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St. Peter's Church, Rodmarton

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EDITORIAL

In the last issue of the Bulletin I wrote of an impending increase in the subscription rate.

The Committee have now decided that it will be £1 per annum. For this our subscribers will receive two editions of the Bulletin per year, and also, as from 1st September, 1980 a copy of our Newsletter. It has not been possible, unfortunately, to arrange production of the Newsletter to commence with this edition of the Bulletin. I would ask readers to note the increase in costs as subscriptions are now due.

Two dates for your diary:—

1. The Local History Conference has been arranged for Saturday, 20th September, 2—5 p.m. at The College of Education, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester. The theme will be “Communications in Gloucestershire History”.
 2. As a follow up to our recent successful Conference on Oral History, there will be an “Oral History Workshop” on Saturday, 18th October, 2—5 p.m. at the County Record Office, Worcester Street, Gloucester.
- Further details on both events in due course.

G. J. STOCKHAM, Editor.

THE 1980's

1980 will see the bicentenary of the Sunday School Movement, popularised by Robert Raikes, the Editor of the *Gloucester Journal*, and with it, the beginnings of popular education.

There will be an exhibition in Raikes' old home, Ladybellegate House, Longsmith Street, Gloucester, from 4th June to 30th August.

1980 will also see the quatercentenary of Queen Elizabeth I granting to Gloucester the status of a port, and celebrations centre on the Docks on the weekend of 21st June.

1981 will be the 1300th anniversary of the founding of The Abbey of St. Peter, though 1982 appears to be a rest year.

1983 is the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Richard III's grant of a charter to Gloucester, and 1985 will be the 900th anniversary of the order by William I to compile the Domesday Book.

Throughout the County this era of anniversaries will doubtless include others which will be remembered.

To recall Robert Raikes, we have invited Mr Frank Booth to contribute our first article. Our thanks to him — and to all our contributors.

BRYAN JERRARD,
Chairman, Local History Committee.

ROBERT RAIKES: PIONEER OF POPULAR EDUCATION

THE COMMEMORATION OF the bi-centenary of the foundation of four Sunday schools by the Rev. Thomas Stock and Robert Raikes in 1780, may serve to remind us of the contribution of Gloucester's famous son to the welfare of his countryman. John Richard Green in his work *A Shorter History of the English People* showed surprising accuracy in his statement, 'The Sunday Schools established by Mr Raikes of Gloucester at the close of the century were the beginnings of popular education.'

Children of poor parents were being taught in charity schools, of course, and Gloucestershire could boast the work of Colonel Maynard Colchester of Westbury-on-Severn, one of the five founder members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Charity schools throughout the country accommodated relatively few children, however, 30,000 being a widely accepted estimate made in the 1780's, whilst less than five years after Raikes' first reference in the *Gloucester Journal* to the work undertaken by 'some members of the clergy' with children on Sundays, nearly ten times that number were stated as being instructed in Sunday schools.

Raikes was unquestionably the Founder of the Sunday School Movement. Although he neither originated the idea of Sunday instruction for children nor founded the first Sunday school, it was through his initiative, purposefulness, skilful persuasiveness and tenacity, that the idea became so rapidly widespread as to become a national movement. Eighteenth century founders of Sunday schools make an impressive list, all having their own interesting story, including those of William King, a woollen card merchant of Dursley, and Sophia Cooke of Gloucester, who married the Rev. Samuel Bredburn, a Methodist minister, and became a great friend of John Wesley. It was Raikes, however, who revealed to the nation the importance and strength of the Sunday school as a religious and social disciplinary force.

Raikes, the leading publicist of the Sunday School Movement, was uniquely situated to become this, owning and controlling as he did one of the most effective media of the day, a thriving newspaper with an extensive circulation. The *Gloucester Journal*, of which he was both the proprietor and editor, was one of the two greatest provincial papers. Raikes was not only an able journalist, but he had the ideal personality to be a successful publicist. He positively enjoyed the magnificence of his public image as a Sunday school founder, which if unsought, was inevitably created.

Raikes learned at first hand of the squalor, drunkenness and vice in which some of the labouring classes lived. As in the case of William King, philanthropic work in Gloucester prison brought him face to face with the distress of the criminal classes, and he saw their need of religious instruction and social training. By the establishment of Sunday schools he believed that the children of the poor could be taught 'notions of duty and discipline', and that this work could bring about 'a reformation of society.'

The publicity given to the work of Sunday schools succeeded beyond Raikes' wildest expectations. 3rd November, 1783 was perhaps the date of greatest significance in the beginning of the Sunday School Movement. On that day Raikes included the following (now famous) paragraph in his newspaper.

'Some of the clergy in different parts of this county, bent upon attempting a reform among the children of the lower class, are establishing Sunday Schools, for rendering the Lord's Day subservient to the ends of instruction, which has hitherto been prostituted to bad purposes. Farmers, and other inhabitants of the towns and villages, complain they receive more injury in their property on the Sabbath, than all the week besides: This in a great measure proceeds from the lawless state of the younger class, who are allowed to run wild, on that day, free from any restraint. To remedy this evil, persons duly qualified are employed to instruct those that cannot read, and those that may have learnt to read, are taught the catechism, and conducted to church. By thus keeping their minds engaged, the day passes profitably, and not disagreeably. In those parishes where this plan has been adopted, we are assured, that the behaviour of the children is greatly civilised. The barbarous ignorance, in which they had before lived, being in some degree dispelled; they begin to give proofs that those persons are mistaken, who consider the lower orders of mankind as incapable of improvement, and therefore think an attempt to reclaim them impracticable, or at least not worth the trouble.' Small wonder the passage was later printed in other newspapers. Raikes had thoughtfully appraised social problems which were of constant concern to the propertied classes — the depravity, immorality, disorderliness and brutality of the 'lower orders'. Raikes' message, frequently, yet skilfully iterated and reiterated in his newspaper, received approval from the lowest to the loftiest. In June, 1787, Raikes attended the royal household at Windsor, where George III and Queen Charlotte expressed their approbation of 'the zeal he had manifested' in instituting 'the very excellent mode of instructing the poor.' Members of all classes and sections of society began to share Raikes' convictions.

The endeavours of Raikes inspired others. In a century when religion was at its nadir, many clergymen were moved to undertake their sacred duty of ministering to the needs of the poor, especially the children. William Fox, a native of Clapton, near Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, having prospered in business, was anxious to devote his wealth to helping poor children. Having already learned of Raikes' activities, Fox wrote to him and after receiving both help and encouragement from Raikes, founded the Sunday School Society.

Thanks to Raikes and others of the same pioneering spirit, the nation learned of the power of education. In increasing numbers people of all ranks of society saw it in their own interests to have the poor instructed. After Raikes' publicity campaign the great mass of the nation's children were viewed with a new sense of understanding. He had shown that even the most neglected, disreputable and ill-behaved children were educable, and that their instruction was worth the trouble. The common people themselves, parents and children, began to realise that schooling could effect remarkable changes, advantageous to them. In communities throughout the kingdom, attitudes of indifference changed to those of concern and caring. The tremendous historical significance of the Sunday School Movement, begun by Raikes, has never been adequately appraised. If judged alone by the numbers of people involved, Raikes was an outstanding pioneer of popular education.

Raikes and the Sunday school teachers gave thousands of common people the key to knowledge and understanding. Raikes' first requirement of the

teachers he employed was that they could teach the children to read, and he did not restrict the teaching of reading to Sundays only. He encouraged a new development, the provision of evening classes on weekdays. This indicated Raikes' clear intention to 'educate' children and not simply habituate them into Sunday routines. In his 'reformation of society' Raikes led clergy and laity back to the teachings of the Christian religion. Sunday schools were attended by the children of all sorts and conditions of common people: labourers, mill-workers, factory workers, artisans and traders. They became the meeting ground for the poor and the rich, for employees and employers. For teachers and learners the labours would often be mutually enlightening and rewarding. To a few, perhaps, came the realisation that we live to be educated.

FRANK BOOTH

For a fuller account see Frank Booth *Robert Raikes of Gloucester* (National Christian Education Council), February, 1980.

THE LYSONS FAMILY CONNECTION WITH RODMARTON

THE ROAD WHICH passes through the villages of Coates, Tarlton and Rodmarton is the old Roman road which served the villas situated to the west of Cirencester. At Rodmarton, the road forks to form the boundries of a small triangular green situated in the centre of the village.

On the north side is the Parish Church of St. Peter and to the west lies the old Rectory, built about the 16th century and rebuilt around 1627 by Job Yate, a former Rector. Almost opposite the entrance in the Church, on the north side of the aisle, is a board containing a list of the Rectors who have served this Parish since 1325. Prominent is the name Lysons, four members of this family having served this Parish continuously for over 170 years.

The original family residence was Hempstead Court near Gloucester, 'a moderate sized mansion with attractive grounds'. The family had been prominent in the affairs of Gloucestershire for many generations. Daniel and Samuel were family christian names and one Daniel Lysons (1672-1736) appears to have been the originator of the family residence at Hempstead having purchased it about 1700 from the Atkins family.

His only son, also named Daniel (1697-1773) became 'a prominent Christian, scholarly and a beneficent Burgess of Gloucester.' His marriage to Elizabeth Mee produced two sons, the eldest, also named Daniel (1727-1800) became a Doctor and the youngest, Samuel (1730-1804) was the first member of the family to be Rector of Rodmarton, at the age of 26, in 1756. He subsequently married Mary Peach and settled in the Rodmarton Rectory where was born two sons and a daughter.

The eldest son, Daniel (1762-1834) also entered the Church and became Rector of Rodmarton in 1804 on the death of his father. His younger brother Samuel (1763-1819) was the famous antiquary. He was baptised at Rodmarton on the 17th May, 1763, his date of birth is not recorded and his early schooling was undertaken by his mother. He was subsequently sent to an Uncle in Bath and attended Bath Grammar School where 'he became an outstanding classical

scholar'. His friends saw him 'as a future Lord Chancellor' and put forward the suggestion that on his appointment he should take the title of 'the Earl of Tetbury'. In June 1780, he was placed with a Bath Solicitor named Jefferies and some four years later went to London as a member of the Inner Temple. There he studied under a Mr Walton, a special pleader, and subsequently practised in this capacity. He was called to the bar in 1798 and joined the Oxford Circuit.

Earlier, in Bath, he met and befriended Thomas Lawrence who had a profound influence on his artistic talents. Together, they attended lectures by Sir Joshua Reynolds and practised etching. His first published attempt was a Crest for the Colston Charity Sermon preached by his brother in 1784. From the following year he exhibited at the Royal Academy and is known to have exhibited on at least fifteen occasions. In 1791 he published in parts, his 'Views and Antiquities in the County of Gloucester', in particular, the revised edition of this work (1803) contains plates produced with a high degree of skill and beauty.

In 1786, at the age of 23, he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and it was also about this time that he was introduced to Sir Joseph Banks, who showed a great interest in Lysons and his work. An interesting collection of letters, written by Lysons to Banks, is preserved in the British Museum. Both brothers knew Horace Walpole well and Daniel became a frequent visitor to his brother's chambers when in London.

In the 1790's appeared Samuel Lysons first illustrations of Roman antiquities, works which possibly are his most lasting claim to fame. It was during this period that his acquaintance with the Royal Family began.

It was while he was collecting his Gloucestershire Views, the renewed discovery of a mosaic pavement at Woodchester excited him. He began his extensive examination during the summer of 1793 which continued over the next three years, 'using his scholarship and artistic ability to the full'. In 1797, at the age of thirty-four, he published his book, 'An Account of the Roman Antiques Discovered at Woodchester', a large volume containing forty plates; the text was in English and in French and was dedicated to George III. A copy of this work was sent to Napoleon, 'so that the Savants of France might embark on similar researches'. On the 2nd February 1797, Lysons was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and in 1810 was further honoured by being made Vice-President and Treasurer. In 1798, he was elected Director of the Society of Antiquaries and became Vice-President in 1812.

Haverfield in his 'Roman Occupation of Britain', describes Lysons 'Reliquie Britannico — Romance as — perhaps the most magnificent volumes ever published on the Roman antiques of this country'. These were published in 1801 and 1808.

During this time, Samuel Lysons was still earning his living at the law, but, in January 1804 when he was 41 years of age 'he got his long awaited release from this, to him, irksome occupation.' He was appointed Keeper of the Records at the Tower of London, at a nett salary of £290 per annum. This was raised some five years later to £500 per annum. Because of his own prestige at the time, he lent an added importance to his new office and had little difficulty in getting the numbers of his staff increased from two to six. John Bayley, his

successor wrote in his History of the Tower, 'Lysons found a great portion of the records in the White Tower lying in total disorder, but by directing attention to these neglected treasures, a vast collection of Royal letters, state papers, parliamentary and other documents of the highest value and importance were rescued from a state of filth and decay and the whole arranged and methodised in a manner essential to their preservation.'

There was much love and affection between the two brothers and Samuel found in his brother Daniel a willing supporter in his antiquarian interests. In the County Records Office are manuscripts by both brothers giving details of their researches covering several centuries of the history of the Rodmarton area.

About 1800, the two brothers started to plan a County by County history of England. Both were great travellers in their own county by carriage, on horseback and on foot. Daniel Lysons left on record that between the 24th June, 1789 and the 25th June, 1800 he walked a total distance of some 19,500 miles, averaging in excess of some 1,750 miles each year in search of information. Although overshadowed by his brother, Daniel also became a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

In 1815, at the age of 52, Samuel Lysons came into possession of an estate of about £800 per year by the death of his Aunt in Bath. He was now able to keep a carriage which 'was a great convenience — being troubled for some time with lameness of the hip.' A last honour was bestowed upon him in January 1819 when he was elected Antiquary of the Royal Academy. He never married and died on the 30th June 1819 at the age of 56 and was buried at Hempstead on the 5th July.

Apart from his major publications, he contributed some twenty eight papers to *Archaeologia*, one of which on the History of the Berkeley Family, occupied 'fifteen evenings in the reading.' His *Reliquiae* occupied twenty-five years of his life and it is said to have cost him more than £6,000.

Their father, as Rector of Rodmarton was responsible, with others, for the introduction of educational facilities in the village, by starting a school 'for the education and apprenticing of the poor.' Originally a Sunday School, it developed into two small schools, one for girls and one for the boys, using local houses for the purpose. These schools became operational in 1790 and Daniel Lysons, brother of the famous Samuel, 'provided the necessary balance of the capital needed and provided funds for the clothing of the girls.

Although the famous Samuel never married, his brother Daniel married twice. His first wife, Sarah Carteret Hardy, bore him a son and two daughters and his second wife, Josepha Catherine Cooper another son. The younger son, Daniel (1816-1898) joined the Army and subsequently as General Sir Daniel Lysons, G.C.B. became Constable of the Tower of London.

The elder son, also named Samuel (1806-1877) however followed the family tradition and entered the Church and later using the family home at Hempstead became an Honorary Canon of Gloucester Cathedral. He was appointed Rector of Rodmarton in 1833, at the age of twenty-seven, a year before the death of his father. He followed the family traditional interests in archaeological matters and education. He wrote several books on his antiquarian interests and it was mainly at his own expense that the present village school was built in 1854.

However, he married three times. His first wife, Eliza Sophia Moore and his

second wife, Lucy Curtis Hayward, were the mothers of three sons. The eldest followed his Uncle and joined the Army and rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. The youngest, Daniel George, followed the family tradition and entered the Church. He became Rector of Rodmarton two years before the death of his father having been Curate-in-Charge for several years prior to his appointment as Rector. His father's third wife had a daughter and a son, Nigel Lucius Samuel who was born in 1877 and was killed in action in the First World War (1916) with the rank of Major.

Daniel George Lysons (1844-1929) married Katherine Anne Eyton. They had one child, a daughter, Esme and thus came to an end the direct link between this famous family and the village of Rodmarton. It was in Rodmarton however, that Daniel George Lysons, in 1890, delivered a series of lectures setting out the complete history of the village. These lectures were subsequently published and became the standard reference to the history of Rodmarton. Unfortunately, very few copies are known to exist.

From the time the Rev. Samuel Lysons came to Rodmarton in 1756, to the death of the Rev. Daniel George Lysons in 1929, 173 years had passed. They served the village well and such a small community owes a great deal to this famous family.

W. MESSAM.

GEORGIAN AND REGENCY THEATRE IN CHELTENHAM

THE THEATRE HAS always played a prominent part in the life of Cheltenham. From 1891 when Lily Langtry opened the Opera House in Regent Street with a performance of "Lady Clancarty", to the present day, when the Everyman Theatre — the old Opera House transformed — presents every type of show from bedroom farce to the works of Shakespeare and Tchckov, "going to the play" has been one of the pleasures of life in the town.

But it may not be generally known that Cheltenham's theatrical history is much longer than the honourable 89 year life span of the Opera House/Everyman.

The first mention of the drama in Cheltenham was in 1612 when an entry in the Manor Rolls records:

"Dobbins sounded his drum up and down the town of Cheltenham in the market, accompanied by R. Clerke and divers other young fellows, Clerke following Dobbins with a truncheon . . . and proclaiming that whoever would hear a play should come to the sign of the Crown". (The Crown Inn, High Street).

In 1744 a local newspaper with the delightful name of *The Cirencester Flying Post* announced:

"We hear from Cheltenham Spaw (sic) that the Warwick Company of Comedians, who are now entertaining the quality and gentry there, intend going from thence to Stratford-on-Avon with ten plays, selected from Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Congreve etc". Evidently Cheltenham had the cultural "edge" on Stratford in the mid 18th century.

The first real theatre in Cheltenham was probably situated in Coffee House Yard at the top of Pittville Street on the site now occupied by the "Brahms and Liszt" public house.

In this primitive playhouse, where the actresses' dressing room was divided from the actors' quarters simply by a torn blanket, Sarah Siddons (née Kemble) gave her famous interpretation of Lady MacBeth in 1774, arriving in her sedan chair ready dressed for her part, hardly surprising in view of the lack of amenities in the theatre.

This provincial actress was "discovered" by the Honourable Miss Boyle, step-daughter of the Marquess of Aylesbury, who attended a performance of Otway's "Venice Preserv'd" at Coffee House Yard expecting to see a thoroughly gauche production. To her astonishment the blasé young lady of fashion was so overcome by the power of Sarah's acting as "Belvidera" as to be "unpresentable" the next morning. However she visited the actress later in the day and spoke of Sarah's talent to David Garrick on returning to London, with the result that the 20 year old Mrs Siddons was playing Portia at Drury Lane in December, 1775.

In 1782 a new theatre was built in Grosvenor Terrace and six years later this establishment was granted the title of Theatre Royal by King George the Third, who had gone to the play in Cheltenham while visiting the now fashionable Spa with his family. Mrs Siddons had returned from her triumphs in London to take the parts of Portia, Belvidera and Mrs Sullen in the Beaux' Stratagem at the new Theatre Royal.

"Private Theatricals" were quite the vogue at this time. In a book of "Royal Recollections" the King described how he had considered taking part in an amateur production in Cheltenham, organised by the Duke of Richmond, but Queen Charlotte disapproved of the idea. Had he appeared on stage the King declared that he would have taken Mrs Siddons as his model for he considered her to be "masculine, imperious and royal" in her acting style. King George was evidently not one of Sarah's most ardent fans. He preferred Dorothy Jordan, famous for playing "breeches" parts, saying "Mrs Jordan is the only public favourite who thoroughly pleases me."

In 1805 Mr J. B. Watson, who had managed the Theatre Royal with great success, built another playhouse in Bath Street, on the site of the present-day Garrick's Head public house.

This new venture was said to have cost £8,000, a considerable sum in those days. Perhaps Watson felt that he had been rather rash in launching this new enterprise for he advertised in *The Gloucester Journal* of February 4th, 1805, asking for "subscriptions", loans to put it plainly, of £100 a head, offering in return free admission to his theatres in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Warwick. By May 1805 he was asking for "subscriptions" of one hundred and fifty guineas, this time bearing an annual payment of £10 interest as well as free seats in his theatres.

The Cambray Theatre as the establishment in Bath Street was called, did not lack aristocratic patrons — Earl Fitzhardinge, Lord Byron and Colonel Berkeley of Berkeley Castle among others.

In 1809 the Royal Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester and the Prince of Orange visited the Cambray Theatre where they saw Watson's son-in-law, an acrobat named Richer, said to be admitted into "the first circles of society", performing on the tight rope. In 1816 the Duke of Wellington attended performances of "The £100 Note" and "The Rencontre". Watson's enterprise had proved successful.

Edmund Kean, who had been playing in Gloucester for some time, visited Cheltenham to act in "Richard the Third". Opinions of his ability varied considerably.

A description of a theatrical "sell out" appeared in *The Cheltenham Chronicle* of September 1814.

"The all powerful attractions of Edmund Kean were on Tuesday last fully shown by the throng which attended our theatre to witness his unrivalled performance of Richard the Third". At the early part of the week all the boxes were taken; and such was the desire to see him that even the gallery became the resort of respectability.

But in 1816 the local press was denouncing another of Kean's performances of Richard Crook-back, declaring:

"His voice is harsh and unharmonious — his figure must not be critically dwelt upon."

What a crushing dismissal of a great actor.

Prices of admission at the Theatre Royal and the Cambray Theatre were at first 3 shillings for boxes, 2 shillings for the pit and 1 shilling for the gallery. Later the prices were increased to 4 shillings (5 shillings if a star were visiting the theatre) for the boxes, 2 shillings and 6 pence for the pit and, from 1808, 1 shilling and 6 pence for the gallery.

Doors opened at 6.0 p.m. and the performance started at 7.0 p.m. There were always two plays, sometimes three, in one evening's programme and during the intervals the audiences were entertained with recitations and comic songs.

Georgian and Regency Cheltenham offered great theatrical riches to playgoers. To be able to see the stars of the period performing in two or even three plays in one evening for a cost of at most 25p was splendid value for money. Those were the days.

JENERY HOWARD.

THE WINTER OF 1740 IN NORTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

IN RECENT YEARS research on a variety of evidence has revealed the considerable changes in climatic conditions through time and it has been possible to establish the pattern of the weather during the past thousand years. Within the fluctuations which have been identified some periods stand out as having been unusually cool or unusually warm. The late sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries, for example, were conspicuous for their comparative coolness. Indeed this spell has been termed the 'Little Ice Age'. The last decade of the seventeenth century was especially notable for the predominance of cool

weather and severe winters. The early eighteenth century, in contrast, saw a considerable amelioration in the climate, with mild winters, early springs and warm summers predominating, leading to particularly fine harvests throughout the 1720's and 1730's. These long-term climatic oscillations were punctuated by individual seasons of marked intensity. Thus there were notably hot and dry summers in 1665, 1666, 1699, 1714 and 1723 and extremely severe winters in 1658, 1683-4, 1698 — when there was a snow fall and frost in Tewkesbury as late as 3rd May — and 1740.

The winter of 1740 was certainly the worst winter of the eighteenth century. As one contemporary writer put it: 'An unheard of frost seized with extraordinary severity on the world and the elements . . .'. Indeed, since the middle of the seventeenth century it has been exceeded in its intensity only by the 'great frost' of 1683-4. Although there is no day-by-day account available for the north Gloucestershire region it is possible to outline the progress of the winter from the notes entered in the account and memoranda book of the Coffees of the Giles Geast charity in Tewkesbury. This volume, which was begun in 1558, contains entries on a number of subjects, including the weather, throughout the period and those for 1740 are particularly full.

Little can the inhabitants of Tewkesbury have suspected that the severe frost which began while they were celebrating Christmas Day 1739 marked the beginning of two months in which the average temperature was to remain below freezing point. At the end of that week, however, a strong easterly wind set in which was so piercing that the cold was 'hardly to be borne'. This was to be the dominant feature of the weather for several weeks, it continued to blow from between east and east-south-east until early February. Tewkesbury's position between the Severn, Carran, Avon and Swilgate has meant that it has always been particularly susceptible to flooding and wet years, such as 1725 and 1739, were marked by several inundations. Similarly, the less frequent freezing of these rivers is an index of the coldness of the winter months. By 1st January, 1740 the Severn itself had frozen over and within a few days people were able to cross the ice on foot. As the frosts continued it became safe for horses and wagons to pass over the ice. The freezing of the rivers was followed by the traditional roasting of 'a hole shecp . . . on the ice a littell above Key Bridge' on 5th January. A few days later there was a similar sheep roast at the quay at Gloucester. Early in February it was estimated that the ice on the river at Tewkesbury was more than a foot thick and in the middle of that month it was measured at eight inches. Throughout these weeks the daily temperature scarcely rose above freezing and there were a number of heavy snowfalls. A thaw finally came in the third week of February. By the twentieth of that month it was possible for a barge from Worcester to get through the ice to Tewkesbury and on the following day a number of boats passed downstream to Gloucester. The worst of the winter was finally over, but night frosts were to continue throughout March and April and into May.

The effect of the stoppage of the water borne trade upon prices was considerable. North Gloucestershire, like most parts of the Severn valley, drew its coal supplies from the Shropshire coalfields. Salt from the Droitwich area was also brought down the river. Consequently supplies of these two key commodities were virtually cut off by the ice and prices began to rise. By the middle

of February coal was said to be almost unobtainable in Gloucester and what little was available in Tewkesbury was selling at 1s. 2d. per hundredweight, as much as fifty per cent higher than the normal price. Firewood, too, became both scarce and expensive. Simultaneously grain prices were increasing. This was related not only to conditions that winter but also to the preceding harvest, which had not been good, due partly to the unusually heavy rainfall in 1739. Throughout the early months of 1740 average wheat prices at Gloucester were sixty per cent higher than in the corresponding months of the previous year. The increases in barley and oats prices were not as great but were nevertheless substantial. A shortage of bread grain began to develop and there were charitable distributions of loaves to 'the silent poor'. Meat and butter prices were also badly affected. Clearly the economic effects of the winter were serious and a considerable strain was placed on the operation of the poor relief system. Both private and public charities were called upon to assist the poor, who were hardest hit by the rising prices and harsh physical conditions.

Unfortunately the consequences of the winter did not end with the thaw. With the frosty weather continuing until early May it was a late spring. This problem was exacerbated by the dryness of both the spring and summer months, when rainfall levels were much lower than normal. Indeed, scarcely any rain fell at Tewkesbury between April and mid August. The effects on grain supplies were serious. The autumn sown crop had been much damaged by the severity of the winter, the late spring delayed ploughing and sowing, while the lack of moisture impeded growth and made a poor harvest virtually certain. In these circumstances the increase in prices could only continue. The rise was again most marked in the case of wheat prices, but barley and oats prices also rose. Throughout England the summer was punctuated by grain riots, aimed chiefly at corn dealers who were suspected of hoarding supplies or of shipping them to another area where prices were higher. In fact the corn harvest was not seriously deficient, although it was very late, not being completed until well into the autumn. However, the delayed spring and the drought combined to virtually ruin the hay crop. There was little grass growth before the middle of August and the cut which was eventually taken was very light. In Tewkesbury the price of hay rose during the course of the summer from 15s. 0d. to £3 per ton.

Despite the severity of the winter and consequent high prices there was apparently no increase in mortality. The number of burials in Tewkesbury during the intensely cold months of January and February was no higher than in the corresponding months of other years and the total for the whole year was only slightly greater than the annual average. Indeed the only period of high mortality in the town during the 1730's and 1740's came in the summer of 1741 when there was an outbreak of smallpox. The register of baptisms for the following autumn and early winter indicates that the number of conceptions, too, was not adversely affected by the harsh winter weather. In fact the community apparently emerged largely unscathed from the winter. The shortages of food and fuel were only temporary, although they undoubtedly caused some distress, and prices eventually returned to normal. The memory of 'this extraordinary winter' was, however, to remain for a long time.

STEPHEN PORTER.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK'S LODGINGS, WESTGATE STREET, GLOUCESTER — PART 2

(See LHB, Spring 1979.)

FURTHER HISTORICAL RESEARCH has revealed more interesting information about the Duke of Norfolk's Lodgings, formerly situated in Lower Westgate St.

This ornate house is just visible in two sketches showing prospects of the City because of the stone eagle mounted on the roof, flanked by Grecian urns and a ballustrade typical of Palladian architecture. (Not 'two eagles surmounting the projecting wings', forming the courtyard, as previously stated.) The Gloucester Cathedral Handbook, Vol. 2, 1833/4, shows a 'South-west Prospect from Llanthony Causey'. 'Country Life', Sept. 7th, 1972 shows 'Alard House, Gloucester' now thought to be Marylebone Park, once situated on the site of the present Police Station.

Amongst its many local names, it was known as Eagle Hall. It certainly created a prominent landmark in Westgate St. in the 18th century.

Anthony Freeman, who was responsible for the building of this impressive mansion in about 1725, was a maltster, with a vested interest in the Swan Inn next door. He was the eldest son of Anthony Freeman of Badgeworth (d. 1671). His first wife was Elizabeth Field, grand-daughter of Rowland Freeman, possibly a cousin. They married in the Parish of Upton St. Leonards, 19th May, 1713, and lived at Freeman's Farm, Badgeworth. Elizabeth died shortly after giving birth to Anthony and Rowland, 26th March, 1714, both of whom also died, Rowland aged 5, and Anthony 7.

His second wife was Elizabeth's sister Mary. She inherited several properties on the death of Rowland Freeman's wife (1717), all of which she granted to Anthony in 1718 at the probable time of their marriage (unrecorded). They had 3 children, Anthony, Thomas and Mary.

After the death of Anthony Freeman, 9th Oct., 1750, and Mary, in 1758, the property passed to his eldest son, Rev. Anthony Freeman, M.A., B.A. (Oxon), vicar of Elmstone Hardwicke, 1773, and Badgeworth-with-Shurdington, 1780. He died in 1789 and was buried at Cheltenham.

His eldest son, Rowland, a surgeon and apothecary in Cheltenham, then became joint owner of the Duke of Norfolk's Lodgings with his aunt Mary, daughter of grandfather Freeman, until it passed out of the family in 1801.

Using *The Gloucester Journal*, the many references to this house help to trace its passage through the years.

In 1787 (15th Oct.), the Mansion was, 'To let, lately completely repaired and fitted up with a handsome new staircase, together with a Garden and elegant Summer-house . . .' Mr Lewis, cornfactor, informs the gentry on the 21st April, 1788 that the Mansion House is in his possession, 'for the purpose of a Lodging House for respectable persons . ..'. By 14th July, 1788, he states that the Lady's Boarding School is removed and all the rooms are for Lodging. (When the school appeared on the scene is unknown).

Aug. 10th, 1789, grandly known as The Gloucester Spa, Lewis announces that ' . . . the Long Room in the Garden will be opened for Tea & Coffee, morning and afternoon.)

It was known as The Gloucester Spa, Hotel and Tavern, by 30th Aug., 1790, with good stabling and Coach-houses, where, 'A Public Breakfast was held, at 1s. a Head, and Tea provided morning and afternoon at 8d. a Head.

This very short-lived elegant era, following the discovery of a spring of saline water in the garden and subsequent development of a Spa in 1788, ended within two years, when the house was auctioned after Mr Lewis died, 16th Dec., 1790. Eight years later, the 11th Duke of Norfolk, Charles Howard, was in occupation during his year of office as Mayor of the City, in 1798, and the rooms again rung to grand Pomp and Ceremony.

The Duke's association with Gloucester began when he married his second wife, Francis, daughter and sole heir of Charles Fitzroy Scudamore and the Duchess of Beaufort, dower of the Holm-lacy estate, Herefordshire, 1771. They were large landowners at Hempstead. Francis became mentally deranged, and in 1816, a year after the Duke's death, a regular commission of lunacy was issued against her Grace.

According to an article written in 1817, 'The lives of the Earles of Arundel', ". . . No nobleman in England possessed a greater variety of residences." He had manors in Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Surrey, and Sussex, where, ". . . he expended immense sums in the re-edification of this noble pile." (i.e. Arundel Castle, burnt by Cromwell in the Civil War.) Unfortunately, his architect was of dubious quality and much of his restoration had to be rebuilt.

"He was rather above middle size, but of late years he had become fat, cumbrous and unwieldy. His eye-brows were dark and bushy, and his complexion had once been good. For many years he wore his hair cut short behind. His clothes were uniformly of the same cut form and generally of the same hue through all the varying changes of fashion. His favourite colour was grey and he often wore this with a black velvet collar and black silk waistcoat, small clothes and stockings.

Continuing from *The Gloucester Journal*, Mr Gilkes' Spa House Preparatory School and Finishing Academy, 1824, was followed in 1825 by David Lundie's Day and Boarding School, 'where Young Gentlemen are liberally boarded.'

Mr Creed opened his New Auction Mart on the premises 17th Feb., 1827, but by May of that year The Spa Hotel and Boarding House, as it was being called, was up for sale. William Jackson & Co., who was also there from 1821-1851, callenderer and calico glazier, '. . . with their Spring Patterns of Paper Hangings, which consist of beautiful Flock and Gold Papers, Satin Grounds, etc. . . .', was followed by Edwin Bick, shoemaker (formerly of Southgate St.).

At some stage in the mid-1800's came the addition of two unsightly shops to the front courtyard. Using Street Directories it is seen that further occupation was by a cabinet maker, in 1865; 2 bakers from 1873, a butcher in 1879 with a greengrocer in the other half (95a) by 1884.

An article in the Gloucester Mercury, 28th Feb., 1880, states: 'The Old Spa House . . . was converted into barracks for the 14th Light Dragoons and the 8th Hussars . . .'.

In LHB, Spring 1979 it was mentioned that the property was a Vinegar Works in 1883, but there is no evidence in the directories to confirm this. Thomas Addis, exiseman, is in possession of the property according to the title deeds at this time.

Then came a tinman, John Earl, in 1886, followed by Branch 3, Co-op stores in 1893. It had become a common lodging house by 1902, run by Mrs Young, and so it remained until it was allowed to decay beyond repair and was finally demolished on the 4th Oct., 1971.

On the site now stands The Dukeries, of the Westgate Flats, to remind the citizens of Gloucester of a former age of elegance.

MISS B. DRAKE.



THE THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL

IT IS BELIEVED that the first 'Music Meeting' of the choirs of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester took place about 1717. Certainly, by 1719 a pattern of sorts had developed, as this notice from the *Worcester Postman* in August of that year shows:

"The Members of the yearly Musical Assembly of these parts are desired to take Notice, That, by their Subscription in September last at Gloucester, they are obliged (notwithstanding a false and groundless Report to the contrary) to meet at Worcester, on Monday the last Day of this instant August; in order to publick Performance, on the Tuesday and Wednesday following."

From 1724 at each Music Meeting collections were taken up and devoted to the charitable purpose which is now enshrined within the Festival — “the alleviation of the poverty of widows and orphans of the clergy of the three Dioceses”. These collections at the Cathedral doors continue to this day.

The Music Meetings took on the title of The Three Choirs Festival some time in the 19th century, by which time there had been many highlights, grand occasions and enormous growth in repertoire. Of the crises that occurred from time to time perhaps the greatest was in 1875 when, arising out of a number of conflicts of views and opinions, the Dean and Chapter of Worcester imposed severe sanctions. Their main objection appears to have been that the Festival had become too secular — that it had departed too far from what the Dean and Chapter regarded as appropriate within their great church. In that year six choral services were sung during the period of what came to be known as the ‘Mock Festival’, but nothing more: no professional musicians were engaged, no tickets were issued, nothing of a secular nature performed. However, the dispute seems to have been soon forgotten.

Up to 1834 all the Meetings had been held in the Quires of the three Cathedrals and were, therefore, on a much smaller scale than those which followed. In that year Hereford erected a huge platform in the Nave and so made possible performances by some 300 singers and players. Nowadays, the Cathedral is still the centre for all the ‘major’ concerts (those attracting most of the largest audiences) but quite a number of additional programmes are presented elsewhere. In 1980, for example, there will be performances in Prinknash Abbey, Tewkesbury Abbey, Gloucester Leisure Centre, Gloucestershire College of Education and the Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham. In addition a number of ‘fringe events’ have been arranged, including some organised by the Courtyard Arts Trust with children and young people especially in mind. The Festival Office will be very glad to send a copy of the programme for the whole of Festival Week to any who are interested.

Three Choirs is widely regarded as one of the friendliest of festivals. It has a number of singular features which mark it out in this way: most of all, perhaps, the fact that unlike most other music festivals its Chorus is made up of local people — singers of proven quality from the three counties. Moreover its success owes much to the tremendous efforts of many scores of other local people who, completely voluntarily, arrange and provide a variety of social amenities and occasions for the hundreds of visitors who come (some of them annually) to the Festival from the length and breadth of Britain and many overseas countries.

To co-incide with the 250th Festival in 1977 a Commemorative Booklet was published. Its 60 pages of text and pictures provide in considerable detail a fascinating account of the history of the Festival and its Charity, including the contribution of composers and performers who have been associated with it during its long history. Also included are articles by eminent musicians and other writers. Copies are still available, price £2.50 (including post and packing) from The Festival Secretary, Community House, College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX.

CHRISTIAN WILSON.