinfect their scissors. I grew an abscess. It was before penicillin, and I still have quite a mark on the back of my neck. It had to be washed out by syringe over a long period, hence my daily visits to the infirmary. But on the 10th May I was actually an in-patient and that was when the battle started. I was out soon after. Mother and car turned up at school quite unexpectedly, a week or two later: "Get your bags! Get everything! I am taking you home." The Germans were coming after all! They had punched a hole over the Meuse at Sedan, round the far end of the Maginot Line (between the wars Belgium objected to its being extended west to face their country, arguing that it was provocative towards Germany and dangerous for them). On the ground the French armies were now falling back, and the British too. It did not look too good and she wanted us to be together. So we went back to La Loupe to our grandparents, around 20th May.

The weather was summery, but not the news from the front. Politically Daladier was being increasingly criticised and was then replaced by Paul Reynaud, seen as tougher. Later the Germans locked them both up. They switched commanders-in-chief too, replacing Gamelin with Weygand, who was presented as the famous victor of a battle before Warsaw in 1920 that stopped the Russians taking the city. The press said things would be different under Reynaud and Weygand, reminding us how grim it had been in 1914 when the battle of the Marne saved Paris (aided in fact by a serious tactical error from the invader). People hoped for something similar. Meanwhile we sat on the lawn in La Loupe, with a map on an iron garden table, sticking in flags and colouring it to show the inroads into the French front. We were there on the day King Leopold of Belgium surrendered his army. He was much blamed by the French for doing that: the radio called him "*Le Roi Félon*" (the Felon King.). He was contrasted with his father, Albert I, who had fought right through the 1914 war with what remained of his Belgian army in a little triangle between Belgium and the North Sea. The radio said how heroic they had been in that previous war and what a shame this chap had given up. It may have been the right decision to save lives but after the war Leopold had to abdicate. We were also there right through the Dunkirk evacuation, admired here but not in France, where it was construed as the British having had enough.

My grandparents' house was on a main road, parallel to the major Paris to Brittany road, which rejoined it further west. Along it came endless lines of refugees, in cars, horse-drawn carts, lorries, on foot and bicycles. At first Belgians, then people from Northern France, then from the Somme region, like some delayed geographical account of the progress of the front line. We

should not believe the picture painted in fictional films like "The Pied Piper". They are quite misleading. Particularly silly is that every French railway is shown as single track and the roads as narrow and un-metalled. The ladies of La Loupe, on the lines of the Women's Institute I suppose, organised sleeping quarters and comforts and food for them, in the town hall and in the communal entertainment hall. There was constant activity of meals and medical help. I remember being shattered one day when they said as they came back from the Town Hall that one of the people on the back of whatever the family were pulling was found to be dead.

During that period in *La Loupe* several incidents might be of interest. We had made friends with a British Army soldier, whom we probably button-holed in the main square. He was a driver, and came up and down fairly often, was glad to meet a family who spoke English and supplied my mother with Virginia cigarettes, which were no longer available in shops. He offered her Gold Flake or Woodbines, her normal tippie being Craven A. We saw him a few times, I think he was a corporal, and my brother thinks he was driving an ambulance. I do not know what happened to him or if he got back. The other incident worth mentioning is the evening we were hauled across to the town's *Gendarmerie*, where they were holding someone ostensibly English they thought could be a spy. The three of us went along. It was an old bloke in black light-weight clothes, who turned out to be dumb, so we couldn't assess his accent, if any. He wrote that he was a gardener in Marylebone. We communicated by writing on little bits of paper and we tried him on various tricks like "Where do you work?" and "Where is it?" It seemed his answers were consistent. At least they satisfied my mother and my brother, I was a mere onlooker. They decided we couldn't prove anything, so we just left him and went home. Then there was the evening when a plane was circling around above the area of our house, on the west side of La Loupe. We speculated whether it was friendly. I think in retrospect it was quite unlikely that a German bomber searching for its target would circle around in the moonlight over enemy territory. It would have let its load go on anything that looked appetising, maybe the railway, and left quickly. However the speculation went on. The expert on aeroplanes was my uncle, and he had his views on the matter, but I cannot remember what they were.

As time went on, we found that the people coming across the front door were coming from closer and closer places: from Normandy, just north of the Seine and then south. The news that the Germans had crossed it then came on the radio. We decided it was time for us too to go much further south (at that stage, no one conceived of all France being overrun). The family spent an evening packing two tin trunks with things of value to be buried in the garden. They included silver and documents, and anything important to us. Wrapped in oil cloth, the trunks were put in holes dug by my uncle, one under the rhododendron bush and the other in a wide hedge, with about a foot of earth on the top. When my mother went back to the house at the end of 1944, having got permission to visit her father and brother (her mother having died of pneumonia), she asked what they had done with the trunks. They said "What trunks?"; neither of them apparently remembered them being buried, although they had taken part in it all. She got them dug up, and found everything well preserved. It was just as well, because the house had been stripped by looters, probably just refugees coming back and taking things on the way from the many empty houses. Later at school in England in 1941, I drew a little map of the "hidden treasure" and showed it to other boys. But they didn't take me seriously, why should they? My mother put her usual fifteen thousand francs in the money belt inside her corsets, and we loaded the car with four suitcases with what we thought were the essentials. And off we set.

I have little recollection of that journey, beyond a vague picture of a petrol pump, probably on a side road where the owner happened to have some left. We must have been lucky. My mother's

friends the Leclerc family had a holiday villa in Royan, a resort at the north eastern extremity of the Gironde, which is the estuary of the River Garonne. On the left the Medoc peninsula, a renowned wine region, divides it from the Atlantic. Royan is on the right at the northern end, facing the Atlantic with a long beach and large hotels. The Leclerc family were from Le Mans and had got to know ours in the 1914/18 war, when the French Army posted my grandfather there (a forty-five year old rescrvist sergeant) to defend rear areas! My mother and one of their daughters called Paulette (later my god-mother) had become firm friends. We arrived in Royan on the day Mussolini brought Italy into the war, about 10th or 11th June, and found the Leclerc villa requisitioned for a naval officer's wife and her children. We tried a hotel where we were offered rooms for one night only. In the hotel lobby the radio was on and everybody was looking at one another and saying "What! Italy?" "Oh dear! Italy!": it had just been announced that Italy had joined the war (Mussolini felt it was about safe by then). Interestingly enough, in a few days, the French Alpine troops fought their way nearly to Turin, which is quite far from the border, and fought a good campaign. Unfortunately, they were stopped by the talk of an armistice on 17th June.

My mother contacted an estate agent and was offered a basement flat. Seaside resorts have hinterlands of villas, each with its own grounds. This one was on a mound dipping down in all directions, with the basement really at ground level and the villa up some steps. I do not remember what the rent was, or if I was ever told. The flat was fairly dark but adequate, at any rate until all the Leclercs turned up to stay in their villa and discovered the naval officer's wife and family. Somehow contact was made with my mother, and they all turned up one after the other, family by family, into this basement flat. I think they were probably three sets of families plus a bit. The dowager lady Madame Leclerc, one daughter Yvonne Duclary and children, possibly some younger Leclercs of the son's family and certainly the Monnier family, to wit the other daughter Paulette (my godmother) and her two children. So there was quite a big group in this flat (women and children, all the men being at the war) and it was not very practical. I had to share a bed with my mother, which I never relished.

We settled, if you can ever say so of these conditions, into a sort of a routine. We went shopping to a large covered market, and generally occupied ourselves as children of mixed ages might. I don't believe we went anywhere near the beach, although it was June, probably because the Navy had put it out of bounds. One particular incident was connected with a trip to the Leclerc's villa, where the crowd of us children went one afternoon into the garden. I suppose we might have worried the naval officer's wife and family, though they didn't appear. A sense of gricvance hung around, not very rational, that they should be ensconced in what was somebody else's house with plenty of room when the legitimate owner and guests and family were squashed into a tiny basement flat. There was a certain amount of tumbling and grumbling. The incident that followed may seem trivial but turned out to be important, as I shall explain later. What happened was that the suggestion was made, I don't know where from, that we might retaliate against the bikes and I took out my *canif* – a folding pocket knife, standard equipment for every boy in France, resembling a present day Swiss army knife with lots of clever tools to pull out. I poked the blade into the tyre of one of the bikes, I suppose it was a sort of showing off action. And we ran. That evening the naval officer turned up at the flat pretty angry. He saw Madame Leclerc, to whom it was a complete surprise as she hadn't realised anybody had been to the garden of her villa. They had a great to-do and I imagine she offered to make good the damage. When he'd gone she wanted to know who was responsible but no one was talking. Then my grandparents and uncle arrived from La Loupe in their elderly car, an old Renault of the

type without a radiator grill, just a sort of metal apron covering the front of the bonnet, late 1920s. They joined us in the flat where we all squashed up a little more.

An Armistice is Sought

A few days later we were clustered round the radio, as always in the evenings, to listen to the new Prime Minister or President, the Maréchal Petain, who had taken over. People knew him as the commanding general in 1916 at Verdun, when the French army withstood fierce enemy attacks with the most appalling carnage and finally drove the German forces back – the battle is deep into French folk memory and Petain was revered as its victor. He was the only surviving First World War marshal and by now in his eighties. His taking over was welcomed and people thought it would be all right – but it wasn't, as we know now. What he said on the radio that evening was that he had asked the German authorities about an armistice. There was no reference in that talk to London or the British as far as I can remember, and our French friends were stunned by the idea of an armistice and the disaster that was engulfing their country.

My mother's immediate concern was that if Great Britain went on with the war we might be interned as foreigners and enemies. None of the French seemed to think the British could possibly go on fighting if the French were out of it. Various dodges were discussed how the three of us might get through a German search for foreign nationals. One scheme was for my grandfather to take his so called *livret de famille*, a sort of family joint identity record, who's who, who got married, what children and so on, like an expanded family tree with official status at that time. As his daughter married a foreigner (a British subject), there was no entry for him or for us their children. The idea now being mooted was to add against my mother's entry as his daughter some fictitious husband and us two. This could be a way of dodging any police investigations, at any rate for a while (nobody seemed to think that things would last very long – even if the British went on they would soon stop going on, as it were).

A silly incident then led to a great row, whose details I have forgotten. One of the other boys, not my brother or me, was being accused of something or other and got into a frightful rage, running off down the hill shouting that if that was how he was going to be treated he would denounce me as the one who damaged the bicycle. It showed that any attempt to conceal our British identities would be at the mercy of a wild tantrum giving us away. The idea was not viable. My mother then had to make peace with Madame Leclerc and explain that it was all very sad and no one meant any harm. As for me, I reflect that damaging that bicycle tyre turned out to be a fortunate thing – though not planned that way. We had to go.

Bayonne

The British consulate was in Bordeaux, 80 miles south. It was the town where the French Government moved in August 1914 just before the battle of the Marne halted the Germans in front of Paris – but this time round Paris was already taken. Next morning we packed and set off. My chief memory of that trip was how crowded the road was, mostly with trucks of French Air Force ground personnel, who had a distinctive uniform with orange/pink coloured insignia on their dark blue. My mother's conversation, worried though she must have been, was mostly to the effect that the British would have no thought of making peace (she always reckoned they were pig-headed and unable to see reality – not a long way from the fond view the British take of themselves). The Bordeaux consulate was near the port. My brother's recollection differs from mine at this point, I suspect because we separated. He says a crowd of people were pressing to

go in, but the French soldier controlling the front door turned out to be a son of Monsieur Trocmé, our house-master from Les Roches, who let them through quickly when he recognised them. Upstairs the consul behind his desk looked at our passports and told our mother that she was responsible for two British subjects who would soon be of military age and she had a duty to get them home. Evidently his Foreign Office briefing was to assume a long war. The last ship had gone from Bordeaux, but he had requested another to pick up British people from Bayonne, about 120 miles further south. They were assuming the German army would soon arrive, but take longer to get to Bayonne.

So off we went to Bayonne, an easy straight road through the pines of the Landes, completely clear of traffic. We had spent a summer holiday in 1938 in the French Basque country between Bayonne and the Spanish frontier (closed at that time by the civil war in Spain). Spain in 1940 did not seem a desirable option as Franco was reputed to be a pal of Hitler's, although some British did get out that way later. We got to Bayonne mid-afternoon and went to the vice-consul there, at the local branch of Barclay's. He confirmed that a ship was due and he would put us down for it. The question, with evening coming, was where we would stay. My brother suggested we should buy some books, since we needed something to read, so we went to a book shop in a street nearby and started looking around. My mother sat on a chair and began to weep in general despair and worry. One must remember that all France was in turmoil with people displaced and bewildered and distressed, so nobody was very surprised. That period came to be known as *L'Exode* (the Exodus). The woman owner of the shop came to see what the problem was, and my mother explained that we were British waiting for a ship and she did not know what to do. So that woman said we should stay at her house for the night – which we did. That was the day after the armistice news, so it must have been the 18th, and as we sailed on the evening of 21st, we must have been there three nights (the armistice was agreed on the 23rd). I do not know what her name was and if my mother tried to get in touch after the war, only that we were given food and baths and beds, and she was a wonderfully kind woman. She seemed to be on her own and maybe her husband was called up. The bathroom I do remember as having been some interesting colour, not white as I was used to but something modern, possibly blue. An example of how trivial things stay in the mind and important ones may not.

The next day we went back to the vice-consul for news of the ship (not arriving that day) and saw the Renault agent to ask if he would take the car before we sailed. He too showed commendable generosity, which was characteristic of everybody in France during this whole crisis as far as I remember, all rallying round and helping one another. He could have had the car for nothing, as it would have had to be left on the quay, but he offered 10,000 francs (at about 170 to the £ at that stage, so a fair price in the circumstances) in effect just for the documents and ignition keys. On one of those days, as we were walking along, my mother suddenly shouted across "Colette!" and ran into the road to this huge Rolls Royce, with a young woman passenger with a baby on her lap. She was the daughter of people who owned a hotel in Neuilly where we had once stayed. Barely twenty, she had married the Rolls Royce manager in Paris, hence the car. Their little boy Peter was about six months and Colette was expecting no 2. They told us they had driven the Rolls Royce through the lines and been waved on by the German traffic police – either because they looked too important or from the policy, widely believed, that the German army directed the traffic congestion to the French side of the front – especially if it involved a young family with a baby. They probably got the car afterwards anyway.

Embarkation

On the third morning the ship arrived, *Koningin Emma* (Queen Emma). The crew were from Rotterdam and had no news of their families. It had been one of the first cities to be blitzed and largely destroyed after the 10th of May invasion of Holland, by now completely overrun. We watched her sail up that morning and went off to get ready. My mother said we should take some food, say sandwiches, so we got bread and butter, but for filler all we found were tins of sardines. That was to be our diet. When we got back to the embarkation point with our bags, we found a vast crowd anxious to board, who must have been hanging around Bayonne just as we had. Colette and family didn't seem to be there, probably having boarded early as an expectant mother with a baby. The press of people formed a rough triangle with its apex at the boarding gangway. We tacked on to the back (it soon grew behind us) edging forward slowly, pushing our cases with our feet. Some feared being left behind and there was some shoving. A British army major stood on the bridge with a megaphone, organising the embarkation. Presently a dozen or so obviously wounded soldiers in uniform turned up, some bandaged, one or two with sticks. Someone shouted "Make way" but the shoving went on as they passed through and got on board. The major stopped everything and said through his megaphone "Nothing is more disgraceful than jostling wounded British Tommies and you just have to behave. I know you have luggage and I know you're anxious, but nobody will be allowed on the boat other than British subjects by birth." That was the essence of his speech.

At once we panicked, because our mother was not a British subject by birth, only by marriage; we said we were not going without her and went back to the vice-consul, outside on the pavement at Barclay's. He wrote a message addressed to the major that Mrs Warner was to be allowed to travel with her sons, and back we went, having lost a few notches in the queue. At some stage people around said we'd never get all our luggage on, and dumped our suitcases in the dock. Fortunately it was low tide so they landed on the mud and stones. One of them, a blue case, bore ever after the scar of being cut by the rock it fell on. We had four cases altogether, although my mother everlastingly later would tell her story around "three little suitcases" and they seemed to get smaller and smaller in her gestures. Anyway, when we got on the ship eventually, across what felt like a rickety gangplank, I asked about retrieving the cases but it turned out a Dutch sailor had already climbed down and got them.

The Sea Trip

We found ourselves in a clump of deck chairs with Colette and family on an inside deck with big windows to starboard, for the moment merely across the river to the north bank. It was a fairly large passenger ship of some 14,000 tons. Perhaps we were in a privileged part of the ship, where Colette and co. had also been placed. In front of me – a picture that has always stayed with me – was an old gentleman in a wheel chair, marvellously smart with spats, a dark blue suit, stiff white collar and tie with a jewelled tie-pin. Most striking of all, he had a large head, perhaps abnormally so, held back from slumping forward by a strap across his forehead (which looked pretty sore) anchored behind his neck, presumably to the back of his chair. He had helpers giving him his food with a small spoon. He was clearly very handicapped and I never saw him speak. I suppose he was eighty and had spent his entire life in that condition, but with plenty of money for the practical help. He was certainly very smartly turned out and well looked after.

I went up to the open deck as we sailed off, just as night was falling. The embarking area was bare and the gangway up, but the top deck was crowded. Curiously, a few of these presumably British passport holders spoke no English. They must have been born in France and lived there always but they were a minority. A few people on shore watched us go downstream and as we sailed by, those in the ship waved and shouted over and over again: "*Vive la France!*" and the people ashore waved back. It was a demonstration of the regard and affection felt for France in her tragedy by those leaving her – a few moments of great emotion. We headed out to sea.

Night fell (the shortest night of the year!) and we settled in our deck chairs. Somebody came round with lifejackets, kapok slabs, one huge lump slap behind and two on either side of the chest. A solid box-shaped slab behind does not encourage sleep, but we were ordered to wear them all the way. Next morning we were told there were submarines about, some debris had been sighted, and the ship was zigzagging. I was invariably seasick whenever we crossed the English Channel each year, so although the sea was ideally smooth, zigzagging on sardine sandwiches was a bit much (my mother had prepared them in plenty of time and the oil had already soaked into the bread). I soon gave that up and settled for a routine of short trips to the loo to be sick every so often, in effect on nothing. Seasickness seems not to require anything in one's stomach, and in those days ship's loos always seemed to expect that kind of visitor. The exciting moment was when they allowed me to change Peter's nappy, a great new experience. He was a lovely little boy, and I enjoyed being with him. His mother didn't mind as she was exhausted, and his father was kindness itself.

England

We eventually reached Plymouth, the journey having taken just 25 hours. It was quick, considering her wide sweep into the Atlantic and all that zigzagging. It was Saturday evening, and the crazy news now emerged that the immigration offices were closed for the week-end and would not be available till Monday. The passengers exchanged knowing nods that we were in England now and not even a war would interfere with the week-end habit. But the Dutch captain was reported to be pretty furious. There we were, a large 14,000 ton ship naked in Plymouth Roads with a full moon and no clouds, in the middle of a war, with goodness knows how many people on board, some in distress and maybe some with immediate recollections of German air power. We spent the night at anchor there, and no planes did come.

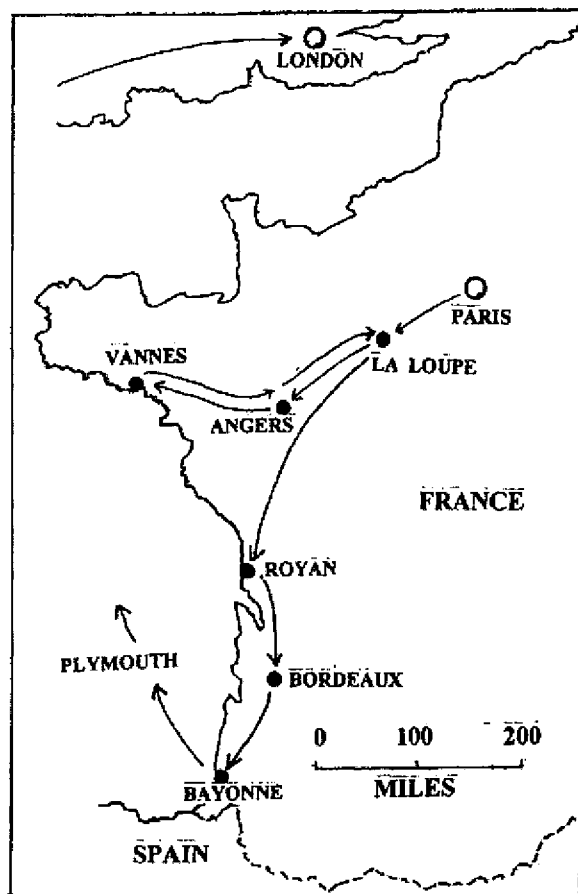
Whatever strings the captain pulled must have worked, as the officials turned up for us to disembark that Sunday morning. My brother remembers that a Navy rating was handing out mugs of tea as we stepped onto the pier, and when I hesitated said: "What's the matter mate, not enough soap?" – a naval joke, but the reason was probably not enough stomach. I felt the pier swaying, a curious psychological effect of only a couple of days on board. It lasted about an hour. We were given the new style identity cards, little blue folded things with a unique number. Mine was PAL911, which I kept till I had to surrender it on being called up years later. I got a long boring number when I was demobbed from that. My brother was PAL910 and my mother PAL909. A long railway train was waiting for us for the journey to London. My mother must have bought tickets because we got into a first class compartment. My mother usually chose first class in England, because there was no second class, which she preferred in France. The train didn't leave till evening, so we spent the night travelling from Plymouth to London. At Waterloo masses of busses were lined up ready for us. Everything was well organised; it was just the immigration service in Plymouth that let the side down, and I dare say the Dutch captain's comments to the Admiralty on the Saturday evening were interesting.

My mother declined the offer of a bus to accommodation, saying she knew London and would stay at one of the hotels where we used to go before the war. We went to the Vanderbilt Hotel in the Cromwell Road. There was an air raid warning that night (I work it out as the night of the 24th/25th June), which woke us up. It worried my mother and she came into our room to see if we were OK and go with us down to the shelter. I believe that was London's first, apart from one the day war started – not a raid either, just the sirens and the all clear a bit later. But it was enough to keep us awake when we thought we had found beds to sleep the night through.

Conclusion

That is more or less the end of the story, but here are two final points:

- (1) In later years my mother absolutely refused to surrender her British nationality, a condition of resuming her French one, even though she was back living in France and it meant foregoing social security and other benefits attaching to French nationals. She could not forget that moment in Bayonne on the quay when told only British subjects could board the ship – and she was petrified at the thought that it could happen again and she would be separated from us.
- (2) The most fundamental final reflection is that my mother has to be given huge credit, no matter what else, for getting us safely out. That was her priority despite having to leave behind her parents, especially her mother who had a skin cancer on her shoulder (she died of pneumonia during the Occupation), and all the places where she was at home and felt comfortable, to come to what was to her an alien country. She was absolutely single-minded about it. Our lives have been really very different as a result. I hate to think what they would have been if we had had to spend four or five years in internment in a camp.



THE WILL OF ELIZABETH REID

David O'Connor

Charles Higgs, Gentleman of Charlton Kings, and his wife Susannah, née Cook, had five children: Jane, Charles, Samuel, Elizabeth and Susannah. Among deeds relating to Ivy Cottage in Cudnall Street kindly made known to the Society by Mrs. S. Fletcher there was a copy of the will of the fourth child, Elizabeth. She was christened on 12 October 1763 and on 3rd May 1792 married the Reverend William Pickering Reid, originally from Winterbourne in Dorset but later living in Prestbury. The will was made in 1827 and was proved on 20 March 1829: it is assumed that she died, as a widow, some little time before this last date. The copy of the will is given below, as it was dictated and written. It is that of a practical, common-sense woman; it is plain that she has no children of her own, since the major beneficiaries of her will are nephews or nieces, the offspring of her own siblings by blood, or by marriage. The will is a purely legal document, with no religious sentiments expressed, nor is there any wider charitable content: the bequests to her servants, although sizeable, are rather rewards for good service. The emphasis is on the passing of her favourite possessions to the younger generation, as lasting memorials of her relationship with them. The financial matters are left to the end and glossed over lightly. There is one full stop, probably a mistake.

"This is the last Will and Testament of me Elizabeth Reid of Winchcomb Street Cheltenham in the County of Gloucester Widow dated the third day of November in the Year of our Lord One Thousand and Eight Hundred and twenty seven First I desire to be buried in the same vault with my late husband (the Rev William Pickering Reid) at Lymington in the County of Hampshire in a plain and decent manner without any unnecessary form or expense And I desire all my just debts and funeral together with testamentary expenses may be paid as soon as they can after my decease and what little property I die possessed of I will and bequeath as follows that is to say To my Sister Susannah Gale⁶⁰ of Charlton Kings in the County of Gloucester Widow I leave all my best table and bed linen Also my lace scarf (formerly belonging to my late sister Mrs Greenaway⁶¹) also a satin gown and a piece of satin to match and a red shawl And I further bequeath to my aforesaid Sister Susannah Gale a piece of silk for a gown not made up and also all my rings save and except such as hereafter are mentioned. The Ring (or Seal) of Bacchus and Ceres I give to my nephew Charles Cooke Higgs of Charlton Kings in the County of Gloucester together with five guineas to buy a Ring and I hereby appoint the aforesaid Charles Cooke Higgs the sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament To my two nephews John Gale and Samuel Gale of Charlton Kings I give all my Books to be equally divided between them I do hereby further bequeath as follows To my

⁶⁰ Samuel Higgs Gale, Susannah's son, did not change the family name to Gael until 1842. Susannah herself retained the Gale spelling, though her death in 1851 was announced as a Gael.

⁶¹ Jane née Higgs, wife of Giles Greenaway of Gloucester

sister in law Mrs Cole⁶² of Bath in the County of Somerset my diamond hoop ring my silver tea pot plated coffee pot sugar basin and cream jug and also a new silk pelisse To my brother in law the Rev David Reid of Felixstowe in the County of Suffolk my silver cruets and stand as a remembrance To my sister in law Eliza Pickering Reid of Windsor in the County of Berkshire one pair of silver Waiters and one pair of silver bottle stands To Mary Ann Cole daughter of the above mentioned Mrs Cole my gold Brooch with "W P R"⁶³ ingraved on it To Rupertia Higgs⁶⁴ (my niece) of Charlton Kings one dozen best silver table forks one dozen silver desert forks and a dozen best silver tea spoons To my sister in law Jane Reid of Windsor in the County of Berkshire One pair of silver bottle stands with labels belonging thereto To my cousin Mrs Mary Ann Allan of Grosvenor Place Cheltenham in the County of Gloucester my diamond ring with "In Memory of" inscribed on it and also my chenille shawl To my Nephew Samuel Gale my gold watch and seals except the one of Bacchus and Ceres already bequeathed to my nephew Charles Cooke Higgs And I hereby further bequeath to my aforesaid sister Susannah Gale All the rest of my plate and plated Articles for her life and afterwards to her two sons John and Samuel Gale aforesaid except the large silver Waiter which I only leave her (my sister) for her life and at her death I desire it may be given to my niece Rupertia Higgs aforesaid To Doctor Boisragon⁶⁵ of the Crescent Cheltenham Five Guineas to buy a Ring To Daniel Stroud Chairman⁶⁶ One guinea for his great care and Attention to me To my sister Susannah Gale aforesaid my Side board and at her decease to her son Samuel Gale All the rest of my linen and wearing apparel I bequeath to my Servants Emma Hobbs and Lydia Webb living with me at my death together also with two pair of my best Doulas⁶⁷ Sheets and two pair of pillow cases to each of them I also bequeath to the aforesaid (Emma Hobbs and Lydia Webb) living with me at my death five guineas each over what money be due to them to that period And I further direct that they the aforesaid Emma Hobbs and Lydia Webb may each be supplied with a suit of mourning⁶⁸ And I lastly request that the rest of my household furniture may be sold and the money applied as far as it will go to my funeral and other expenses after which what more I may have in the three per cent consolidated annuities or may be in my bankers hands Messrs Hoare and Co Fleet Street London or Messrs Pitt Gardner and Co Cheltenham or due to me from my Annuities I bequeath in the following manner that is to say one third to my niece Rupertia Higgs aforesaid and two thirds to be divided equally between my two nephews John Gale and Samuel Gale aforesaid In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal above the day and year above written.

(It is my desire that Emma Hobbs may have twenty pounds should she live with me till my death and Lydia Webb may have ten pounds) Elizabeth Reid"

⁶² The sister of William Pickering Reid.

⁶³ William Pickering Reid

⁶⁴ Charles Cooke Higgs' sister

⁶⁵ Physician Extraordinary to the King and a popular and wealthy social figure in Cheltenham

⁶⁶ Chairmen were licensed like carriages and employed to provide mobility around the town for the elderly and disabled.

⁶⁷ Probably 'Dowlas', rough calico.

⁶⁸ So that they would be properly able to attend the funeral of their mistress

Elizabeth subsequently added two codicils: one raising the sums to the two servants to fifty and twenty pounds respectively. Fifty pounds was a very substantial legacy for a servant: its purchasing value today would be in the order of £2,500. The second rather mystifying codicil was the bequest of two butter ladles to her nephews John Gale and Samuel Higgs Gale, then 22 and 19 years old respectively. This read like some sort of family joke but engraved silver butter ladles, which had a cup-like spoon, were found in wealthy houses. John Gale may not have received his: he died aged 22 in the same year as his Aunt Elizabeth. There are some calculations on the reverse of the will which suggest that the money available after deductions was £769..6s..10½d, the approximate purchasing power of which, in today's terms, is £38,000.

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RESTORATION OF THE DRINKING FOUNTAIN

Ann Hookey's article in Bulletin 55 of 2009 described the history and deterioration of the Holy Apostles drinking fountain. Owing to the endeavours of Mrs Karen Radford, Heritage and Conservation Manager for the Cheltenham Borough Council, funds were found to undertake the necessary repairs. These were excellently completed in February 2011 by Mr Ron McAllister of Ron McAllister Masonry Ltd., Haresfield, at a cost of £15,000 + VAT. The fountain now shines as it once did and Charlton Kings is pleased to see a piece of its history restored and well⁶⁹.



⁶⁹ Photograph courtesy of David Broad

OUR HOME FRONT

Brian Lickman

After Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, yet another 70th anniversary arises from the Second World War - the National Farm Survey of England and Wales (1941-1943).

Farm surveys are not new: as long ago as 1866 the government introduced an annual farm survey. It is noteworthy that this return was not made compulsory until 1917, making earlier annual comparisons suspect. Over the years, the requested information has altered slightly to reflect changes in agricultural practice. The summaries are held by county, and parish within county. The complete run (1866-1983) of these summaries is also held in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew.⁷⁰

The outbreak of war in September 1939 created immediate national concern about the feeding of our island population. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) sponsored the survey and delegated the responsibility to County War Agricultural Executive Committees. The complexity of the work of these Committees may be simply summarised as ensuring that each farm makes its maximum contribution to food production. They had to assess the needs and capacity of each farm for increased food production and the capability of the farmer to contribute to the national food production plan. One of the first responsibilities of all County Committees was to direct a ploughing-up campaign, under which large expanses of grassland were prepared for cultivation. Because, as we shall see, Charlton Kings was predominately "dairy", not much is recorded on ploughing directives.

In an attempt to rationalise local interpretations of governmental instructions, County Committees were directed to confine the survey to agricultural holdings of 5 acres and above. The adoption of "holdings" was considered more inclusive, embracing "farms" and "non-farms", the former having sufficient capital resources to provide the occupier with a main occupation and a chief source of livelihood from farming, and the latter which did not conform to the farm definition. The cut off at 5 acres was deemed desirable to reduce the national workload, given that 70 thousand holdings between 1 and 5 acres comprised less than 1% of total areas of crops and grass. Their inclusion would have greatly increased the volume of work without appreciably adding to the value.⁷¹ Charlton Kings parish had 60 recognised holdings, including horticultural and market gardeners' holdings, bee and livestock breeders.

The National Farm Survey comprises three distinct parts; the primary detailed assessment of the holding's potential, generally by an experienced farmer during an arranged visit to the occupier; the recording of the holdings fields and boundaries on a definitive Ordnance Survey 1:250 scale map; and, lastly, three supplementary forms reflecting the situation as at 4th June 1941. Unlike the Primary Survey, the farmer completed these latter forms himself and posted them back to the Ministry. The original Charlton Kings returns are held at TNA.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Class series MAF 68. [e.g. MAF 68/3978 for 1941; MAF 68/4015 for 1942; etc.]*

⁷¹ *National Farm Survey of England and Wales; a summary report [HMSO 1946]*

⁷² *Class series MAF 32/86/29*

FARM SURVEY

78 acres.
1/29/53.

County Glos. Code No. GR/41/29/53
 District Cheltenham. Parish Charlton Kings, Glos.
 Name of holding Happercombe Farm. Name of farmer R. R. Payne.
 Address of farmer Happercombe Farm, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham.
 Number and edition of 6-inch Ordnance Survey Sheet containing farmstead XIVL. 16. 1923.

A. TENURE.

1. Is occupier tenant ... **OWNER** ...

2. If tenant, name and address of owner :—

3. Is farmer full time farmer ...
 part time farmer ...
 spare time farmer ...
 hobby farmer ...
 other type ...
 Other occupation, if any :—

C. WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

	Flow	Well	Hand	Stream	Pipe
Water supply :—					
1. To farmhouse ...		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
2. To farm buildings ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. To fields ...				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes	No	
4. Is there a seasonal shortage of water ? ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Electricity supply :—					
5. Public light ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public power ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private light ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private power ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Is it used for household purposes ? ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is it used for farm purposes ? ...					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Does farmer occupy other land ?

Name of Holding	County	Parish	Yes	No
<u>Leadwores</u>	<u>Glos.</u>	<u>Charlton</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>The Heath</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>Kings.</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Hilleybrook</u>	<u>(In)</u>	<u>"</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Happercombe</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Has farmer grazing rights over land not occupied by him ? ...
 If so, nature of such rights :—

D. MANAGEMENT.

1. Is farm classified as A, B or C ? ... **B**

2. Reasons for B or C :—
 old age ...
 lack of capital ...
 personal failings ...
 If personal failings, details :—
 Last war wounds.

B. CONDITIONS OF FARM.

1. Proportion (%) of area on which soil is :—
 Heavy 40 Medium 52 Light Peaty

2. Is farm conveniently left out ? Yes ...
 Moderately ...
 No ...

3. Proportion (%) of farm which is naturally :—
 Good 88 Fair 12 Bad

4. Situation in regard to road ...

5. Situation in regard to railway ...

6. Condition of farmhouse ...
 Condition of buildings ...

7. Condition of farm roads ...

8. Condition of fences ...

9. Condition of ditches ...

10. General condition of field drainage ...

11. Condition of cottages ... **None**

12. Number of cottages within farm area ... **0**
 Number of cottages elsewhere ... **0**

13. Number of cottages let on service tenancy ... **0**

3. Condition of arable land ... **No arable land**

4. Condition of pasture ... **3**

5. Use of fertilisers on :—
 arable land ... **No arable land.**
 grass land ...

14. Is there infestation with :—
 rabbits and moles ...
 rats and mice ...
 rooks and wood pigeons ...
 other birds ...
 insect pests ...

15. Is there heavy infestation with weeds ?
 If so, kinds of weeds :—

16. Are there derelict fields ? ...
 If so, acreage ...

Field information recorded by
F. H. J. Jones.
 Date of recording 10/12/53.
 This primary record completed by
R. R. Payne.
 Date 19/1/53.

In June 1940 the primary farm survey was initiated with the aim of increasing food production. The form is a double-sided document with identifier heading and six sections. On its front are sections A (Tenure), B (Conditions), C (Water and Electricity) and D (Management; whilst, on its reverse, sections E (General Comments) and F (Grass fields ploughed up). The form carries two dates; the first when the crop recorder first visits the holding (by arrangement) and the second date when his holding is completed. The example form shown is from the TNA archive set, typed from the manuscript working copies in late 1942. It should be noted that sections B and D are qualitative and reflect the personal judgement of the original field recorder, made without “fear or favour” to the farmer concerned. The form’s heading carries a code number unique to the holding, giving the county (Gloucestershire) GR, the district (Cheltenham), the parish (Charlton Kings) 29 and the holding number (Sappercombe Farm) 53. A map sheet (reduced 25 inch, not 6 inch) and edition is quoted to assist in location.

The tenure section (A) identifies between tenant and owner; this turns out to be 50:50 for the parish; some owners live out of the parish. One intriguing classification of farmer is “hobby” which seems unlikely but which is claimed by A. Mitchell of Ham, a brewer with 300 acres at Drypool – just out of the parish!⁷³ Because some occupiers farmed land out of the parish, it sometimes becomes difficult to rationalise the figures with printed parish summaries. For example, the 1886 Ordnance Survey area book of Charlton Kings gives an acreage breakdown of land as 3383.759, roads as 80.993 and railways as 24.933, whereas the parish summary sheets for 1941 give crops and grass as 2956.2 and rough grazing as 180.2. Some of this reduction is undoubtedly taken up by urban development.

A very full assessment of the holdings was carried out (section B). There seems to be no definition offered towards the meaning of heavy, etc., nor of good/fair/bad. There was not time to train recorders to a common standard and it is not surprising that this section became the most heated. No argument, though, over infestation. Equally, the water and electricity (section C) shows that wells and springs were the main water source and that electricity was a luxury. Section D is more enlightening as the recorder graded over half as A. The remainder scored B or C with “justification”. Some of the defaulters displayed lack of enterprise, ambition, interest, ability to tackle a difficult job, knowledge, capital, not enough attention to hilly ground and, believe it or not, lack of interest in farming. Others were marginal but last war wounds, old age, and “inheritance from absentee” were clearly no fault of their own.

On the reverse of the form, at section E, one finds a generality of the farm working. From these remarks, 60% classify themselves as Dairy, 20% Mixed, 17% Stock Raising and 3% Arable. Finally, at section F is a record of directed ploughing and crops for the 1940 harvest and for 1941. The land parcels are given, rather than acreage, so the outcome is open to further research. Nevertheless, the direction was mainly for six fields of oats, wheat or barley, with an extra need for one field each of potatoes and peas in 1941. Some fields were left fallow, by rotation. By comparing adjacent years (1939-1945), it is possible to discern a benefit to the parish by this outside guidance, although Dairy rules throughout.

⁷³ *Unlikely but true : Albert Dowler Mitchell, owner of Glenfall and of Mitchell and Butler’s Brewery in Birmingham*

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.
THE DEFENCE REGULATIONS, 1939, AND THE AGRICULTURAL RETURNS ORDER, 1939.
RETURN WITH RESPECT TO AGRICULTURAL LAND ON 4th JUNE, 1941.

CROPS AND GRASS		Sewer Acres	LIVE STOCK on holding on 4th June, including any sent for sale on that or previous day		Number (in figures)
1	Wheat		43	Cows and Heifers in milk	15
2	Barley	6 1/2	44	Cows in Calf, but not in milk	
3	Oats		45	Heifers in Calf, with first Calf	9
4	Mixed Corn with Wheat in mixture		46	Bulls being used for service	1
5	Mixed Corn without Wheat in mixture	5 1/2	47	Bulls (including Bull Calves) being reared for service	2
6	Rye		48	2 years old and above	Male
7	Beans, winter or spring, for stock feeding		49		Female
8	Peas, for stock feeding, not for human consumption		50	1 year old and under 2	Male
9	Potatoes, first earlies		51		Female
10	Potatoes, main crop and second earlies	1 1/2	52	OTHER CATTLE	
11	Turnips and Swedes, for fodder		53	Under 1 year old—	
12	Mangolds	1 1/2		(a) For rearing (excluding Bull Calves being reared for service)	9
13	Sugar Beet			(b) Intended for slaughter as Calves	1
14	Rape, for fodder		54	TOTAL CATTLE and CALVES	35
15	Rape (or Cole)		55	Stoers and Heifers over 1 year old being fattened for slaughter before 30th November, 1941	
16	Cabbage, Savoys, and Kohl Rabi, for fodder		56	Ewes kept for further breeding (excluding two-tooth Ewes)	24
17	Vetches or Tares		57	Rams kept for service	1
18	Lucerne		58	Two-tooth Ewes (Showering Ewes or Gimmers) to be put to the ram in 1941	
19	Mustard, for seed		59	Other Sheep over 1 year old	
20	Mustard, for fodder or ploughing in		60	Ewe Lambs to be put to the ram in 1941	
21	Flax, for fibre or linseed		61	Ram Lambs for service in 1941	
22	Hops, Sower Acres, not Hop Acres		62	Other Sheep and Lambs under 1 year old	38
23	Orchards, with crops, fallow, or grass below the trees	2 acres	63	TOTAL SHEEP and LAMBS	63
24	Orchards, with small fruit below the trees		64	Sows in Pig	
25	Small Fruit, not under orchard trees		65	Gilts in Pig	
26	Vegetables for human consumption (excluding Potatoes, Flowers and Crops under Glass)		66	Other Sows kept for breeding	5
27	All Other Crops not specified elsewhere on this return or grown on patches of less than 1/4 acre		67	Barren Sows for fattening	
28	Bare Fallow		68	Boars being used for service	
29	Clover, Sainfoin, and Temporary Grasses for Mowing this season		69	ALL OTHER PIGS (not entered above)	Over 5 months old
30	Clover, Sainfoin, and Temporary Grasses for Grazing (not for Mowing this season)		70		2-5 months
31	Permanent Grass for Mowing this season	32	71		Under 2 months
32	Permanent Grass for Grazing (not for Mowing this season), but excluding rough grazings	54	72	TOTAL PIGS	54
33	TOTAL OF ABOVE ITEMS, 1 to 32 (Total acreage of Crops and Grass, excluding Rough Grazings)	101	73	Fowls over 6 months old	250
34	Rough Grazings—Mountain, Heath, Moor, or Down Land, or other rough land used for grazing on which the occupier has the sole grazing rights		74	Fowls under 6 months old	150
LABOUR actually employed on holding on 4th June, for occupier, his wife, or domestic servants should not be entered.			75	POULTRY	
35	WHOLETIME REGULAR WORKERS		76	If none, write "None"	
36	Males, 21 years old and over	2	77	Ducks of all ages	
37	Males, 16 to 21 years old		78	Geese of all ages	
38	If none, write "None"		79	Turkeys over 6 months old	
39	Women and Girls		80	Turkeys under 6 months old	
40	CASUAL SEASONAL or PART-TIME WORKERS		81	TOTAL POULTRY	400
41	Males, 21 years old and over		82	GOATS OF ALL AGES	
42	Males, under 21 years old		83	HORSES on holding on 4th June	Number (in figures)
43	Women and Girls		84	Horses used for Agricultural Purposes (including Horses kept for breeding) or by Market Gardeners	21
TOTAL WORKERS			85	Unbroken Horses of 1 year old and above	2
2			86	Light Horses under 1 year old	1
Form No. C 47 S.S.T.			87	Heavy Horses under 1 year old	
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES			88	Stallions being used for service in 1941	
21/10/41 (11/10/41)			89	All Other Horses (not entered above)	
				TOTAL HORSES	6

The second entity of the survey was a marked set of maps showing the outline of the fields and boundaries worked by each holding. The very sad news is that no copies exist either at the National Archives or our local Gloucestershire Archives. The entry in the TNA catalogue shows that a small group of maps around Cheltenham District have been lost! This was a sad thing to come across as I had already extracted the data onto a spreadsheet format. I hoped to be able to reconstitute the farm territory using the 1909 Valuation Survey results, but this is proving difficult to achieve. I am still searching all sources to locate the originals.

The third part of the Survey comprised three one-off forms for information about the holding as at 4th June 1941; these returns are my working data. You can see the complexity of the exercise as forms were sent to the occupiers by post and completion requested by return. It is remarkable that very few defaulted. The Crops and Grasses, Labour, Live Stock and Horses return is shown - the detail is quite overwhelming! Multiply this example by 60 holdings to appreciate the problems of analysis. What it does confirm is that Charlton Kings was predominately a dairy area, almost unchanged over the wider span of the war period. There is an increase of high value food and fodder crops, which supports the intensification of cattle numbers. Unsurprisingly, the 1940/41 direction towards Oats/Barley production seems to have contributed towards this aim, supported by the shift from lamb to beef. The number of Horses (over 100) is also consistent with about one-third kept for non-agricultural use. Poultry retained its popularity over the years.

The second one-off is the Labour, Power and Tenure form. Over the war years, the labour on holdings in Charlton Kings increased from 62 to 93, predominately male over 21 years. It is noteworthy that it is 1944 before 6-8 Women's Land Army are recorded alongside 8-10 Prisoners of War. The Power report reflects that only two tractors are held in the parish, with a third for mowing only; one was at Northfield Farm, the other at Southfield Farm. The Tenure status of occupiers gives 40% under 10 years, 30% in the 10-19 range, 15% in the 20-29 range, with the remaining 15% over 30 years - much as expected in time of conflict.

The last one-off Return is of Vegetables, Soft Fruit, Hay and Straw. Suffice to say only one acre of the parish total of nearly 3500 acres is devoted to soft fruit. In support of the government's "Grow your Own" exhortations, 15 acres were used for vegetables for human consumption, including Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, parsnips, turnips, swedes, beans and peas.

Perhaps one can finish on a lighter note? I was troubled by finding a rogue farm which had not been recognised before - Oldham Farm. It took me some thought before I realised this was actually Old Ham Farm! Again, my favourite entry is that for Charlton Kings holding number 13, Beechwood in Battledown. The lady occupier of 11 acres was stated as 90 years old and raised bees! Her management rating reflected the observation that "bees take too much time". Nevertheless, the place was managed by her son - now a hive of industry? The Daily Telegraph newspaper of Friday, September 19th, 1941 reminds us of past forgotten hardships when it reports that the Ministry of Food, after stating emphatically that the registration period for onions would not be extended, has now granted an extension, but only until tomorrow - to get one's share of 2lb of onions for the year!

WHO'LL HELP?

In 1889 parishioners of St. Mary's received with the Parish magazine a monthly journal called "The Banner of Faith" published by The Church Extension Association. This last was the organ of an Anglican Order of Nuns called the Sisters of the Church, and both these are still in being today. The content was a mix of stories, verse, accounts of missionary work and details of the month's Sunday Lessons, much of it for children and all of it with a strong emphasis on morality and Christian behaviour. This poem from February 1889 is one of the more subtle such pieces.

I was up near the City Road one day,
Some chaps were digging a drain;
The sky was dark and the streets were grey
With a misty drizzling rain
I had done my work, and was hurrying by,
But a chap is bound to know
What's up when he hears a frightened cry,
And a crowd begin to grow.

Ill news flies fast. The word was passed;
'The Drain!' 'The props!' and 'Save!'
The earth had slipped, and the men were fast;
Their souls in a living grave.
They had mates at hand, by luck, poor chaps,
Who hurried with pick and rope;
Thought I, They'll dig'em out sharp perhaps,
But little the worse, let's hope.

So I stood and watched them for a while,
As I'd nothing else to do.
They threw the earth in a goodly pile,
And one of the lads got through.
'Hurrah!' went up from the watching throng,
And rang through the misty air.
A girl I knew came running along,
And sighted men standing there.

The poem may have had some resonance in Charlton Kings. In 1855 two men, Richard Shaylor and Stephen Curtis, were digging a vault in St Mary's churchyard, which is sand. They had reached a depth of about 14 feet when the sides collapsed, burying them both. Shaylor, who was standing, was covered but managed to raise a hand and was pulled out. Curtis was kneeling down, laying the bricks on the vault floor and died before he could be dug out. Richard Shaylor lived to 1886, three years before this poem, and was once again buried in the churchyard.

'Jem!' she gasped; 'can't you help? Go, go'
And she seized and shook my arm;
'It's your brother, lad, that is down below,
And you standing there so calm!'
'My brother'! There, in a second's space
I was digging away like mad –
Fearing to light on his poor dead face –
The only brother I had!

And I got him out! With a bruise or two
But nothing of harm beside.
You'd scarcely think what I say is true,
But I fair broke down and cried,
To think I'd been standing staring there,
While my kin was like to die,
Letting the others do all my share,
Out of pure stupidity.

It seems to me, when I come to think,
That our life on earth goes so:
Some stand safely on the brink,
Some work in the depths below.
And I'm sure, if people only knew
That their brothers were like to die,
They'd hasten to see what they could do,
Instead of just standing by.



BATTLEDOWN COURT,
CHELTENHAM.

The Mayor of Cheltenham's Christmas and New Year Greetings card for 1897, sent from their home, Battledown Court in Oakley Road. Colonel Richard Rogers was then in his third year as Mayor and he later completed two more years from 1901 to 1903. His wife Jane, the daughter of James Humphris, carried out the duties of Mayoress for all five years, which is probably why they chose to have their names printed rather than signing. The crest is that of Cheltenham Borough – "Health and Learning".

Christmas . Greetings & Best . Wishes
for . a . Happy . New . Year
from . the . .
Mayor . and . Mayoress . of . Cheltenham
(Colonel & Mrs. Rogers).

Xmas, 1897.