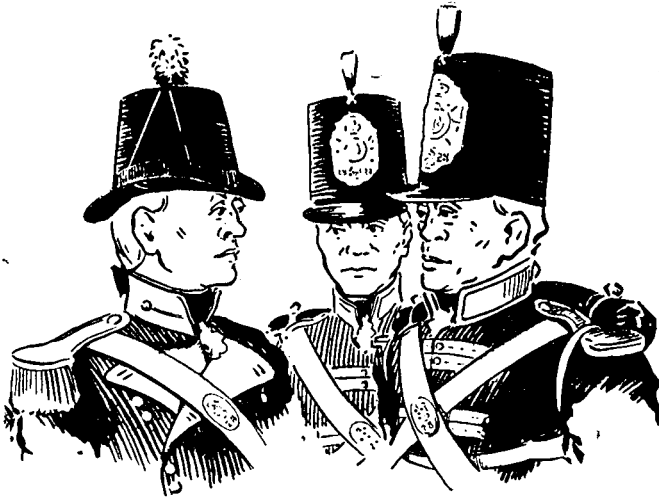


GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

# Local History Bulletin

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THIS IS THE first issue of the Bulletin since the death of Canon R. J. Mansfield who had been chairman of the Local History Committee for some years. He served the committee with a quiet distinction and did much to foster and extend the interests in local history through a regular feature in the *Citizen* and as chairman for many years of the Forest of Dean Local History Society, one of the largest Societies of its kind in the county. His research interests covered a very wide range of history, especially of the Forest area which was both his home and his parish.

It is my privilege and pleasure as his successor on the Local History Committee to follow his lead and we are particularly anxious to make this Bulletin not only a forum for amateur and professional interests in history but a means of putting all those concerned with local history in touch with each other. Outsiders have complimented us on the general quality of the Bulletin, and Mr Graham Stockham, the new Assistant Director of the Community Council, and I would welcome suggestions from you, the reader, to add to our own plans for the Bulletin in the future. **BRYAN JERRARD, Chairman.**

#### EDITORIAL

HAVING JUST TAKEN over as Editor of the Bulletin and having put my first edition to bed (I think that is the correct jargon) I am already worrying about the next one. However local historians, both amateur and professional, are so industrious that I am sure come July we will have many interesting articles for the Autumn Bulletin. You will note elsewhere in this Bulletin brief details of the forthcoming Local History Conference and I certainly look forward to meeting many of our readers at this event.

**GRAHAM J. STOCKHAM, Editor.**

#### COVER ILLUSTRATION

Our cover illustration shows the uniform worn by an officer and men of the 28th Foot at Alexandria on 21st March, 1801, the historic action which earned 28th Foot (later The Gloucestershire Regiment) their famous back badge.

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#### OLD BRAGGS AND SILVER-TAILED DANDIES

KIPLING WROTE "THE backbone of the Army is the Non-Commissioned man", like so much of Kipling, a truly perceptive thought, and to enlarge the scale somewhat, it is equally true to substitute "the County Regiments" for "the Non-Commissioned man". There is no better example of a first class County regiment of infantry than our own Gloucestershire Regiment which mercifully has escaped the most recent wave of amalgamations and disbandments to be inflicted upon the army with the object of breaking the hearts of proud old soldiers!

It is nearly two hundred years since the first links were forged between Gloucestershire and the two regiments which were later to be combined to form the officially titled "The Gloucestershire Regiment", but we must go back another eighty odd years to find the beginnings.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth, Colonel John Gibson, received a warrant dated March 5th, 1694 to "... Raise ... a Regiment of foot ... " which, as was the custom before numbers were used, was known simply as Gibson's Regiment of Foot.

Thus was drained the first pot of ale that can boast of two hundred and eighty-five years of unbroken progeny to a pint of Whitbreads Trophy in succeeding wet canteens in almost every part of the world. Almost immediately the Regiment was shipped to Newfoundland, soon to be brought back for Marlboroughs wars in Europe where "Ramilles" was the first of a staggering list of battle honours to be hard earned by the regiment which would come to be known as the Glorious Gloucesters.

In 1734 Colonel Philip Bragg assumed command and retained it for twenty-five years, during which the regiment acquired its cherished nickname "The Old Braggs". This conveniently perpetuated the use of the Colonel's name over the introduction in 1742, of a numbering system which meant that henceforth the title of the regiment would be The 28th Foot.

The outbreak of the Seven Years War in 1756 caused the army to be expanded and amongst other newly raised regiments was that which was to become the "other half" of the Gloucesters, The 61st Foot. It was not long before the regiment sailed to the West Indies and won its first battle honour, Guadaloupe. Although this was not a campaign which changed the world, it vividly illustrated the far-flung nature of soldiering in exotic places where far more men gave their lives in the agony of strange fevers than died in the face of the enemy.

For the rest of the 18th century, the 28th and the 61st followed the pattern of good, stolid, reliable infantry regiments which served wherever fate decreed to enjoy a little glory and a great deal of tedium in places as diverse as Quebec, Martinique, Havana, Minorca, North America and the Cape Colony.

In 1782, regiments were linked to counties for recruiting purposes, often quite arbitrarily. Thus, "The 28th or North Gloucestershire Regiment" and "The 61st or South Gloucestershire Regiment" became official titles. Their first acquaintance with their new "home" was short lived; the 28th marched off to Scotland and the 61st to Ireland.

The new century found both regiments involved in the Middle East helping to counter Napoleon's bid for an exotic empire. The 61st performed an epic march from Kosseir, on the Red Sea, to Keneh on the Upper Nile; one hundred and thirty miles across open desert, in July, wearing the tight red coats of the period, and carrying a stupefying weight of arms and equipment. Meanwhile, the 28th were part of the army to land at Aboukir Bay as a prelude to the battle of Alexandria.

It was at this battle that the Gloucesters unique distinction was won. In those days British infantry fought in two ranks, this in itself indicates the high standard of discipline and steadfastness which typifies the British infantryman, and although this information was effective against less well disciplined enemy infantry, it was held to be suicidal against cavalry for which the famous square was the best defence. Alexandria was a hard battle, and at one stage the French

were able to get cavalry to the rear of the 28th ranks before there was a chance to form a square. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers then gave the order which has become part of history, "Rear rank, 28th, Right About Face". The rear rank turned, and back to back with their front rank comrades received the charging French cavalry with such cool volley firing that the attack dissolved! The rear rank turned about again and calmly engaged the original enemy to their front. What they had done was theoretically impossible, and to commemorate that moment of supreme cool courage, the 28th wear a badge on the back of their caps as well as the front, and to this day it is an honour borne by the Gloucesters alone.

This was early in the bitter war against Napoleon, which, as far as the British army was concerned, was fought mainly in Spain and Portugal where both the 28th and 61st were engaged with little respite. At the famous battles of Talavera, Busaco, Barrosa and Albuera either one or both regiments were present to add these honours to their colours, and during the final phase the names of Salamanca, Vittoria, the Pyrenees and Toulouse, each one another battle honour, trace the path of Wellington's victorious army as the French were driven relentlessly from the Iberian Peninsula back to France. No regiments did more than "The Old Braggs" and as the 61st were known from the silver lace on the tails of the officers coats, "The Silver-tailed Dandies".

Napoleon abdicated and the world celebrated peace at last, but of course this was short lived and he returned the next year, 1815, and had to be beaten again, this time finally, at what is probably the most famous battle of all — Waterloo.

Both the 28th and the 61st were in Ireland when the news broke of Napoleon's return, and the old 28th soon found itself in Belgium for the final bloody act. At Quatre Bras, which was the prelude to Waterloo, and at Waterloo itself, the 28th played a conspicuous part and suffered severe losses as a consequence, but when Wellington wrote his famous despatch after the battle, of the very few regiments mentioned by name, the 28th was the only English regiment.

In the "long peace" after Napoleon's final destruction the 28th were sent to Australia and a number of time expired men remained there to help nourish the new colony, and there must be a respectable number of Australians today descending from these pioneers who would be surprised to learn of their connection with the old North Gloucestershire Regiment.

There was never any real peace for soldiers in the nineteenth century. The ever growing empire was constantly boiling over somewhere or other and between them the two regiments added exotic names such as Chillianwallah, Goojerat and Punjaub to their colours not to mention the part the 61st played in suppressing the bloody Indian Mutiny in 1857.

The 28th missed this dark episode for the very good reason that they were otherwise engaged in the Crimea, where they died like flies from



*Regimental Sergeant-Major c. 1900*

criminal neglect by the higher authorities, and for those that escaped cholera, starvation, exposure and typhus — enemy bullets. Nevertheless, their colours were further emblazoned with Alma, Inkerman and Sevastopol before they returned to India.

Just for once, the Crimean dead did not die entirely in vain. The national scandal which resulted, formed by the outspoken Florence Nightingale amongst others, brought about radical improvements in the soldiers lot, and for the rest of the nineteenth century there was an atmosphere of almost constant change. It was during this period of the "Cardwell Reforms", named after Edward Cardwell, Gladstone's Secretary of State for War, that pairs of regiments were formally linked together. Thus the old 28th and 61st became the 1st and 2nd Battalions, The Gloucestershire Regiment. Now they were one their old nick-names became rather cumbersome but there is another. In 1764 whilst the 28th were serving in Montreal, a certain magistrate, Thomas Walker, behaved in a most churlish way by refusing decent billets for the soldiers during the severe Canadian winter. As he was at supper on 6th December, a group of disguised men rushed in and during the furore the assailants sliced off half Walker's right ear and made off with it! Subsequent enquiries petered out without reaching a conclusion, but from that day to this the Gloucesters have been known in the army as the Slashers! This may not seem a very glorious exploit, but it does illustrate the tight "family" feeling generated in a good regiment when officers and men close ranks against a slight from outsiders.

From the Crimea to the Boer War there was little active service, but, as always, when the war started both battalions of the Gloucesters were in the thick of it and more battle honours were won by the guts and sweat of the regiment. Much was learned about modern weapons and tactics which was just as well because the holocaust of the Great War was only twelve years off.

During the 1914-18 War, the army was expanded beyond all previous imagination. The Gloucesters raised no less than twenty-four battalions that served from Flanders to Macedonia, and over eight thousand men died wearing the proud "back badge" on their caps.

Between the two World Wars the regiment, again consisting of just two regular battalions, were back to policing the Empire from Ireland to Shanghai.

In the Second World War the Gloucesters were again more or less first in and last out, and by 1945 nine battalions had been raised and served wherever there was fighting to be done.

Peace did not last long, and there can be few natives of the County who are unaware of the regiments marvellous performance on the Imjin river in Korea where, all alone, they fought the Chinese hordes for seventy hours and won the admiration of the free world and the highest American military honour, a Presidential Unit Citation.

The qualities of the British soldier epitomised by the Slashers are something of which we can all be deeply proud. One does not have to glory in war to appreciate courage, honour and devotion to duty, all of which are needed in peace as well as war, and perhaps above all that tender quality — self-sacrifice.

So here's to the Slashers — the Old Braggs and Silver-tailed Dandies and to their one hundred and six battle honours won before 1918. May they go on for another two hundred years at least. They will never be destroyed by an enemy, but could be by a pen.

DOUGLAS BISGOOD.

## THE POST IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE INTRODUCTION OF the penny post by Rowland Hill in 1840 started a new era in the postal service. It brought about not one but many related changes. By the new service letters could be sent anywhere in the country for one penny; previously postage varied with the distance. Each sheet had also been charged separately, and people therefore used no wrappers but simply folded their letters and sealed them with wax; after 1840 envelopes came into use. Consequently the backs of older letters still show the postmarks and endorsements. A single rate of postage made pre-payment easy, and for this purpose adhesive postage stamps which could be bought in advance were introduced. There was no need to take letters so stamped to the post office, and so some time after 1840 pillar boxes began to appear in the streets.

Before these changes someone sending a letter normally took it to the post office. In London letters could be handed to men who went through the streets ringing a bell. "The post bell rings and I cannot have time to write more," concluded a correspondent of William Blathwayt of Dyrham. John Warner wrote a letter to George Selwyn, member of parliament for Gloucester, but he missed the Bellman and had to run with it to Lombard Street. Jonathan Swift hated leaving his letters to Stella with the Bellman, and preferred to take them to the post office.

Postage was usually paid by the recipient. It might be prepaid, in which case it was at half rate. When Samuel Whitcombe in 1780 wrote requesting votes for James Dutton, Tory candidate for Gloucestershire, he was careful to prepay the postage. All letters bore two postmarks. The town of posting was at first indicated by a code; later its name was shown. A separate postmark gave the date of posting, at first just the date of the month, and later the year also.

The amount of postage varied with distance. The rate was 3d. for 80 miles around 1700; during the eighteenth century it went up; in 1794 a letter from London could be sent to Uxbridge for 2d., to High Wycombe or Maidenhead for 3d., to Oxford for 4d., to places in Gloucestershire for 5d., and to Cardiff for 6d. Since each sheet was charged separately people sometimes made the most of one sheet by turning it round and writing more lines across those they had already written.

Members of parliament and officials of the government were entitled to franks, that is, they could send and receive letters free. These letters had to be endorsed and signed by the member, and were sometimes postmarked "free." There was evidently a weight limit of two ounces; William Blathwayt complained when his steward sent papers in one bulky packet which cost him 3d., which would have been carried free if divided into two packets. Charles Edwin of Clearwell, and member of parliament for Glamorganshire, was furious when the postmaster of Tewkesbury had the impudence to charge him for a letter, and threatened to "have him before the House." Members gave so many franks to their friends, that parliament had to set a maximum number for each member. Newspapers were also sent through the post free of charge, but they had to pay a tax. On the front page of the Gloucester Journal may be seen the stamp showing that the tax had been paid.

Money was usually sent through the post by bill of exchange. If bank notes were sent, the post office recommended that they should be cut in half and sent

separately. Mary Packer of Painswick cut in half a bank note for £100 and sent the two halves to her factor in London on different days. Money nevertheless disappeared in the post. Henry Eycott of Dudbridge offered five guineas reward for the recovery of seven bank notes to the value of £100 lost in the post.

The mail was carried towards its destination by postboys on horseback. Another of their duties was to guide travellers riding post. Their work was hazardous. John Charde, who rode post between Bristol and Gloucester for thirty years, was drowned. Because of floods in 1770 postboys had to bring the mails to Gloucester by boat. Highwaymen attacked postboys. The postboy from London to Gloucester was robbed on Hounslow Heath in 1730. Postboys sometimes succumbed to temptation. The postmaster of Ross offered 10s. reward for the apprehension of Jack the Postboy, who rode to Gloucester and Hereford, and who had robbed his master. William Anderson was in Gloucester Gaol in 1785, for opening the mail and stealing money; he was sentenced to seven years transportation, which it was originally intended should be spent on the coast of Africa. William Musty, only 15 years old, stole from his pouch bank and other bills worth £170, but then destroyed them.

In an endeavour to increase both speed and security mail coaches were introduced by John Palmer of Bath. The first ran between Bristol and London in 1784. It left the Rummer Tavern in Bristol at 8 in the evening, and arrived at the Swan With Two Necks in London before 10 the next morning. Letters posted in Bristol were delivered in London next morning. The coachman and guard wore royal liveries, which was, commented Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, a great improvement on an old cart and a ragged postboy.

Mail coaches were quickly introduced on other routes. One started between Gloucester and London in 1785. However postboys were still to have been used, for the Gloucester Journal reported in 1792 that a postboy on horseback coming with the London mail to Gloucester saw four houses on fire in Cheltenham. Foot messengers were employed in 1839 to carry the mail from Monmouth to Newland and on to Coleford and St. Briavels.

The mail coaches kept very good time, and the guards and coachmen were armed. Their punctuality, suggested a correspondent to the Bristol newspaper, might make them even more the object of a highwayman's attention. Attacks by highwaymen still occurred, though less frequently than on postboys riding alone. In 1785 the Swansea mail coach was held up near Chepstow, but when the guard cocked his blunderbuss and the coachman his pistol two men disappeared over the hedge.

The first posts were organised from London to the main provincial towns. Cross posts between provincial towns were organised by Ralph Allen of Bath. Letters sent in this way were endorsed "cross post".

The penny post was originally a local post. It was started in London as a private venture by William Dockwra in 1680. Two years later it was transferred to the post office, whose monopoly it infringed. The case for the post office was put in court by Richard Jeffreys, later notorious as Judge Jeffreys; Penny posts were subsequently introduced into many provincial towns; for example Cheltenham had one by 1831. Letters sent by penny post had to be prepaid, and were postmarked accordingly; they bore two other postmarks, one indicating the office of posting, and another not simply the date but also the time of posting. Letters posted early enough were delivered the same day.

The monopoly of the post office was established by law in 1657, and was enforced by severe penalties. The Cheltenham Chronicle contained a notice in 1801 saying that the illegal carrying of letters was liable to a fine of £5 a letter or £100 a week. A few years later the post office announced in the same newspaper that it had obtained an award of £200 against a mercantile house for sending letters in parcels.

The local postmaster usually had other work. He was often an innkeeper; others are described as grocer, baker, ironmonger and so on, with one or two gentlemen. The duty might be performed by a woman; when the postmaster of Bristol died, his widow continued his work. Gabriel Harris, postmaster of Gloucester, was a bookseller and a notable figure in the city, where he was a friend of George Selwyn, was an alderman, served twice as mayor, and was called in his obituary in 1786 "father of the city". His sister married Samuel Woodcock, who was surveyor for the post office. Their son Frederick was postmaster of Gloucester from 1822 to 1847. A directory of 1820 named Mrs Susannah Woodcock as postmistress of Gloucester.

When a letter reached the post town near its destination it was endorsed with the amount of postage to be paid. It was often called for at the post office, and so the address was only the name of the town or village. If it was delivered an additional charge was made. The postmaster of Bath charged  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a letter, by which he made for himself £600 a year. The practice was challenged by a Gloucester lawyer, John Skynner Stock, who brought a case in the Court of King's Bench against Gabriel Harris. The court eventually ruled that a postmaster was bound to deliver letters without any gratuity within the area of the post town, the extent of which was to be settled by local custom.

Arrangements for delivery were described in a survey made in 1789 by Samuel Woodcock. (The survey was alphabetical and never got beyond C). At Bath there were three deliveries a day, including Sunday; they were made by three letter carriers, whose wages were 11s. a week. At Bristol there were also three letter carriers, two of whom were paid by the postmaster and not the post office. Letters were also delivered by guards of mail coaches and by postboys if they passed near the address. Some letters, especially those for out of the way places, were left at inns in Bristol or in the post office. At Burford letters were usually called for at the office, but on market days they were delivered, presumably by farmers returning from market, as happened elsewhere.

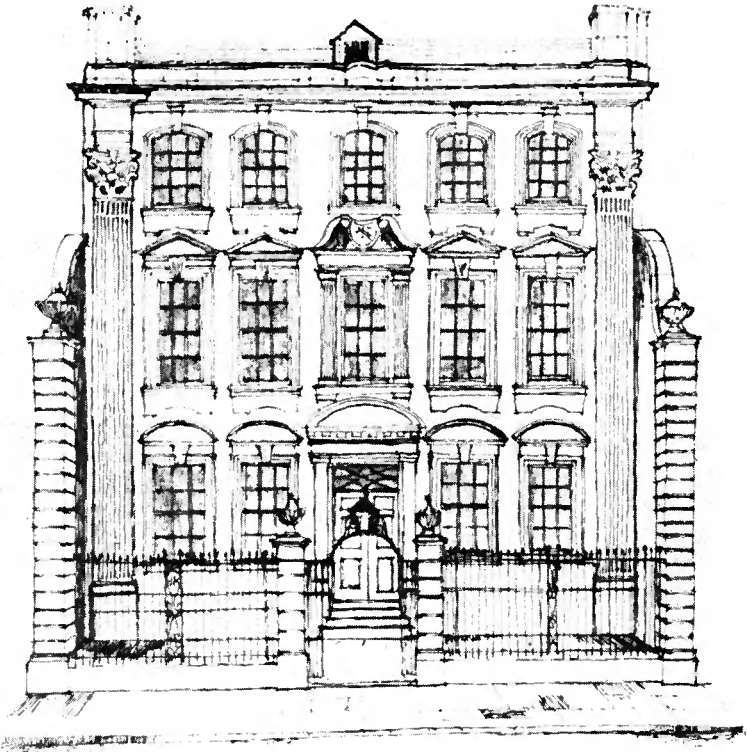
The extension of delivery to rural areas was largely the work of Anthony Trollope the novelist. He wrote in his Autobiography, "A plan was formed for extending the rural delivery of letters, and for adjusting the work, which up to that time had been done in a very irregular manner. A country letter carrier would be sent in one direction in which there were but few letters to be delivered, the arrangement having originated probably at the request of some influential person, while in another direction there was no letter carrier because no influential person had exerted himself." Trollope visited the West Country, including Gloucestershire. "I would ride up to farm houses, or parsonages, or other lone residences about the country, and ask the people how they got their letters, at what hour, and especially whether they were delivered free or at a certain charge. For a damnable habit had crept into use . . . in accordance with which these rural letter carriers used to charge a penny a letter, alleging that the house was out of their beat, and that they must be paid for their extra



work . . . I believe that many a farmer now has his letters brought daily to his house free of charge, who but for me would still have had to send to the post town for them twice a week, or to have paid a man for bringing them irregularly to his door".

RUSSELL HOWES.

**THE DUKE OF NORFOLK'S LODGINGS,  
WESTGATE STREET, GLOUCESTER**



*An artist's impression of the Duke of Norfolk's Lodgings,  
Westgate Street, Gloucester, in the 18th century.*

'ONE HUNDRED YEARS ago the lower end of Westgate Street, the Island, and St. Mary's Square, were the most fashionable parts of Gloucester. Many of the neighbouring gentry had town houses in these parts, to which they came to spend their winter.'

'Many of the houses in the Island and its neighbourhood must have been extremely pleasant residences . . . On entering some of them, the spectator is surprised at finding staircases of solid and ornamental workmanship, and large and lofty rooms . . . firmly constructed with solid brick walls and oak panelling and were far better than the miserable things now erected by speculating builders . . .' So Clarke wrote in 1850 in his 'Architectural History of Gloucester'.

Spa House lay on the north side of Lower Westgate Street, adjoining the Swan Inn, east of Swan Lane. It was formerly known as Eagle Hall, having Stone eagles surmounting the projecting wings, and later became known as the Duke of Norfolk's Lodgings after he used it during his term of office as Mayor of Gloucester in 1798. The House was built sometime between 1724 and 1750 by Anthony Freeman, a Gloucester merchant, who purchased the property from Robert Frampton, a maltster, in 1724. Freeman died in 1750, but the property remained in the family until 1801.

A spring of saline water was found in the garden at the back, and in a book written by Dr. Hemming in 1789 about the properties of this water, he states, "This water was first taken notice of about 40 years ago, by a gentleman (probably Freeman) who, when building the mansion now occupied by Mr Lewis, ordered a well to be sunk; and soon found that the water of this spring differed much from that of the town". This would seem to date construction to the 1740's. Title deeds, however, show an increase in sale price from £150 in 1716 when it was 4 tenements, to £330 in 1724, as a single tenement, indicating some alteration, which could possibly be the rebuilding.

An advertisement in the Gloucester Journal, 14th July, 1788 reads, "Thomas Lewis, cornfactor, having fitted up and neatly furnished all that Mansion House in Westgate Street, Gloucester, hereby acquaints the nobility and gentry that the Lady's Boarding School is removed, and all the spacious rooms are now for the purpose of Lodging. One of the largest dining-rooms has an excellent view, and there is also upon the premises an excellent water, proved by the faculty to be a steel mineral, and recommended for internal weaknesses, which persons inhabiting the lodgings have the free use of . . ." It became known as Spa House for this reason, and many visitors took the waters as they gushed from a stone dolphin's mouth. In 1900 this spring was in the cellar covered by a large stone, sales particulars state.

'Old Spa House was built of freestone in the Palladian style, consisting of two fluted Corinthian pillasters, supporting an enriched cornice, surmounted by an ornamental balustrade; the windows are adorned with Architraves and Pediments (i.e. ornamental surrounds). The interior was originally very richly fitted up, many of the rooms being panelled with mahogany.' Clarke in 1850. 'This house is now divided into two and disfigured by the projection of two unsightly shops in front.' These remained, spoiling the frontage, until the entire house was demolished in October, 1971. Projecting wings formed a little forecourt, with railings in front. The Duke's coat of-arms, carved in stone, were attached above the central window.

At about the time the Duke was tenant the interior consisted of, ' . . . two commodious parlours, with a kitchen, housekeeper's room, elegant drawing-room, with three bed-chambers, and dressing-room, and five bed-chambers on the attic story, together with convenient attached offices, a malthouse adjoining them, and large garden.' The Journal, 6th December, 1790.

The house was leased in October, 1798 to the Duke of Norfolk when he became Mayor of Gloucester for the second time. Charles Howard, 11th Duke of Norfolk, lived from 1746—1815, and was Mayor in 1783, 1798, 1809, 1815; he was Recorder of the city from 1792 until his death in 1815.

The Duke's association with Gloucester began with his marriage in 1771

into the Scudamore family, large landowners at Hempstead. He was an intimate of the Prince Regent, and his political activities were motivated by his desire to aid his Royal friend in building a Party. He was Earl of Surrey when he first came to Gloucester, and Duke of Norfolk at each subsequent election.

He was noted locally for his genial nature and generous hospitality and would brighten up local affairs by giving elegant dinners from time to time, usually at the King's Head Inn in Westgate Street, which was then at the height of its importance. On October 1st, 1810 the Journal states, 'On Saturday last, his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Mayor of this city, gave a sumptuous turtle feast to the Corporation, at the King's Head Inn. The dinner, which consisted of every delicacy of the season, was arranged with the taste characteristic of the house, and the Champagne and other wines, were of such superior quality and flavour to merit particular thanks to Mr Dawling. The evening was particularly distinguished for festivity and harmony and the company departed highly gratified with the elegant hospitality of the Noble Mayor, whose period of official duty closes this day.'

Again, on 8th October, 1798 the Journal reports, 'On Monday last his Grace the Duke of Norfolk was sworn in Mayor of this city. The Corporation having suspended all public entertainments during the War, His Grace invited the Gentlemen of the Body to an elegant dinner at the Spa House, which the Duke has taken for the period of his mayoralty.' (Apparently, the only period he was tenant.)

For many years after his death, a full-length portrait was hung in the old Tolsey at the Cross, and moved to the present Guildhall later, where it is now stored, for want of hanging space.

From October 1801 until May 1805, the house was owned by George Worrall Counsel, author of 'The History of Gloucester', written in 1829. It passed to the widow of a wealthy barge-owner, Margaret Smith, until 1807; was leased to Richard Brown Cheston, doctor of physick in 1809; to William Jackson, calenderer and calico glazier 1821—1851, followed by Edwin Bick, shoemaker. Thomas Addis took possession of the property in 1883 and it became a Vinegar works. (The lane known as Swan Lane at the back was sometimes called Vinegar Lane).

By 1908 William Lee leased a portion of the property as a common lodging house, which passed to Mrs Elizabeth Lee in 1939/40 until 1952, and finally Mr F. Chapman until the building was demolished in 1971.

In 1965, the house was scheduled as Grade 2 in the Ministry of Housing List of Buildings of architectural and historic interest, 'the most elaborate 18th century facade in the city.' After an eight year struggle by historic bodies to save it, during which time it fell further into decay, on 14th September, 1971 it was announced at a meeting of the City Housing Committee — who owned the building — that the Secretary of State for the Environment had given consent for demolition, six months after the committee had pressed for this decision. 'If preservation was ever to have been a serious proposition then the time to have considered it would appear to have been 30 or 40 years earlier.'

So a complex block of modern flats stands on the site of the scene of much elegant activity; only written material and photographs indicate the passage of time. The area was allowed to decay, but now it seems that, surely, it can only improve in the style of the late 20th century.

MISS B. DRAKE.

## A FRENCH P.O.W. IN CHELTENHAM

AMONG THE TREASURES of Cheltenham Museum is a gold ring heavily decorated with clusters of grapes and vine leaves. The ring has a champlevé which contains a miniature likeness of Napoleon, who presented it to one of his Generals, Comte Charles Lefebvre-Desnouettes. General Lefebvre (he did not make use of his title, which had been granted by Napoleon) was one of the three captured French Generals stationed at Cheltenham and who, having given their word not to move more than three miles from the town centre, were treated much as other visitors to the Spa town. The General's wife was permitted to join him and the couple arrived at Cheltenham in February 1811, taking up residence at 131, High Street, a house that would have faced the present Promenade (not laid out until 1818) having stood on the site of the present shop of Boots, the chemists.

In March 1811 the local newspaper noted that on Tuesday (i.e. March 12th) "Albinia, Countess of Buckinghamshire, gave an elegant gouter at three o'clock, to Madame Lefebvre, the French Generals and a select party of about 30." (Cheltenham Chronicle, 14th March, 1811).

General Lefebvre had been paroled to Cheltenham through the intercession of Colonel Macleod of Colbecks, a resident of Charlton Kings, who had been arrested in France at the outbreak of war, and had received much kindness during his imprisonment. After fifteen months of pleasant captivity, General Lefebvre outraged local society by escaping. Disguised as a German Count, with Madame Lefebvre dressed in boy's clothes as his son, and his aide-de-camp, Amand Le Duc as a manservant, the General had taken a post-chaise to London, alighting at an hotel in Jermyn Street. The party made their way to Dover and were smuggled over to France, General Lefebvre rejoining his Emperor and distinguishing himself at Bautzen in 1813, and seeing service at Waterloo in 1815. (The account of Lefebvre's escape is contained in the Cheltenham Chronicle, 14th May 1812).

Lefebvre was never forgiven by the Cheltenham residents and the remaining French prisoners were promptly transferred to Abergavenny.

ROGER BEACHAM.

## BADMINTON ESTATE ARCHIVES

HIS GRACE THE Duke of Beaufort, K.G., has deposited the Badminton estate archives in the Gloucestershire Record Office. It is one of the greatest family collections of historical records relating to Gloucestershire, mostly of the extensive Badminton estate acquired by Thomas Viscount Somerset, uncle of the 1st Duke of Beaufort in 1608, and of the Stoke Gifford estate following the marriage of Charles 4th Duke of Beaufort with Elizabeth Berkeley in 1740.

The Badminton Park estate straddles the boundaries of the ancient counties of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire as well as the new county of Avon. Among its records are the surveys, rentals, park and farm accounts from early in the 18th century, showing the development and administration of this great estate,

large quantities of deeds and leases, and many estate maps, some illustrating the village open fields divided into strips before late 18th-century inclosure.

The Stoke Gifford estate was linked by marriage with both the Beaufoots of Badminton and the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle. The archives are of special interest to industrial archaeologists and historians for they include early coal-mining accounts of the Lodge and Kingswood collieries from 1709 to the early 19th century, papers relating to the Warmley Brass and Copper Works about 1770, as well as deeds and records relating to the Stoke Gifford and Kingswood area which until 1974 was part of Gloucestershire. Other records relate to property in London, Hampshire, Dorset and Norfolk. Together they form an important collection of new historical material relating to Gloucestershire's two greatest families. Most date from the 18th and 19th century, but in packing the records for the move some earlier ones were noticed, among them being a few 14th-century manor court rolls.

The Duke of Beaufort is continuing to keep at home the family and personal records of his ancestors, together with the household and domestic records of Badminton Park itself, but his generous action in depositing the estate archives in the Gloucestershire Record Office provides historians with an extensive new quarry for their research.

The Gloucestershire archivists expect to make many discoveries as they catalogue the Badminton records. For the present other researchers will have to be patient before these historical treasures are made available. They will not be open for research until they have been sorted, checked and listed, which the County Archivist, Mr Brian Smith, M.A., F.S.A., hopes will be finished by the end of this year. The task of compiling a full descriptive catalogue will then take several years longer.

The size of the job facing the archivists is formidable. Already some years ago Mr Smith and his predecessor, Mr Irvine Gray, had spent days in identifying and listing the records, and recently Mr Smith, and an assistant archivist Mrs Margaret Richards, with Mr Paul Aldous, archive conservationist, and Mr Tom Bowers, senior strongroom assistant, packed some 250 boxes before transporting the 2 tons of the records to the Record Office strongrooms.

### ILLUSTRATED CHELTENHAM GUIDE

IN 1969 S.R. Publishers reprinted George Rowe's 'Illustrated Cheltenham Guide' with its detailed and fascinating descriptions of walks through the principal shopping areas. The original publication bore no date; Austin in his Catalogue of the Gloucestershire Collection dated it at either 1845 or 1850. S.R. playing safe gave the year 1850 on the jacket of the reprint and 1845 on the title page. It has now been positively established that 1845 was the original year of publication for an advertisement has been found in the 'Cheltenham Looker On' of February 15th 1845, "This day is published, Rowe's Cheltenham Illustrated Guide. Price 2s. 6d. Examiner Office, February 12th 1845".

ROGER BEACHAM,

Local Studies Assistant, Cheltenham Reference Library.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

**Charlton Kings Local History Society** are planning a survey of historical remains in Charlton Kings, and also hope to publish the first issue of their *Bulletin* during the Spring. The Society will be visiting the Avoncroft Museum on 12th May.

**The Committee for Archaeology in Gloucester** wish to give an advance notice that they are holding a Symposium and the provisional date is 29th September. Mr J. D. Bestwick of the W.E.A., will be Tutor/Organiser.

**The Cheltenham and Gloucester Historical Association** have arranged the following excursions for the Summer of 1979 and warmly invite you to participate. Full details are available from Bryan Jerrard, 16 Grafton Road, Gloucester, tel. 417178.

June 9—CLIFTON, BRISTOL, leaving Cheltenham at 1.30 p.m. and Gloucester at 2.00 p.m.

June 23—CHAVENAGE HOUSE, TETBURY and KINGSCOTE EXCAVATIONS, also a half-day excursion.

July 14—PUCKLECHURCH, DYRHAM PARK and GREAT BADMINTON CHURCH, all day visit.

Aug 1—CRICKLEY HILL EXCAVATIONS, evening visit.

**The Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club** are planning a Tour from 3rd—7th September which will be based at the University of Surrey at Guildford.

**Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum** have a permanent display which includes The History of Regency Cheltenham in contemporary prints, and a room of early 19th century drawings and paintings of the town and its environs. Lectures continue to be held every Wednesday from 1.15 until 1.45 p.m.

### **Folk Museum Information Sheets:**

A recent development at Gloucester Folk Museum has been the introduction of "Information Sheets". These are printed on both sides of a single coloured sheet, and sell at 5p each. The titles on sale by the end of February were: "Bishop Hooper", "Pinmaking", "George Whitefield", "Bellfounding" and "Joe Price". All are illustrated. By April 1979 it is expected that at least two more (on "Bishop Hooper's Lodgings" and "Severn Trows") will be available.

### **Gloucester Buildings Record:**

A depository for all types of records relating to historic buildings (measured drawings, photographs, etc.) except those normally collected by the County Records Office (title deeds, building accounts, etc.) has been established at Gloucester Folk Museum.

The Gloucester Buildings Record is arranged very simply. All the information relating to one building is placed in an envelope and numbered. The next building processed is given the next number, and the envelopes are filed away in numerical order. Cross-referencing is achieved by a topographical card index, each card bearing the name of the building, its number and the whereabouts of any slides or photographic negatives relating to it.

The Museum would be very grateful to receive any records relating to historic buildings, or to be given the opportunity to make copies of original material. The Gloucester Buildings Record may be consulted during office

hours, provided that a prior appointment is made; the staff contact is:—

MR STUART DAVIES,

City Museum and Art Gallery, Brunswick Road, Gloucester. Tel. 24667.

### **The Severn Gallery:**

This Gallery at the Folk Museum is currently being re-displayed. It is due to be finished by April, and will contain both the famous Severn Fisheries collections, and a section on the Port of Gloucester.

Gloucester Museum and Art Gallery are holding a Local History Symposium on 21st April at 2 p.m. at Wheatstone Hall, Brunswick Road, Gloucester.

**The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust:** All those taking part in archaeological projects, or concerned with the recording of local history, have the chance of a lifetime to go overseas and gain more experience. Application forms can be obtained from:

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust,  
15 Queen's Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PR.

### **Local History Committee — Forthcoming Events:**

It has now been arranged for the Local History Conference to be held on Saturday afternoon, 22nd September, at Gloucestershire College of Education, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester. Will you please note this date in your diary. Full details will be published in due course.

We at Community House are still holding stocks of:

'I REMEMBER — TRAVEL & TRANSPORT IN GLOS. VILLAGES, 1850-1950'.

Price 25p, plus postage.

'I REMEMBER — DAY'S WORK IN GLOS. VILLAGES, 1850—1950'. Price

50p, plus postage.

'LOCAL HISTORY HANDBOOK'. Price 50p, plus postage.

Also available back numbers of L.H.B. (details on request).

### **RECORDINGS ON COTSWOLD LIFE**

"Steam and Harness", Saydisc SDL 294 (price £3.69).

It is indicative of the success of earlier recordings dealing with Cotswold life and characters that new discs should be added or planned.

Whereas previous releases by the Badminton based company, Saydisc Records, were mainly about Cotswold personalities and voices, the latest addition is a collection of recollections of bygone means of power and transport in the area.

### **BOOKS NOTED**

"Crime and Punishment in Gloucestershire 1700-1800" (Gloucestershire County Council, SIGNAL Teaching Aid No. 6, 1978) from Gloucestershire County Record Office, Shire Hall, Gloucester. Price: £1.25p.

"Beachley Between the Wye and the Severn" by Ivor Waters (The Printing Club, Army Apprentices' College, Chepstow 1977) from the publisher, Chepstow, Gwent. Price: £1.25p.

"The Origin of Chepstow Rugby Football Club" by Bernard Jarvis (The Chepstow Society) from the Society, 41 Hardwick Avenue, Chepstow, Gwent NP6 5DS. Price: £1.50, plus 20p postage.

- “Vanishing Chepstow — Conte Pencil Drawings of Humble Landmarks of the Recent Past” by Mercedes Waters (The Moss Rose Press 1978) from Ivor Waters, The Moss Rose Press, 41 Hardwick Avenue, Chepstow. Price: 75p.
- “Mathern, Gwent — History from the Parish Registers” by the Rev. Dr. Keith Malcolm Denison (The Chepstow Society 1977) from the Society, 41 Hardwicke Avenue, Chepstow. Price: 60p.
- “Chepstow Road Bridges” and “The Port of Chepstow” both by Ivor Waters (The Moss Rose Press, 1977) from the Author, 41 Hardwicke Avenue, Chepstow. Price: £1.25 for the latter; the former book had no price specified.
- “Stroud as it Was” by Joan Tucker (Hendon Publishing Company 1978) £1.80.
- “No. 1 — Directory of National Organisations” containing details of national organisations which local historians may wish to consult — 10 pages, 1978. 40p including postage.
- “No. 2 — Recognisable Qualifications in Local History” giving particulars about courses which lead to awards in local history for young people and adults. 6 pages — 1977. 30p including postage.
- “No. 3 — Local History Societies in England and Wales: a list” — listing under Counties the names and addresses of local organisations concerned with promotion of local history. 34 pages — 1978. 65p including postage.
- The above three publications issued by The Standing Conference for Local History, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU.*
- “Armorial Bearings of the Sovereigns of England”. W. J. Petchey, 1977 edition. £1.25.
- “Building Stones of England and Wales”. N. Davey. £1.00.
- “Hedges and Local History”. M. D. Hooper et al. 75p.
- “Historian’s guide to Ordnance Survey Maps”. Harley, new edition 1979.
- “How to read a Coat of Arms”. P. G. Summers and A. Griffiths. 50p.
- “Landscapes and Documents” ed: Alan Rogers and Trevor Rowley. £1.50.
- “Local History Exhibitions”. Norman Cook — how to plan and present them. 12p.
- “Local History and Folklore”. Charles Phythian Adams. 85p.
- “The Logic of Open Field Systems”. Rex Russell. 90p.
- “Maps for the Local Historian”. J. B. Harley. £1.95p.
- \*“Tithes and the Tithe Commutation Act, 1836”. Eric J. Evans. £1.50.

From booksellers or by post \* — (cash with orders please): BOOKPOINT LTD., 78 Milton Trading Estate, Abingdon, Oxon OX24 4TD. \*Please add 10% to order for postage — minimum 15p.